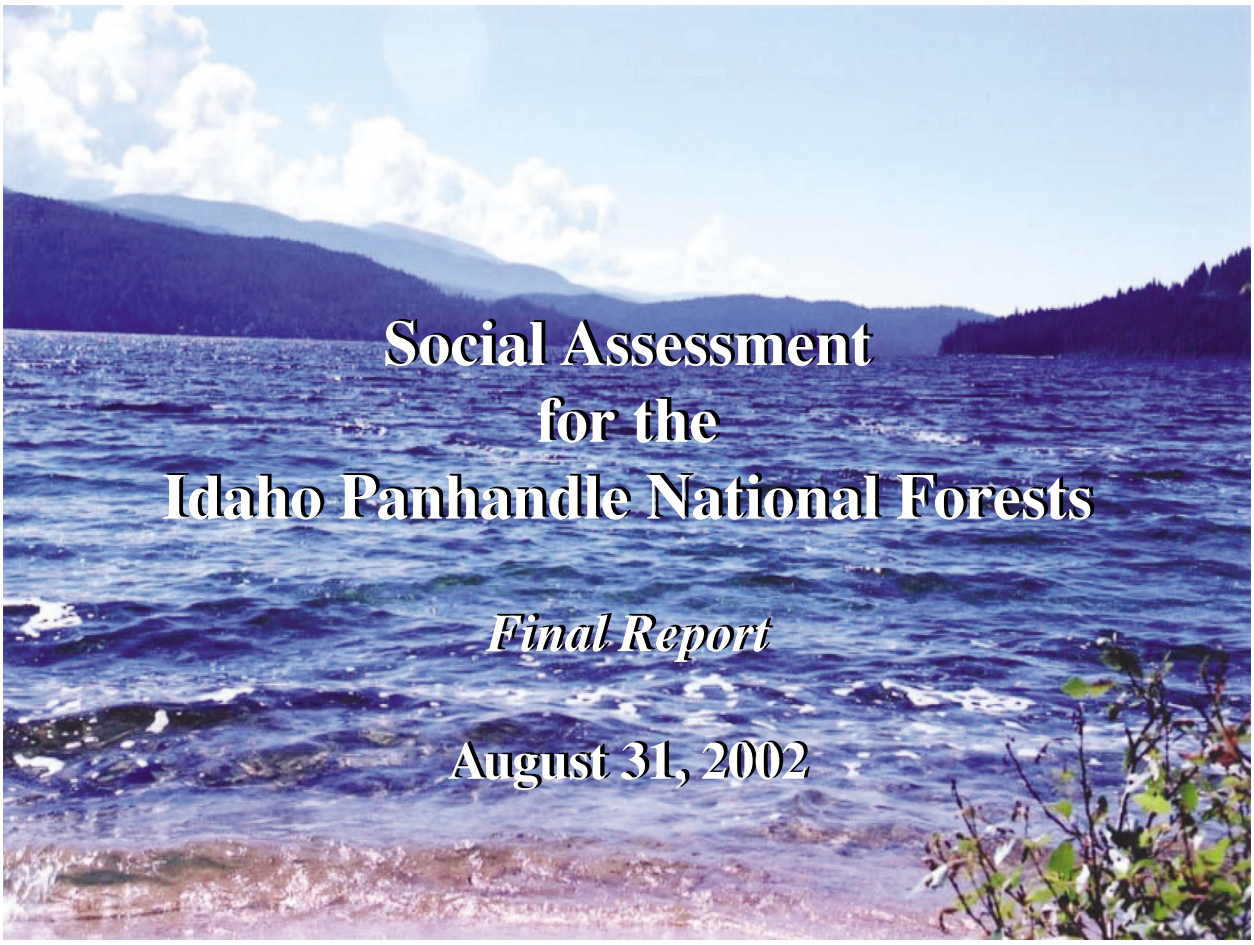

Social Assessment for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Final Report

August 31, 2002

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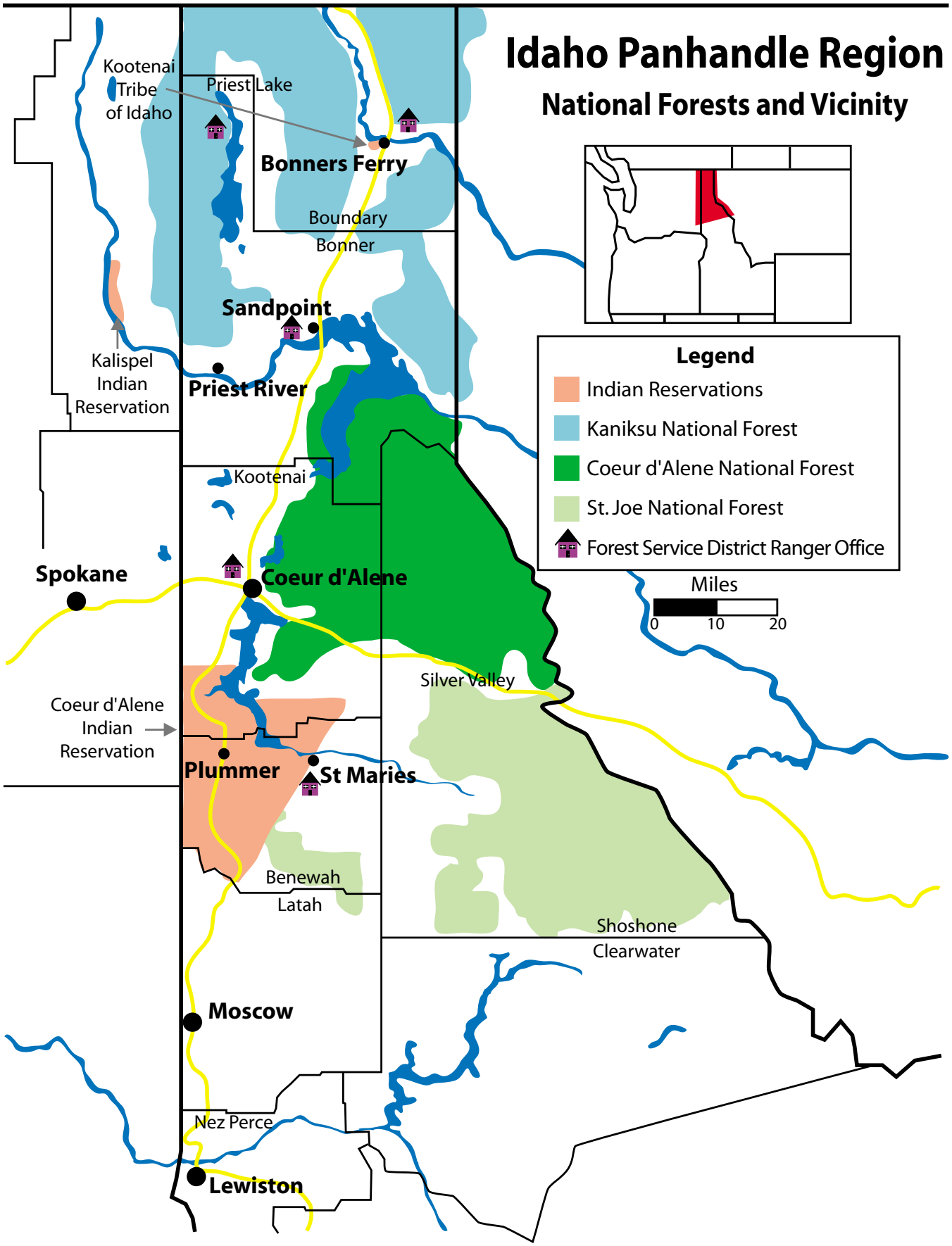
This project was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service under Challenge Cost Share Agreement No: 01-CS-11010400-018.


Idaho Panhandle Region
National Forests and Vicinity
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
Priest Lake
Bonners Ferry
Boundary
Bonner
Sandpoint
Kalispel Indian Reservation
Priest River
Kootenai
Spokane
Coeur d'Alene
Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation
Plummer
St Maries
Silver Valley
Benewah
Latah
Shoshone
Clearwater
Moscow
Nez Perce
Lewiston
Legend
Indian Reservations
Kaniksu National Forest
Coeur d'Alene National Forest
St. Joe National Forest
Forest Service District Ranger Office
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ABSTRACT

In developing the necessary components for revision of the Forest Plan, the USDA Forest Service contracted with the University of Idaho to conduct a Social Assessment of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF). The purpose of the Social Assessment is "to assess public perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, community characteristics, and other sociocultural factors that affect the interaction of nearby communities with the natural resources of the IPNF" (USDA Forest Service 2001). The social assessment focuses on three areas: 1) the state of local communities, including related Native American Tribes; 2) local perceptions of forest resource management of the IPNF; and 3) the relationship between the communities and the Forest Service.

Participants in the six geographical study areas were selected based on two criteria: 1) a diversity of perspectives; and 2) an understanding of the community within each of the geographical areas. Six communities within the IPNF region were identified as study areas: Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Priest River, Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, the Silver Valley, and St. Maries/Lower St. Joe. Three Native American Tribes, which have strong connections to the IPNF, were also represented in the study – the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. Confidential interviews were the primary tool for data collection, in conjunction with focus groups, to generate in-depth, representative qualitative data for the IPNF Social Assessment. Relevant themes and sub-themes were then identified from the interviews to guide the analysis. Representative quotes in the study are used in this report to illustrate the themes.

This study yielded a variety of responses regarding communities, forest resource management, and community relations with the Forest Service. Communities in the Panhandle are defined by the change that each community is experiencing. The type and degree of change varies greatly between communities. Perceptions of forest resource management were diverse but generally focused on having a healthy and sustainable forest. Although there is substantial conflict as to which management regimes are beneficial or harmful to the forest and communities, concurring perceptions of forest management do also exist. Participants generally wished to see improved relationships between the Forest Service and communities, and to collaborate on shared goals such as economic and ecological health, trust, education, and communication.

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ACRONYMS

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ICBEMP	Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project
IPNF	Idaho Panhandle National Forests
MUSY	Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish & Wildlife Service

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The responsibility for this study is with the research team from the University of Idaho. Without the cooperation and assistance from many people across the Idaho Panhandle region, this work would not have been possible. As is often the case with this type of study, many were generous with their time and sharing perspectives. In addition to members of the communities with whom we spent time, we also wish to acknowledge the significant amount of time Forest Service staff set aside to time to meet, interact about our progress, and provide background information.

A significant number of contributors to this report also deserve special mention here. Students and staff that contributed include:

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Thank you to all for this combined effort.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Purpose of the study

This report is a social assessment prepared for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) to be used for the revision of their Forest Plan. The purpose of the IPNF social assessment is to "assess public perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, community characteristics, and other sociocultural factors that affect the interaction of nearby communities with the natural resources of the IPNF" as per a Challenge Cost-Share Agreement established with the Forest Service in 2001.

The IPNF social assessment focuses on three areas:

1) the state of local communities, including related Native American Tribes;
2) local perceptions of forest resource management on the IPNF; and
3) the relationship between the communities, tribes and the Forest Service.

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests encompasses 2.5 million acres of the northern Idaho Panhandle region – ½ of the total forested land in the area (USFS 2002). This mountainous region includes nine counties and dozens of small towns in rural Idaho, eastern Washington, and western Montana. Two urban areas are within or adjacent to the Panhandle: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Spokane, Washington. Apart from these two cities the area is not densely populated. Small towns in valleys and along waterways interrupt large stretches of forested land. The study presented here reflects the diversity of perceptions from people living, working and recreating in the communities and forests of the Idaho Panhandle.

The area has several 'hot spots' of economic and population expansion including Sandpoint in Bonner County and Coeur d'Alene in Kootenai County. Other areas such as Wallace and Kellogg (the Silver Valley) in Shoshone County are in decline both in terms of population and economy. For additional background demographic information on the Idaho Panhandle, see Wang (2001).

Structure and organization of the report

While reviewing this document, readers should keep in mind the complex nature of a social assessment—especially for a region as expansive as the Idaho Panhandle. To be certain, diversity exists in the IPNF communities, especially in terms of social and cultural values, opinions that respondents shared, and approaches to addressing some of the issues discussed in this report. In short, our data do not support stereotypes of the region as any one thing—a place for separatists, all timber-dependent, or whatever the characterization might be. Instead, we found a multitude of perspectives.

People vary in conceptualizing ***community*** within the Panhandle. Most respondents to our questions did not relay their notion of community by simply telling us the town they live in or near. As such, it makes analytical sense to organize the report along thematic lines. By ***theme***, we mean an idea or set of ideas that is found as a pattern across different perspectives and contexts within the data. The themes tell the story. In essence, the themes we present here are infinitely more important than the residence of the interviewees. To the extent possible and where relevant, we couple theme and place to provide more context.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Interviews

Qualitative research methods were used to collect data for this report, including 116 in-depth interviews of 130 people and two focus groups. We conducted qualitative inquiry using a case study model. Interviews were the primary tool for data collection. Focus groups, scoping and secondary data such as newspapers, web sites, books and government documents were also used as a basis for understanding the Idaho Panhandle.

The research team purposively sampled for two criteria: 1) a diversity of perspectives, and 2) an understanding of the community within each of the geographical areas (Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Priest River, Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, Silver Valley, St. Maries/Lower St. Joe). A snowball sampling technique was used to locate appropriate respondents for the study. This sampling technique begins with a few key interviewees identified through a scoping process which then determines further interviewees by asking these key participants for names of people they would recommend to be interviewed.

The research team developed an interview/discussion guide to reflect the information sought by the IPNF Forest Service. This information also includes issues brought forth during preliminary scoping. Scoping is the informal process of interaction with members of the study population and review of local information such as newspapers and background documents. As a result of contextual information gathered at the outset, we designed the interview guide to provide a wide latitude of response. Each respondent was assured confidentiality as a part of participation in the study. Confidentiality is defined as not disclosing the names or other identifying information of respondents as well as any written or verbal communication (including interview transcripts) that could link individuals to statements and compromise their privacy of response.

Analysis

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The research team coded the transcripts based on a common set of codes derived through preliminary analysis of interview data and cross-checked by multiple researchers coding the same documents. Transcripts and coding were entered into a qualitative research software package (Nud*ist N-5) The

selected statistical package generates reports on particular codes. Reports were used to develop data for relevant themes within the interviews. From reports based on various codes we established common themes and sub-themes throughout the data.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

Communities of the Idaho Panhandle

The transitions happening with lifestyles and identities across the Panhandle region reflect the most constant community theme from these interviews. Sometimes the change is rapid; other times it can be very gradual.

Historically, and until recent decades, natural resource extraction dominated the Idaho Panhandle's economy. With one type of industry dominating local economies, communities often develop identities associated with that work to express 'this is who we are' and '*this* is what we do.' In addition, the importance of rural community identity still pervades most of the IPNF region.

In some cases, natural resource extraction still dominates the identity and activities of communities. St. Maries and Priest River both show strong ongoing identification with timber harvesting. In other cases, the local economy, culture, and identities have shifted to more of an amenity-based model for development activities, including tourism, recreation, and retiree benefits. Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint are two examples of communities reflecting this type of change. Communities such as Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, and those in the Silver Valley show signs of multiple identities and influences compared to others in the region.

However, we learned through this social assessment that these communities in many ways also defy characterization with a single identity. Therefore, we believe this region should be treated sociologically as such: a region whose defining characteristics are *resource dependency*—both the extractive and amenity based—and *change*.

Resource dependency in the Panhandle communities

Although timber production remains a substantial force to the many local economies, most local people perceive that its substance and significance have decreased over the past 15-20 years. During that same time period, different resource-related economic development has emerged largely in the form of recreation-, tourism-, and retirement-related services.

In addition to relationships that illustrate a community's dependence and attachment to a particular industry or lifestyle, respondents also recognize the economic change occurring around them. However, extraction-based communities often have deeply rooted social structures intertwined with the timber industry as a source of livelihood. Carroll (1995)

pointed out the importance "occupational identity" has for the social well-being in many rural northwestern timber-dependent communities.

Some Panhandle communities have experienced such substantial changes in economic patterns, their resource-dependency can be analyzed as amenity-based. Specifically, Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint exemplify this pattern the most within the IPNF at this time. While these two communities certainly still have strong and enduring ties to the timber industry, the overall perceived focus of their collective identities is no longer dependent on resource extraction as in previous eras. In the broadest sense, those interviewed often reported on the perception of an amenity-based economy with mixed feelings. In some cases, respondents presented this economic perception in a positive light, suggesting that the community stands to gain from the influx of visitors' spending with local vendors.

An increase in recreation and growth from amenity-based development has a mixture of costs and benefits. Interviewees expressed the need for a balance between recreational use and conservation in relation to community impacts from an amenity-based economy. In addition, some interviewees discussed frustration over a perceived change in values of community members. A significant in-migration of newcomers to an area, whether seasonal or permanent, may affect local values and understanding of norms and customs.

Equally characteristic of this region are the communities currently experiencing social and economic transition. The Silver Valley corridor communities of Wallace, Silverton and Kellogg as well as Bonners Ferry and Priest Lake exhibit patterns of this significant transitional state; each for different reasons. Participants we interviewed from these transitional communities tended to reflect on the disruption and consequences that often emerge from social and economic change. Exhibiting the social and economic struggles often associated with this sort of change, many participants lamented the loss of extraction-based industries, and alluded to a perceived dependency on Forest Service timber harvests.

Changes and implications for Panhandle Communities

Community change is multidimensional. On a broad scale, local communities today are increasingly impacted by more environmental regulations and global economic activities than ever before. In turn, these trends have led to escalated interaction—some substantive, some superficial—among people with diverse interests, who often find themselves eventually to be collaborative working groups to maintain multiple uses and interests of local resources.

Many Panhandle residents noted concerns about losing what is familiar to them about their community. Like many rural communities across the country, Panhandle community residents want livable-wage jobs. Transitions and changes affecting the core communities in this area has resulted in employment has become less certain, and when available, less secure, according to most participants.

Those interviewed, in many cases, reflected on the resistant attitudes toward change. A less common theme was that change can also be the seed of a new vision and/or opportunity for individuals to look at situations differently. Leadership in a community can often be an influential force in how others might deal with and/or accept the broader changes occurring.

While this study does not evaluate the total net gain or loss of jobs across the region, *it does document the perceived loss of jobs.* Perhaps more importantly, local perspectives also claim that many of the jobs that did go away were extractive-based and valued over amenity-based employment regardless of how many of the latter were created. Although the loss of jobs or a decline in economic health at a community or regional level is complex, to make sense of what people see happening, they often reduce the cause down to a simplified attribute. In many cases among those we interviewed, a reduction in timber sales from Forest Service land was perceived as a major constraint to the local economy.

The social and cultural consequences from this kind of transition should be considered heavily, even though these types of impacts do not lend themselves to quantification. In extraction-based communities, as people who live there become more and more aware of a transition and its effects—decline in economic health, population, job security, and similar indicators—they also tend to develop anxiety about whether they or their affiliates might be next in line for similar types of impacts. Although much of the anxiety may be attributed to worry over losing a job, arguably there is more at stake in the collective minds of the community members: their home and relationships they share with one another. Despite the difficulties change presents, some groups also find a constructive outlet to make the process of negotiating outcomes beneficial as well as supportive of the community as a whole.

Inevitably, people's visions for the future must relate to the context of the past and/or present as a point of comparison. In the IPNF communities, many recognize the substantial decline in overall timber production as well as how the changes in where that timber is cut. By and large, they also recognize the newer "service" economy, whether directly tied to it, or just an observation around them in the sea of change. Despite the latter observation, in a majority of cases, those interviewed maintained an attachment to identities based on resource extraction.

Across the array of communities we analyzed, most respondents reflected on those places where they work, play, and live as rural. Without a doubt, they would like to preserve those qualities associated with the rural lifestyle—quiet, safe, friendly, traditional, easy-going, and limited restrictions. Coeur d'Alene could be considered the obvious exception to the rural character of the Idaho Panhandle. In a relative sense, however, because Coeur d'Alene's neighbor—Spokane, Washington—just across the border is significantly larger and considered the regional hub for transportation and business, the Idaho "playground" still maintains somewhat of a small-town atmosphere. Along these same lines, a number of those interviewed emphatically described the desire to control residential and commercial growth in the region.

As a part of the analysis, a model was developed (see page 41 in CHAPTER Three) to illustrate different transitional phases that a community might move into and out of with respect to its economy, identity, and social structures. At a local level, people perceive their future as tied to multiple entities and forces.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERCEPTIONS OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

Participants were asked to reflect on past management, present management and future desires for management. The overarching themes in this section include the differences in local versus national Forest Service employees, the perception that the IPNF is bound by various constraints from managing the forest, and that while agreement exists on the need for forest health, how that is defined and produced, is the basis of substantial conflict.

Perceived differences in local Forest Service and national Forest Service

It is important to note that within the theme of forest management is the near universal differentiation between "local" or regional Forest Service and the "national" Forest Service office employees in Washington, D.C. Participants often specified what level of management they were commenting on (local or national), and indicated the local Forest Service was doing a good job, or the best they could under the constraints placed on them.

Perceptions of past and current management

Perceptions of current and past management include a wide spectrum of views, but often centered on the concept of "neglected management" including timber, restoration and recreation issues. The perceived source of neglected management is generally agreed upon: agency gridlock from national level forest policy, litigation and appeals, and environmental regulations. However, in light of the dissatisfaction of neglected management are the acknowledgements of improving management regimes that have recently evolved in the last decade relative to historical practices**.**

Many study participants, especially those in communities that rely more on timber production are frustrated by what they perceive to be reduced timber harvest, specifically from national forest lands. Participants outside the extractive industries indicated frustration with the lack of visible management of recreation amenities such as trails and campsites. Forest restoration was often noted as a main priority for respondents within the IPNF, especially in areas degraded by previous management techniques. Generally, there is support for the restoration programs in progress; however, a number of people remain frustrated with the perception of slow progress of the restoration efforts.

When we asked the interviewees to assess Forest Service management regimes, there was a predominant theme among respondents of perceiving the present management regime

as an improvement from the past. This general scope of management of the national forests sets the context for analysis of the special ecological, cultural, and economic issues for the IPNF.

Special issues in the IPNF forest management

Perceptions of past and present fire management by the Forest Service varied widely among our respondents. General responses ranged from dissatisfaction of the unchanging fire management regimes to desire for suppression of all fires. Another primary response among many individuals concentrated on the fear of fire in the context of homes and communities at risk in the wildfire/urban interface.

Support and opposition to road closure was very mixed. Support for road closure transcended environmentalist/extraction boundaries. Many people from differing ideological perspectives understand the benefits gained from road closures. Many recognize that the IPNF is very heavily roaded and that roads can interfere with wildlife habitat and especially water quality. However, strong opposition to road closures predominantly came mainly from those tied to resource extraction. Those opposed to road closures were also often long time residents, who have generational ties to the community. Distinction in support and opposition was clarified in the discussion of road closures versus road obliteration. Often times even when those within extraction industries supported road closure, road obliteration was opposed.

How forest management mandates and goals evolve, how decisions are made and how management regimes are enforced, is an area of disagreement for many participants in this study. Local versus national control of national forests was a major recurring theme in the interviews. Interviewees' ideals ranged from believing there should be solely local control, to those who believed in input from across the nation, to those who desired to see local views weighted more heavily than non-local views. The issue of local powerlessness also emerged due to a lack of local population density as compared to urban areas. The fear of being unheard due simply to numbers seems to motivate the argument for local control over the national forests.

Science and forestry in management

Some respondents indicated that foresters and those trained in forest science should be the ones managing the IPNF. People advocating foresters manage and make decisions about the IPNF saw public input as a barrier to managing the forest appropriately.

Forest health

When the study participants described the desired conditions of the forest, the environmental and utilitarian perspectives superficially envisioned the same goal: forest health. The difference in perspectives surfaced with opposing definitions of what constitutes forest health and forest management. Conflicting perspectives continued when each perspective was elaborated regarding what creates a healthy forest—human

intervention or natural processes, respectively. Organizationally it becomes clearer, as well as, still definitively accurate, to categorize forest health in terms of two scopes: forest health as *naturally functioning ecosystems*, and forest health as *sustained yield*.

Desires for future emphases of the IPNF

Some participants spoke about their frustration with the perception of a lack of direction in forest management and suggested that the IPNF try to set goals and criteria for issues within forest management and strive to meet those. Some interviewees do not see the plans created as useful, doable, enforceable or related to the Forest Service mission or legislative mandates. Interviewees generally expressed an understanding of and empathy for the difficulties involved in addressing the varying values, needs and uses associated with forest management. Although participants acknowledged these challenges, they do wish to see a better balance between varying values, uses, and needs. Due to the increase in the human population in the region and rising interests in outdoor recreation in the past 50 years, as well as the finite amount of land and resources within the IPNF, the perceived need to manage people that use these resources has increased.

CHAPTER FIVE: FOREST SERVICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Representatives of the Forest Service interact with members of resource-dependent communities in many ways. The effects and influence of this interaction can be both positive and negative. For the better part of a century now, the Forest Service has grown to become an integral part of many rural community areas that originally settled close to or within vast forests. As such, the Forest Service as a federal institution and through its local representatives has particular influences on the livelihood of local people through its policies and practices.

Most participants did acknowledge in some form that agency decision-making can have significant influence on local places. The depth of influence varies by community and by the interviewee's perceptions. People based in small communities with strong ties to natural resource management often felt that the influence of the Forest Service was very strong. Interviewees discussed impacts ranging from recreation and timber flow to school funding based on timber receipts from the IPNF.

Many people living in Northern Idaho communities have the feeling that they are losing their way of life, or that they have to defend their lifestyle. These feelings color their relationships with the Forest Service. The situation for many in the Idaho Panhandle is very emotionally charged with community members feeling that they are under attack from forces that they cannot control. Environmental legislation, the faltering timber and mining industries, and the centralization of Forest Service offices leaves community members wondering who their allies and enemies may be. This sometimes leads to growing anger in communities toward the Forest Service as well as environmental entities—both of whom receive blame for shifts in timber production markets.

Perceived benefits of the IPNF

Some participants in this study indicated the IPNF had a variety of positive impacts on their communities. According to respondents, these were focused mainly on amenities but they did range from providing timber and recreation opportunities, to enhancing the community, protecting aesthetic resources, contributing to the economy as well as protecting land and watersheds.

One positive social impact of the IPNF management on communities discussed by respondents centered around district-level employees and the leadership of the district rangers. St. Maries district was frequently noted as having positive social dynamics between the district office and the community, although there were also sometimes conflicts between these two entities. The social benefits included contributing business to the town, contributions of time and leadership.

In addition to the social benefits of the IPNF, participants focused on recreational benefits of living near the IPNF. Most respondents discussed hiking, huckleberry picking and many mentioned hunting, fishing and camping. Another common theme was teaching about or experiencing the forest with children. Other uses mentioned included cross-country and downhill skiing, snowshoeing, firewood cutting and gathering, and Christmas tree cutting for family use. Motorized recreation was mentioned less frequently but included driving, 4-wheeling, riding ATVs, and snowmobiles. Recreational use provided a significant connection between community members and the forest. It was a method by which those with extractive and those with non-extractive ties all connected to the resources.

While the IPNF was seen as a provider of recreational opportunities, many interviewees were skeptical about the contribution of the IPNF to local economic development.

Community and economic development costs related to the IPNF

While perceptions of benefits of the IPNF existed, perceptions of the IPNF as a barrier to economic and community development were very prevalent. In many interviews strong feelings surfaced regarding the IPNF's role as a hindrance to economic development. The IPNF is seen as a diminishing or unreliable source of timber products. Generally, the focus of interviewees was on the loss of jobs created by the reduction in available timber. However, other respondents discussed the far-reaching impacts of the reduction of timber.

In general, a prevalent perception exists among Panhandle communities that the IPNF has a negative impact on their economy and employment. This perception was found across the spectrum of respondents from Saint Maries, Priest River and Bonners Ferry and among people in the forest and natural resource professions in Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint and Priest Lake. In addition to the overall negative economic impact perceived by

community members in the Panhandle, a specific problem with the loss of small-scale logging and small mills was also mentioned repeatedly.

Interviewees from communities with stronger recreation-bases (i.e., Priest Lake and Sandpoint) as well as those communities trying to develop tourism (i.e., Silver Valley), were more concerned about the reduction of access to the forest because of road closures than loss of timber to the economy.

Lack of concern for local communities

Increasing the effects of the loss of timber jobs is the feeling in some rural communities that others do not care about impacts that are evident. These "others" can include the Forest Service, environmental organizations based elsewhere, or non-local constituents.

Trust in the Forest Service

Compounding the anxieties regarding perceived negative economic impacts and the lack of concern by the Forest Service regarding local communities is the perceived lack of trust in the Forest Service's motives. Lack of trust exists from the perspectives of people with a broad spectrum of values. In contrast to the feelings of distrust of the Forest Service by many interviewees, some individuals interviewed indicated that they did trust the Forest Service and believed that they should be left to "do their jobs."

The trend of consolidating local offices and responsibilities to more centralized or more urban locations is perceived to impact the social well-being of communities and agency/community relationships. Although participants throughout the Panhandle alluded to this notion, the issue was especially prevalent and emotional within Silver Valley. The withdrawal of the Forest Service from local communities included relationship, economic and logistical problems according to interviewees. Also, this trend of consolidation of district employees to urban areas is perceived to have economic effects on small towns.

Communication and public involvement

According to most participants we interviewed, people on the Panhandle get their information about Forest Service management and policy from three primary sources: in-person contact, public meetings, and the newspapers. A substantial number of individuals also appear to supplement information gathering via the internet and other electronic correspondence. The degree to which each respondent perceived each of these as effective media to distribute information varied quite a bit.

In many cases, rather than simply saying these more traditional opportunities for public participation and involvement were adequate or inadequate, respondents offered new ideas and suggestions on additional ways to get community members engaged.

The notion that usually only the extremes are heard in the media, and perhaps by the Forest Service via public input were strong themes in both of the focus group sessions as well. Consensus across the focus group representatives on this point highlighted the desire to more closely involve the middle 80% rather than worry and concentrate on the "radical fringes" that appear to currently dominate policy and management debates.

Another theme within the data on public input, was the feeling that there was too much public involvement. This relates to the perception that the "experts" meaning Forest Service employees, should be able to do their jobs without so much public input noted earlier in this chapter.

Perhaps the most detrimental of the social impacts within the Forest Service-community relationships occurs when citizens make the effort to participate in forest management issues and feel their input does not count or matter. Obviously, the Forest Service, as a national agency managing public lands, cannot please every individual who cares enough to become involved. This impact, however, is not a question of reconciling such a dilemma. Instead, the impact of input not mattering is largely an issue of managing social interactions and acknowledgement.

Lastly, the details of public input opportunities often matter a great deal. Everything from the remote location of many communities in the IPNF region to the amount and type of information distributed affects how public input may be gathered as well as processed.

Education

It seems that much of the disappointment, anger, frustration and confusion that people express arises because they do not understand why certain management regimes happen, why certain moratoriums exist, why an action is good or bad, or why their opinion may conflict with what needs to be done. Interviewees suggest that the Forest Service needs to improve their outreach and educational programs.

CHAPTER SIX: NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS

Three Native American Tribes have strong connections to the Idaho Panhandle National Forest – the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe, and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (Kootenai). Each of these Native Tribes has ceded land within the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Each Tribe has treaty rights that allow them access to lands within the IPNF. These Tribes differ greatly in size and development. The Kootenai have a 12 acre reservation near Bonners Ferry and 125 enrolled members. The Kalispel have a 4,600 acre reservation in eastern Washington along the Pend Oreille River and 330 enrolled members. The Coeur d'Alene have a 345,000 acre reservation along the Washington/Idaho border due west of the St. Joe National Forest and 1,753 enrolled members. The Coeur d'Alene reservation is not completely owned by the Tribe because

of past sale and distribution of land (see map on inside cover of this report for reservation locations).

Within this report, these three Tribes require unique consideration due to their status as sovereign nations as well as their cultural development issues associated with their communities and the IPNF lands or resources.

Methodology

The assessment of the Kalispel, Kootenai and Coeur d'Alene Tribes depends on both primary and secondary data collection and analysis. Interviewees were selected from recommendations made by Tribal/Forest Service liaisons and by Tribal government representatives. A total of eleven Tribal representatives were interviewed. The low number of interviews creates difficulty in assessing appropriate levels of diversity of views expressed.

Tribal communities and people

Like many communities in the Panhandle, Tribal communities are dependent upon natural resources. Representatives of each Tribe discussed their dependence on resource extraction – mainly logging – for the economic health of their Tribe. Each of these Tribes operates a casino. These gaming operations have taken some economic pressure off the Tribes to use timber from their own lands as an economic base. However, timber production is still a part of Tribal economic well-being for individuals, families and the community. Representatives of the Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel Tribes also discussed their Tribe's long-term battle with poverty and need for economic development.

The Kootenai of Idaho, Kalispel, and Coeur d'Alene Tribes each believe they possess historical and current understanding of the ecological systems and management of natural resources in the IPNF area. Representatives of the Tribes believe that they can be an asset to the management of the IPNF based on their historical ties to the area as well as their current levels of use of the land both within and around the IPNF.

Rights and Relationships

The treaties governing the relationship between the sovereign Tribes and the federal government create a unique situation for the interaction between the Tribes and the IPNF administration. Each Tribe's ancestral lands are of great importance according to our interviews. And, the use and knowledge of these lands is something that the Tribal representatives from the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene focused on as necessary for the maintenance of their Tribe in terms of culture, education and subsistence.

Native American use of natural resources has a different underlying basis from many other users. The difference exists in the relationship between recreation, culture and subsistence. While there are also non-Tribal people who feel that resource use is part of

their culture and way of life, and people who use non-timber resources as part of their subsistence, the Tribal representatives never discussed or focused on natural resource uses such as hunting, fishing or berry picking as recreation. When Tribal representatives discussed uses of the IPNF, they focused on consumptive use of non-timber products – hunting, fishing, root gathering and huckleberry picking. These activities were seen as important components of Tribal culture.

Historically important and sacred places exist on the IPNF that the Tribes want to protect and preserve. However, a lack of trust hinders participation by the Tribes even in areas that they have a strong interest.

Tribal representatives interviewed held mixed feelings regarding roads and road closures on the IPNF. While these Tribal representatives generally supported road closures and obliteration for the protection of the watershed and wildlife, they also had special access needs, especially in relation to traditional use areas for the Tribes and the handing down of knowledge from Tribal elders to younger members.

Because of the treaty rights of the Tribes, they hold a special relationship to the federal government and therefore to the IPNF. This government-to-government relationship, they believe, requires an enhanced level of consultation and communication between Tribal governments and representatives of the IPNF. Representatives of each Tribe noted the perceived lack of understanding or follow-through regarding the government-to-government relationship between the Tribes and the Forest Service.

Both the Coeur d'Alene and the Kalispel Tribes characterized the communication between the IPNF and the Tribes as based mostly on the IPNF sending them draft EIS or other plans for comments. Sometimes the issues were relevant to the Tribes and sometimes they were not. This "read and respond" mode of communication was considered inadequate to the Tribal representatives.

Views of forest management

Each Tribe, through their representatives interviewed, expressed an interest in sustainable use of the National Forests. As Tribal members are tied economically and culturally to timber harvesting, a balance was sought between resource extraction and protection. The Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel Tribal representatives discussed native and diverse species for both cultural and ecological health concerns.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FOCUS GROUPS

Representatives from UI conducted two focus groups as a part of this study. These focus group sessions had the specific purpose to gather information from representatives of the substantial urban user-groups proximate to the IPNF.

Focus groups are a frequently used methodology to gather more in-depth qualitative responses to issues of common interest and/or concern. Focus groups are conventionally designed with six to eight participants engaging in semi-structured discussion on questions posed by a facilitator, ideally for two to three hour sessions.

Members of the University research team selected individuals from the Spokane, Washington and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho community areas to participate in the two focus groups. The first session, conducted at Spokane House Hotel on December 4, 2001, included seven participants and lasted two hours and fifteen minutes. The second session, conducted at a hotel in Coeur d'Alene on December 6, 2001, also included seven participants and lasted two and one-half hours. A team of trained professionals from the UI Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) facilitated each session.

Participants were selected based on direct and indirect relationships to forest management on the IPNF. The objective in these sessions was to identify and assess a broad rather than narrow range of viewpoints and perspectives on forest management. Backgrounds of the participants included environmental preservationists, mountaineers, motorized and non-motorized recreationists, economic developers, hunters, philosophers, homemakers, foresters, outfitter/guides, and fish/wildlife managers.

Each individual participant contributed to the sessions, and most openly expressed appreciation for the opportunity to give input and insight on forest management issues. As expected with this type of group, each session produced a collaborative and constructive tone within the context of divisive and controversial issues. Participants signed a permission form for each session to be video- and audio-taped so that the sessions could later be transcribed fully and accurately. Transcriptions were completed by UI staff in January and February 2002.

The single most significant theme to emerge from the sessions emphasized human cooperation as a critical aspect of forest management. Social concerns can present serious obstacles to managing resources; contrastingly, communication and interaction can facilitate the relationships necessary for management and policy to function well.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the study

The purpose of this social assessment is to "assess public perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, community characteristics, and other sociocultural factors that affect the interaction of nearby communities with the natural resources of the IPNF" (USDA Forest Service 2001).

Communities

Communities in the Idaho Panhandle are defined by the change that each community is experiencing. The type of change differs by community (i.e. a community may be

growing or shrinking; declining or increasing economically) but the process is similar for each community and for the region as a whole.

It would be convenient to be able to place communities into exclusive categories of 'timber dependent' or 'tourist towns' but those strict labels are inappropriate for Panhandle communities. Each of the communities in this study had some combination of traditional extraction economies and lifestyles and increasing diversification into other areas including tourism and amenity-based growth. Labeling communities by specific type ignores the diversity within the communities. For example, while Bonner's Ferry may be highly dependent on logging, a small but strong environmental community exists within the town.

Forest resource management

Interviewees' perceptions of forest management focused on the state of the IPNF forests and the perceived barriers to managing the forests. In addition, while the vast majority of interviewees discussed their desire for healthy and sustained forests, through data analysis we began to understand a fundamental difference among participants' definitions of forest health and sustainability. The context in which interviewees discussed forest management is also important to note. Frustration with gridlock inhibiting forest management and the widespread belief that local IPNF employees – especially at the district ranger level – were good people trying to do their jobs with serious limitations placed upon them constitutes the context in which interviewees commented on forest management problems.

Forest Service/community relationships

Given the amount of Forest Service land and the dependence of local communities on the forests for both amenities and extraction, the relationship between the IPNF and the communities surfaces in the daily lives of individuals within the communities and the local IPNF employees. Most respondents from Priest River, Silver Valley, Bonners Ferry and St. Maries perceived negative economic impacts from the IPNF. Study participants from other areas perceived a negative impact on people working in extractive industries, but overall a lesser impact and sometimes a slightly positive one for their community as a whole. In order to maintain healthy communities and implement forest management effectively, the relationship between the communities and the IPNF needs to be addressed.

Native American perceptions of the IPNF management

The Kootenai, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene Tribes require special consideration because of the treaty rights and government-to-government relationship they have with the Forest Service.

Similarities exist between Tribal communities and their neighbors in the Panhandle region. Tribal communities are dependent on timber extraction and feel the need to balance economic needs with forest health and sustainability.

The Kalispel, Kootenai and Coeur d'Alene Tribal representatives focused their comments on forest management, sustainability and natural processes. Especially important to these Tribes was the return of native plant species.

Cultural use of the forests focused on non-timber products – huckleberries, roots, fish and game. The continuation and increase in traditional uses of the forest were extremely important to Tribal representatives.

Implications

Forest management does not exist in a vacuum. Understanding forestry and science must be taken within a social context.

Within the constraints of outside forces – changing economies and external politics – the perception is that the IPNF has little latitude to determine their effect on local communities. Because of the perceived limitations of the IPNF management on decision making regarding forest management itself, the most significant area that could benefit from efforts by the IPNF is developing the relationships between local communities and the IPNF. This relationship is the critical passage through which forest management decisions and community development flow.

- ***Local and regional understanding of Panhandle communities***

Within the constraints of external forces – changing economies and national politics – it is perceived that the Forest Service has little latitude to determine their effect on local communities. Because of the perceived limitations of the IPNF management on decision-making regarding forest management itself, the most significant area that could benefit from efforts by the IPNF is developing the relationships between local communities and the IPNF. This relationship is the critical passage through which forest management decisions and community development flow. Without good working relationships in local communities, forest management actions will not be readily accepted.

- ***Regional consideration due to interdependence among Panhandle communities***

While it is important to maintain local ties to communities, it is also important for the Forest Service to understand the interaction among communities in the Panhandle how they overlap and relate to one another. People may work in one community, shop in another and live in another. Or, relatives may be scattered throughout the Panhandle making the region feel like home. While some categorization can be done regarding communities in the Panhandle, we believe the region is diverse and interconnected

enough that the sociological considerations in planning should be viewed from multiple levels including the regional level.

- ***Language, communication and education***

Language and communication should be considered in developing relationships between the IPNF and Panhandle communities. While we saw superficial agreement on issues such as forest health and sustainability, the language used in these general forest policy terms is not precise enough for real understanding of the meanings of these concepts.

Communication is critical to the development of healthy community/Forest Service relationships. Two-way communication is preferred by interviewees. The 'read and respond' model of communicating and the formal public input process are not seen as legitimate communication.

Most people showed an interest in learning more about forest management. While public "education" is not the only answer to conflicts over resource management, giving more clear factual reasons for practices like road closures could have an impact on the level of conflict between communities and the Forest Service as well as between multiple constituent groups at odds with one another.

- ***Small scale timber sales and local community support***

A compilation of viewpoints from the interviews suggests a potential method of management that might alleviate some of the difficulties – economic, political, social and ecological – facing the IPNF and Panhandle communities. Interviewees often discussed the need for small timber sales accessible to small local logging companies.

- ***Tribal involvement***

As discussed in Chapter Six, all three Tribes included in this assessment expressed dissatisfaction with the efforts of the Forest Service to include their perspectives concerning forest management. The three Tribes feel that collaboration between the two government entities would be worthwhile and create positive ramifications for the forests and the communities of the IPNF. Thus we suggest applying the same outreach and involvement opportunities suggested to work with all other stakeholders of the IPNF.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose of the study

Acknowledging the needs and desires of people has been a part of the Forest Service since its beginning. In his memoirs, Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service wrote, "Through all my working days, a part of my job, in office and out, and a most essential part, has been to estimate and understand public opinion, and to arouse, create, guide and apply it" (Pinchot 1974).

Following that tradition, this report is a social assessment prepared for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) to be used for the revision of their Forest Plan. The purpose of the IPNF social assessment is to "assess public perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, community characteristics, and other sociocultural factors that affect the interaction of nearby communities with the natural resources of the IPNF" (USDAFS 2001). The result of this research will contribute to the development and understanding of local perceptions of forest management practices and policies within the IPNF.

The IPNF social assessment focuses on three areas:

1) the status of local communities and related Native American Tribes;
2) local perceptions of forest resource management on the IPNF; and
3) the relationship between the communities and the Forest Service.

The underlying purpose of this study is twofold. First, social assessments are an important and necessary component of any forest management plan. The relationship between forests and humans is not reciprocal: humans need forests, but forests do not need us. Thus, we manage forest resources according to societal values and needs. Social assessments target an understanding of those values and needs in a given place and time.

Second, the IPNF and its various constituent groups are currently amidst significant social changes. In short, the general decrease in timber production as well as shift away from national forest timber within the remaining production created a sizeable economic and cultural shift for many IPNF communities. Additionally, the region has been inundated with residential growth and tourism/recreation-related development to the extent the demographics and predominant values of local places is less easily understood.

While these changes are readily observed anecdotally, to date little, if any, systematic analysis of these changes has been conducted in the IPNF, let alone in relation to forest management. Gaps in understanding the social dynamics and values within the Panhandle communities set the stage for the information contained here.

This report is a qualitative analysis designed to capture local perceptions and definitions of recent community changes and forest management for the IPNF. This research was conducted independently by the University of Idaho.

1.1.1 Background and setting

1.1.1.1 The IPNF region

The Idaho Panhandle National Forests encompasses 2.5 million acres of the northern Idaho Panhandle region – ½ of the total forested land in the area (USFS 2002). This mountainous region includes nine counties and dozens of small towns in rural Idaho, eastern Washington, and western Montana. Two urban areas are within or adjacent to the Panhandle: Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Spokane, Washington. Apart from these two cities the area is not densely populated. Small towns in valleys and along waterways interrupt large stretches of forested land (see the regional map on the inside cover).

1.1.1.2 Demographic trends

Trends in population growth and decline, income, and education differ across the Idaho Panhandle. The area has several 'hot spots' of economic and population expansion including Sandpoint in Bonner County and Coeur d'Alene in Kootenai County. Other areas such as Wallace and Kellogg (the Silver Valley) in Shoshone County are in decline both in terms of population and economy. To provide a basic demographic understanding of this region we address several summary statistics in the five counties with substantial amounts of IPNF land in the Idaho Panhandle (Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah and Shoshone) in Tables 1.1 – 1.3. The U.S. Census (2002) provides a large amount of data at the county level. Although county level data can disguise demographic trends in individual towns, it can also provide a basic and general understanding of the region. In addition, county level data captures data from unincorporated areas often excluded from community analyses. Thus, we provide county data here for a demographic overview.

Table 1.1 Population change in Idaho Panhandle counties

	1990 Census	2000 Census	% Change over 10 years
Benewah	7,937	9,171	15.5%
Bonner	26,622	36,835	38.4%
Boundary	8,332	9,871	18.5%
Kootenai	69,795	108,685	55.7%
Shoshone	13,931	13,771	-1.1%

Source: U.S. Census (2002)

Most western states have seen rapid growth in the last decade. The Idaho Panhandle was no exception with growth concentrated in certain areas. Kootenai County with the cities of Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls grew most rapidly in the past ten years – more than doubling in population. While growth rates are high, most counties in the Idaho Panhandle remain relatively low in population when compared to other areas of the

United States. Persons per square mile for each county are 5.2 (Shoshone) 7.8 (Boundary), 11.8 (Benewah), 21.2 (Bonner), and 87.3 (Kootenai), while the national average is 79.6 people per square mile.

Table 1.2 Income and poverty in the Idaho Panhandle

	Median Household Income	Persons below poverty level
Benewah	$31,728	14.4%
Bonner	$30,311	15.2%
Boundary	$29,732	16.5%
Kootenai	$36,123	11.5%
Shoshone	$27,555	20.1%

Source: U.S. Census (2002)

Poverty rates are higher than the state average for each county in the Idaho Panhandle except Kootenai County. The same holds true for median household income. Each county in the study area, except Kootenai, has a lower median income than the state of Idaho ($33,612) and a higher poverty level. Income levels for all counties are well below the national median household income ($42,151).

Table 1.3 Major ethnic groups of the Idaho Panhandle

	White, Not Hispanic	Hispanic	Native American
Benewah	87.8%	1.5%	8.9%
Bonner	95.6%	1.6%	0.9%
Boundary	93.2%	3.4%	2.0%
Kootenai	94.4%	2.3%	1.2%
Shoshone	94.7%	1.9%	1.5%

Source: U.S. Census (2002)

The Idaho Panhandle remains predominantly Anglo (White, non-Hispanic). However, in recent years, the population of Hispanic residents has increased and in some counties Native American residents have substantial populations. The Coeur d'Alene Indian reservation rests within Benewah County and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho has a reservation in Boundary County.

In a demographic analysis of the Idaho Panhandle, Wang (2001) describes the region by zones or areas. The St. Joe Area includes most of Shoshone County, Benewah County, and small parts of Latah County. The Coeur d'Alene River Basin incorporates parts of Shoshone County and all of Kootenai County. The North Zone includes Bonner and Boundary Counties. In comparison to state and national figures, Wang found the St. Joe Area to have slow growth, an aging population, high rates of poverty and unemployment and low levels of education. In the Coeur d'Alene River Basin, a dichotomy exists between Shoshone and Kootenai Counties. Shoshone County is described above. Kootenai County is growing rapidly, has income on par with the state, and has a younger median age. The North Zone had higher than average poverty rates, below average educational attainment, and higher unemployment than the rest of Idaho and the nation.

The demographic and geographical background is important to understanding the Idaho Panhandle as a region. This mountainous area is largely rural and sparsely populated with Coeur d'Alene as its only sizable city. The study presented here reflects the diversity of perceptions from people living, working and recreating in the communities and forests of the Idaho Panhandle.

1.1.2 Previous related work

At the outset of this study, the Forest Service advised the research team of two related studies (Canton-Thompson 1990; Impact Assessment, Incorporated 1995) conducted within the past twelve years for background information as well as relevant information to design this project. Both of these studies were taken into consideration in planning the IPNF social assessment. Appropriate modifications were made according to changing issues, methodological contexts, and the assurance to maintain confidentiality among respondents.

1.2 Implications of the report

This report reflects local citizen understanding of forestry and community issues. In their quest to develop a Forest Plan that reflects the needs of local and non-local citizens, the Forest Service can use this report to gain a better understanding of the interest and perspectives of their *local constituents*. Specifically this report will allow the Forest Service to hear local constituents express their needs and desires for their communities, local knowledge regarding forest resource management, as well as perceptions of the costs and benefits of Forest Service/community relationships.

Through interviews with over 100 individuals throughout the Panhandle, the research team from the University of Idaho, identified and analyzed themes within the data reflecting the interests of a variety of communities and stakeholders. The research team identified undercurrents of agreement and disagreement among local constituencies that will enable the Forest Service to view common ground and areas of conflict relating to Forest Service management.

1.3 Structure and organization of the report

1.3.1 The diversity and geography of place

While reviewing this document, readers should keep in mind the complex nature of a social assessment—especially for a region as expansive as the Idaho Panhandle. None of the places, people, or perspectives we describe here are the same. However, overlaps exist and we have identified patterns in order to focus on particular themes that emerged from the collection of responses.

To be certain, diversity exists in the IPNF communities, especially in terms of social and cultural values, opinions that respondents shared, and approaches to addressing some of the issues discussed in this report. In short, our data do not support stereotypes of the region as any one thing—a place for white supremacists, all timber-dependent, or whatever the characterization might be. Instead, we found a multitude of perspectives. The challenge here is to represent those in as comprehensive and true of a manner as possible.

The fact that diversity exists in the Panhandle makes our analytical labeling process somewhat risky. By calling a particular community timber-dependent or amenity-based, or even using less well-known phrases may give the reader the impression that the community, as a whole, is that and only that. On the contrary, our analysis presents trends and patterns we found in different communities, but emphasizes the theoretical interpretation of the entire region and all the communities within it as dynamic and changing. To put it a different way, communities deserve multiple labels. We hope we have retained some of the complexity of places while also using snapshots to illustrate their pasts, present, and futures.

The analysis is not a community-level analysis per se, nor is it based on county boundaries. Sociologically, it makes more sense to organize this data by theme rather than a strict geography. Just the same, we represent (in most cases) individuals by position, place, and/or demographic characteristics to attach them to real and identifiable aspects of community as well as to give readers a sense of how to envision those who participated in this study.

Even though socio-demographic data is often collected along political boundary lines (i.e., counties), social interaction patterns do not necessarily follow the same trajectory. This report illustrates how and why this is true within the Idaho Panhandle region. The places we refer to here align somewhat to watersheds, somewhat to the Forest Service Ranger Districts on the IPNF, and somewhat of a practical community-based division in order to make the analysis manageable for the reader. The data is not analyzed by county because those political boundaries do not align well with the social dynamics found in the Panhandle. In some cases as we present, attitudes and perceptions about forest management, appear correlate to place. In many others, they are not bound politically or geographically.

At the beginning of the community results discussed in CHAPTER THREE, COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION, we illustrate how people vary in conceptualizing ***community*** within the Panhandle. Most respondents to our questions did not relay their notion of community by simply telling us the town they live in or near. As such, it makes analytical sense to organize the report along thematic lines. By ***theme***, we mean an idea or set of ideas that is found as a pattern across different perspectives and contexts within the data. The themes tell the story. In essence, the themes we present here are infinitely more important than the residence of the respondent(s). To the extent possible and where relevant, we couple theme and place to provide more context.

In CHAPTER THREE, we present a schematic that illustrates the concepts discussed here about communities as dynamic, changing, and not monolithic entities. This model should be used as a reference tool and reminder for interpreting the complex issues related to communities, forest management, and Forest Service/community relationships.

1.3.2 Report structure

Although the volume of data here represents a fraction of what was collected, the results present a variety of complex perspectives found throughout the Idaho Panhandle in regard to community and forest management. This feature, as well as the sociocultural nature of the data itself, provide for a lengthy report with numerous examples of concepts and themes expressed by respondents. While the overall findings and implications are summarized in the final chapter, readers may also use the Table of Contents or the report Index contained at the back of the document in order to use the report as a reference guide for particular interests. Below is a brief description of the contents for each chapter:

Chapter One

- Chapter One states the purpose, objectives and focus of this study. The chapter provides general background such as the research setting, descriptive characteristics of the IPNF region, and demographic trends of the region's population. The introductory chapter also briefly discusses how this report is organized conceptually by theme in order to reflect the complexity of perspectives presented.

Chapter Two

- Chapter Two describes the methodology used to conduct this project. Data collection and analysis procedures are reviewed. These include sampling, structure, design, confidentiality, and interview/focus group guides. This chapter documents who we contacted for relevant information and the mechanics of conducting the fieldwork.

Chapter Three

- Chapter Three presents findings related to community areas that were the specific geographical focus of the study. The main themes are transition and change in relation to the substantial shifts IPNF residents have experienced socially and economically in the past 10-15 years. Examples are used to outline trends in communities as well as individuals' perceptions of changes. Future visions of communities in the Idaho Panhandle conclude this chapter.

Chapter Four

- Chapter Four focuses on respondents' perceptions of forest resource management, especially in relation to the IPNF. The chapter initially reviews how local people interpret the past and current management regimes for the IPNF. Special issues such as fire management, road closure/obliteration, and local vs. national control are also addressed as a part of this chapter in the context of forest resource management. Respondents' future visions of forest management are also presented.

Chapter Five

- Chapter Five builds on points from Chapters Three and Four to present the key themes of the Forest Service's relationships to communities in the Idaho Panhandle region. This chapter addresses the social dimensions of what Forest Service operations, practices, and policies mean for local places. The chapter is organized to present local perceptions of the main costs and benefits of national forest management proximate to people's homes, families, and jobs—in other words, their communities. The chapter concludes with several sections related to local views on communication and public involvement.

Chapter Six

- Chapter Six is a self-contained summary of the data collected from Native American Tribes with relevant land and resource considerations to the IPNF. In addition to introductory and methodological sections, this chapter focuses on several key themes—Tribal communities and people, rights and relationships, and views of forest management.

Chapter Seven

- Chapter Seven presents data from the two focus group sessions conducted for this study. The focus groups were designed to collect qualitative data from a variety of perspectives among urban user groups within the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene areas. Results in this chapter are presented in conjunction with each question posed to the focus group participants.

Chapter Eight

- Chapter Eight outlines the major findings, implications and recommendations of this study. We discuss the key themes related to forest management that emerged from the data in connection to the project objectives—to assess local perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles of communities in the IPNF region.

Works cited and Index sections follow the primary chapters in the report.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviewing and focus groups, were used to collect data for this report. We conducted qualitative inquiry using a case study model. Interviews were the primary tool for data collection. Focus groups, scoping and secondary data such as newspapers, web sites, books and government documents were also used as a basis for understanding the Idaho Panhandle. The multiple interviews conducted along with focus groups and secondary data allowed us to 'triangulate' or cross-check the information obtained. Multiple sources are used to insure that statements can be supported by diverse sources and that these statements can be viewed as a significant theme within the data collected.

The IPNF Social Assessment is naturally a case study—an assessment of phenomena in a particular place at a particular time. Case studies are different from ethnography in that the latter is an in-depth assessment of a particular place over an extended period of time in which researchers become a part of the community in order to understand all that makes that community function—such as culture, ecology, myths, history, social forces, and economies (Schwandt 1997).

Social scientists employ qualitative research methods especially in areas of sociology, anthropology, and other cultural research. These methods provide a depth of understanding to varying degrees about subjects, but do not provide quantifiable and statistical analysis. With qualitative research methodology, data remains in the form of words, phrases and paragraphs instead of percentages, averages and graphs.

2.1 Interviews

We used interviews as the primary data collection tool for this study. For the IPNF social assessment, two University of Idaho faculty and other trained researchers conducted 121 interviews between the summer of 2001 and July 2002, as well as two focus groups in the Fall of 2001. Five of the 121 interviews were conducted with people from the growing Latino population in N. Idaho. Two additional follow-up interviews were conducted with district rangers to ground truth our interpretation of the results. Several of these interviews followed the publication of a preliminary report in December 2001.

2.1.1 Sampling

Within each of the six geographical study areas identified, the research team purposively sampled for two criteria: 1) a diversity of perspectives, and 2) an understanding of the community within each of the geographical areas (Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Priest River, Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, Silver Valley, St. Maries/Lower St. Joe). This purposive or directed sampling method is used in qualitative research to provide representation of a broad range of people or characteristics.

A snowball sampling technique was used to locate appropriate respondents for the study. This sampling technique begins with a few key interviewees identified through a scoping process which then determines further interviewees by asking these key participants for names of people they would recommend to be interviewed. Generally, original sources obtained through scoping came from: 1) local Forest Service district rangers, 2) local newspapers, and 3) discussions with local residents and merchants. Sampling lists were expanded with each interviewee and cross-checked for overlap. Respondents were selected based on a combination of our two criteria and the recommendations of others.

Five Forest Service employees were interviewed in four of these geographic areas for background information and to pre-test our interview/discussion guide. This phase served as a means to ground truth the scope of information planned within the data collection effort. Table 2.1 shows the number of individuals within each geographical study area in the IPNF social assessment.

Table 2.1 Number of interviews and participants in the IPNF Social Assessment by study area

Area	Interviews	Participants
Bonners Ferry	22	28
Coeur d'Alene	13	14
Priest Lake	11	12
Priest River	12	14
St. Maries/Lower St. Joe	20	23
Sandpoint	23	24
Silver Valley	20	20
Total	**121**	**135***

**The number of participants is higher than total interviews because on several occasions more than one participant was present at an interview. Tribal representatives are included in the primary geographical groupings (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho in Bonners Ferry, Coeur d'Alene in St. Maries, and Kalispel in Priest Lake).*

Table 2.2 Primary Role of Participants for Sampling Purposes in the IPNF Social Assessment

Primary Role	% of Interviews
Occupation: Extraction*	23%
Occupation: Recreation Industry	12%
Interest: Utilitarian	6%
Interest: Environmental	10%
Interest: Recreation/2nd Home	4%
Community Involvement**	37%
Forest Service	4%
Native American Representatives	4%

**Includes: Logging, Mining, Forestry, Milling and Agriculture*

*** Includes: Business Ownership/management, elected officials, community leaders, educational employees, healthcare, retirees and newcomers*

To focus our sampling criteria, individuals were assigned primary roles in the sampling process. Examples of these roles include: extractive industry representative, tourism industry representative, environmental interest, elected community leader, local business leader, educational employee, motorized and non-motorized recreationists, retirees, and vacation home owners (Table 2.2).

However, individuals do not usually align to just a single role in their lives. Therefore, in reality, this labeling process would not be mutually exclusive. For example, a farmer, labeled "extractive industry" may also hold strong environmental views or perhaps participate in significant recreational activities on the IPNF. However, to better understand the range of individuals selected for interviews, we present the participants as fulfilling particular roles based on the dominant themes in their interviews.

2.1.2 Structure and design

The research team developed an interview/discussion guide to reflect the information sought by the IPNF Forest Service. This information also brought forth issues during preliminary scoping. Scoping is the informal process of interaction with members of the study population and review of local information such as newspapers and background documents. As a result of contextual information gathered at the outset, we designed the interview guide to provide a wide latitude of response.

Figure 2.1 contains the framework of the interview guide. These questions were included in semi-structured interviews with respondents. In most cases, information provided by respondents elicited follow-up questions from interviewers.

2.1.3 Confidentiality

Individuals were contacted either at their residence or workplace. Appointments were scheduled for each interview session 1-7 days in advance. Each respondent was assured confidentiality as a part of participation in the study. Confidentiality is defined as not disclosing the names or other identifying information of respondents as well as any written or verbal communication (including interview transcripts) that could link individuals to statements and compromise their privacy of response.

After permission was obtained to record, interviews were recorded using either a cassette recorder or a compact disc recorder. Later, staff at the University of Idaho transcribed the recorded interviews. Interviews varied in length with most interviews lasting an hour.

Figure 2.1 The interview/discussion guide used in the IPNF Social Assessment

Interview/Discussion Guide

Background

- How long have you lived here?
- Where do you live (in town, out of town, etc.)?
- What is your job/occupation?

Community

- Please describe your community in terms of the following:
  - Economy
  - Culture
  - Geography
  - Socially
- What are some changes you see happening in your community?
- How would you like to see your community in the future?

Forest Resource Management

- What is your opinion of the way the IPNF have been managed for the last ten years?
- How do you personally use the forest?
- The Forest Service works on restoring forest health through many activities. Could you comment on each of these efforts; and then discuss any benefits you feel they may have for the community?
  - Prescribed burning
  - Mechanical thinning
  - Reforestation
  - Road closure/removal
- *If the respondent mentions any specific problems ask them to address them in terms of the following:*
  - How do we find a new way of doing things?
  - What would you propose to change or improve?
- As the Forest Service proposes their plan for the next decade, what would you like to see as their focus?

Forest Service/Community Relationships

- How has Forest Service management affected people in your community?
- How do you get information about what the Forest Service is doing?
- What do you think is the best way to involve people in Forest Service decision-making?
  - How do you feel non-locals should be involved? Or should they not be involved?

General Comments

- Is there anything else that you would like to add that you think would help us understand your community better, or any forestry topics you would like to elaborate on?

2.1.4 Analysis

Interviews were recorded via an audiocassette recorder or compact disc recorder. UI staff transcribed these interviews verbatim. Two interviews conducted in Spanish were translated by the bi-lingual interviewer, entered and coded in English. The research team then coded the transcripts based on a common set of codes derived through preliminary analysis of interview data and cross-checked by multiple researchers coding the same documents. Following development of a standard list of codes, researchers coded transcripts by hand. Hand-coding involves writing codes into the margins of transcripts.

Transcripts were entered into a qualitative research software package (Nud*ist N-5) then these transcripts were coded based upon hand-coded notes. After computer coding was completed, redundant codes from the hand-coding phase were consolidated. The selected statistical package generated reports on particular codes. For example, a report on 'local control' generates one document of excerpted paragraphs based on all transcripts that have been coded as 'local control.' This list of transcript excerpts brings together all of the data from the transcripts on local control with a list of which interviewee is responsible for each excerpt.

In addition to creating reports, N-5 was used to generate excerpts based on key words or concepts. This feature, similar to a word search or find function in word processing programs, was only used to check whether or not coding had captured all of the relevant quotations. The process reflected accurate coding by the research team.

Reports were used to develop data for relevant themes within the interviews. From reports based on various codes we were able to establish common themes and sub-themes throughout the data or support themes already identified through hand-coding. All of the quotes regarding each code or theme are not presented in this document. However, representative quotes were selected from the lists of excerpts to illustrate themes in the data.

2.2 Focus groups

By way of design, two focus groups were also conducted as a part of this study in order to collect data on forest management in the Panhandle. Focus groups are intended to provide an interactive setting to generate qualitative data centered on specific themes. The focus group participants were selected primarily from Spokane and Coeur d'Alene urban user groups and interests proximate to the IPNF. The focus group methodology and results are included in this report as CHAPTER SEVEN: FOCUS GROUPS.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

As a goal for this social assessment, the Forest Service identified a need to better understand the communities and human interests within the Panhandle. The transitions happening with lifestyles and identities across the Panhandle region reflects the most constant community theme from these interviews. The communities central to this study—St. Maries/Lower St. Joe Area, Priest River, Silver Valley, Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Sandpoint, and Coeur d'Alene—exemplify how places in a region can have similarities as well as differences. In almost every community, however, change is occurring. Sometimes the change is rapid; other times it can be very gradual. Below, we analyze the major IPNF communities in an effort to give each a general profile within the diversity and complexity of the overall region.

3.1 Communities of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Historically, and until recent decades, natural resource extraction dominated the Idaho Panhandle's economy. With one type of industry dominating local economies, communities often develop identities associated with that work to express 'this is who we are' and '*this* is what we do.' An example of this can be found in the identity-based school mascots in northern Idaho towns including the Wallace *Miners* and the Priest River *Loggers*. Each of the primary community areas within this study at one time or another exemplified a timber- or mining-extraction identity. Even so, such a pattern does not indicate that each identity associated with timber or mining was or is the same. Using identity to analyze community is also a way to incorporate characteristics and features of the social and cultural attributes of a place and its people, as well as distinguish it from other places having similar or contrasting attributes.

To establish a context for change, it is important to reflect on a past identity of logging towns and mining towns that were universal. Things look different, however, in the Panhandle today. In some cases, natural resource extraction still dominates the identity and activities of communities. St. Maries and Priest River, based on the data collected in this project, both show strong ongoing identification with timber harvesting. In other cases, the local economy, culture, and identities have shifted to more of an amenity-based model for development activities, including tourism, recreation, and retiree benefits. Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint are two examples of communities reflecting this type of change. Communities such as Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, and those in the Silver Valley show frequent signs of multiple identities and influences compared to others in the region.

However, we learned through this social assessment that in many ways these communities also defy full characterization with a single identity. The dynamics of these communities are such that classifying them is complicated. While Sandpoint may be a tourist destination, some community members are still involved in logging. Log trucks

rumble past upscale coffee shops in the main part of town. Bonners Ferry, in a heavily resource-dependent part of the state, has significant tourism ventures and a small but active environmental community.

We believe this region should be treated sociologically as such: a region whose defining characteristics are *resource dependency*—both the extractive and amenity based—and *change*. In many ways, change is the nature of community itself, as a dynamic process rather than a static thing. This is a defining feature of the change gripping the IPNF region today.

No matter how we might label a community, each has its own dynamic such that *a place's state of transition* becomes the key factor of interest. The transition(s) each community faces are not uni-dimensional. The categories are indicative of neither positive nor negative characteristics, per se.

The central theme of this study—*how can the Forest Service best assess the interests of local communities on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests*—the places where people live serve as a focal point. Although the Panhandle region could be subdivided many different ways, an analysis in which respondents are identified by community is familiar to many people because it provides a bridge between the individual and society (Wilkinson 1991). Most interviews began as a discussion about each participant's community—how they defined it geographically, economically, and socially.

In this section, we describe the primary themes expressed about communities and change in the IPNF. The goal within this section is to outline a sense of what the Panhandle communities are all about and where they stand in relation to their unique state of transition, especially in comparison and contrast to "neighboring" communities just up or down the highway (with the understanding that a neighboring community might be twenty miles away in the Panhandle).

We draw on some of the historical contexts of these communities that have bearing on current conditions. We also concentrate on the changes communities have and continue to experience, since change is one of the more defining characteristics of the region today. In addition, this section offers views of residents regarding how they envision the future of their communities. Together, these points about community transition provide an important background for understanding and interpreting many of the results regarding forest management and relationships with the Forest Service. It is important that forest managers and policy makers understand the social context of the areas they manage.

3.1.1 Rural communities[1]

From Boundary County bordering Canada to Benewah and Shoshone Counties at the southern end of the IPNF, many communities dot the Panhandle landscape. Some are along the main arterial highways, while others remain relatively remote away from major thoroughfares and without well-known destination points to attract outsiders. The communities of Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake, Priest River, Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene, St. Maries, and the Silver Valley Corridor[2] serve as the population centers of the IPNF. These community areas dominate the region and counties as the nuclei for social and economic activities, especially related to forest management.

The importance of rural community identity still pervades most of the IPNF region. Respondents often described how or why they perceived their communities as rural. Some consider places with smaller populations to be "rural" while others associate rural with a sense of place for a particular area. Still others, like this respondent, emphasized the interconnectedness among the local population while describing their town or community area as 'rural.'

> Well, like a lot of small towns, it has a spirit and a flavor to it that I see is really unique. Its history, and the orientation that people have toward mining and logging, it is so ingrained in families, multiple generations. It means so much more to people than where my dad worked for AT&T in Cleveland (Ohio), because other people didn't do the same work, or live in the same neighborhood, and it wasn't that connected in terms of everybody understanding what everyone's parents do and the whole community hanging together around the basic industries, schools, and churches.

This passage also indicates how local businesses are considered part of the key institutions of rural places along with religious and educational institutions. This is especially relevant to rural areas as they often have a high density of acquaintanceship (see Freudenburg 1986), which is to say members of smaller places experience more frequent interaction(s) with one another. One local business owner expressed a view about their community with the following:

> There was always sort of this social control to the family. My family was fourth generation and came from Europe. So there were always cousins and family, and it was very integrated until closures started making it necessary for people to leave the valley. But there is a tremendous and immediate

[1] Although we often still refer to community areas like those in the Idaho Panhandle as "rural," many of the communities of focus here could easily be labeled more strictly as non-metropolitan. In spite of this distinction, most of the places analyzed as a part of this study are in effect more rural than urban by virtue of the interactions, limitations, and opportunities that define those places, and are considered such for this analysis.

[2] The Silver Valley Corridor has several communities including Wallace, Kellogg, and Silverton. Because of their shared history and unique geography, sociologically these towns are viewed as a single community area for this report.

> support system, if somebody is ill or if you're celebrating anything or whatever is going on. And in fact, you find jobs by an internal linking through the family and that's how young people get started in the family profession. It is pretty comparable to other rural communities.

When asked to describe the community they most identified with, many respondents reflected that the social and economic patterns of the Idaho Panhandle compound the region's geographical complexity. While most of those interviewed acknowledged a particular place they called home, either in or outside of a municipal community, other tendencies are noteworthy. In cases where respondents do not live and work in the same locale, they usually took the initiative to clarify each in relation to their community associations. As such, many defined their "community" as a much broader and larger area than Priest Lake, St. Maries, or Coeur d'Alene. For example, respondents often broadened their sense of community to Bonner County if they reside in Priest River or Sandpoint.

A substantial portion of those interviewed even considered a larger region than a county to define their community. A strong sense of identity with the Panhandle, or "Northern Idaho" as a region with unique qualities became a predominant theme among many. One long-time resident of the Coeur d'Alene area expressed the following view:

> Well, I consider my community from probably Lewiston, north to the Canadian border. Socially, I have friends in that entire spectrum, and it definitely goes to Spokane and a little bit over in the eastern direction toward Wallace. So from that sense, I guess I call, in general, all of that home.

Respondents often discussed the region as a place they chose or selected to settle. In almost every case, this type of description evoked a positive sense about community as in this individual's evaluation:

> The (region) is a menagerie, a melting pot of social and economic classes that are completely across the board, and integrated by the fact that it's a fairly rural and fairly small community. . . Out of that we've got a large conservative element and we also have a significant number of people who are at the opposite end, who tend to be more art and musically oriented and who are almost diametrically opposed to the local working woods-oriented structure of people. Out of that ironically, is a very tolerant, accepting community.

In addition to different values and preferences being a defining characteristic that cuts across the region, economic ties also came to mind for many residents as they described their communities. In many cases, the commercial patterns for the sale and purchase of goods and services do not follow municipal boundaries. Instead, as this conservation-oriented interviewee explained, ties can naturally cross state boundaries as well:

> You know, this community's unique in that there's a large population that comes in here seasonally. If you look at the license plates, you'll see they're not necessarily all tourists. There's the component from western Montana that come over here for services that, you know, are probably here one or two days a week, but fairly frequently. When I lived over there, I also sort of felt part of an extended community that crosses the border. Geographically speaking, northern Idaho has more in common with western Montana than eastern Washington because of the forest type of rural communities.

Within this broader context of local perceptions of rural communities, most respondents also characterized their communities with historical snapshots of the social and economic identities of these places. In the next section, we discuss two main natural resource dependency categories—extraction-based and amenity-based—as the models perceived to dominate this region.

3.2 Resource dependency in Idaho Panhandle communities

Historically, many rural communities in general and in the Panhandle specifically developed around natural resource extraction such as timber and minerals. Less-advanced technology, perceived resource abundance, and fewer environmental regulations in the past combined to make resource development profitable for rural areas. The vast forests of the Northwest made this resource especially viable for rural communities in this region as an export to support a local economy. Many extraction-based communities, however, eventually suffer boom and bust cycles (England and Albrecht 1984; Krannich and Greider 1989). Thus, despite often-profitable histories, local economies based predominantly or exclusively on natural resources may lack diversification and stability.

Currently, segments of many IPNF communities maintain the resource-extraction ways of life that characterized their homes and workplaces in the past. Although timber production remains a substantial force to the many local economies, most local people perceive that its substance and significance have decreased over the past 15-20 years. During that same time period, different resource-related economic development has emerged largely in the form of recreation-, tourism-, and retirement-related services.

Our analysis indicates St. Maries and Priest River exemplify a more extraction-based economy with more gradual elements of change within the communities compared to the region as a whole. The interviews suggest these two communities, more so than others, remain linked to the timber production industry, both in terms of local industry-related jobs, as well as the predominant values, lifestyle, and preferences of the people who live there. For instance, Priest River's recently revised motto at the entrance to town professes their identity as "A Progressive Timber Community." This symbolizes Priest River's community awareness as well as intent to keep that force alive as a part of who they are and plan to be.

The next section documents a variety of local views regarding how extraction-based resource dependency has guided development and shaped the identities of the communities. It also offers local perspectives that support categorizing St. Maries and Priest River as maintaining an extraction-based influence in their economies and identities.

3.2.1 Community-resource relationships

Many Panhandle community residents recognize both the dominant timber extraction history of the region, as well as how that force has changed in contemporary times. In both contexts, a community defines itself in relation to what resources it has, uses, and relies on. A Silver Valley resident we interviewed described the multifaceted aspects of both timber and mining industries in the area:

> I guess our community is kind of the greater Silver Valley. It's traditionally been a resource-based economy. Both mining and forestry still play major roles. Mining is still a very large element of not only history and heritage of this area, but also the current economy. Forest products still are a large portion of our economy too. A lot of the guys working in the mine have worked in the woods too. They go back and forth . . . and the community's pretty open to people – outsiders who are coming in. Some of that is the transient nature of the community – miners come and go, loggers come and go.

This passage illustrates some of the complex dynamics of a natural resource-based economy and work. The local community may experience significant social and economic effects from cycles of natural resources-related development. The absence or loss of work may contribute to demoralization and/or a loss of community pride in cases where a work ethic and sense of identity are strongly tied to the community and the surrounding landscape.

Those interviewed recognize how things change in their lives and the lives of others in their community when the economy shifts. One Panhandle resident told us about this community-resource relationship in the context of local efforts to diversify the economy:

> We are a somewhat economically depressed area primarily due to the reduction in the timber harvest as we all know about. We are unfortunately, and in many instances primarily, dependent on the tourist dollar. And we have seen through studies of other areas that that is not a very good situation. So that is part of the effort of [Priest Lake's Chamber of Commerce] -- to try to find means to diversify the economy. To take the place of the timber jobs that we have lost over the past 20 years. It is a very unique place.

This passage also indicates the difficulty to change and/or adapt to these types of larger shifts. While change may be challenging for many, rural communities face an uphill battle due to a perceived narrow array of options available on local levels. Resentment

among rural residents may also build from outsiders' expectations of how and when change is possible.

3.2.2 Extraction-based economies

In this section, we outline the primary themes found among communities adhering to natural resource-based extraction as their predominant economic and social way of life. As noted above, for the sake of analysis, we include St. Maries and Priest River in this category as examples of communities continuing to emphasize an extraction-based economy. This categorization does not reflect a comprehensive range or view of activities in these communities, merely what appears as dominant and resonates with the local identity.

3.2.2.1 Economic dependence

Almost without fail when asked to describe their community, participants in and around St. Maries declared their community a timber town. Not only does this indicate some consistency among interviews, but expresses a widely held belief about what makes St. Maries tick. Similarly, although not quite as consistently, the same tendency was found among Priest River participants. While many recognize recent changes in the larger economy and how that might have local effects, most noted the sentiment that timber is the history of Priest River and continues to dominate the community's character.

Decline in natural resource based activity has obvious direct effects to employment, but also has indirect or "ripple" economic impacts through decreasing property values, reduction in the types of jobs available, decreasing retail and tax bases, loss of general population and human capital. On a social level, economic decline in the timber industry also results in a net loss of network ties through internal and external interactions. A general lack of diversification among "timber-dependent" towns can create limitations for the whole according to many respondents, as this business person from St. Maries indicated:

> If you don't want to work in the timber industry or something supporting that, the jobs are limited that way. It is not a stagnant economy, but it certainly isn't growing fast. It is precarious in the sense that it is based on one industry. Timber and that is about it. . . . I think like many small communities, many retailers are closing and not being replaced. Because people are mobile, they tend to spend their dollars out of town. It's killing the retail base. The school district has declining enrollment, and it's all because of management of the woods, part of which is related to the Forest Service.

Change in technology, meaning increases in various forms of mechanization for timber harvesting and milling, have also led to significant local economic impacts. Respondents who either worked in or had experience related to timber production often spoke frankly about the costs associated with increased mechanization for their communities:

> It takes one man to do three men's jobs now. And they produce twice as much wood because the mills are becoming more efficient. Mills have closed here in town.

Despite fluctuations in the overall health of the timber industry and its effect on local mills and individuals, most participants seem keenly aware that forest products are part of a regional economy. For those still in the extractive work, this broader sense of regional ties appears to strengthen their identity to not only the work, but also neighboring towns and their community. One individual who works for the timber industry around St. Maries expressed his perspective this way:

> St. Maries is rural and small—only about 2,500 people. We are timber-based, we have two mills in town and another one on the west end of the county. And the surrounding area feeds all the other mills within a hundred to even 250 mile radius. We are a close-knit group. If there is a hardship or something, we all jump in and help out our neighbor. Our company has donated a lot to the community and will chip in with both labor and equipment to do the groundwork for new buildings, ball fields, and that kind of stuff.

3.2.2.2 Economic change

In addition to relationships that illustrate a community's dependence and attachment to a particular industry or lifestyle, respondents also recognize the occurring around them. Another interviewee and elected leader offered the following comments:

> We've had high unemployment for years. I don't know just one answer to it, but the declining timber industry has some bearing on it. Due to technology, we're going to have less jobs just by the fact that they use more equipment and less men. We need to improve our economy by trying to increase value-added jobs. Tourism can help us a little, but it will be a small percent of what we need to survive on.

Periods of the focus group sessions in both Spokane and Coeur d'Alene also focused on economic change for Panhandle communities indicating, as these two excerpts represent, that even more urban residents and forest-users are aware of the transitions affecting the rural areas:

> There's been a large shrinkage inside our forest products community in northern Idaho. The survivors are struggling too.

> The loss of mines was a huge economic impact to this area. Some of it's Forest Service-related. The logging—we've lost several big mills. And these were all higher paying jobs than any of the jobs you're going to find in recreation. As it came down, the logging trucks needed tires, so there were people in tire shops or fuel stations. Mechanics drew a higher wage and all these trucks had to be maintained and repaired.

In recent years, Priest River has also experienced mill closures, employment setbacks and timber industry changes. In this analysis, we categorized Priest River as an extraction-based community. Those interviewed in the Priest River area also revealed newer patterns of possible change. For instance, this local business woman described the changes she sees:

> I would describe Priest River as protective of their community and maybe not as progressive as we should have been up until about the past few years. Because our logging has been the major way of life here, the economy hasn't been as good. Changes in the industry, even though we're a close-knit community, have made it hard to introduce the idea that we need more tourism or industry different than we have.

In Priest River, participants sometimes described their community in terms of recent changes to the extraction industry base they are most familiar with. For instance, an individual interested in economic development detailed the local industry changes:

> Now our job base in the Priest River area is predominantly agricultural or timber-related. We have three mills: JD [Lumber], Stimson, and Riley Creek—that's three of the remaining five mills in North Idaho that produce over 50 million board feet a year. Three of them are in our community! And this is all with 70% of the production currently based on private ground such as John Q. Farmer, or their own.

Geographically, Priest River sits at a highway junction and serves as a hub to other communities, some of which are smaller and/or have more limited services. In this context, Priest River is likely to continue experiencing transition to a more diversified economic base. This type of change, may lead some in the community to seek out new opportunities. Due to local sentiments favoring timber production, Priest River may also experience a reluctance to change as the following participant indicates:

> It's pretty typical of rural communities in northern Idaho. Its history is aligned to resource extraction and it's in a transition period where the economic picture has shifted considerably. The traditional means of support are changing rapidly and there is some recognition of this, but there is great reluctance to make that transition, so consequently there's a great deal of upheaval. Some people lacking the educational skills and training probably feel threatened by changes which they rightly see as inevitable.

These passages illustrate a significant continuation of the extraction-based resource dependency described as the historical pattern of development for many Panhandle communities. This pattern still dominates the contemporary profiles of St. Maries and Priest River specifically. Communities in this type of position face challenges with respect to economic diversification in a region that is rapidly changing.

Extraction-based communities often have deeply rooted social structures intertwined with the timber industry as a source of livelihood. Carroll (1995) pointed out the importance "occupational identity" has for the social well-being in many rural northwestern timber-dependent communities. Although an extraction-based economy may not provide equal economic stability to a more diversified one, community interaction and activity may still thrive given the high degree of cohesion and interconnectedness often found in this setting.

3.2.3 Amenity-based economies

Other Panhandle communities have experienced such substantial changes in economic patterns, their resource-dependency can be categorized analytically as amenity-based. Specifically, Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint exemplify this pattern the most within the IPNF at this time. While these two communities certainly still have strong and enduring ties to the timber industry, the overall perceived focus of their collective identities is no longer dependent on resource extraction as in previous eras. This section illustrates some of the implications and differences in how this shift in a local economy redefines and reshapes a community once defined as extraction-based (Smith and Krannich 2000).

3.2.3.1 Economic ties

By amenity-based resource dependency, we mean: tourism and/or recreation-based activities, growth in retirement populations, telecommuting populations, and business location due to quality of life in an area. In most of these examples, the business, quality of life, or motivation to relocate is related—directly or indirectly—to aesthetic appeal or accessibility of the surrounding natural resources. The amenity-based economic pattern provides daily business interactions revolving primarily around providing services, access, and/or information about the local opportunities and attractions to visitors, especially those directly or indirectly related to natural resources. Compared to other communities in the region, Coeur d'Alene for instance, is now considered to have a relatively diverse economy, much of which is natural resource-based:

> Well, we also work over in Silver Valley and that side's a totally different economic climate there. It's a depressed area and probably going down more before it comes back up. You know, very heavily into mining and logging industries. Coeur d'Alene has a lot more diverse economy, a lot of tourism and recreation orientation.

One recreation guide who participated in the Coeur d'Alene focus group commented on the interconnected economics of the region:

> There's a certain amount of my money through my business activity on the forests that gets put into the general Forest Service funds in use fees, which I don't look at it quite the way the lumber industry would look at stumpage fees propelling the forest stewardship. That's a minor amount

> of money, but that money I turn around to those same four kids working as guides for me in their twenties. This past summer, one of my managers was able to buy a house. He is a hard-working individual and he gets to do what he loves to do. The reasons those dollars are there is because of things that have changed in forest management in the past ten to twenty years.

Despite their recognition of the substantive shift toward an amenity-based economy, many members interviewed from these communities also perceived amenity-based economies as insecure and did not believe the change to be actual and/or lasting. One respondent from Sandpoint shared the following:

> You know, there's a ski area and the lake and it's become a recreational area and there are certain people who will tell you that you can forget about lumber and all that: 'We can survive on the tourist industry…', but to be frank, they're just blowing smoke.

In the broadest sense, those interviewed often reported on the perception of an amenity-based economy with mixed feelings. In some cases, respondents presented this economic perception in a positive light, suggesting that the community stands to gain from the influx of visitors' spending with local vendors. For instance, one timber manager from the Sandpoint area elaborated on this theme:

> Since I moved here [twenty-plus years ago], Sandpoint has been discovered by the outside world. It was pretty much a rural community in north Idaho. Now it's a destination resort area that the community is trying hard to market to bring people in from the outside.

Another business executive noted how the downturn in the timber industry within the Coeur d'Alene area did not register great importance within the community's economy given the strong development in other areas such as amenity-based activities:

> The forest products industry is undergoing consolidation, with diminishing jobs and opportunities in the milling, logging, log trucking and related industry jobs. But on the other hand, there is a robust economy out here and a lot of people doing very well independent of the timber industry. So, other than individual impacts to those embedded in that industry, the overall regional economy apparently takes very little notice in terms of where we are transitioning from what this industry is to what it is going to be in the future.

While interviewees often noted the positive ramifications of a shift to an amenity-based economy, more often than not, they also understood the community's situation as a dynamic and changing one with little future certainty. This theme elicited a number of concerns expressed in the next section as costs related to an amenity-based economy.

3.2.3.2 Perceived costs of amenity-based economies

Often, the story from a local point of view—especially in the Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint areas—indicated a pessimistic or critical view of the multiple community costs from an amenity-based economy. Community members alluded to a variety of perceived impacts from what many agreed to as an unstable economy reliant on tourism and seasonal activities.

Many respondents reflected on the addition of businesses such as Coldwater Creek and Litehouse Dressing as "good" development. In contrast, one community leader in Sandpoint noted a shift in the orientation of a local community's central business district:

> We see the turn to more of a tourist-oriented downtown. You're losing the day-to-day operated shops and utility offices to pay your bills. They're going elsewhere, and their spaces are being filled by more once-a-month or tourist shopping. The downtown core is definitely feeling that. There is no more bakery, but you get more boutiques, more clothing stores and that kind of thing, and I've noticed the working downtown diminishing, while it's becoming more of a tourist town.

Although respondents described the tourism industry as adding economic growth in some communities, they also pointed out that in terms of employment, these services often translate into lower-paying jobs with little to no employee benefits, in comparison to natural resource extraction-based job opportunities. An individual from Sandpoint working with a local outfitter explained a perspective on how the amenity-based industry sector, even when in good standing, may still have limitations as well as local environmental impacts:

> Traditionally, our economy was based on extractive industries – mining, timber. Well, times are changing. And so is management and concern. And so I think the community is struggling with how to make the economy viable. And one of the avenues that the community has taken is to attract tourism. I think a fair degree has been successful, but we live in the Pacific Northwest, so we are affected by weather quite a bit. So I would say that all in all, it's tough to make a living up here in north Idaho. Most recreational businesses operate on a seasonal schedule, which means that when the season's on you've got to work in as many days and hours as you can to sustain you through the off months. Even though this could be the future of our area, my concerns as a business are that tourism can have just as devastating an impact as extractive industries. . . . I think one of the main reasons people come here is for the mountains, the forest, the lakes. And if we don't maintain the integrity of those and foster an appreciation for that, then you know, I really don't know what the future would hold for us.

Additionally, the above passage alludes to the perception among many, but certainly not all, that an increase in recreation has a mixture of costs and benefits in and of itself. One

individual—a native of the Priest Lake—area expressed the need for a balance between recreational use and conservation in relation to community impacts from an amenity-based economy:

> There are hordes and hordes of people that are coming up that now have the money to buy 4-wheelers and things like that. It is imperative that we make places for these people to go, so that we can keep sensitive areas clean and taken care of. Education is a key part of that. I am a believer in using our public lands for recreation. I do all types of recreation, everything from hiking to motorized, and I think we have the right to access it. But I also think we have the obligation to take care of it. . . . Selfishly, I would like to see nobody else come here. I was born here and there were very few families around at the time. But keeping people out doesn't give me a hardware store. It doesn't give me a grocery store. It doesn't give me the repair shop. So, when you have to look at it, realistically, I think what I would like to see is some sort of management, not just free run.

Still, others describing their current community as amenity- rather than extractive-based expressed frustration over a perceived change in values of community members:

> Once people have a taste of Sandpoint, they tend to want to stay, or to move here because it's a beautiful place and close to a city and nice airport facility (Spokane), and colleges are close by. . . . They bring their preconceived ideas with them as to how the community should operate, how it should be run, what changes should be made. Which tends to at times conflict with those people that have lived here longer than I have certainly . . . There are pluses and minuses, but there are fewer and fewer family-raising type of jobs and more where wage earners have to have more than one job just to raise a family. Even the forest stewardship jobs are lower paying jobs.

As this individual points out, a significant in-migration of newcomers to an area, whether seasonal or permanent may affect local values and understanding of norms and customs. Thus, the effects of an amenity-based economy often translate to an increase in service-sector employment presenting new and significant limitations to local residents, especially if the historical opportunities have provided different levels of job security and interest.

3.2.4 Transition economies

Equally characteristic of this region are the communities currently experiencing great social and economic transition. The Silver Valley corridor communities of Wallace, Silverton and Kellogg as well as Bonners Ferry and Priest Lake exhibit patterns of this significant transitional state.

Each of these communities is unique in the underlying reasons behind change, the type of change, and the methods by which they cope. The Silver Valley has experienced declines

in logging and especially in mining. Discovery of large-scale environmental contamination and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clean-up process has created acute changes in economy and lifestyle. Bonners Ferry is rapidly diversifying its economy with the influx of specialty agriculture and psychological/educational services. While they maintain strong ties to timber, there is a decline in the timber industry there. Priest Lake is experiencing rapid increases in up-scale second-home ownership an decreases in timber production. A tourist destination and seasonal residence area for many years, Priest Lake's changes appear to be in the relative wealth of second-home owners and the rapid increase in building.

3.2.4.1 Social and economic change

Participants we interviewed from these transitional communities tended to reflect on the disruption and consequences that often emerge from social and economic change. Because these areas find themselves amidst that change more heavily, they speak to the impacts with earnest and emotion. This small-business owner in the Silver Valley talked about the area's overall economy:

> It is extremely depressed economic-wise, and transitional in terms of moving from one form of revenue to another. It seems to me we have hit the bottom and now we are starting to swing back up, partially due to the fact that I think a lot of people are accepting the concept of a new way of making a living. This is different from what the old traditional methods are [logging and mining]; they are used here still, but they are not producing like they were, and probably never will.

Another long-time Silver Valley resident offered the following perspective:

> We are in a decline in our use of timber harvests; jobs in the forest are almost nil-zero right now and our mining is down to almost zero as well. We need to depend on our forest recreation now more than ever—it is better than nothing.

Exhibiting the social and economic struggles often associated with this sort of change, many participants lamented the loss of extraction-based industries, and alluded to a perceived dependency on Forest Service timber harvests:

> Because 70% of Shoshone County is national forest, they are totally dependent on the Forest Service to get them timber, and because of the way the Forest Service is operating now, the old days of cutting a 100 million board feet of timber a year just ain't going to happen again.

3.2.4.2 Impacts of economic diversification

Despite continuing timber industry production, the Bonners Ferry community has developed several agricultural and amenity-based industries during its transition to a more diversified economy. In addition to crops such as apples and potatoes, a strong

nursery crops sector has emerged in Boundary County. The Bonners Ferry community is also home to several educational institutions for troubled juveniles that seek remote locations to site their facilities. One individual described these changes in an interview with the following:

> When I moved here it was primarily resource-based: agricultural and forest products. Since then, the agriculture has diversified from grain crops to nursery crops—the hops industry has developed tremendously. We also have a growing industry for working with troubled kids, with high-paying jobs. That has been a major development in terms of our economy with three schools and about 300 kids from various target populations. There have been spin-offs from that like some more mom and pop businesses.

Economic diversification is also leading to lifestyle and demographic diversification in Northern Idaho. One Hispanic social worker in Coeur d'Alene discussed the increasing Latino population:

> So when I talk about North Idaho I talk about the five northern regions, which is Kootenai County which encompasses, Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls. There's Shoshone County, which incorporates Kellogg, Wallace. And then there's Benewah which is Saint Maries, and then there's Bonner County, the Sandpoint area. And then Boundary County, which is Bonners Ferry. When I talk about the people there it's pretty homogenous, it's pretty Anglo, however there's an influx of Latinos in the area. Further in Bonners Ferry there's the migrant workers, there's Latino workers, although there are some family that live in the area and reside in the area that are Latino. In Post Falls we have the other highest Latino population and then in Coeur d'Alene they are pretty spread out, now Kootenai County has the highest numbers, with over 2,000 families in Kootenai County but they're so dispersed and so it's different than in Bonners Ferry since they're condensed because of the farms.

A local teacher reflected on how these shifts in a transitional economy have begun to manifest in the social and cultural patterns he sees in his community's children:

> You would think culturally people are into using the land a lot, but I am seeing a trend that kids are using the woods less and less. There are less kids that understand farming, less kids that understand logging than there used to be. Few of the kids in my classroom ever visit a lot of the [natural] places around here which totally surprises me compared to years ago. Fewer kids are hunting, and fewer kids are fishing.

Many local residents who participated in this study recognized implications of a changing economy. As one example, in the Priest Lake area, residents are actively involved in attempts to diversify the local economy, citing other communities perceived as too heavily dependent on tourism alone. Still, as the following individual expressed, tourism

has become the predominant identity among local residents in this area, if not also the reality of revenue and exchange:

> Our community originally was based on timber, which is what brought all of the people to this area, and then slowly as people found it as a vacation area, it developed resorts, businesses, vacation cabins. And it seems due to the closing of a lot of mills and the difficulty of staying in business in timber, the tourist industry has overtaken as the mainstay of why people are here. . . . Yet the lake itself seems to be having a hard time sustaining its own businesses. There used to be at least 15 gas stations on the lake, at least five more resorts and stores. Slowly it seems to be closing down. The businesses that remain get a little busier every year, but the elementary school population shrinks every year.

Another small business owner in Boundary County reflected critically on impacts associated with a diversifying and transitional economy:

> The business community is sprawling further and further along the transportation arteries. There is an increasing interest in tourism, which I might be unique in thinking isn't all that healthy. It is happening slowly, but I think our air and water quality are slipping. We see more truck traffic and tourist traffic on the highway, making them become busier and more crowded, and less polite.

Again, the above analysis depicts changes that are not the same for each place let alone dealt with on a consistent basis by those in communities experiencing such transitions. The communities in the Silver Valley Corridor, Bonners Ferry, and Priest Lake specifically within the Panhandle, currently reflect various stages of transition related to significant changes in the forest products industry and the development of those same resource bases as natural amenities for tourism and recreation development. The next section elaborates on some of the implications of changes occurring in the region as well as perspectives on what local participants envision as their communities of the future.

3.3 Changes and implications of Idaho Panhandle communities

3.3.1 Types of changes in communities

Community change is multidimensional. On a broad scale, local communities today are increasingly impacted by more environmental regulations and global economic activities than ever before. As a result, we also found perceived increases in both environmental stewardship and conflict. In turn, these trends have led to escalated interaction—some substantive, some superficial—among diverse interests, who often find themselves eventually to be collaborative working groups to maintain multiple uses and interests of local resources. These trends typify what we might consider community change.

3.3.1.1 Demographics and diversity

In the past decade, the Idaho Panhandle has experienced substantial population increase, with the exception of the Silver Valley corridor and Shoshone County (Wang 2001). Although this net in-migration to the Panhandle region could obviously impact forest management by virtue of increased use by local visitors, another dimension of this change will likely have greater direct and long-lasting effects on the community: increased and expanding diversity among the overall population.

In multiple forms—social, political, religious, ethnic/racial, and economic—diversity continues to expand across the Panhandle. Granted, the racial and ethnic diversity of the region, for instance, is extremely low on a percentage basis to begin with, but nonetheless, these factors have substantial impact on rural communities experiencing change.

Exemplary of this increased diversity, a number of participants in Bonners Ferry identified such local changes:

> The hops farms have had workers coming in. First, there were a lot of Hispanics that came, and would only stay for the summer, but are now staying year-round. Now there are several African-American families that live here and you would have never seen that 10 years ago.

Socially, one of the mechanisms that enables this sort of substantial change is the rapid rate of growth that has occurred for such a rural and relatively remote region. The rate of growth in Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai County has been unprecedented, but is relatively high across the entire region except for Shoshone County which saw a slight net decrease in population over the same decade (1990-2000). In this respect, the changes that accompany rapid and substantial population growth affect the entire community in some fashion or another, including how that community manages its current stage of social and economic transition.

3.3.1.2 Influx of retirees and seasonal-home owners

One of the most significant migration trends noted by many participants was the influx of retired and seasonal-home residents to the Panhandle. A perception loved and hated in the minds of many: the Panhandle has become a destination. Even in the Silver Valley area of Shoshone County, which experienced an overall population decline, locals claim to be experiencing an influx of retirees as well as natives who previously moved away and have now come back home. Community leaders worry that these trends may exacerbate issues such as long-term planning, providing services and re-generation of the community.

Local perceptions of retirees indicate that many newcomers migrate from the Pacific coast metropolitan areas in Washington, Oregon, and California. According to one St. Maries couple:

> A lot of them are tied strongly to the hunting and fishing that is available. Also the boating, the snowmobiling, and a lot of them find time to do four-wheeling. Anything that is tied to recreation, so they don't tend to spend as much money on their home as they do on having the fun things. But that is what keeps them tied to the area, because we have got so much as far as recreational availability.

If true, the implications of this pattern are far-reaching, including: 1) a declining tax base in relation to new residents; 2) increased overall recreational use of resources; 3) shifts in the proportion of multiple uses; and, 4) probable related shifts in the expectations about forest management from a growing segment of non-native residents. In Bonners Ferry, one participant alluded to attempts on the part of newcomers to become active in the community:

> We have another segment of the population that is a more recent influx, for the lack of a better word—a lot of retirement people. Slightly different mentality of how they regard our natural resources and the public land. There are a lot of retirees coming from the Boeing sector in Puget Sound. But they show up at our sportsmen's meetings, they show up in our Chamber of Commerce meeting, so they want to be active members of the community. It's an influx we didn't have 10 years ago for sure.

Sometimes the newcomers' attempts to insert themselves into community activities are taken positively, and sometimes not. One of the sources of conflict over newcomer attitudes for a number of participants revolved around support or opposition for continuation of the forest products industry. One timber industry worker in the Coeur d'Alene area described a difference in values between newcomers and existing residents:

> Well, they seem to be coming from everywhere. Very few of them come from timber or places where there is a lot of timber management. And they have the idea that if we leave everything alone, it is going to stay nice and green and healthy, and that is not the case. It takes a lot to educate the new people.

Other participants pointed out the potential inequitable impacts that could result from changing forest management practices related to this kind of difference in values. Longer-term residents tend to also be the ones maintaining extraction-based, or –related jobs which could be adversely affected by changes in Forest Service policy for instance. In addition, more indirect effects of different values among in-migrants potentially impact local spending for education, infrastructure, and other public services.

3.3.1.3 Loss of rural character due to development and change

Many Panhandle residents noted concerns about losing what is familiar to them about their community. For instance, when discussing Planning and Zoning, many Panhandle citizens respond negatively rather than positively about the future of what their

community will become. This creates a paradox: old timers sometimes value freedoms associated with rural areas (i.e. no zoning) so highly that they do not embrace policies that might maintain the rural character of their communities. One individual from Bonners Ferry summarized this point:

> I think a lot of the local people have been resistant. It is one thing to not want that to happen, it is another to be able to, I guess, pretend that it is not going to happen, or is going to be costly down the road. Specifically, I am thinking about things like planning and zoning and stuff where I think to be a growing community you have to accept that change is going to happen, and if it is going to happen locally I think that zoning and other government bodies like that, and who have the tools to shape that change to make it more what you want. I think the more you ignore that that is going to happen, the easier it is for haphazard development things to occur, which you are forever trying to recover from.

Again, the communities in the greatest degree of transition bear the heavy weight of disruptive change. The following comment from a resident at Priest Lake emphasizes how the social dimension of change makes some community members think others are unwilling to be realistic enough to cooperate:

> A problem area when you talk about changes, we have a significant segment of the primarily year round population, they see no change because they don't want to see any change. That kind of creates a problem where, if I don't look, nothing is changing, so everything is OK. So we don't have to take any action to control development or anything. Because there is nothing changing. Unfortunately that is an attitude on the part of some folks.

3.3.1.4 Loss of human capital

Like many rural communities across the country, Panhandle community residents want living-wage jobs. Due to the transitions and changes affecting the core communities in this area in multiple ways, such employment has become less certain, and when available, less secure according to most participants. The most telling consequence of this change according to those same respondents appears to be a loss of youth and their skills from hometowns.

While this trend is not unique to the Idaho Panhandle, it is relevant and rampant in the perceptions and experiences of those who do still reside locally, especially older generations. The primary impacts are twofold: 1) at the individual and family level, disconnections or substantial inconvenience and costs become the norm for younger people to find living wages, and 2) at the community level, the national trend of aging populations is exacerbated and further threatens the long-term sustainability of rural towns.

Whether right or wrong, community members often described this trend, not only as a loss of youth, but specifically as a systematic drain on the best skills and future capacities

of the local community—a brain drain of the human capital. Those individuals, paradoxically, develop the opportunities to leave and move on to other places. We interviewed some participants that in some cases did, as individuals, choose to come back to Priest River, Sandpoint, and St. Maries, as well as other towns in the Panhandle, after receiving college degrees in management, accounting, and a variety of other business-related fields. Still, the majority do not. A St. Maries resident painted the picture bluntly:

> The young people of course, teenager types, all want to leave; this is the last place they are going to want to live. The median age is probably higher than it would be in a city because more of the young people do leave.

In Silver Valley, this factor was often described in great detail as to how the loss of one job within the family can have a compounding domino effect for the social and emotional well-being of the entire family:

> Obviously, we are losing the children: they have to move on or they have to accept a different kind of job. You have men in their 50s who were very highly skilled either as miners or machinists, who don't want to leave their property or their family and work for remediation -- picking up rocks and very menial activities. Which I think is a blow to the families, and the men in the communities, in a loss of income, status, security and a sense of what will I do next. The necessity to move . . . A necessity of children to make lives in other places makes even more ambivalence about having children leave and having grandkids at a distance. These changes are very difficult on family life. This also adversely affects the number and quality of volunteer organizations available to assist those in need.

These factors are also complicated by certain communities having depressed economies and becoming less expensive places to live. One school administrator offered a perspective that an influx of people needing social services is stretching an already overburdened support system to the limits, because with little-to-"no work available, people go live where it's cheapest."

For a rural community amidst a transition, these issues present significant challenges. For communities still strongly tied to extraction, such issues can be debilitating economically, if not also psychologically. As a means to offer optimism and hope, participants often looked ahead still concentrating on what they find most familiar. One native of Priest River expressed sentiments about the loss of youth and tied this issue specifically to timber sale opportunities on Forest Service lands:

> What I would like to see—because I have four children, and I think a lot about that—I'd hope that we could introduce a quality industry into the community close enough that it could employ at above-minimum wage jobs with good benefits for some segment of our community. And then on the forestry end of it, we have a lot of national forest surrounding us, and if we could get a better

> working relationship, say with the Forest Service on sales, that, I guess, would be ideal.

In relation to Priest River's categorization as an extraction-based community in transition, this passage indicates a dual-base economic outlook, but with the extraction-based dimension as the nucleus and core.

3.3.2 Attitudes regarding change

Social change in rural communities can be quite cumbersome. In addition to often relying on more limited resources, existing social structures familiar to many increase resistance to change. Those interviewed, in many cases, reflected on the resistant attitudes toward change held by many in these communities. This retired Forest Service employee from Bonners Ferry explained:

> I think a lot people would like to go back to the old days. And that's probably more of the older element of the community. I sense the more recent people would, would kind of like for it to stop right now. They moved here, they like it, now let's don't get too big. Don't let anybody else come in. There's kind of that dichotomy going on.

For some, day-to-day experiences might become unsettled or uncertain within the place and interactions they know as community when an identity shift occurs that they do not agree with. This interviewee from Priest River described this local sentiment:

> There are a few people I would think that grasp the challenges, but most people seem locked in the past. One of the things you learn when you get involved in environmental issues is that people are real resistant to change. There's a real resistance to seeing that things are changing. I've had one of the local business leaders telling me several years ago that Priest River has always been just like Priest River will always be. And despite the growth that's going on all around us this person still had his head in the sand. There's a real inability to visualize changing conditions.

Alternatively, change can also be the seed of a new vision and/or opportunity for individuals to look at situations differently. Some participants, like this recreation outfitter from Sandpoint pointed out that being open to change often correlated to having a more cooperative approach when it came time to work with others:

> I think the community is presently grappling with changing, not really sure what to do with it. I see a lot of different agencies coming together at this point in time to sort of try and figure out where we're going, what our goals are. And the community is made up of a lot of independent-minded people. I think what's happening now, and this is really important is that people realizing that we do have to come together. We have to network, we have to share ideas and support one another. I've seen a steady – it seems, it appears that there's steady

growth. I see a lot developing going on and I know in my business we have steadily grown.

Another interviewee who works in Priest River made the point that leadership in a community—by embracing change or not—can often be an influential force in how others might deal with and/or accept the broader changes occurring:

> In Priest River one of the biggest changes is certain peer group leaders in the community are finally making a sincere effort to sit down and talk with each other on issues that they traditionally have been in disagreement with. And I'm talking about the timber industry, the Chamber of Commerce type people, and the environmentalists. That's positive change because if we don't all work together on these issues, they're not going to happen, as long as there's somebody outside the loop who's very unhappy about not getting included. So that's the big change happening in Priest River. It's happening very slowly as these groups are not yet real comfortable with each other. We're wondering what each other's agendas are.

Thus, on a community-level, reactions to change vary. A point worth reiterating, however, is that change is an interactive process. By this we can predict that whether change occurs at a large or small scale, or as a positive or negative impact, it usually has widespread and permeating effects.

3.3.3 Socioeconomic impacts

In general, many communities regardless of their state of transition have experienced a variety of specific social and economic losses as a result of changes in the bases and orientations of their communities.

3.3.3.1 Perceived loss of jobs

While this study does not evaluate the total net gain or loss of jobs across the region, *it does document the perceived loss of jobs*, and more importantly, the local perspective that many of the jobs that did go away were extractive-based and valued over amenity-based employment regardless of how many of the latter were created. On top of actual numbers of jobs and the quality or nature of types of jobs available, many participants—especially those in extractive-based community settings—indicated they perceived their communities to suffer an economic loss related to the overall community well-being:

> Probably one of the changes newcomers are less concerned about is the health of the forest products industry. There is probably less realization of what a strong base the forest products industry is to the overall economic health. It kind of provides a baseline of employment and economic health to the community that newcomers don't totally recognize. That's one of the major changes.

Many of those interviewed in the extraction-based communities offered critical perspectives on whether an amenity-based development pattern would benefit the community and its economy. A longtimer from St. Maries critiqued the amenity-based pattern of recreation as an illusion of economic benefit to rural communities who face the brunt of impacts from visitors:

> To further strengthen or stabilize our economy, the Forest Service has got to have legitimate timber sales. Not the kind of timber sales put up just to say we have got a timber sale up, but legitimate. You can talk about recreation all you want, but if you go up to the St. Joe River on the fourth of July and look at all the people parked along there in their $60,000 motor homes, their camps, everything they have there was bought in Coeur d'Alene, or Spokane, or Moscow, or Lewiston. One skidding crew probably turns more money for St. Maries in a week, a three-man skidding crew, than all of the recreation on the Joe throughout the year. Except for maybe hunting season, that is a big thing, but the Forest Service doesn't really promote the hunting season.

Although the loss of jobs or a decline in economic health at a community or regional level is complex, to make sense of what people see happening, they often reduce the cause down to a simplified attribute. In many cases among those we interviewed, a reduction in timber sales from Forest Service land was perceived as a major constraint to the local economy:

> I think the timber business is always up and down. But when I think long term, and if I look back, I mean the main significant change that I have seen since we moved here [14 years ago]—when the first Panhandle Plan was finalized, we were getting a significant cut off the forest, and there is nothing, there is nothing moving off of federal land right now, nothing. This is a significant change directly relating back to the Forest Service. These trees are locked up; the Panhandle is locked up.

These sorts of impacts have disproportionately less effect on affluent sectors of the population. Within amenity-based communities especially, respondents often highlighted the growing disparities between haves and have-nots. One conservationist living in Sandpoint explained:

> We have a growing division between the very wealthy and the minimum wage. We have more and more people coming here buying or building huge houses for summer use, but then they use them a couple weeks of the year. Unfortunately, those people aren't connecting with the community when it comes to community groups or community events. And then you have all the people who are struggling to make a living at $6.25 an hour.

In contrast, a different socioeconomic trend was also noted among St. Maries participants regarding an influx of what one realtor called blue-collar retirees:

> We have a compassionate community which has brought in blue-collar retirees. 40 years ago, they bought a house on the west coast for $7,500, worked for 30 or 40 years, sold it on a poor market for $225,000 and come here, which is awful good monthly income in St. Maries, Idaho. And they are not the people who want to change the community; they come in here *because of* our community. So they are basically unnoticed, which makes it tough to document what they are doing. But I believe that the blue-collar retirees actually spend more of their shopping dollar in St. Maries than people who have lived here all their life. What appeals to them is when they walk in a hardware store to buy a faucet, and two weeks later go back in and have the clerk say: [John] did that faucet work okay for you?

Clearly, the blue-collar retirees are not viewed with the same disdain as some outsiders or newcomers who arrive with expectations to change the local social structures. Moreover, each community exists in a unique situation given its combination of socioeconomic indicators, political challenges, geographical constraints, and environmental values.

3.3.3.2 Sociocultural impacts

Community change and transition that the Idaho Panhandle currently faces is no small matter. The social and cultural consequences from this kind of transition should be considered heavily, even though these types of impacts do not lend themselves to quantification. Several additional points in this section reveal some of the more positive and negative impacts to the social and cultural fabric of these communities as they cope with change or a lack thereof.

In extraction-based communities, as people who live there become more and more aware of a transition and its effects—decline in economic health, population, job security, and similar indicators—they also tend to develop anxiety about whether they or their affiliates might be next in line for similar types of impacts. Although much of the anxiety may be attributed to worry over losing a job, arguably there is more at stake in the collective minds of the community members: their home and relationships they share with one another.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the closure of a significant number of forest product industrial operators. One corporate executive interviewed elaborated on this broader perspective in relation to an extraction-dependent community's attempt to think about alternative forms of development:

> Well they are trying to get it to have more of a tourism focus, because, they're not stupid, they have seen what happened to other communities in the Pacific Northwest that were solely timber-dependent—they've been going down. Some of those communities have not rebounded and essentially become ghost towns. There are communities around here that were timber-dependent and had mills back 50, 60 years ago that today are basically a few ramshackle single white mobile homes. There are a few of those communities right

> around St. Maries and they don't want that to happen here so they are trying to diversify now.

Other participants pointed out the strong pattern of resistance on many community members' willingness to change, think alternatively, or reservations about progress. Despite a great deal of change happening around them, one participant noted the following about the Priest Lake community:

> I think there is a hesitation to progress. People want to keep things the way they were, and in order to keep the lake clean and the environment clean the way it has been, I would like to see people become a little more progressive.

People may resist this kind of change or transition because it remains unfamiliar and therefore, probably uncomfortable. Rationally, it makes sense to stick with what you know. Yet, this study points out that the safe social-psychological zone of individuals resisting change may also present barriers to a collective shift to a different economic or cultural way of life. Still, those individuals have a basis for their own actions based on unique histories and contexts from which they draw their experience and understanding. As Carroll (1995, p.153) noted, there is no clear answer as to what adaptation (on the part of individuals or a community) means "in a time of great upheaval and uncertainty." For Panhandle communities, past and future disruption and uncertainty are the realities with which people live.

Although any one instance may seem trivial, the accumulation of interaction affected by massive change in social and economic conditions symbolizes how these effects can become personal. A logging contractor in Sandpoint explained some of the change he has experienced:

> Well you know, I would like to see this community be a lot more open to letting people work the natural resources in this area. It used to be that you could drive through this town in a log truck and people would wave to you. Now, I've been to places where I don't even want to tell people what I do because people will look down their nose at you and it pisses me off—why should I have to feel that way? With the political climate anymore, it's hip to be an environmentalist.

These types of sociocultural issues often engender conflict among groups that disagree over a practice or policy. On a more positive note, to address some of the conflict that often exists at the community level, the change and transition occurring in many of these communities will often stimulate new relationships, new patterns of interaction, and new ideas on how to solve long-standing issues. Diverse collaborative working groups were frequent topics during interviews in Priest River, Priest Lake, and Bonners Ferry. Despite the difficulties change presents, some groups also find a constructive outlet to make the process of negotiating outcomes beneficial as well as supportive of the community as a whole.

3.3.4 The future of Idaho Panhandle communities

This section outlines the overall themes found in these interviews as to how participants envision their future communities. In other words, respondents were asked to tell us what they would like to see, and how they want their community to evolve. Analysis of these results fit the same framework used above (*extraction*, *amenity*, and *transition*) to describe the communities.

3.3.4.1 Past, present, and future community visions

Inevitably, people's visions for the future must relate to the context of the past and/or present as a point of comparison. In the IPNF communities, many recognize the substantial decline in overall timber production as well as how the changes in where that timber is cut. By and large, they also recognize the newer "service" economy, whether directly tied to it, or just an observation around them in the sea of change. Despite the latter observation, in a majority of cases, those interviewed maintained an attachment to identities based on forest production and management. The following passage exemplifies this common view:

> I don't want the community to destroy the past and the history and the work ethic and the understanding of the woods. And the river and the mining that they've had in the past. Like every community, we would like to be healthy enough that our children could choose to live here, and be able to do that. And not become a total bedroom community for someone moving to the woods.

Across the array of communities we analyzed for this assessment, most respondents reflected on those places where they work, play, and live as rural. Without a doubt, they would like to preserve those qualities associated with the rural lifestyle—quiet, safe, friendly, traditional, easy-going, and limited restrictions.

One retiree who has lived at Priest Lake for the past decade described the process by which that community area has recently asked itself what it envisions for the future:

> We are in a planning process here where we are asking that question of the community. On a survey a few years ago, what the community said was they would like and what they valued most was the rural character of Priest Lake. They valued the traditional activities that take place here—hiking, camping, hunting, and viewing game, as well as using the lake for boating and those sort of things. When they were offered the choice of whether they would like to see Priest Lake become a regional playground, something like Coeur d'Alene, where we would actively try to get lots and lots of people to come here, they were negative towards that idea by about 85%. They want to maintain it as a family destination resort area. But they were also very strongly opposed to the idea we should have no plan whatsoever and let things develop on their own. They felt that we should have a community plan. But

> it should be developed by the locals, it should not be a plan that originated from the Forest Service or Idaho Department of Lands—it should be us.

In addition to emphasizing the interest for local control over decision-making, this passage implies how Coeur d'Alene could be considered the obvious exception to the rural character of the Idaho Panhandle. In a relative sense, however, because Coeur d'Alene's neighbor—Spokane, Washington—just across the border is significantly larger and considered the regional hub for transportation and business, the Idaho "playground" still maintains somewhat of a small-town atmosphere.

Along these same lines, a number of those interviewed emphatically described the desire to keep control of residential and commercial growth in the region. A St. Maries' interviewee pointed out that for some impacts, growth is both a regional as well as local issue:

> Contrary to what you might think, I would like to see it stay small. I really don't want our community to grow. I am not big into bringing big industry in here. I am greedy. I like the woods and the country and the recreation that we have with less numbers. Even if our community stays small, the surrounding ones are getting so big. It is getting busy, you know with Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Spokane growing up like they are—those people come into our community to do their recreation. So it is getting awful busy out there. In the boating, in the fishing, in the hunting, in the camping, in everything. But I would just as soon see our community stay close to what it is, I don't need it to get really big. I can scratch out a living now, so I am happy.

Alternatively, some local perspectives also emphasized that the future should make natural resources more accessible for all types of development and recreation. An individual who works in Boundary County expressed the following viewpoint:

> I don't want to see a major change, but I also like what we do for a living—managing timber—so I'd like to see more of that. The bottom line is that I would like to see natural resources utilized more. Right now, they're way under-used, which is a function of many things. But I would like to see them more utilized, and not just from an economics standpoint. I mean, we live in a county that is almost 80% public ownership and we keep limiting the number of people that can use that.

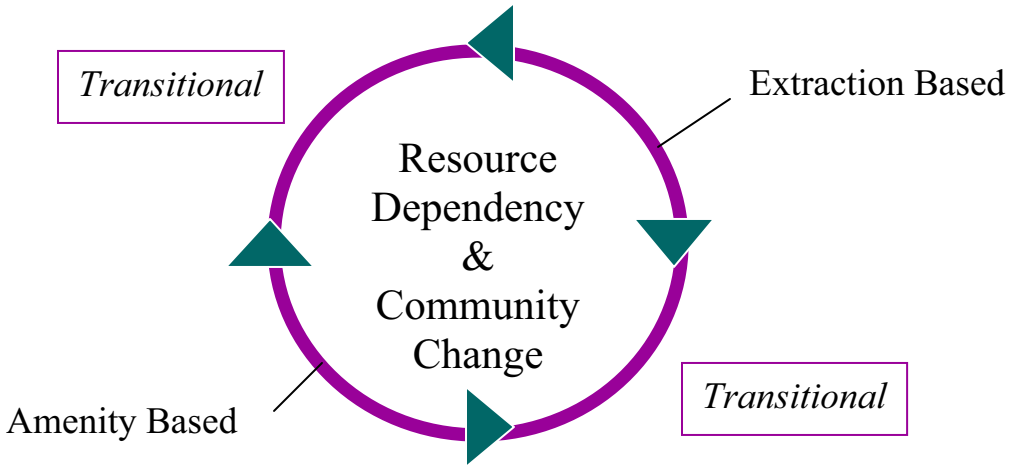
As a way of summarizing this analysis, the next section presents a schematic to illustrate one way of thinking about similarities, differences, and changes in a dynamic context.

*3.3.4.*2 Dynamic model of community change in the Idaho Panhandle

The schematic below (Figure 3.1) illustrates the dynamics of community change based on interview and focus group data collected in the Idaho Panhandle. The

model is simple in terms of the number of factors involved, but complex in that it is ongoing and reflects the truly unsettled process we call 'community.'

Figure 3.1 Dynamic model of resource dependency and community change



The figure illustrates different transitional phases that a community might move into and out of with respect to its economy, identity, and social structures. No point in the model is a "steady state" or equilibrium, although people who live and associate there at any given time may consider it as such. To further elaborate on this model, several additional responses from the data will reiterate how community members envision the dynamic effects of change in their work and their lives.

In actuality, most participants acknowledged an interest and perceived need for diversification in what their future community would hold. Through this claim, community members often explained their hope to find a better mix, or more diversified balance between patterns of development rather than solely relying on any single pattern. Although these views best reflect the reality of transitional community economies described above, the perceived sense of balance emerged strongly from the more extractive- and amenity-based communities as well. Expressing his vision of the future, one newcomer to the Sandpoint region discussed the dynamic state of change taking place there:

> The growth is bringing in a cross-section of people that are more educated, have experience in other places, culture, cuisine, other forms of entertainment, and what have you. And they're wanting the same types of things here, even though that historically may not have always been here, or there's a perception that it wasn't. I think it's definitely changed, so that many people are coming here looking to set up a life that is away from it all. But I wouldn't want it to become unbalanced toward tourism or unbalanced towards extraction industries. I wouldn't want it to be anything but a nice mix of all of those things. White collar businesses, blue collar businesses, forestry, logging, tourism, just have a mix like that, attracting more well-rounded people.

To accomplish this sense of balance, a growing number of people appear not only to recognize, but also express interest and curiosity in new methods of community interaction to address issues. Similar to the positive developments with collaborative working groups in the Priest River/Priest Lake area, a number of participants, like this elected official, indicated how they perceive this type of process as the desirable state for the future of their community:

> One of the issues we continually tinker with is in spite of the community's overall generosity and ability to work on projects, there's still a very noticeable separation of groups who say 'we think it would be done better this way,' and suddenly they're in competition with another group who wants to try something else. I would really like to see in those instances that the groups are able to sit down and find what they have in common with each other. We've got a consultant coming soon to help us develop some strategic plans and implementation goals for community and economic development. I've got high hopes for that process.

Respondents also spoke to the variability they notice across *other* communities in comparison to how they view their own situation and place. For instance, this resource manager living in the Coeur d'Alene area emphasized his perception of how communities have different layers of an identity about who they are and what runs the town:

> I call my community, north Idaho – north of Interstate 90. And that's fine. Within that area there are three major towns Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint, and Bonners Ferry. All of which have their own view--their own identities. Bonners Ferry recognizes the importance of the timber because their point of view they recognize that they are a timber town and the mainstay of their economy is the timber industry. Sandpoint—my impression is that they'd really rather forget the fact that the timber dollars really rule the town, but they believe that the ski area is the draw in the winter time and the lake is the draw in the summer time, and, you know, don't seem to recognize the value of a log. Coeur d'Alene is a bit more diverse. Has a reason to recognize that there are some other things here other than the timber industry. However there are still quite a few mills in the area and they still have a lot of loggers, a lot is dependent upon what happens when they manage the forest.

Finally, many participants remain realistic about the challenges of collaborative and cooperative relationships, especially if they have not been tried before. At a local level, people perceive their future as tied to multiple entities and forces. One elected official we interviewed spoke frankly about the future and the need for a better balance:

> National management issues are not distant here—they are in our face. They affect our everyday psyche and our well-being. And so we need to remain 100% engaged with forest management as it in fact dictates the majority of

> what we are able to do. So we need to diversify and expand the economy to non-traditional sources or resources. We need to attract jobs that are living wage jobs. That is the key…that is kind of a fire word if you will of the era. Tourism, recreation-oriented activities are fine, but they do not feed families and they do not provide the type of benefits that families need today to survive in modern America.

3.4 Summary

In sum, the defining characteristic of Panhandle communities is change. Some communities are changing by rapid growth, in-migration and diversification while others are changing through economic decline, loss of extraction-based economies and population decline. Natural resource dependence – either through extraction of timber and minerals or through the recreation/tourism and aesthetic amenities provided – have a significant influence on communities in the Idaho Panhandle. For purposes of this report we have characterized communities as primarily extraction-based, amenity-based and transitional. However, no community fits neatly into these boxes. Elements of each base exist in all Panhandle communities.

How communities face the challenges associated with change differs. People interviewed often showed a resistance to change. Working together at the local level remains a challenge. Nonetheless, many recognize cooperation as a stronger need for the long-term future and sustainability of their community as well as their own well-being. The next section focuses on forest resources management to highlight local perspectives on past, current, and future management of the IPNF.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERCEPTIONS OF FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The second section of our results is dedicated to community members' attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about the forest resource management by the IPNF. In this section, we focus on the forest resources and the methods by which the Forest Service manages them. The participants were asked to reflect on past management, present management and future desires for management. The overarching themes in this section include the perceived differences in local versus national Forest Service employees, the perception that the IPNF is bound by various constraints from managing the forest, and that while agreement exists on the need for forest health, how that is defined and produced, is the basis of substantial conflict.

According to research, values and ethics regarding the relationships between humans and the environment exist along a continuum in the U.S. This continuum is drawn both simply with two opposing ends *preservation* and *utilitarianism* and with greater complexity. Manning et al. (1999) describe a continuum of environmental ethics with five points: anti-environmental benign indifference, utilitarian conservation, stewardship, and deep ecology.

Variations of these values were found across the Panhandle in regard to forest management. For our discussion of perspectives on forest management, we keep this continuum in mind. While we did not study exactly where people in the Panhandle tend to be on the environmental ethics continuum, sometimes we discuss respondents' views based on which side of the continuum they might lean. We have labeled these 'utilitarian' and 'environmentalist' for convenience. This does not mean people in the Panhandle should be strictly categorized. Similar to classifying communities as 'extraction-based' or 'amenity-based,' exclusive labels seem inaccurate for the majority of interviewees. People often held values within multiple analytic categories along an environmental ethics continuum. Discussing people and their perceptions as leaning towards one end or the other of the continuum does seem appropriate though for simple grouping and analysis.

Local truths—stories and ideas that become part of a community's folklore—are also discussed in this part of the report. Local truths are not necessarily true or false in fact, but have become part of a local belief system. Local truths may also vary by community. In some areas, they have become mantra-like. Just as the need for total fire suppression was a Forest Service truth in the past with its associated stories and icons; local truths are important parts of the culture and ideals that affect views of the forest in communities.

4.1 Perceived differences in local Forest Service and national Forest Service

It is important to note that within the theme of forest management is the near universal differentiation between "local" or regional Forest Service and the "national" Forest

Service offices, a.k.a. the Forest Service Headquarters, or employees in Washington, D.C. Participants often specified what level of management they were commenting on (local or national), and indicating the local Forest Service was doing a good job, or the best they could under the constraints placed on them. Alternatively, blame for gridlock and unproductive management regimes was usually placed on the national level Forest Service. A Bonners Ferry participant noted:

> I think on a local level, my personal feeling is that I think we have had some really good people here. The District Rangers and stuff. And again, the people that work there are part of the community. I think they're sensitive to the community. I think that they have been saddled with federal regulations and things that they have been told that have to be changed. And obviously they may not have always agreed with those changes. There again, I think it is the whole agency philosophy that, federal policies and stuff that, one size fits all.

During the focus groups, some of the discussion also revolved around the issue of local vs. national Forest Service personnel. The following comments related to perceived constraints to the local personnel express some of the widespread sentiment within these sessions:

> You have people that are actually on the forest itself have those good ideas that are very, very gun shy to make any decision, whether it's a good decision or a bad decision.

> The professional people in the Forest Service are as good as any organization in the world—they're just hamstrung.

Even in areas where a great deal of discontent regarding the way the IPNF was being managed, people have generally held the local Forest Service personnel exempt from negative attributions of the Forest Service. An individual who works in the health care industry in St. Maries, where we found a great deal of frustration with forest management, said:

> Actually the people at the local level, the local forestry people here are pretty good folks. I mean we don't have some of these big huge war, fight, conflicts, like you get in some of these communities where these guys are afraid and they have to carry a gun into the woods because the local people are going to lynch them or something. That's not the way is. In fact the Forest Service boss we have here is a pretty good dude. The local people here have done a pretty good job of blending in with the community, together with the community. The head guy actually got into a big hassle with a local bigwig and he was actually able to get together and mend fences and they actually work really good together right now. From a personnel standpoint I think folks are really happy with the personnel issues here. I don't think that's an issue. I don't think anyone is

> walking around saying they are all a bunch of bureaucratic jerks or anything like that.

As stated by this individual in Sandpoint, the criticism of the Forest Service is not at the local or regional level, but rather at the national decision and policy-making level:

> My criticism of the Forest Service is not a local criticism. The district rangers that I've known in the last six, seven, eight years have all been fairly involved with the community, fairly accessible to the community –what they're trying – to work for the local community with their hands clasped behind their back and being directed from Washington through Missoula to implement policies that I just don't think they're local at all. Have I made that point now…?

One of the focus group members from the Spokane session reiterated this point with blame directed specifically at federal headquarters:

> But people are also reluctant to make decisions because Washington [D.C.] is calling the shots. So it's not just external in the courts; it's also internal as far as mandates and political direction coming out of Washington.

The above perceived differences between local and national Forest Service personnel are important considerations as context for the next section, which discusses the perceptions of past and current forest management. This section also includes discussion on neglected management and the perceived constraints of the IPNF management often referred to as "gridlock." First, we address the perceptions of actual management of the forest resources followed by perceived reasons of neglected resource management in the IPNF.

4.2 Perceptions of past and current management

Perceptions of current and past management include a wide spectrum of views, but often centered on the concept of "neglected management." These views ranged from neglected management related to timber production to neglected management related to protection. Various public perceptions generally agreed upon the source of neglected management: the gridlock in the agency due to national level forest policy, litigation and appeals, and environmental regulations.

During both focus group sessions, the interaction among participants elicited intense discussions about the current state of management as complicated by the "gridlock." Summarizing from those comments, the participants perceived that the Forest Service, as an agency, has lost sight of its direction and mission. This perspective manifests itself in multiple ways such as a perceived increase in bureaucracy, distractions because of environmental litigation, issues with enforcement of laws and regulations, a lack of

accountability, and most of all, external constraints on doing the job the Forest Service has been assigned to do. Participants also recognize changes that have occurred for the agency, the economy, as well as shifts in the political climate.

However, in light of the dissatisfaction of neglected management are the acknowledgements of improving management regimes that have recently evolved in the last decade relative to historical practices.

4.2.1 Neglected management

An overarching attitude exists among many Panhandle respondents that the IPNF is not being actively managed. For most interviewees, the idea of forest management meant timber management or the growth and harvesting of trees. For some though, forest management means the active management and maintenance of recreation facilities, trails and roads. While still others view forest management in terms of protection and restoration. Two perspectives are given in the following interview excerpts—gridlock and the slow ideological transition of the Forest Service:

> The last 10 years the Idaho Panhandle National Forests have been frozen in place. The management of the national forests has been in a huge state of disarray, of conflict, of appeal, of court cases, fear of litigation.
>
> In my opinion, in the last 10 years the Forest Service has been going through a painful adjustment from decades of road building and timber harvest focus, to acceptance of what is clearly the will of the American public to change that. The Forest Service in the Panhandle has been very slow to respond to that. … when you look at what has happened in the Panhandle, the clear-cuts that are directly in the watershed, say on the Coeur d'Alene. It is just abhorrent… I think the last 10 years has been a time of transition, it has been frustrating for people in the Forest Service.

In addition to individual community members, Forest Service employees tended to agree with the idea that the agency should be managing the resource more actively. One Forest Service employee told us:

> We, the Forest Service, need to stay active resource managers. There are a lot of folks that don't necessarily believe that. There are a lot of folks that think the public lands should be left alone and we should just be custodial in nature. … But, I don't believe that.

4.2.1.1 Neglected timber

Many participants focused on timber harvesting when they discussed the idea of neglected forest management. Many participants, especially those in communities that rely more on timber production are frustrated by what they perceive to be reduced timber harvest, specifically from national forest lands. They often recounted stories of timber

"going to waste" because of appeals to timber sales through processes related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), or a lack of activity on the part of the Forest Service.

Not only was timber management perceived as beneficial to local economies, respondents also indicated their perceptions that management benefits wildlife populations. We found this as a common view among extractive industry representatives such as this individual:

> I am an advocate of logging because I am living in a logging community and it is our survival, but I also think logging is important to maintain the forest and the creatures that live there.

The timber management issue often focused on salvage of insect-killed or fire-killed trees. For respondents focused on extracting timber, the salvage logging issue seems to exemplify the perceived problems with forest management. One participant employed by a forest company indicated:

> We [industry] had a terrible bout with bugs and beetles the last couple of years, and while harvesting it won't really remove the beetles, at least we recaptured the value. And took the dead and dying trees out and provided space for the next crop to come in. On federal lands, just up the St. Joe here they aren't even getting that done.

4.2.1.2 Neglected timber due to recreation emphasis

An additional belief that emerged was the perceived shift of the Forest Service towards recreation, especially in its hiring of personnel. As such, many respondents elaborated on this belief to imply the emphasis of the IPNF has evolved to management for recreation only and not for timber. In some instances, we found this local truth came across especially strong, as can be seen in the following two interview excerpts from foresters in the Panhandle[3]:

> Just call up any district ranger office, any of the six, … and if you call up the district office, find out the district supervisor, then go to all of the rangers and find out who they are, find out what their background is. What you are going to find has nothing to do with forestry anymore. Doesn't that tell the story, of what the management theory is? It tells a story to me to where they are really not geared to managing their district for the crop that is on it. If you take a district…what you are going to find, like the one [district ranger] in Coeur d'Alene, has a parks and recreation background. And look at Priest Lake -- parks and recreation. The new ranger in Bonners Ferry-- parks and recreation background. The district guy out at Sandpoint that oversees these guys-- parks and recreation background.

[3] Interviewee identities of any sort for these two passages are purposely not included here due to the somewhat personal nature of the comments.

> Everything is recreation. That's another thing that burns me up – is that nobody seems to want to work in this country anymore. It's just everything is oriented toward recreation and that's the only thing that's going on in our ranger district anymore is recreation things.

While a significant number of respondents indicated a frustration with a *lack of* recreation management, the undercurrent of a perception of too much emphasis on recreation is important to note as well. Interestingly, the district rangers we interviewed reported a wide variety of backgrounds, including fisheries, anthropology, law, and forestry. These different perceptions can be used to highlight the idea of 'local truth' and perceptions. The theme that more and more Forest Service employees had a recreation background is important to note because it displays what people believe. And, what people believe to be true about the Forest Service colors other perceptions of forest management, whether their belief is factually based or not.

4.2.1.3 Neglected recreation

Participants outside the extractive industries indicated frustration with the lack of visible management of recreation amenities such as trails and campsites. This view existed throughout communities, but was especially strong in Priest Lake and was supported in the Spokane focus group. One study participant from Priest Lake discussed the perceived lack of recreation management within the context of available funding and employees to the IPNF:

> The other issue with the Forest Service that concerns me is the dramatic decrease in their recreational budget over the past two or three years even. I mean it, as you may well know, has been absolutely sliced to the point where trails are not even maintained, let alone developed. So that concerns me especially in this area where recreation is a big factor. And the enjoyment of the quality of life at Priest Lake as well as the economy.

Another interviewee from St. Maries expressed concern for maintaining the recreational component of the forests as a historical legacy that needs to be preserved:

> Second is, you know, what they need is recreation. They have trouble coming up with enough money for their trails system, keeping their trails. The trail system is, I think they are doing better, they complain about it, but it is something that they need to keep intact. If at all possible because it is our legacy. We started 100 years ago around here, 150 years ago, so they need to try to preserve the trails and the recreational opportunities as much as possible.

Other perceived indicators of a lack of forest recreation management discussed by interviewees include road closures reducing access for recreation, the lack of personnel to manage recreation permittees, and the lack of interpretation or environmental education associated with recreation facilities such as trailheads or campgrounds.

4.2.1.4 Neglected restoration

Forest restoration was often noted as a main priority for respondents within the IPNF, especially in areas degraded by previous management techniques. Generally, there is support for the restoration programs in progress; however, a number of people remain frustrated due to the perception of slow progress of the restoration efforts. The following two participants from Coeur d'Alene and St. Maries express their desire for restoring areas degraded from various actions, whether they are the result of management pursuits or logging operations:

> A lot of the streams were just basically trashed. So I'm hoping what we see in this transition period that we're moving into is more how do we go in and try to restore the health of these ecosystems.

> Well, I don't know, they log the hell out of it, and then they back out and don't do anything else with it.

Although restoration has become a part of many timber sales on the IPNF, study participants indicated a perceived lack of restoration progress. One Forest Service employee explained that restoration was now a part of the timber sale process:

> [Community members wanted to] be able to bid on a contract to this project to reduce the fuel for this -- part of it being try to reduce the devastated trees by thinning and so forth, but it's kind of a goods for services contract. And so we've had a lot of other projects that they would be doing in relation to that….building recreational facilities, planting and thinning -- besides the fuel reduction timber removal. And it's a new way of doing business with the Forest Service because normally what we do is have a timber sale contract that removed the wood and then we'd have a service contract which would be specific to one job like planting some trees whatever. This is wrapped into a single contract -- a single contractor would do the whole job. Basically he would collect funds for the foresters that would do the reforestation.

One example of the delays in forest restoration comes from a community-based forest stewardship project. During fieldwork for this study, residents of three communities in the Priest River/Priest Lake area were attempting to acquire a permit to restore a forest near their communities. While this project is being hailed as a good example of collaboration between environmentalists, local loggers, community development agencies and the Forest Service, local residents involved in the project indicated that the process has been held up for a long time – nearly four years by some estimates – due to appeals and the NEPA process.[4] One Forest Service employee explained the project:

[4] This project was permitted in the Spring of 2002.

> It's a community's business to set up a stewardship committee of which the timber industry, the entire local environmental group, and then the three chambers – we're all a part of it. And so you've seen so much more communication between the environmental community and the Forest Service and the timber industry, and the community. It's really unique and you know, the bridges—there's a long way to go—but I mean the bridges are being built. … So, that's been real positive.

4.2.1.5 Neglected protection

There were a number of respondents in the IPNF indicating dissatisfaction with the amount of protection of certain areas within the IPNF. Several key populations that expressed these views are the Kootenai, Kalispel, and Coeur d'Alene Tribes associated with the IPNF (see CHAPTER SIX, NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES). However, in addition to the Tribes, there are many individuals who want to see certain areas protected from ecologically harmful operations. One resident in Bonners Ferry expressed his perspective with the following:

> Some of the things that I have not seen-I have not seen certain areas maybe protected as well as I would like-like Long Canyon in the Selkirk Crest is an area that was identified probably 30 years ago as being a fairly important piece of land and it is still not a wilderness area, for example. Locally people would say it is managed in that respect so they say it is. And I would say that part of what…since I consider a lot of these areas jewels, I just did a 40-mile hike into Long Canyon, around the area and in terms of the diversity.

Another participant from Bonners Ferry expressed the perception that if it was not for the conservation community, there would be no protection in the national forests:

> I think they're still in the timber harvesting mode, and I think that needs to change. I don't think they're doing a real good job, but they're doing a lot better job than the state of Idaho. They are light years ahead of the state of Idaho and they sometimes do a better job than private land owners. So I think that they're still in the mentality of we have to get trees out of the forest. And the only thing stopping them is because the conservation community does have laws in this country, which makes them accountable. That is the only reason that the cut isn't up any more.

Respondents indicated a number of reasons for the perceived neglect of forest management. The next section will focus on the perceived constraints that may create gridlock for IPNF management.

4.2.2 Perceived outside constraints for IPNF management

While many participants expressed frustration with the lack of management, they did not, for the most part, blame the local Forest Service employees for the problems. Participants indicated a belief that the IPNF is bound in its ability to manage the forest by several factors:

- Litigation and legal appeals processes (especially through NEPA)
- Regional and national-level forest policy
- Environmental regulations (especially the Endangered Species Act)

4.2.2.1 Litigation and appeals

Respondents perceived that the IPNF is bound by timber sale appeals and litigation especially based on the NEPA process. The NEPA process, derived from the National Environmental Policy Act passed in 1969, requires federal agencies to identify and assess environmental impacts of their activities. A strong theme in the interviews was the slow pace at which management is performed because of the NEPA process. Interviewees often discussed the ability of anyone from anywhere to appeal a timber sale with little or no grounds via a simple letter—the "$.34 Appeal."[5] We noted several stories from respondents about school children from the eastern U.S. – New York and Maine – appealing a timber sale in the Panhandle as a class activity. These stories were not verified. One resident of St. Maries explained his perception of the problems with NEPA:

> Now we have this whole ridgeline that is black and dying, but the way the process works today, is that from the time the Forest Service determines that we need to do something with that hillside and that you can actually touch it, is typically four and a half years. … NEPA caused a lot of that. … They have gridlocked the government. You stop something by appealing … so it is the industry against the enviro's and the Forest Service is caught in the middle. I don't blame the management problem on the Forest Service as much as I do NEPA.

The following two passages from interviews in Bonners Ferry and Coeur d'Alene convey the idea that gridlock within the Forest Service is a result of *avoiding* appeals and *fear* of litigation rather than the appeals or litigation themselves:

> The management of the national forest has been in a huge state of disarray, of conflict, of appeal, of court cases, fear of litigation. Just the act of potentially having a group or a minority, or majority, suggest an appeal is enough to stop activity and action and management.
>
> Management over the last ten years, I would say has been totally focused on how to avoid law suites. And it has been rather unsuccessful in that regard. Everything

[5] At the time of data collection (late summer 2001) when this story was expressed often, postage for a regular-sized letter cost $.34.

> they do is in terms of what's going to possibly survive the appeals process. So yeah, so many of the other people are focused on whether something's going to make it through the appeals process and that seems to dislocate so much of their activity or lack thereof.

Both focus group sessions, especially the Coeur d'Alene session, corroborated these perceptions about litigation overrunning the agency's efforts. Focus group members described that they believed litigation constrained Forest Service personnel from doing the job they were trained and are capable of performing. The following two comments illustrate typical comments from many of the focus group participants:

> The Forest Service has not been able to manage the forests because the courts have.

> So even though from a professional standpoint, they know what needs to be done on the land, in a lot of cases they were reluctant to start because they know as soon as they say that 'harvest' word, they're in court.

4.2.2.2 National-level forest policy and politics

Another theme regarding the outside constraints of the IPNF is the perception that Washington D.C. policies and politics are trying to put a "one size fits all" management scheme on the Panhandle. Many interviewees suggested that the local Forest Service knows the land and the communities and would best be suited to make management decisions as this community leader from St. Maries states:

> I guess I would like to see them manage their forest for the value that is in it. Use the trees where the trees should be used. Maintaining your streams and your fishing, your hunting ability. And it can all be done, it can all be balanced. I would like to see the Forest Service given the opportunity to do this. There are a lot of people who come in to drive and just look at our country. There are a lot of people that come to hunt and fish. It's nothing [impossible], it's not an unreachable goal at all, it is just a matter of allowing them to do their job. The Forest Service I think given the opportunity, will do just fine. Just let them do their job the way they are trained to do it. When you start letting Washington D.C. make the decision of what is going to happen in the St. Joe River drainage you are not really being effective. The people that work here know this drainage, they know it well, they know what to do with it, they know where the bad fire spots are. Just allow them to do their job. I think that is the feeling of most people in this community—let the Forest Service do their job, and do it properly.

An interviewee from Priest Lake stated the perceived difficulty with bureaucratic control:

> Part of that I think is the weight of the bureaucracy. The lack of flexibility in the forest plan, the local managers need to manage their forest and need to

> have the flexibility to change when the market conditions or whatever else changes.

This individual from Coeur d'Alene refers to national forests as "political lands" rather than "public lands," indicating his perception that politics have taken over management:

> First I think the Forest Service has no values – I think they've lost them. I think they all sway to the political winds of the time and I personally feel that Forest Service – I don't care where you are, are no longer public lands. We're not free to treat these lands as public – they're political lands. And the values have shifted where the human aspect is no longer, I think, the human aspect – I think the uses of the forest are not being what—managed as well as it can be.

4.2.2.3 Environmental regulations with focus on the Endangered Species Act

An underlying theme, especially prevalent in Bonners Ferry, is the feeling that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is constraining the management of the IPNF through the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Bonners Ferry and Priest Lake areas have a number of predominant threatened and endangered species that make the ESA seem very powerful from a local perspective. One resident of Bonners Ferry felt that he spoke for the majority of the community when he said:

> We want the forests to work in conjunction with other forest values and so we are as a community a huge backer of the multiple use concept. We bristle at the thought of single use management, of setting aside huge acres for management of a single species. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it is enforced today, has a noble goal, but in reality has some, many, many failings as it relates to looking at the forest as a whole. And as a result the single use management that has been practiced because of the ESA and threats of the enforcement of the ESA, have caused untold loss to our community, and to forest health.

A community leader in Bonners Ferry points out the perceived failures of the ESA in the context of caribou management:

> Boundary County is the number one monetarily affected county. We understand – we know it is in the state of Idaho, but we understand in the entire United States by the Endangered Species Act. We've got a lot of critters. I'm very actively trying to recover those critters, because we also don't want the critters to go away. Obviously. It wouldn't make any sense to have some animals go extinct because of the actions of humans. We don't want to do that. But we also look at the surprising failures in the ESA. And because of the Act we have actually had some damaging issues related to recovery of animals. Caribou is probably a prime example in Boundary County. There still is a caribou out there, however we don't have any

> here. We transplanted a bunch of them here from Canada. We killed several of them trying to get them down here. And every time we transplant them … Somehow there has to be something in that portion of it. The Endangered Species Act allows for if the animal was there at any time, that that is habitat for that animal. But what it doesn't include is the possibility that the animal just doesn't want to be there. And that's one issue we have – is if the caribou won't stay there, how do we promote them to stay in an area that they don't want to stay. It's a requirement of the ESA, but all we're doing is killing animals by trying to make that happen. They still have an active population in Canada. I think that there should be some point where you have to say they don't want to be here. You can do everything you can, but you can only do so much.

However, in the advent of the changing management regimes, another Bonners Ferry resident welcomes the ESA as an opportunity to integrate threatened and endangered species management within forest management:

> The way it was managed 10 years or so ago, it was heavily based on timber management and timber harvest. With the advent of more species on the Endangered Species list that has somewhat subsided. In terms of the harvest levels or greater environmental requirements that we have to do. I guess that is the big change. A lot of folks around here probably see that as an impediment. In my eyes, I see it as an opportunity to integrate endangered species management with forest management. Instead of looking at it as a loss or road block, I say how can we do something through forest management that helps the threatened and endangered species and benefits the community. I think that there are ways to do that.

4.2.3 Improvements from past management regimes

When we asked the interviewees to assess Forest Service management regimes, there was a predominant theme of perceiving the present management regime as an improvement from the past. Many respondents conveyed the idea that in the last decade, the Forest Service has gone through an "ideological transition" relative to the previous decades of cutting too much timber and not focusing on ecosystem management. As stated by a Forest Service employee we interviewed:

> OK, in the past, prior to the past 10 years of course, timber was the main focus and that was really what the forest was about. You did a lot of roading to get access. In the past 10 years our focus has changed a little bit. In that we are focusing on the need to do vegetative and watershed restoration work. Still in the management side of things, not just to preserve a watershed, and let nature do its thing. And have active management in the forest. But the focus again, is a little bit different. The way the chief of the Forest Service states it is that we

> need to focus on what we leave rather than on what we take. And I think that is a really good message point.

This interviewee from Sandpoint acknowledged the changes in terms of timber harvest techniques, noting that timber can still be harvested while the forest is protected within the improved harvest regimes:

> I think in the last ten years it was a marked improvement as far as forest management and getting the forest management away from the clear-cut mentality makes forest extraction and management much better. But I think as far as the management, I think that there has been an improvement, an improved awareness in the last ten years of managing so that the visual product at the end of a sale, at the end of a harvest, is something that people can live with and accept and at the same time you are still trying to harvest timber. So I think that these last ten years have been an improvement.

As a member of the conservation community in Sandpoint, another individual also identified a vast improvement of forest management within the past ten years:

> So, if I look at today compared to what they were doing ten or fifteen years ago I think they've done some enormous – or they've made some enormous progress in being more sensitive to a lot of the issues that you care about if you're in the conservation community. The healthiness of the soils, the regeneration growth rates, the composition of the forest, the number of snags they leave for wildlife, starting to rip out roads or close them down and make some hard decisions to protect wildlife. In the Bonners Ferry district, the Sandpoint district, and the Priest Lake district I think they've been doing a better job on those issues than down in the St. Maries, St. Joe's area.

Although perceptions of forest management include various complaints concerning neglected management, there seems to be a widespread belief that the Forest Service has limited power due to congressionally prescribed mandates, as well as other legalities, inhibiting adaptive change at the local level. Although it is important to understand the sources of criticism and the suggestions for improvements, it is also important to acknowledge the support for the changing management regimes that have occurred in the previous ten years. This general scope of management of the national forests sets the context for analysis of the special ecological, cultural, and economic issues for the IPNF.

4.3 Special forest management issues in the IPNF

4.3.1 Fire management

Perceptions of past and present fire management by the Forest Service vary widely among our respondents. General responses ranged from dissatisfaction of the unchanging

fire management regimes to suppression of all fires. Another primary response among many individuals concentrated on the fear of fire in the context of homes and communities at risk in the wildfire/urban interface. The protection of homes through fire suppression is not exclusive from the desire to allow wildfires to burn. Rather the common ground seems to be preventing catastrophic wildfires, which according to many, includes more natural fire regimes in the western forests.

4.3.1.1 Fire suppression

Frustrations have arisen because of a lack of clear and consistent fire management plans to determine conditions in which fires would be allowed to burn. A number of interviewees were perplexed as to why the Forest Service both recognizes the need for fire, yet they still operate under the fire management regime of suppression. The following interviewee states his dissatisfaction with the suppression of wildfire occurring on the IPNF:

> I guess last year I was a little disappointed. The Forest Service was putting out fires that they had no business putting out. Brush fields or areas where fires naturally occur and they would do good, it seems like a waste of money and time. And in my mind it wasn't doing any good to the environment for the long term kind of natural ecosystem.

Another interviewee from Coeur d'Alene reinforced the importance of getting the forests back to a more natural fire regime through fire itself:

> But we act in a big pendulum don't we. We went for years with fire suppression to sort of a swing towards the let it burn, and then there is public outcry about that. This year it seems that, it was another dry year like last year. In reaction to last year it seems like we're jumping on every blaze as soon as possible. I think we need to get back into more natural cycles, I think we need to let burn, I think the Forest Service needs to be given more money and ability to conduct prescribed burns as well as let natural fires that start play their role.

A respondent from Priest River applies the need for the science-based ecosystem management plan with regard to ecological health through fire. He stated his disappointment that this science is recognized but not utilized. The ICBEMP study to which this individual refers is the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP), a science-based ecosystem management study.

> No, they haven't been effective. They have yet to devise a comprehensive fire management policy. There's a recognition again as the result of the "Ice Bump" (study) that fire plays an important role in the interior northwest forests. I think that recognition is pervasive across the agency. It's what to do about it that seems to be the problem. You have systems which are fire driven and depend on fire for nutrient cycling,

> for creating various wildlife habitats, any number of things that fire does that logging and other kinds of specific management can't successfully do. So we're going to have to devise a policy which tries as best we're able to create those effects on the land. It's going to have to be intelligent. It's going to involve some sacrifices by varying interest groups in the community. But if we don't we're basically creating ecological havoc and it will come back to haunt us sooner or later.

One Forest Service employee reinforced the present fire suppression mandate, while recognizing the need to modify the fire management regime:

> Well, of course, the Forest Service, fire suppression is part of our agenda. So, that hasn't changed really. It is our obligation to go and suppress wildfires and we are doing that aggressively. We have geared up our forces to do that. But again, as I think we go to our forest plan revision we will take a closer look at opportunities for fire use, to let fires burn as they have historically. I think that some of our management activities will be directed at changing the forest composition out of there, so that when a wild fire does occur, it won't be so catastrophic. It will be more in line with what, perhaps occurred more historically. We could let some natural fires burn.

4.3.1.2 The wildfire/urban interface

Mixed in with the desires for wildfires to burn is the concern for the wildfire/urban interface, in which, homes and communities are at risk due to their close proximity to forest ecosystems vulnerable to wildfires. A strong fear of wildfire exists in Panhandle communities, especially in the Silver Valley and Priest Lake. This fear within Silver Valley partly rests on the fact that the characteristics of historic city of Wallace provides a dangerous mix of close-together, wood homes in a valley surrounded by forested land. The fear within Priest Lake seems to stem from an increasing number of vacation homes built throughout a forest that has not burned in many years and has a significant amount of visible dead trees. One resident in the Priest Lake region points out the responsibility to protect areas at risk.

> Logging does not make a forest fireproof. It doesn't happen that way. But we can do what is sensible. We can look at interface areas, we can say can we reduce the hazards of that around highways and around resort areas and can we thin that, can we possibly reduce the amount of fuels, the fuel load on the ground? Can you take the under-story down?

Along with the awareness for the need of protecting developments from wildfire is the strong desire to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and return to a more "natural," less destructive, fire regime. A regime that manifests prevention rather than just reaction as stated by a representative of the forest products industry in Coeur d'Alene:

> I don't think we do fire management, I think we do fire response. For whatever reason, we have chosen to sit on the sidelines and then respond when we have catastrophic fire events. And attempt to throw dollars and people, homes, lives, and property in the battle with the fires. Instead of coming around and being more on the prevention side. And trying to put our forests in such a condition that they are more fireproof or more survivable if fire does occur. I would rather see us work on the front end that way, instead of the response, at the other way. And that is not something that we are doing, I know there is some political efforts going on to bring that about, but I don't see a lot of on-the-ground execution of that sort of management philosophy. We're still in a chase-it mode instead of position our forests health-wise and whatever other ways we need to do it. So they are less susceptible to fire, less destructible."

Again, in the case of discussion about fire management, urban residents participating in the focus groups also appeared generally knowledgeable about the regional potential for wildfire and associated management issues:

> We're seeing fuel loads in the national forests—we're going to have fires—and the Forest Service is stopped by courts from going in and cleaning up.

4.3.1.3 Reducing fire risk

However, disagreement exists as to how to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire. Some participants feel that harvesting timber and thinning forests will mimic fire regimes and reduce the threat of wildfire. Others, feel that prescribed fire can be used to reduce the threat. Another individual from Bonners Ferry discussed the perceived benefits of prescribed fire:

> Prescribed burning, benefits the community, I think it has an air quality benefit, even though some people may not think that it does. Through prescribed burning we can control the timing and release of particulates into the air shed. Under a wild fire scenario you won't have any control of the timing or the amount or anything else. So it has a benefit from that standpoint for the air shed. Prescribed fire also can be used to reduce fuels adjacent to urban interfaces where people have their property and homes. So there is some benefit from that. As well as employment of some of our seasonal work force comes from the local community and there is an economic benefit to those people. So it has quite a bit of benefit to the community I would say.
>
> Well I think, because of the way we have managed or not managed the National Forest land we are being forced into a situation where we have this horrendous fuel load out there. We can either choose to manage it

> through prescribed fire or nature is going to do it for us. And particularly around certain communities and places in the urban interface, I think we have an obligation if we are managing these lands to at least mitigate for that fire hazard as much as you can. I think we need to use prescribed fire as a management tool to mitigate that risk.

However, recent events involving prescribed fire – especially the loss of control of a prescribed fire in Los Alamos, New Mexico during the spring of 2001—concern those living within the Panhandle. One forester from Coeur d'Alene explained:

> You know there's a lot of fears about it. There's always, when you hear of Los Alamos and some of the other events and under the best of circumstances with most knowledgeable people you know some fire's going to get away and not do what you want them to. But I think there's general support for that.

4.3.1.4 Fire wastes forest resources

Another perspective concerning fire management regimes emphasized the belief that allowing fires to burn wastes valuable timber resources and threatens communities. One resident of Priest River spoke to the perceived problem of allowing fires to burn in the context of outsiders' influences on the debate over fire management and extraction:

> I don't like to see people from Spokane come in and monopolize the place. My idea is for the health of the forest, not necessarily for economic growth or anything. I think they have got a method of maintaining our forests so they can be healthy and productive. …It's just this idea of 'okay, let's tie up 50 million acres of forest and not touch it'. Then a fire comes in and burns it all down. The animals are all dead, the ground is ruined, and we didn't get the timber. So if we did it in a logical manner, and harvest what is harvestable and let it grow back then it would be fine.

The following individual, also from Priest River, states his opinion that within the consideration of what to let burn for the ecological component exists an economic element of the situation which also deserves consideration:

> Natural burns still have to be good. I mean that's what's happened for a long time, but years ago we weren't as populated as we are now. We didn't have an industry that is dependent upon continuing to use those products. So I think we have to get a mix. I don't think the Forest Service should always dictate, ok, we're going to reforest and we need to replant and we need to leave these areas until they burn themselves. We have beetle kill and by the time that's all sorted out, the wood isn't any good anymore and it could have been – it's not, it's either going to cause a huge fire if it stays there dead, or we could have used it if it was in a good logging situation – if it had been done properly, then we could have used that wood already in the mills and it would have helped out the economy.

In addition to the perspectives we have addressed, the issue of fire risk and road closures also emerged within the data. Some individuals hold the belief that closing roads eliminates access for management purposes, such as the feasibility to suppress fires that may be undesirable either because of the close proximity to homes or because of the view that fire wastes the resource.

4.3.2 Perceptions of road closure and/or road obliteration

Support and opposition to road closure was very mixed. Support for road closure transcended environmentalist/ extraction boundaries. Many people from differing ideological perspectives believed benefits are gained from road closures. Many recognize that the IPNF is very heavily roaded and that roads can interfere with wildlife habitat and especially water quality. However, strong opposition to road closures came mainly from those tied to resource extraction. Those opposed to road closures were also often long time residents who have generational ties to the community and more traditionally extraction-based livelihoods. Distinction in support and opposition was clarified in the discussion of road closures versus road obliteration. Often times when road closure was supported by those within extraction industries, road obliteration was opposed.

4.3.2.1 Support for road closures

Need for road closures is promoted by a wide variety of people. The widespread support for some road closures arises from the ecological and economic impact the degrading roads create in the forests. A logger in Bonners Ferry illustrates his support for road closures, addressing the sensitive ecological issues that need to be considered.

> Road closures … there are some places where road closures are very necessary. We have harvested timber. We have built roads. There is nothing wrong with gates or road closures. There are areas that we work today that are very sensitive: they fall into the grizzly bear habitat, the caribou habitat, the lynx habitat that has been put on the Endangered Species list. Those places are very sensitive areas and we do harvest timber in areas like that at given times, like in the early spring time when we are working on six to eight feet of snow, and the reason for that is so that we don't touch the soils, they're sensitive soils, very wet soils.

From an economic standpoint, road closures and halting new road building are also supported due to the lack of the financial ability to maintain the many roads in the IPNF, as indicated by this individual from Coeur d'Alene:

> We can't take care of what we have got fiscally. So the only responsible thing we can do is to quit building roads. I don't think that's a conservation driven idea, it was a practical management driven solution.

Some interviewees perspectives discussed the importance of road closures not just for ecological well-being but for the benefit of future generations. This individual from Sandpoint talked about road closures in the context of providing future generations with an opportunity to see the forest as past generations did.

> Personally my belief is if you need – you know, if we have the ability to close down a section, a large section of national forest and the only way you can go in it is by walking into it, I think that's phenomenal. Because I think my children's grandchildren will never have the opportunity to see what a totally pristine forest will look like. And because everything we touch we adjust. So I definitely am not opposed to sacrificing now for what it will do for decades or generations down the road. I think we kind of look too short-sighted and it's a little too much. And twenty years isn't that far away. What's going to happen in 150 years?"

The following environmental perspective from a respondent in Priest River offers ecological reasons to support road closures.

> I'm in favor of any and all road closures. We've created this monstrous network – this spider web of incursions on the landscape. The "Ice Bump" identified roads as the single most destructive feature on the landscape. The argument that a lot of groups present that they're being shut out of the forests is absurd. Nobody's being shut out of the forest. Motor vehicles may be shut out, but anybody can get off their lazy butt and get out and walk. For millennia the human species has walked across the landscape without benefit of the internal combustion engine and I suspect they're still able to. We know these roads are creating huge ecological problems that we've had with wildlife, we've had with fisheries, and we've had with streams. They're creating avenues for the incursions of noxious weeds. They're creating landslides and all kinds of problems. The agencies don't have the money to maintain these networks and it only makes sense to begin to close them down. While there may be cases where specific roads that are having relatively minor ecological impacts may be left open so that people can get closer to accessing these certain areas, but by and large we have this vast network of roads that could be closed down tomorrow and benefit anybody.

4.3.2.2 Opposition to road closures

While support for road closures can be found in a wide array of respondents, opposition does not exist in the same breadth. As relayed by those we interviewed, two primary reasons to oppose road closures or road obliteration stand out in the IPNF. These are: 1) recreational access, especially as it existed historically and, 2) use of roads for management access.

One resident of St. Maries addresses a number of the issues for opposition to road closure:

> And so, you can go in there if you are willing to hike, but you can't take a 4-Wheeler in there, I am not a hiker, if I can't take my 4- Wheeler in there then I'm not going to go. A 4-Wheeler or a dirt bike. So all of these tourists that were going to come [according to the Forest Service], you have got to be a yuppie, Eddie Bauer, or REI type, backpack type person. And want to pack in 20 miles to Snow Peak. Other than that, nobody gets to ever see it, ever. Not handicapped people, disabled people can't go in. Nobody can go in. It is just another inaccessible thing that some environmentalists and fisheries biologist-types wanted to lock up. And sold it to the general public as a good thing, but the general public that used to be able to go into it can't. So how is that a good thing? Well, and they think it is because it met their little criteria. And actually, they are probably very glad that very few people can go in there because it is there little mountain goat sex area. In my opinion, the Forest Service does things like that all the time. They gate off roads to areas that used to be open. They close them off, they actually go and do mitigation and actually rip out logging roads and try and restore them. And people used to use those roads for access to the woods and they are fire access roads. And they took all that out.

This individual from Silver Valley discusses a common issue among those opposing road closure: the lack of access for fire suppression and other forest management efforts:

> My concern with road closures and removal of the roads is the fact that we do live within our forest and so I think it would be very difficult to manage the forest to the very best of your ability if there is no access to that forest.

4.3.2.3 Road obliteration

Another issue arises in the distinction of road closure and road obliteration. Road obliteration, the removal and deterioration of roads, is viewed as an unjustifiable mandate. Although such perspectives are not necessarily opposed to road closure, people such as this active community member and business owner from Bonners Ferry are skeptical of the ecological or economical benefits created from road obliteration:

> What I've seen, especially since my active involvement over the last five or six years – what I've seen is a – honestly, a catastrophe. It's not that I disagree with putting some of the roads to bed and letting them sleep, but it hasn't been the standard. The standard has been when they close a road it goes to obliteration. The roads that I've seen obliterated created an ecological disaster. I think that if you look at the regulations that are out there do not allow for degradation of environment for the purpose of putting a road to bed. One particular road that comes to mind is up here on Boulder Creek. When they removed it they re-contoured, re-sloped the surface…. where they took the road out.

> Huge amounts of mud and muck came off that the following spring and damaged the creek. It was terrible. There were people up there that were knee-deep in mud the next year watching this ….. So the method -- the reason that they did that doesn't make good sense.

Another interviewee from St. Maries discussed her concerns with obliteration:

> It is not so much the closure, but we have seen the obliteration, and it seems like a lot of money invested in something that probably just could have been burmed up and left alone because it was already growing with trees, just close it.

The issues of road closures and/or road obliteration, sometimes generates intense debate and other times there is unexpected concurrence from generally opposing sides. The management issues of road closures often times also coincided with the issue of local control—those who did not want road closures often also focused on local control.

4.3.3 Local or national control in forest resource management

How forest management mandates and goals evolve, how decisions are made and how management regimes are enforced, is an area of disagreement for many participants in this study. Local versus national control of national forests was a major recurring theme in the interviews. Interviewees' ideals ranged from believing there should be solely local control, to those who believed in equal input across the nation, to those who desired to see local views weighted more heavily than non-local views. The issue of local powerlessness (see Gaventa 1980) also emerged due to a lack of local population density as compared to urban areas. The fear of being unheard due simply to numbers seems to motivate the argument for local control over the national forests.

4.3.3.1 Local sense of ownership and control

Generally, long-time residents who have more interest in the public lands due to economic ties were the sector of the population that believed the local communities should have complete control of the national forests. The rationale of this perspective is based on the local truth that locals know the forests best and they should have the power in decision-making. When a St. Maries business owner was asked if non-locals should be involved in decision-making in the IPNF, this perspective emerged:

> Well, the less the better. I really do. Just exactly what I said, I think the local people can manage things better than the non-locals. They know what is best all-around, they are not going to just cut the forest and run and destroy recreation. Shoot, I would be the last one to do that. Because I love to recreate out there in every form that you could possibly do. I do it, probably more than anybody will see. I would not want to see that, but I do think that there are opportunities to improve it, and I think that local input from our local people is the

only way to go.

This outright opinion that non-locals should not have a say in the management of national forests, is felt by a significant number of interviewees, and reiterated in this statement from an elected official from the Bonners Ferry area:

> If you don't live here don't tell us what to do. You know, we live here, we want clean air, we want clean water, we want to raise our children and our grandchildren here. We don't want them living in a polluted devastated toxic community. I just don't think that, if you have never been here, and seen the people or seen the forest in our community that you should have any input. If you want input then come out and see what it is like. Don't make a decision if you have never been here.

Interestingly, focus group participants discussed this same issue with excitement. Many of their comments reflect the frustration and local/regional emphasis indicated in this comment:

> Somehow narrow this cadre of the population that has a say in the national forest management down to reasonable sizes. I don't see there's any way we can answer to the entire United States citizenry for these three little forests here. Somehow we've got to regionalize the pressure group control of the forest. There's no way you're going to get consensus.

4.3.3.2 Weighting local needs and desires

Those who generally favored weighting of local views often also offered multiple viewpoints regarding the local/national control debate, making their stance on the issue unclear. Statements that began with the perspective that national forests belong to the nation—implying an 'everyone should have a say' perspective—often ended with statements about frustration with outsiders having a say in managing "our" forest. This statement from a respondent in St. Maries illustrates this point:

> It is everybody's land. So they should all be involved. To a certain extent. You shouldn't have somebody from New York City telling us how to run Idaho. I mean it is that way. They wouldn't want us to go over there and tell them how to run their town.

People from a variety of different backgrounds and interests favored national input with local weighting, as discussed by this interviewee from Coeur d'Alene:

> Well the Forest Service is the U.S. government and they represent everybody in the U.S. Sometimes I get irked that people in Washington D.C., or people back East, have a large influence on what happens out here, and they don't ever come out here. But obviously I think they have a say, they pay taxes which help, which the Forest Service uses. So I think

> they should be involved. I think more weight should be put on the people that are being directly influenced by it, which are more of the locals. But by all means everyone has a say.

4.3.3.3 National sense of ownership and control

The local control issue illustrates well an ideological split that seems to exist between more environmentally-oriented people and utilitarian-oriented people. People holding an environmental position general put forth that these forests are a national resource and that national input must be considered. One environmental-leaning respondent from Bonners Ferry explained:

> I think that the national forests--the control is a national issue, so we have that to consider. What is in the best interest of the country? And I hope that is parallel with what the best interest is here. And that needs to…those kinds of things need to be communicated more. … They [non-locals] should be involved, it is national forest. I think it is hard for local people to understand. It is a national treasure. It is a resource. It should not be the mayor of Bonners Ferry dictating what the national forest is going to be and it is not just an extractive resource. So I think soliciting people from all over the country. Maybe the Forest Service should bring meetings to other places because theoretically this is a national forest. It is not Bonners Ferry's forest.

This is not to say that the view of national control fails to consider local interests. This resident of a resource-dependent community, expressed his concern for local communities of which he is apart, yet recognized the inherit mandate of a national forest:

> I mean you create a nightmare of problems when you start being so arbitrary in trying to segment the idea that national forests are just that. They're national forests. People that live in proximity to the forests should count their lucky stars. Rather than being an impediment to the good life, it's probably a huge value, a huge asset to their …. This notion that local people should have more say I think is ludicrous. Now I have a lot of empathy for the locals, in fact I sit in on these local pilot programs. I think local people certainly should be heard and because of the proximity, their concerns would probably be more resonant than somebody who lives in Chicago or New York, but nevertheless, we are national forests, and the person who lives in New Jersey has every bit as much right to have input as to how these forests are managed as the guy who lives on the forest boundaries. Even though I'm involved in local projects, and like I say, I have a great deal of empathy for local people and their concerns, I think this whole program is probably going to create an enormous nightmare.

Sometimes people believing in national-control suggested those who believe in local-control maintain a false sense of ownership. This retiree living in Bonners Ferry told us:

> The fact that those fish are from somewhere else and go back and forth,

> or that the forest doesn't stop just for the line drawn on the map, or the grizzly bears don't knock before they cross the border, they just don't see it that way.

Many who believe in national control of the national forests, specified criteria for non-local interests to be involved—for instance, education regarding the forest. The lack of understanding regarding forest management of involved non-locals seems to be the major concern regarding others, as one individual states:

> National forests, not local forests. I don't appreciate non locals who don't educate themselves with local issues and then attempt to get involved. But I do, we who live here in the community have the most at stake, and the most experience with our local forests, and it is only logical that we would be most involved in the community input side of how the national forests are run. But, it is certainly appropriate for people from outside the community to get involved—if they get involved in a responsible manner.

4.3.3.4 A sense of powerlessness

Another background theme in the local control issue is the feelings of powerlessness due to small local populations expressed by participants wanting more local control. Realizing the national demographics, they recognize that the voices in rural communities are relatively small. Feeling outnumbered creates a significant frustration for people in small communities in the Panhandle, and leads to them fighting harder for weighting local voices. An extraction industry representative from Bonners Ferry discussed the issues of local control and forest management within the context of national demographics:

> The political climates have changed in 10 years. People's attitudes in America, I mean we went from 240 million people 10 years ago to 269 or 270 million now. And the attitude of those people, we have become more of an urban and suburban society. We go further and further away from the rural way of life. That has affected the influence on the Forest Service, and it is hard to just blame it on the Forest Service. You [the Forest Service] are under utilizing the resources, but it needs to be utilized more, and there again, you get a, somewhat of a tainted aspect from me, I am a forester and I don't like to see land mismanaged. It doesn't mean you need to manage every acre, but I don't like to see a resource wasted. But what a majority of people in this country don't understand is that the forest is a living, dying ecosystem just like everything else. It does not remain static. The reality is that Boundary County is a pinprick in this United States and in relative terms we have four electoral votes in Idaho out of 594—we don't have much say in our own destiny.

The debate over local versus non-local rights lends itself to the corresponding views of enforcement in national forests. There is an association between interviewees who are supportive of local control and the belief that there should be fewer regulations that govern the forest. Generally, those who identify with a more nationalistic sense of ownership feel there is insufficient active enforcement of regulations and wish to have more.

4.4 Science and forestry in management

Respondents tended to indicate that foresters and those trained in forest science should be the ones managing the IPNF. Public input, appeals and litigation, and decisions based on consensus were seen as a barrier to managing the forest appropriately. Political or bureaucratic constraints have also been identified as perceived limits to the professional's ability to utilize their knowledge and experience in forest management. A respondent from Bonners Ferry gives a clear statement on the issues of professional foresters managing the forest:

> I don't think the forests are being managed by the professionals and by the people that know the forests.

This individual from Silver Valley expressed desire for the management decisions to be determined and executed by the trained professionals and believed that the agency should dismiss nonprofessional's ability to make these decisions:

> I think the Forest Service needs to have more autonomy in their ability to recommend and carry out different management practices in different areas. I think that the input from the public is valuable. Because any activity can be misused in one direction or the other, but what we need is a reasonable approach to forest management. And that includes giving the Forest Service a little bit more ability to manage than what they have had. And I guess another part of that is there seemed to be an awful lot of people who are untrained and unskilled in forest management who think that they know better than the people who have been educated and trained in that. And so we don't tend to think that a truck driver knows more about medicine than a doctor does, but we tend to think, for some reason or another, that we know more about forest management than the people who have been educated in that.

Another respondent, from Bonners Ferry expressed her desire for the agency to employ science-based management decisions that is not skewed by special interests or the public domain:

> We need to free up the scientists and those who are on the edge of management to be able to use best practices. Best practices based on real scientific… to be freed up to do that management. We should not be managing the

> national forest on a consensus. Which is what you are attempting to accomplish here through gaining consensus. Tough decisions need to be made every day on behalf of people, in a representative democracy it is important that we understand and vote for people to represent us, and we give them a certain authority to gather information and knowledge and we provide them resources and a budget, and they have information and resources that the public never has access to. And the result is that those individuals need to make decisions based on what is best, not what the wind is blowing.

An environmental-leaning respondent addresses also revealed his perception that the Forest Service is neglecting to use the ICBEMP study. This interviewee states his dissatisfaction by claiming the agency has not attempted to understand the science of this forest ecosystem management plan:

> Well, in the beginning of that ten-year period you mentioned we were seeing things like rampant logging of old growth timber, logging right down to the stream banks, building roads on highly unstable soils, little or no regard for threatened or endangered species. You don't see that kind of stuff – at least this flagrantly done as we did earlier. There have been significant changes. I attribute that largely to the "Ice Bump" Science. Environmentalist aren't smarter than the agencies, but we were intuitively right. And what we saw, logging on stream banks, logging … and wilderness stands, building roads on highly unstable soils were wrong. And science as a result of the "Ice Bump" process bore that out. We were proved right. And again it wasn't because we were smarter. We didn't have the training that a lot of the agency professionals had, but we had the intuition that what was wrong was in fact wrong. And we were doing outright science. And I think the agencies responded to that science. But it's the managers that don't seem to get it there. I could give you an example. When the "Ice Bump" literature came out it, it creates a stack about this high – two or three feet high. I resolved at that time to read all of the documents, just as a matter of course. To read it all. I have yet to meet a single Forest Service person who's read hardly any of it. Almost all of them have read the Executive Summary. They've gone to a certain training process that deals specifically with their area of expertise, but I have yet to meet a single manager, much less a line officer in any capacity that's read the complete compilation of science and it's some of the most intriguing, fascinating stuff you'd ever read if you're interested in natural resource issues. But none of them read it. Whether it's because they lack time or lack incentive I can't say. But if you haven't read that how can you make wise decisions on the land? If you can rely on the Executive Summary, which doesn't even come close to reflecting the body of the message, then you're going to go about half-cocked, and that's what I see happening.

Regardless of which perspective a segment of a community is coming from, we found a strong desire for science-based forest management, generated from professionals who are using their expertise of the many issues that exist within the national forests. Not surprisingly, this idea was especially strong among those employed in forestry and timber-related positions.

4.5 Forest health

4.5.1 Forest health defined

The interviews indicated that when the participants described the desired conditions of the forest, the environmental and utilitarian perspectives superficially envisioned the same goal: forest health. Both perspectives focus on land that generally supports healthy native plant populations. The difference in perspectives surfaced with opposing definitions of what constitutes forest health and forest management.

Conflicting perspectives continued when we elaborated each perspective as to what creates a healthy forest—varying degrees of human management or natural processes. The application of the varying ideologies of what forest health is and how it is obtained is clear when we apply them to the special issues within forest health such as the issue of fire.

The euphemism of the term forest health, is identified by a resource manager who acknowledged the vast possibilities of the meaning of forest health:

> To improve forest health? Well, that is kind of a trick question because forest health is different for everybody. For the timber manager a healthy forest is a managed forest. You have young trees that are growing bigger. As a fish biologist, I like to see the forest that is what you see as more natural, with fire and some bug outbreaks areas where there is old growth, young growth …

In acknowledging the variance of definitions among people who were using the same terminology, it is important to understand the term forest health as defined by the context in which it is used. Organizationally it becomes clearer, as well as, still definitively accurate, to categorize forest health in terms of two scopes: forest health as *naturally functioning ecosystems*, and forest health as *sustained yield*. The definitions of what forest health is, becomes further clarified, when the means by which the desired conditions are achieved, are integrated into the definition, as discussed later in this section.

4.5.1.1 Forest health as functioning ecosystems

Those who defined forest health as naturally functioning ecosystems addressed forest health in the context of improving the resiliency of the forest to ensure the ability for the

forest to maintain or improve its ecological viability through forest restoration. This perspective was conveyed as stated by the following participant:

> I'd like to see forest restoration and properly functioning ecosystems that have the resilience to be able to withstand disturbances: logging, recreation, climate change, fire. If we don't re-create the resilience that was in these systems from the beginning all we're doing is setting the stage for an ecological nightmare that future generations will have to deal with.

Forest health as a naturally functioning ecosystem is further clarified as this participant from Silver Valley discusses how the natural cycles of fire and insect kill relates to forest health:

> We have a lot of forest-health issues, and those forest-health issues go beyond just the health of the forest, basically when something attacks and kills those trees, there is really nothing wrong with that ecologically. That is how nature cleans itself. And I think the same thing with us, the national fire plan talks about salvaging timber under certain scenarios, certainly some of our forest-health issues-disease things like that, Why not remove that through logging? You have to leave some wood matter down, it has nothing to do with really forestation per se, but it has to do with mycorrhizae in the soil. It is more the soil. So you need to leave some woody debris down, but there is an opportunity and we can do it. We have the science.

4.5.1.2 Forest health as sustained yield

Defining forest health in terms of sustained yield relies on viable timber products that can be generated from the forests in perpetuity. Health of the forest is indicated primarily by the amount of harvestable timber growth it produces over the long-term as well as some ecological and recreational worth. This individual from St. Maries understood this process well:

> The number one thing is, you know, I think they should managed for a healthy forest. And for a long term yield, a long-term forest down the road rather than say we will lock it up and we're not going to do anything, we will let Mother Nature take care of it, we will let it burn, let the bugs kill it. It can be managed to where it creates jobs, it creates income, yet you still have a healthy forest that people can use and recreate in, and have good clean water. I mean the laws are in place to do that now. And it could happen, and I don't advocate over-cutting the forest in any way. In some areas you don't need it, but there are areas that need cleaned, that need managed. For number one, a healthy forest. And that would be a benefit for everyone is far down the road as you go.

Another similar perspective defines forest management in the context of forest health as managing a crop. The sustained yield element is addressed in terms of crop harvest by this community leader from the St. Maries area:

> I would like to see forest health as their focus. I think everybody would like to see forest health as their focus. But it encompasses all the things that you have already talked about. It encompasses the thinning, perhaps commercial logging, it encompasses the disease control, it encompasses the management of the species, for recreation, for commercial use, for whatever. One thing that you really haven't asked in that context, perhaps it is coming up, I kind of view the forest as a crop anyway. It is a growing, replenished resource. Surely there are some nice old trees out there that are several hundred years old, but basically most of the forest is a growing thing that will die if you don't do something with it as it proceeds.

Some participants, especially in the St. Maries and Bonners Ferry areas see the forest as an agricultural system where trees should be grown and harvested like a crop. The language of the forest as a crop or farm has become a local truth in these areas. Two respondents from St. Maries told us:

> Let's just manage it. Cut it, replant it. It is a renewable resource.

> I want the forest operated like a big giant tree farm that we all collectively own.

This perspective from Bonners Ferry illustrates the perception of forests as crops, whereby managing the forests like a farm is appropriate for healthy forests:

> But I think for renewable resources it has to be managed. It has got to be taken care of. Just like when we grow crops, we have got to fertilize it. We have got to till the ground. You've got to burn the stubble, just for plant health reasons and things like that. I think the same thing has to be done in the forest.

Another Bonners Ferry resident is using the term sustainable yield as synonymous with sustainable management.

> Sustainable yield. Management, you know so that we have a healthy forest. I think the local ranger feels the same way too. As far as that goes, I realize he has a lot of restrictions with Fish and Wildlife, but what he has to do I think he does a responsible way. I think, yes, just a sustainable management for a healthy forest.

4.5.2 Methods for obtaining forest health

Inherent in defining forest health is determining how forest health is obtained. The methods to obtain forest health vary greatly. Ideal methods range from natural processes, to management focused on restoration with some logging, to management focused on large-scale commercial logging. Many interviewees who mentioned forest health, clarified what they perceived as the appropriate processes to create forest health, whether their definition was oriented towards naturally functioning ecosystems or more towards sustained yield.

4.5.2.1 Natural processes to create forest health

Generally interviewees who defined forest health as naturally functioning Ecosystems clarified their perceptions by indicating that to achieve forest health, the forest conditions should be dictated by natural processes. One Forest Service District employee we interviewed used the issue of dead trees to demonstrate the differences in perceptions of what a healthy forest is:

> Most of the local people are very conservative here and they are commodity oriented. They like being around the forest. But they don't like to see trees dying on the forest so they hammer us. They let us know that they don't agree with the environmental community and all that. 'Here is a forest of dead trees standing in it, is it a healthy forest?' Well, in reality, yes it is. To them it is not. To them it is 'Why aren't you cutting these trees, and why can't we get up every single road we used to be able to get up?' Those are the issues we face.

Another individual from Sandpoint explains that human management ideals are too shortsighted for nature's long-term balance and order:

> You know, I think Mother Nature's got a very large plan and sometimes we manipulate it into our smaller twenty to thirty year plan….I think manipulating it too much becomes devastating to Mother Nature and to our forest.

In discussing reforestation, another interviewee from Coeur d'Alene reflected on the need for diversity within the forest. This respondent also went on to discuss the role of the restoration in watershed quality:

> Well, I think if the goal of reforestation is to restore a diversified forest to some previous healthy condition I think that is a good idea. If it is to do monoculture trees for future timber harvest, I don't think it's a good idea. I think the goal should be the diverse species and wildlife and fisheries habitat number one …

> Clearly some of the awful clear-cuts, some that were done right in the Coeur d'Alene watershed basin, right on the slopes, can never happen again.

4.5.2.2 Restoration and forest health

Within the perspective of healthy forests as naturally functioning ecosystems, is the idea that forest health can really only be obtained through restoration management—with activities such as pre-commercial thinning and prescribed fire. As definitions of forest health were clarified, proponents of this view discussed their perceptions that we have manipulated forests for a long time, creating unnatural and unhealthy conditions, and the only way to restore the natural conditions is to actively implement restoration methods in the name of revitalizing the forests. A woman from Bonners Ferry states this perception rather clearly:

> Hands off--I don't think that's an option. I think the managers have been monkeying around in these woods for too long. I mean it's not socially realistic at all. Attempting to use -- timber harvest is a way to make, you know, what fire behavior would have created in the past, or using fire as a tool. Create some of the more natural cycles. And all that sounds great in theory and on paper, you know. How well all that can be executed on the ground, I don't know. I'm not sure. But I definitely like the soundness of that. And forest health, I think, for me – it needs to not just be the health of the trees. It has a lot to do with the entire ecosystem. The aquatics…I think all those, I think all that has to be taken into the equation. ...And it's a resource – it's being used by folks and to a certain extent it's gotta be managed. Managed as long as the trees are renewable resources, but I think it's possible that they could be managed as such. So, you know, and I'm ok with the seeing that again. I don't think hands-off—don't ever cut down another tree—would do anybody any good. You know, I just want to see some real responsible cutting and I'd like to see things like noxious weeds taken into account…..eradicate that sort of thing.

The following participant is a good example of an individual who takes on what generally seems to be opposing ideals of forest health. This interviewee from Bonners Ferry defines forest health in terms of naturally functioning ecosystems, yet believes the best way to achieve that desired condition is through active, mechanical management of the forest:

> I would like to see their focus become maintaining the forest health by mechanical means as opposed to going back to natural means. The forest fires are devastating, they take a long time to recover. I think if we go in and mechanically thin and mechanically removed dead and older story material. Controlled burns to mimic nature where appropriate, to control as much as possible the natural disasters better results in allowing the forest to take a natural course is in the best interest of America, and certainly in the best interest of my community. I think disease

> resistant strains, I think uneven aged management of the National Forests, a mix of aged trees and timber, and a mix of species, is sound. I think it allows the forest to not become susceptible to blight and disease, which causes again, additional danger for fire and loss of natural resources as a result of that.

4.5.2.3 Utilitarian-based management for forest health

Respondents who defined forest health in terms of sustained yield clarify this definition through the explanation that proper forest management is more timber management based on logging designed and carried out by people. These interviewees state that active timber management contributes to healthy ecosystems. Two individuals, one from Silver Valley and one from Bonners Ferry illustrate this point below:

> I would like to see forest health as their focus. It encompasses the thinning, perhaps commercial logging. It encompasses the disease control. It encompasses the management of the species, for recreation, for commercial use, for whatever … The situation that we have right now is pretty much no management. It is Mother Nature managing the forest.

> I would like to see their [IPNF] focus become maintaining the forest health by mechanical means as opposed to natural means.

In one exchange, in which the interviewer asks the respondent to address improving forest health in a follow-up question, the participant from St. Maries responded:

> Logging. Number one is you have to log. There are different aspects, you know different silvicultural prescriptions. I think they need to go back at looking [at the forest] on a stand specific basis to figure out what is best for that piece of ground. And go back to managing. And this letting nature take its course, I mean that is crazy. When we have a growing population in this country and in this world that we are going to just let nature do its own thing out here and not capture a renewable resource as great as what we have here in the Inland Northwest, that is nuts.

This interviewee from Priest Lake defines management for forest health as synonymous with logging. This quote clarifies the extent to which meanings behind widely used terminology differ, at least slightly, for most people:

> I think management is a better word than logging. Parts of it need to be logged, parts of it need to be thinned, someone can make some money, and I think that the forest would be healthier at the same time. There is a perfect example right in my backyard here. It is a wasted…it is a small little 80-acre piece, but it is a wasted resource. Most of it should have been cut 15-20 years ago. Now they are just rotting and falling and dying. I have got a fire hazard back there. Some of it is bark beetle,

> some of it is hemlock that just got old and is dying. But all of the white pine that were in there have died. They could have been saved 10 years ago. Just bad management right in my backyard. That is what it is.

This perspective from Bonners Ferry illustrates the perception of forests as crops, whereby managing the forests like a farm is appropriate for healthy forests:

> But I think for renewable resources it has to be managed. It has got to be taken care of. Just like when we grow crops, we have got to fertilize it. We have got to till the ground. You've got to burn the stubble, just for plant health reasons and things like that. I think the same thing has to be done in the forest.

4.5.2.4 Fire and forest health

Fire management provided further clarification of the different forest health perceptions. This individual from Coeur d'Alene emphasized the ecological importance of fire contributing to forest health as something that cannot be replaced by logging and thinning:

> Thinning is fine but it is not the same as a fire. I mean fires leave a lot of nutrients behind. Fires regenerate species that can only regenerate with fire, like Ponderosa Pine…Nevertheless you have systems which are fire-driven and depend on fire for nutrient cycling, for creating various wildlife habitats, any number of things that fire does that logging and other kinds of specific management can't successfully do. So we're going to have to devise a policy which tries to create those effects on the land. It's going to have to be intelligent.

One interviewee explains the ecological impact of salvage logging after a fire and his perception that it degrades forest health:

> The national fire plan talks about salvaging timber under certain scenarios, certainly some of our forest health issues-disease, things like that -- to justify us going in there and doing some more removal and why not take advantage of that logging? Because you have to leave some wood matter down—for the soil.

On the other hand, the people who define forest health as sustained yield indicate that fire wastes the resource and causes more death in the ecosystem. Respondents with this perspective explain that proper forest management prevents fire through logging. One business owner from St. Maries explained that logging improves wildlife habitat and disease prevention:

> I would fully and heartily agree with mechanical or commercial thinning, or whatever thinning measures they use because, like I said, it creates

> more habitat for the wildlife. And it also is fire prevention and disease prevention, and to me that is how we manage the forest.
>
> And timber is a crop-if you don't manage it, it is going to die and burn up. Probably right now in this county we have billions of board feet of timber that should have been logged a long time ago or salvaged or cut down and they burned up.

Corroborating the interview data, this dichotomy in perspectives about fire and salvage was brought forth during the Coeur d'Alene focus group.

> We're seeing fuel loads in the national forest – we're going to have fires and the Forest Service is stopped by courts from going in and cleaning up – like Ice Storm that many of us are well aware of. There was many, many acres and many thousands of dollars was left on the ground because of law suits to stop them from doing it. No different than the fires down around Hamilton, Montana and down Southern Idaho two years ago, where millions of acres of timber burned that was still salvageable.

People with different perspectives across the continuum are both interested in and concerned with having healthy forests. It is how forest health is defined and how that goal should be achieved that creates conflict. Often, the same words—especially *forest health* and *sustainability*—are used by people with differing viewpoints. The use of ambiguous terminology serves as a major communication barrier for people and groups along the continuum.

4.6 Desires for future emphases of the IPNF

4.6.1 Fulfill the mission of the Forest Service

A widespread public perception is that the Forest Service is not fulfilling their mission as managers of the national forests. The Forest Service mission statement is: "To achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use concept to meet the diverse needs of people" (www.fs.fed.us 2002). This perception is exacerbated by the varying implications of sustainable multiple-use. Many participants have varying understandings as to what the multiple-use concept implies. For example, sustained use could mean the reduction of timber volume or the increase in timber volume from the IPNF. Further confusion exists regarding the Forest Service mandate—people tended to focus on two laws governing the Forest Service—the Organic Act (1897), which focuses on timber production, and MUSY (Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act) established in 1960. If the respondent believed that the IPNF over cut in the past they were likely to regard sustained yield as a reduction in harvesting:

> I think the key is the Forest Service in the last century didn't practice sustained yield management. They practiced cutting way too much wood,

> some of which was dictated by Congress, a lot of which was dictated by local politics and the Forest Service not taking a stand and saying 'we can't continue to do that, we can't continue to cut 60 billion board feet out of this forest every year.

Others interviewed believed that sustained yield of timber was the foundation of the Forest Service and continued output of some level of timber should be the goal. This respondent from St. Maries, discussed his views regarding sustainable extraction from a managed forest:

> The forecast, if they would harvest, the forest was capable of growing more than a hundred million feet a year, and being a sustained yield. If they cut at the 40 million ft. a year for a five-to-ten year period, the sustained yield would actually increase to over a hundred and twenty at the hundred and twenty million would start dropping down because you are, you would be having the disease and insect and fire dangers and just the stunting of the growth because of overcrowding of the trees. So we have gone now for a period of time in that lower range, we're actually reducing the potential yields coming off that forest. So what I would like to see them do is actually get those yields back up and to the sustained yield, and keeping those cuts available. And don't see any reason in the world why they couldn't do that without damaging species, damaging water quality, and all those things, those can be managed and they've shown those can be managed, and meet those issues.

This interviewee does not feel the Forest Service mission is being fulfilled because he senses a lack of support of the local communities by the Forest Service, while they sell to the big timber corporations. He explains:

> I think just the forest…fulfilling the Forest Service mission I think. Unless I misunderstand it- it is multiple use. And I just don't see that the resources are dedicated for those particular uses. The Forest Service's influence, even though it is a national forest, is very much influenced by local concerns and logging concerns. They are gun-shy about certain activities. So they might pander more towards local interests which is good, we need to take care of that. I like…here is a problem. I see an increase in large sales and now we are getting only large logging companies. That is changing the complexion of the community in some ways. We are going to have two or three very large logging companies and the guy that had the skidder and the truck he can't bid it. Even the bigger operations-they are saying they don't see any sales for them anymore. When they manage for the resource, it would be nice for them to manage for the little guys as well as the big.

Members of the Coeur d'Alene focus group spent substantial discussion time on whether the Forest Service has strayed from their perceptions of its primary mission. Their

discussion was consistent with the points above yet stressed that this does not necessarily mean a return to practices now defined as detrimental, such as clearcutting. Essentially, the focus group members suggested that right now, the Forest Service is not balancing their efforts enough to accomplish their mission: "To achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use concept to meet the diverse needs of people" (USFS 2002).

> There's some internal agency bias within – people getting into the Forest Service not necessarily because of what the Forest Service mission is, but what they perceive their ability to influence the Forest Service mission. And so, they write their own management mission for the agency when they get in. And there's a little bit of that here, not as much as some of the other forests.

4.6.1.1 Set goals and meet them

Some participants spoke about their frustration with the perceived lack of apparent direction in forest management and thus suggested that the IPNF set goals and criteria for issues within forest management and truly strive to meet those goals. Some interviewees do not see the plans created as useful, realistic, feasible, or enforceable. As this participant from Coeur d'Alene shares, the planning process, as well as the plans for forest management, need to be doable:

> I guess the one thing I would like to see is I hope they construct a plan that is implementable. There are very few forest plans that I've seen or read that anyone with any sort of intelligence could sit down and open up and understand how that plan was going to play out on the landscape of the forest. If there is to be any meaning found in this process, we have to have a plan that we can implement. And quite frankly I think I have seen a lot of things in this planning process that they are so convoluted and conflicting within themselves that nobody could rationally implement the plan. Aside from whatever we're talking about out on the ground the planning process I hope is going to have some long term meaning to the management of the forest. So that is my desire.

Some people we spoke with had participated in the last IPNF forest planning process. They believed that once they did have a good plan it was quickly dismantled once implemented. One participant from St. Maries told us:

> Well for one thing, I would like to see them make a plan that's acceptable to the local levels of the Forest Service and to local governments and the local population. First they have got to have an acceptable plan, and secondly they need to live up to the guidelines and game plan that they set in that plan, and they haven't. The last plan wasn't hardly out in print before it started falling apart.

The need to set goals and criteria ranged from what constitutes caribou and grizzly recovery to setting targets for timber harvesting. One Forest Service employee discussed his recognition of the frustration behind amending forest plans for grizzly recovery:

> This meeting was for the forest plan amendment, correcting our forest plan that we had not incorporated the guidelines of the interagency grizzly bear committee. It was a site-specific project – we needed to close this road for grizzly bear security, so it was more a programmatic type of [issue]. It was a frustration though for part of the audience in terms of, it just seeming like the standards keep changing. And there's more needs for more road restrictions or for restricting the public to access the private lands.

The desire to see goals clearly defined and implemented generally seems to stem from the similar perspective of neglected forest resource management. As this respondent from Coeur d'Alene perceives, the process seems to be the end result, rather than the active management itself:

> To me, does the plan mean anything? Does it have any legs? I mean everyone has gone through this once already or twice in some places, why bother? Why do it if it's not going to mean a darn thing? So why focus on a project, a very intensive project that, that just becomes a process in and of itself, and the process becomes important and not the end result. And I would say that we ought to focus on the end result which is active management of these lands and that doesn't necessarily mean for timber extraction but that is obviously going to be a part of it. But we need to get the systems back into some semblance of natural order because they are way out of whack right now. A plan, is not going to do that. A plan is going to employ a bunch of bureaucrats. And then somebody will appeal it and they will throw it out. And you will be back looking at another plan, there is lots of plans out there. They know what they need to do, let them do it, that the professionals do their jobs. That's what they need to do.

A reforestation professional in Sandpoint expressed the sentiment that there is inadequate enforcement in general in Northwest forests and that people are in the forest violating existing regulations:

> The timber they're not supposed to be cutting, they're cutting. Maybe sites that have been marked for spotted owl habitat are cut through. You don't have – the Forest Service doesn't have the money to enforce these new practices, so it really doesn't make a big difference to come up with a new forest plan if you can't initiate it and follow through. And I think that's what's been happening at the same time that the Forest Service started realizing the problems and addressing them is also the same time they started getting cutbacks. So, you know, you can

> come up with this glorious plan and say we're doing this, but if you don't got people on the field enforcing it, and if you can't come up with a better system that maybe would actually reward the contractor for a job done correctly, as opposed to penalizing them with the current bid system, I think would make a major change. I've seen so many violations in the Northwest. I've worked on units that were supposed to have spotted owl growth, and we're planting through them because the loggers cut them down and nobody enforced it.

Those involved in previous planning processes were often frustrated by the lack of results or the inability to follow through on plans. Although respondents understood that the Forest Service had barriers to implementing plans, the lack of follow-through made providing input seem futile.

4.6.2 Balance between varying values, uses, and needs

Interviewees generally expressed an understanding of and empathy for the difficulties involved in addressing the varying values, needs and uses within the IPNF communities. Although participants acknowledged these challenges, they do wish to see balance between varying values, uses, and needs. Often this balance is referred to as multiple-use, although many point out that the connotation of 'multiple use' can have ecologically negative implications. Many of the respondents rather than expressing their desires with the value-laden term that is very contextual—sustainability—have expressed specifically what that sustainable balance is to them.

Along these lines a member of the Coeur d'Alene focus group offered the following perspective:

> Their [Forest Service] emphasis should be on balancing all these needs. They need to be able to develop a process that they can work within—a framework. They are so balled up in bureaucracy that the half-full goal isn't there. They need to set up their parameters so that the ten or fifteen percent on either side isn't satisfied and that the seventy or eighty percent in the middle of the ground is satisfied and go from there.

This individual from Priest Lake communicates how productive the mixed mandate is for forest resource management:

> The U.S. Forest Service has a mixed mandate to manage for return, as well as to manage for wildlife, as well as to manage for recreation. And that certainly is a lot more beneficial to our community than the alternative that we have from the Idaho Department of Lands, which is simply to managed for the highest and best use regardless of impact on the recreation or impact on wildlife or anything else.

The following two interview excerpts represent the large portion of the respondents which value the balanced efforts in forest resource management. Elements of sustainability are often included in the desires of future management. A Bonners Ferry business owner said:

> Well, I hope they don't narrow their vision to any one focus. I don't think any one issue is overwhelmingly demanding of attention. I hope they keep a balanced view towards resources, toward harvesting and toward conservation issues, wildlife issues. I would like to see them take a responsible stand on all of those issues. Maybe focus more on scientific and biological expediency rather than political expediency. Not to say that social and political issues shouldn't be, should be ignored or shouldn't be addressed, it should be well balanced for both, and biological and scientific issues.

A Forest Service employee discussed the balance of varied forest uses:

> We need to draw a balance on motorized recreational component. You've got to provide that. That's a very legitimate use of the national forest system lands. But what we also need to do is make sure that those aren't competing with the need to have areas of wildlife … So that we have lots that connected like the old growth or the….or whatever so you can have the dispersed corridors that the wildlife travel. Especially in the wide range of carnivore species. So, I mean I like to have grizzly bears and wolves on my district….. I want the whole gamut of animals that were here back…. I like us to be healing these strains so that, I mean, right now we don't have any endangered species on this district because it's been so hammered, pushed them all out years before the Endangered Species Act was passed.

This interviewee from Sandpoint expressed the need for balance through the example of the potential regional ecological, social and economic impacts produced by the proposed Rock Creek Mine in Montana. This interviewee sought balance in terms of the many different costs that need to be weighed regionally to make thorough management decisions:

> We also have to keep in mind that we do need timber, we do need minerals, and we need to come up with a plan that some of these other values hold an equal baton to mining and logging. You know it's been out of balance for years and years and years and it's got to come back. We're already fighting from behind. And I think that should be the focus. You know, a perfect example is there's a mine that's being – threatening our lake right now. Lake Pend Oreille is a special resource. We have been fighting this mine for ten years. What's going to happen to all the recreation businesses down here when the lake's no longer suitable for swimming, for, you know, it's just ridiculous. Why should one mine have such an impact? I think the Forest Service needs to listen to people that there are other

> uses for the forest besides just taking the trees. I mean a lot of people consider fish a top priority. And they're fighting tooth and nail and it just seems odd that the factions of low impact have to fight so hard against the impacting factions. You know what I'm saying? It just seems really out of balance. I'd like to see it come into balance with everybody's use equal.

Timber harvest, according to this interviewee from Coeur d'Alene, is a major determinant of what is in balance or sustainable. The desire for sustainable harvests is expressed in terms of logging practices that happened historically and how that has proved to be unsustainable.

> We need to get, we need to find that balance. I think the key is the Forest Service in the last century didn't practice sustainable yield management, they practiced cutting way too much wood, some of which was dictated by Congress, a lot of which was dictated by local politics and the Forest Service not taking a stand and say we can't continue to do that, we can't continue to cut 60 billion board feet out of this forest every year. So I think they need to come up with a realistic figure of what can be sustained. And that may mean no harvest for the next 20 or 30 years while the forests recover. But at some point I would imagine that there is a sustainable level that would keep a few small mills going and employing people for the next thousand years and would make some sense. That's the way I would like to see us go, rather than this of boom and bust cycle, cut way too much and then have nothing to cut and have all these huge problems. The first responsibility that the Forest Service has now is to get our watersheds back into the condition that they were in, prior to 1880, when people started logging around here in a big way.

This widespread desire to see balanced use and sustainable management of the resources within the national forests is very congruent to the laws governing the USFS. The difficulty seems to remain in finding the sustainable balance for the communities, ecosystems and economies.

4.6.3 Recreation

Because of the increase in the human population in the region and rising interests in outdoor recreation in the past 50 years, as well as the finite amount of land and resources within the IPNF, the perceived need to manage people that use these resources is increasing.

4.6.3.1 Importance of recreation

Although there is a growing awareness for the need of recreation management to protect resources and recreational areas, there is a large portion of the public that is concerned with the access and recreational opportunities that exist in forests adjacent to their communities. This concern for recreational opportunities, as expressed by this

interviewee from Sandpoint, is important as recreational experiences connect people with the forests:

> That's number one. I think recreation is important for many reasons. It gets people connected to the other resources. And becomes a voice for those resources in the future.

The trail system within the IPNF was the focus of dissatisfaction regarding recreation within the IPNF. There is a general discontent not only with the trail system itself, but also with the reference material that supplies the public with sufficient and current trail information. This widely shared sentiment is expressed by the following Sandpoint resident working for an environmental organization:

> I'd like to see the Forest Service maintain – I know there are a lot of trails that are advertised in their little books that I've tried to hike. And you go out there and they haven't maintained them in years and years. There's a lot, like there's Goat Peak over near Scotchman's Peak that they could do. There's a whole bunch of trails that they don't have the money in their budget for maintenance and I think that would help off-set some of the growth. Because then you wouldn't have, you know, people using the same trails over and over.

From an economic standpoint within the Priest Lake region, this interviewee expresses the need to maintain recreational opportunities in the area for fear that visitors will go elsewhere with their tourist dollars.

> Managing more for population growth and access. I know habitat and animal recovery is important, but there are people who come here to enjoy the area, and if they can't access anything other than the lake, they will start deciding to go elsewhere. Especially in the winter months, if they close down a lot of trails, we will have to close in the winter.

This individual from the Silver Valley region expresses a desire for recreational use for everyone. This includes populations who are physically less able, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Although there are conflicting management regimes with this request, this individual expresses a desire to have some of the recreational opportunities available for the general public and for those who are less physically able:

> I would like to see their focus as a unilateral access plan that absolutely focuses on shared recreational opportunities for the rich, the poor, the handicapped, the healthy, the week and meek. And while and the Hiawatha trail is great for those that have got two good strong legs, there are a lot of people that are handicapped or young children that could never see that, with their family, unless there is somebody strong enough to peddle them on the back of their bike. There are some people in here with canes that will never get to see it. I think there needs to

be a more homogenous approach to access. I believe in everybody having the opportunity. And I understand that there are some things in conflict.

4.6.3.2 People management

As stated above, the desire for 'people management' stems from the increasing use of areas that are finite in size and desire to constrain certain impacts. Many individuals using the IPNF express the need for people management. Interviewees also acknowledged that this type of management--the management of people and uses--seems to be among the most challenging components as indicated by a Coeur d'Alene resident:

> It's the people factor that is the big variable and the toughest to get a handle on because – sanitation……people don't take care of human waste. And we have to figure out how are we going to deal with sanitation. But it's becoming more and more managing people than really managing natural resources. There's some studies that basically say the world's probably already surpassed a comfortable capacity. You know whether we are populating people or something like that right now and maybe about 2 billion's about where we should be. I don't know, but obviously the more people we have the more we need to regulate.

This community leader from Sandpoint expressed concern about mechanized recreational impacts. He states that the social ramifications from motorized impacts seem to have more costs to the national forests and its users than benefits for the individual user:

> I guess maybe because I'm not an off-road biker or a snowmobiler I don't have much sympathy for people who do that. You know, I have a tendency to think that using machines like that out in the forests tend to be more damaging to the forest than they are exhilarating to the individual. I wouldn't win many popularity contests probably saying that, but I don't have that kind of passion. There are a lot of people in our area who come in to North Idaho because of the forests, for hiking, for camping, and I think it's great that they're there. I'm just hoping that forest practices, as well as administrative strategies can keep people from being more irresponsible than sometimes they are – with fires and trash and this kind of thing.

4.7 Summary

Perceptions of forest resource management in the Idaho Panhandle National Forests yields an array of views among stakeholders. A majority of participants in this study believe that local Forest Service employees are trying to manage the resource with the best of intentions. Although there is substantial conflict as to which management regimes are beneficial or harmful to the forest and communities. Concurring perceptions of forest management also exist. Most participants believed that the IPNF was lacking in resource management because of the constraints placed on them by federal Forest Service policy,

the appeals process, lack of funding for management, environmental legislation, and the fear of litigation.

The ultimate goals promoted by interviewees are sustainable forests and sustainable communities. The difficulty lies in the varying opinions as to what is sustainable and how sustainability is obtained. The poles of the environmental continuum are not so extreme in the Idaho Panhandle as one might assume. Often there is overlap in opinions, attitudes, and values among stakeholders with stereotypically conflicting ideology.

CHAPTER FIVE: FOREST SERVICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Representatives of the Forest Service interact with members of resource-dependent communities in many ways. The effects and influence of this interaction can be both positive and negative. For the better part of a century, the Forest Service has grown to become an integral part of many rural community areas that originally settled close to or within vast forests. As such, the Forest Service as a federal institution and through its local representatives has particular influences on the livelihood of local people through its policies and practices.

The community-agency relationship may be characterized by a complex set of costs and benefits, as with most any relationship. We describe local people's feelings and perceptions about how "real" these connections and relationships truly are, even if they remain intangible and symbolic. Some dimensions of these relationships are positive; some are not positive in that they reveal tensions, conflict, and points of emotional stress. The dynamics of these relationships between the IPNF and local communities are highlighted in this chapter.

5.1 Influence of the Forest Service on communities

Most participants did acknowledge in some form that agency decision-making can have significant influence on local places. The depth of influence varies by community and by the interviewee's perceptions. Respondents often felt very strongly about the influence of the Forest Service on their town whether they considered the IPNF "irrelevant" because of decreased timber sales, or felt that the IPNF permeated everything about their community. This retired Forest Service employee we interviewed for the study talked about the substantial effect agency personnel have on the community whether they realize it or not:

> My feeling during my career was that the agency had way more effect on the lives in a community than they realized. And they were having an effect on people's lives seemingly uncaringly—that bothered me. On average, our incomes were higher than the loggers' incomes, and the loggers were generally one of the higher paid occupations in the county. Few people in the agencies ever had to worry about losing their jobs, and they didn't realize the control they were having on people.

People based in small communities with strong ties to natural resource management often felt that the influence of the Forest Service was very strong. One community leader indicated:

> As mayor, my impression is that I don't have as much impetus in our future as the forest supervisor does—who is, of course, a non-elected bureaucrat who is subject to national whims of policy making regardless

> of whether it is best for this community or not. And that is a grave concern that has shown its ugly side in the past and will likely be continuing friction.

In this segment of an interview with an individual from Coeur d'Alene, the interviewee notes that the impact on the city of Coeur d'Alene itself is greater on specific interest groups, whereas the impact on communities in the more extraction-dependent Silver Valley is broader.

> We've got a Jekyll/Hyde here in the sense that the economy of Coeur d'Alene is strong whereas in the Silver Valley the Forest Service can have a major impact on their economic well-being – both in terms of just Forest Service employees living there and the contributions they make that way and the activities on federal lands. They have such a high percentage of land based in Shoshone County in federal ownership. And so in terms of Coeur d'Alene I see it more as special interest groups within the community than the community itself.

Interviewees perceived that forest management had effects on communities both in terms of its impact on recreation and tourism as well as on timber flow. Several respondents noted the perceived impact on recreation. One respondent from Silver Valley, working in education, discussed the impact of the IPNF on recreation, timber and on the protection of the community from fire:

> Well in the broad sense the decisions the Forest Service makes have a tremendous impact on our community both through the tourism trade, recreational access both for the local patrons and also as far as tourism. So we need to have a real strong working relationship for the community economically and for the community recreationally. There is no sense living here if you can't enjoy the woods. With 78% of Shoshone County being natural resources or national forests, state lands, or BLM lands. This isn't as ideal a place to live if you are confined to the concrete of the valleys. But if you can get out and go experience the rivers and the mountains it is a wonderful place to live. So decisions the Forest Service makes about our access is critical to the well-being of the community. The decisions the Forest Service makes about its harvest is critical as far as economics for the local timber industry and the local logging communities. It has a tremendous impact there. Forest practices decisions is probably the most important, if they fail to protect us from forest fires we can have a repeat of the history of the 1890's and the 1910's and 1930's when the community was burned out.

Another impact of the IPNF revisited by interviewees was the issue of school funding. Across communities in the Panhandle, people recognized the impact of 25% of timber receipts coming back to their schools. Over the past few years, the decline of timber

money has affected the economic viability of the schools. One resident of the Silver Valley area explains the impact for his community:

> Basically what happened was 25% of all the timber receipts would go back to the counties, and that is true anywhere in the U.S., so when we are producing 100 million feet of timber per year, and making $50 million, they were getting 25% of that. But recently, there is what they call the Craig-Widen Act, and basically that imitates the old timber receipts-like Shoshone Co. is going to have a windfall over the next 5 years of about $400,000 per year dollars to really help the community, but the old days of timber production are down.

There were mixed feelings regarding the Craig-Widen Act that would give federal money to school districts based on higher levels of timber receipts for five years. Some welcomed the money. Others we interviewed saw the money as "welfare" or as a ruse to eliminate support for logging in rural communities. These interviewees believed that money from the Craig-Widen Act weakened the communities' claims for timber sales based on economic need.

In addition to the overall influence noted above, these interviews also revealed a variety of specific social impacts tied to the relationships between the Forest Service and IPNF communities. First, it is important to understand the context in which many people in the Idaho Panhandle live. As noted in CHAPTER THREE, COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION, change seems to be the only constant in Panhandle communities. Currently, those tied to resource extraction economically and/or culturally feel that their way of life is under attack.

5.1.1 Losing a way of life

The feeling of many people in many communities in Northern Idaho that they are losing their way of life, or that they have to defend their lifestyle, colors their relationship with the Forest Service. The situation for many in the Idaho Panhandle is very emotionally charged with community members feeling that they are under attack from forces that they cannot control. Environmental legislation, the faltering timber and mining industries, and the centralization of Forest Service offices leaves community members wondering who their allies and enemies may be.

While the economic reality of the impact from Forest Service decision-making varies among individuals, perceptions of impact have very real social consequences (Carroll, Daniels, and Kusel 2000). For example, although many local people interpret "problems" with the Forest Service originating at a non-local level, the brunt of any blame attributed to the agency is more likely to manifest in local situations through the course of everyday interactions. In this type of scenario, the resulting consequences (i.e., tension, negative interaction, distrust, etc.) may create barriers to healthy relationships between the Forest Service and communities.

A health care worker in one of the extraction-based communities offered this emotional and lengthy plea about the dominant local way of life and a proposed change of ownership of a local resource:

> You can hold hearings anywhere you want, but the hearing that counts is the one you hold here. They held one here and one up in a community to the east of us and both places were totally against [the land swap]. When they got to Coeur d'Alene, every environmentalist and backpackers association you never even heard of showed up. And there was like three times more people than we could turn out here and the other town together. How fair was that? They don't live here. And those people want the wilderness experience and don't want to come to the park near here and watch logging trucks on the other side of the mountain going by and see the roads cut in—they don't want to see that. It is not wilderness, not the spiritual experience they want even though it's gorgeous up there. With this kind of thing, the Forest Service needs to be more sensitive about helping to preserve a way of life that helped make this country great. You know all the homes that were built all over this nation were built of logs that came out of these locations. And these people are still willing to provide this for our country instead of having to go and watch them rape Canada's timber. For crying out loud, you can get logs from Siberia right now because we have complicated things so bad here. We need to get back to some roots here; I don't know how you fix this because things are so polarized, but the Forest Service needs to have a commercial arm so they can do these cuts effectively.

In Bonners Ferry, another individual summarized the issues over losing a way of life as personal and collective impact:

> The United States needs small communities like Bonners Ferry. If it comes to the point where push comes to shove and you start taking the livelihood away from these people, something ugly could happen in town. I hate to say that in that way, but what can we be retrained for? You know, I'm 50 years old, you know what I mean? What we do out here is real good, and there are good families, good Christian families that work hard, you know what I mean? And they pay their taxes, they're proud to be American, and then you get outside interests coming in and slowly trying to shut these down through Endangered Species or other avenues they look at. And it is just not right. Bonners Ferry—you need it. It is the heartbeat of America. It is, it really is. I just hope that people have enough good common sense all the way to Washington, D.C. to understand that. You can't just put some of the endangered species back; it can't be like it was two hundred years ago, it just can't be. I wish it would sometimes. I know we could get out of this rat race and that we're trying to make a living in and working so hard. When you work seven days a week sometimes just to get ahead. But it just can't be. But like I said, there is a very equal or happy medium between animal and man

> that we can work together, all of us, and the benefits will become tremendous, I believe. For Bonners Ferry, I have pretty well said it all.

Passages from interviews in this section hint at growing anger and the possibility of actions taken as a result of that anger. Respondents use words and phrases in these passages such as "pissed," "real threat" and "something ugly could happen." The growing anger among rural communities has been documented by others (see Dyer 1997, and Strassel 2001 for further assessment of this phenomenon also found in the Panhandle.)

A logger from Sandpoint emphasized that many people in these communities are simply trying to get by, doing what they know how to do, and believing they make a contribution to society, but suffering increased anxieties:

> There's guys that had to re-mortgage their houses, move, relocate. It's created a lot of stress and anxiety between families. So a lot of people have went and done other things. It's sad, you know. There's a tradition in logging, you know. People have done it for years. You know, I'm third generation. And you've done it all your life and you're out there just trying to do a good thing. And we're all just hard working people, and try to do everything like you're supposed to—you're just about taxed out of business anyway with insurance and taxes and all the other things that goes on with the government. And then here's someone comes along and throws injunctions and shuts everything down. And you know, there are people getting really upset about it. I mean they're really upset.

And as the following individual from Bonners Ferry noted, concerns about the future way of life in communities are tied to management policies, especially related to resource access, as well as how those government agency decisions take effect locally:

> I think people's biggest fear is probably the government control that we keep seeing. In the agricultural industry, and the timber industry too, there is some frustration. Even though you try to do things differently with your practices to appease some of the environmental regulations, it seems like you never get any credit for doing anything positively. They are still beating up on you like you're doing nothing and almost imply that you are just intentionally trying to do things that are destructive to the environment. There is also a real fear of government agencies because they've gotten such a foothold in here with a lot of the wildlife habitat and those lands have been locked up. Certainly, I think most of the local people's response is that we are already doing our share to create habitat. So I think they feel a real threat by government agencies and government regulations, and I think justifiably so. There are few counties that have just as much federal and state-owned land locked up and preserved for endangered species as in this county.

5.2 Perceived benefits of the IPNF

Some participants in this study indicated the IPNF had a variety of positive impacts on their communities. According to respondents, these range from providing timber and recreation opportunities, enhancing the community, protecting aesthetic resources, contributing to the economy as well as protecting land and watersheds.

5.2.1 Social benefits

One positive social impact of the IPNF management on communities discussed by respondents centered around district-level employees and the leadership of the district rangers. St. Maries district was frequently noted as having positive social dynamics between the district office and the community, although there were also sometimes conflicts between these two entities. Interviewees from Priest River/Priest Lake, Bonners Ferry, Silver Valley, and Sandpoint also had positive comments about the social impact of the district office on their communities.

The local Forest Service employees were usually seen as a part of the community. In Bonners Ferry, one respondent told us:

> I think that as a whole the community supports the local personnel. They are very, they are part of our community. Their kids go to the school, they play ball with our kids, it's not like there is two sides. I'm sure they take a lot of criticism and all because they [the district employees] are right here in your, in somebody's face, when they're right here. Or you can go down to Coeur d'Alene and sit in the supervisors office or to the regional office. But I think as a whole, I think they are respected and liked. They are part of the community. I don't think they are seen as the bad guys themselves.

The St. Maries district office was noted several times for supporting local businesses and charities. There is a fine line between economic and social benefits to communities, supporting local businesses provides both positive economic impacts and promotes a positive relationship between the Forest Service and the community. In addition, the survival of small local businesses helps diversify the economy and maintain the structure of the community.

Here, two individuals from St. Maries discuss the social and economic benefits of local purchasing by the Forest Service:

> I think that they [the Forest Service] work with the community, and they try to spend money locally, whenever possible. At least our local ones do, I think they really do. And that is a plus for the economy. So I do think that our local people do try to help the economy as much as they can. I know that whenever they can, they spend local. When they have a fire or something, which is when they can spend money, to replace their supplies,

> they tend to spread it out, buy local all they can, and do their service local. And that is a plus for the economy.
>
> In this local area, for one, they are a big employer in this area. I think they do a really good job out of Hoyt Flats as far as working with the community, with the school really well. They work with us really well on any type of fires, they try to give us, all of the local businesses as much business as possible. They don't go out of the area. And I think that is really a plus. And I think that comes from the local management. I think that they are doing an excellent job of trying to work with us.

On top of contributions to local businesses, Forest Service employees at the local level contribute time and goods to volunteer and charitable efforts in their communities. One district employee who lives in a community dealing with a great deal of change explained his connection to the local community this way:

> [This place] is in a flux. They are very dependent on us, and one of the reasons I am here is to be a community leader. I used to go to all of the meetings, and just sit there, let people know I am there. Listen to there issues and help when I can. Let them know about federal funding. Programs that are there, like you heard me talk about before. And very much what I do is also be a community member, I coach, and go to all of the little league games, and help the kids. Its kind of what I like to do. My wife volunteers, in fact, she volunteered to teach at the middle school. She won a volunteer award. You know, it is incredible. And that is what is expected of her too. It is almost like being an officers' wife. There are expectations for her to be involved in the community. I see my role here very much as a public servant, as well as administrating a natural resource program.

In addition to volunteering time and providing community leadership, local constituents highlighted the provision of charitable contributions by Forest Service personnel and assistance with economic and community development. One resident of the St. Maries area discussed his long term relationship with district rangers over the years.

> We have had good relationships with our District Rangers. They have always been active and involved in the community, they have worked very hard with various groups to obtain grants. Active, you know just family people, schools, churches, involved in the Economic Development Foundation. I think that our relationship with our district office here has been wonderful. And I have nothing but admiration for the various District Rangers that I have personally worked with.

A community leader in Sandpoint also discussed the contributions of local Forest Service employees while at the same time noting their limitations:

> I think the District Ranger and his crew – they're accessible, they participate in community events, they come to the Chamber meetings. I think they try as best as is possible to keep their finger on the pulse of the community. They're concerned, they listen. But again, you know, as a mid-level bureaucrat there's not a great deal that you can do, if there's policy from Washington prohibiting you from doing something different.

5.2.2 Recreation benefits

In addition to the social benefits of the IPNF, participants focused on recreational benefits of living near the IPNF. Most respondents discussed hiking, huckleberry picking and many mentioned hunting, fishing and camping. Another common theme was teaching about or experiencing the forest with children. One resident of St. Maries told us:

> I recreate in the forest like a lot of other folks do. I just went camping this past weekend with family. I have young kids, so actually the focus of ours is to go out and try and teach the kids about the forest. Teach them tree species, about relationships with animals, trees and fish. We go fishing. We go camping. We go boating. So those are the primary uses on the personal side.

Similar to the education focus of other interviewees, this focus group participant discusses the need for forest-based recreation as a link to understanding natural processes.

> With the local folks, it provides that connection back to the land. There's people who think milk comes out of boxes and boards come from the board store and they don't have that connection, whereas we have the forest close enough that maybe we can make that connection.

Other uses mentioned included cross-country and downhill skiing, snowshoeing, firewood cutting and gathering, and Christmas tree cutting for family use. Motorized recreation was mentioned less frequently but included driving, 4-wheeling, riding ATVs and snowmobiles.

Recreational use provided a significant connection between community members and the forest. It was a method by which those with extractive and those with non-extractive ties all connected to the resources.

Nearly everyone we spoke with talked about his or her use of the IPNF for recreation (with the exception of Native Americans—see CHAPTER SIX, NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS for details). There was a recognition that the forest provided amenities that significantly added to their quality of life through hunting, motorized recreation, hiking, camping and other

activities. With recent road closures, some interviewees discussed the diminishing forest recreation access and were concerned about this for themselves and their communities. Individuals from more diversified communities such as Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint and Spokane focused more on recreation than others.

One respondent from Sandpoint discussed the provision of recreational land from the IPNF:

> There are a lot of people in Bonner County now that have moved into the area – if you want to say they're maybe "health nuts" – they just get out and hike a lot. So all the trail systems and the road systems are pretty important to get to these areas. And they get out – I've seen people in some of the strangest places, out just hiking. So, I mean the forest is being utilized, but I think it needs to be maintained. The road systems, trail systems need to be maintained too. The trail system in the Panhandle is probably one of the less maintained areas. It seems like the trails are going downhill.

Focus group participants included recreational opportunities in many of their comments. These respondents discussed their use of the trail system for motorized and non-motorized recreation and the benefits it provides both socially and economically. For instance, the following comments are from participants in the Coeur d'Alene focus group:

> The trail system is kind of unique for this area. A lot of bicycle enthusiasts come up for that. It's a trail system that is maintained well.

> Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, motorcycle riding, ATV, horseback riding, cross-country skiing…The whole list. We all benefit from being able to do all of this. Recreation also goes back to the dealers—the people who sell all the equipment and instruments people use.

5.2.3 Economic benefits

For some interviewees the IPNF was seen as beneficial to their economic livelihood. Often, discussion of the economic benefits of the IPNF focused on non-extraction based amenities including recreation, tourism, and aesthetics. Most people interviewed believed timber resources held by the IPNF amounted to an economic "loss" for their communities due to its perceived inaccessibility as a commodity. A few respondents discussed harvesting timber, recreational outfitting and guiding services and benefits to retail and real estate sales. A focus group participant working in the recreation industry explained:

> There's a certain amount of my money through my business activity on the forests that gets put into the general Forest Service funds in use fees, which I don't look at it quite the way the lumber industry would look at stumpage fees propelling the forest stewardship. That's a minor amount of money, but that money I turn

> around to those same four kids working as guides for me in their twenties. This past summer, one of my managers was able to buy a house. He is a hard-working individual and he gets to do what he loves to do. The reasons those dollars are there is because of things that have changed in forest management in the past ten to twenty years.

A realtor from the Priest River/Priest Lake area discussed how the IPNF benefits both real estate sales and tourism.

> A lot of people are drawn here because there is a lot of National Forest Service. People are always requesting land that backs up to National Forest Service and all that. I guess they like the no neighbors, partially, and then just for use. They get, you know, if we didn't have a lot of national forest around here, we would not have nearly the tourism we get. Which tourism is also another industry that helps us.

While the IPNF was seen as a provider of recreational opportunities, many interviewees were skeptical about the contribution of the IPNF to local economic development. A forester from Coeur d'Alene explained the difference between providing recreation opportunities and providing for economic gain.

> I don't have a good opinion of what is going on. I think the national forests have sort of come into a sort of paralysis or fibrillation where little if any productive activity is getting accomplished. I think the Forest Service is sort of defining success for themselves as planning, thinking, monitoring. And I don't think they define success as delivering a product, a service to the community at large. I think they have an attitude that if we stand still and do nothing we are going to be criticized, if we attempt to do something we're going to be criticized, so we would rather take the criticism for having done little or nothing. I am not seeing a huge contribution to the regional economy, or people's lives locally, other than the forest obviously does provide recreation opportunities and a chance for people to utilize the forest. But it is providing little or nothing in terms of the economic enterprise to the community.

This leads us to the next section of the assessment of the Forest Service/Community relations on negative economic impacts of the IPNF.

5.3 Community and economic development costs related to the IPNF

While perceptions of benefits of the IPNF existed, perceptions of the IPNF as a barrier to economic and community development were very prevalent. In many interviews strong feelings surfaced regarding the IPNF's role as a hindrance to economic development. This sentiment rested largely on decreases in the availability of timber from the IPNF.

5.3.1 Timber

The IPNF is seen as a diminishing or unreliable source of timber products. Generally, the focus of interviewees was on the loss of jobs created by the reduction in available timber. However, other respondents discussed the far-reaching impacts of the reduction of timber. There is also an undercurrent in this data that suggests the perception that outsiders and the Forest Service do not care about the loss in timber jobs or the related impacts to communities. This perception—real or not—has been viewed as a source with the potential to sour the relationship between the Forest Service and local constituencies.

In general, a prevalent perception exists among Panhandle communities that the IPNF has a negative impact on their economy and employment. This perception was found across the spectrum of respondents from Saint Maries, Priest River and Bonners Ferry and among people in the forest and natural resource professions in Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint and Priest Lake. One interviewee in Priest River told us simply:

> How do they [the IPNF] impact the local people? Well there are decisions and policies right now that have impacted the people because they have shut off jobs. Period.

Another respondent from Bonners Ferry explained:

> Well any time they change the cut here it has a profound effect, this county is more dependent on timber than I think any other county in Idaho. And so any ripple that affects the cut throws people out of work, and decreases the economic activity in the county.

The following quotes elaborate on the larger rippling effects of job loss related to timber. A forester from Coeur d'Alene discusses socioeconomic and ecological issues related to the far-reaching impacts of timber sales and his perception that it is at least partly the fault of the Forest Service.

> I have been witness to the growth that has occurred in this community and the surrounding area. I think there is a number of very significant issues that have arisen with respect to the national forests and the forest within this community. I guess I will summarize them in the forest industry in general, since that is my profession, and in my immediate neighborhood there is an awful lot of people who make their living off of that. One [impact] is basically the total halt of any removal or extraction of any products off of national forest land. Which is a definite impact on the economy. If you read the newspaper today Crown Pacific has just closed down a mill in Coeur d'Alene, and people I know are losing their jobs again. You combine that with the unavailability of timber off of the national forest land, it makes an intense pressure on private lands for harvest. Which, in my opinion has led to, or is leading to, despite things

> like the Forest Practices Act, perhaps an unsustainable rate of harvest off of private lands….Well, I mentioned early on that because of the change in the industry and the cutbacks on the volume of wood, one, there's a lot of people unemployed, they had to change careers, they had to move, they had to leave. Those jobs have been replaced by lower paying service jobs, that's probably the most significant impact.

A farmer working in the St. Maries area who has social ties to the timber community explained some of the ways the decisions for the IPNF can ripple through a community. He describes that having Forest Service land adjacent to their community is "a sacrifice" for the community:

> Timber is our only resource here to make a living and have quality of life. The forest is our resource and so decisions that are made impact everyone. There was a big scare this last spring that mills would close down and that affects all our institutions. You know, if our kids are not as well educated because of the school's funding, despair, drunkenness, child abuse, I mean, it all sort of runs together. I'd say it's a sacrifice.

5.3.2 Impacts on small-scale loggers

In addition to the overall negative economic impact perceived by community members in the Panhandle, a specific perceived problem with the loss of small-scale logging and small mills was also mentioned repeatedly. The following quote from people in the Priest Lake area who operate a small mill describes the problem. This issue, however, was highlighted by a number of individuals in each community.

> When we first bought the mill, the Forest Service used to sell what they call a "green slip" sale. That is where a small time logger could go out into the woods and find a small number of trees that were either dead or dying from a storm or whatever, and he could approach the Forest Service and they would go up and look at this, and say, 'all right, we will put this up on a green slip sale.' The logger that found that would pay the Forest Service so much for the salvage, and then he would bring the timber into our mill, or whatever mill he was close to. Now the practice has changed to where anybody who finds a stand of dead trees or something and approaches the forest service, they have to put it up for bid for every logger that is qualified to bid on it. That really hurt the economy around here. We got so many logs in our mill from the green slips- it helped the little logger that lived here. The one that couldn't afford to be licensed and bonded to get out a 5 or 10 million foot sale. He could go out and find a number of these little sites and cut them. It really hurt the community, I think.

One forester, from outside the Forest Service, in the Coeur d'Alene area proposed a partial solution to the problem of negative economic impacts on communities:

> Roads get shut down, timber sales don't happen, mills close. I mean I was talking before about the mills using the Forest Service as a scapegoat for why they're closing down. But there is some significant impact of that in terms of supply and mills shut down and jobs being lost, you know. People trying to find other work that doesn't pay half of what the mills work would have paid. You know if they could find a way to employ more people doing actual forest restoration at livable wages, you know, I think that would be a very good direction for them. But you know again much forest restoration is going to involve road and cutting trees of some form or another.

5.3.3 Impacts on recreation access

More economically diversified communities seemed to perceive fewer impacts on the community as a whole. Interviewees from communities with stronger recreation-bases (i.e., Priest Lake and Sandpoint) as well as those communities trying to develop tourism (i.e., Silver Valley), were more concerned about the reduction of access to the forest because of road closures than loss of timber to the economy. Some participants saw this as a hindrance to tourism development.

> If I can't have access to my forest and they can't have access to their forest then we've got a big, big problem. There has to be a balancing act somewhere along those lines, and that's why we're here today even talking about it.

5.4 Lack of concern for local communities

Compounding the effects of the loss of timber jobs is the feeling in some rural communities that others do not care about impacts that are evident. These "others" can include the Forest Service, environmental organizations based elsewhere, or non-local constituents. One business owner from Saint Maries described the closure of mills and his feeling that the Forest Service does not care about it.

> The timber industry is not what I would call a real profitable business to be in. The mill down here finally made money last month for the first time in several years. They talked about closing it, they closed the Jaype mill over by Orofino, and they have closed a lot of mills around here. The ones in Grangeville, most of them are closed. They closed the one in a Horseshoe Bend. They closed the one in Cascade. They haven't closed the one in Tamarack yet. But why, why are they closing and all of these mills? Because the resource isn't there, the Forest Service has been under so much pressure, particularly when the Democrats were in power that the Forest Service doesn't care. They just let them close. And that's a bad thing.

Another individual from Sandpoint who works in the wildlife field discussed the effects of reduced timber harvesting on the Panhandle and the lack of concern from non-extraction based lobbyists:

> So we're still going to have the forests here. They're going to be not managed, mismanaged, and sometimes by not managing you have mismanagement. And even though we have some of the ripest forests in the world, we're not allowed to utilize them. I think that's a shame. I think it's a shame to the American people because it raises their taxes. When they took road credits away from timber sales – what they did in effect was they cut off the 25% fund, which went to the counties and to the schools within the counties. That hurt, that hurt big time. And the people that pushed for that don't belong to the timber counties, they could care less. And again there goes your taxes to help pay for all that. And there are counties within the state of Idaho right now – Shoshone County is a good one – where they don't have enough money to fund their school districts.

5.5 Trust in the Forest Service

Compounding the anxieties regarding perceived negative economic impacts and the lack of concern by the Forest Service regarding local communities is the perceived lack of trust in the Forest Service's motives (Krannich and Smith 1998). While the focus of the previous section came largely from extraction-based communities and individuals, the lack of trust exists from the perspectives of all interests and populations. While most agreed the Forest Service has a trust or credibility problem, some suggested that this was improving. One Forest Service employee told us:

> The Forest Service's credibility isn't very good. Environmentalists accuse us of cutting our way to forest health. They just look at it as another way to get logs to the mill.

Another Forest Service employee perception linked the lack of trust in the agency by environmentalists with the mandated level of timber cut by Congress.

> So we have a lot of forestry issues, and what I would like to see…I think a lot of the reason that the public doesn't trust us with this timber management is because they know we have a target. Anybody who knows anything about the forest service knows we are mandated by congress to produce so much timber. … I think, if you are a die-hard environmental group that is opposed to cutting anything on the national forest, no matter what kind of dialog you and I have, this target is always holding over our heads. No matter when I say 'trust me,' and 'what you are saying makes good sense-good for the watershed, good for the environment.' I [speaking

> as the environmental group] know the ranger's gotta make a 20-million cut.

Similar issues of agency trust were discussed in both of the focus group sessions as well. As explained by one of the Spokane focus group members, Forest Service personnel may often be considered untrustworthy in their everyday roles of doing their job:

> On the debate over whether to cut down the dead trees, for fire or bug protection—in order to better manage the forests? That argument seems to be real prevalent in the Panhandle—that you can somehow make the forest better by actively managing it in some way to cut down as many trees as you can, whether they're dead or alive. It doesn't inspire a lot of confidence on my part that the forest managers really know what they're talking about when they say things like that and try to use those arguments. So, I guess I really don't have that much trust or faith in the Forest Service as land managers who have a real interest in balancing the environment with economics and with tourism and recreation.

Distrust existed within the extraction communities as well. This distrust ranged from people who told us the Environmental Impact Statements were done poorly to allow for environmental appeals, to those who questioned the desire of the Forest Service to provide any timber at all from the forest. One logging company owner said the following about the agency in relation to communication between the Forest Service and people who work in the woods:

> Oh, I think most people are pretty skeptical. But there again, it depends on which ones they're talking about. Individually maybe it's good, but as a whole, they would be a little skeptical about it. It's a government thing and I really don't blame the Forest Service. I think they are in a pretty tough spot, but I really think they need to take a stand.

In many ways, the level of trust for Forest Service personnel reduces to whether and how they maintain a relationship with a local community. Another farmer we talked to within the Bonners Ferry explained his perception:

> I think a lot of the government agencies have created their own problems because a lot of the spokespersons have not been sensitive to the community. Most of them have not committed to saying, 'Well, we as an agency want to do this, here's how it will impact your community, and what can we do as an agency to minimize those impacts?' I think there is a real move to change that now. . . there's a lot more open dialogue to do that, but again there is just a lot of skepticism and distrust. Most people feel they have already made their decisions when they ask for input.

Another project participant—a retired forester from outside the Forest Service—who wrote and mailed in a follow-up letter to our interaction with him—evaluated what he

sees as a different trend and double standard threatening forest productivity. The following quote is from his letter:

> I'm really disgusted, angry, frustrated, etc., etc., at the Forest Service's inability to manage the national forests as they were intended to be cared for. . . The near criminal neglect and waste of Idaho's forest resources caused by the network on the largest landholder in Idaho would be the subject of a Congressional investigation, if the case was in medicine, or farming, or manufacturing. But the urban Congress people would hamstring such an investigation anyway.

A Sandpoint native employed in natural resource management did not suggest whether he believed the IPNF did or did not have credibility but he did believe that if the Forest Service demonstrated credibility, it could improve current gridlock.

> It has to be the agency has to get up and they have to demonstrate that they have the credibility to do the job that they were hired to do. And once they do that I think there's a reasonable opportunity for the public to be involved and do it in a logical manner, instead of the gridlock.

One interviewee, a clergy member from the Sandpoint area told us that he believed the Forest Service had gained credibility by working with the local community:

> I don't think many people would think the Forest Service is doing a poor job at all. There's been good effort. In the time that I've been here I've had some contact with Forest Service personnel. They've struck me as being very community minded, both individually as well as acting on behalf of them in their jobs. I've known the head forester, the last three I think, and they have been involved with community groups very responsibly and I think they see their own personal passions as having positive social benefits for the Forest Service – just the fact that they're involved says the Forest Service cares. And I think that's really great. Especially when they have to deal with – you know make some kind of unpopular decision if the person gains credibility with the community that's going to put the Service in much better position with the community.

Finally, in answer to a follow-up question regarding whether "most folks trust or distrust the Forest Service," a logger from Priest River told us his views on trust, the role of media and the ability of the Forest Service to manage the forest.

> I would say it would be distrust. But a lot of it is played on by the media. I mean they can make or break anything, so, you get media that is basically saying a green fact, or on the green side, they are going to focus on what they have done wrong instead of what they have done right. So that plays into it, you know, if you watch the news and that is all you ever see, you

> think yea, the Forest Service is screwed up, why do we have them, lets get rid of them. Lets have the state take it over? I don't think that is necessary either. I think just to give the Forest Service back the power and let them do the job they are supposed to do.

5.5.1 Leave management to the professionals

In addition to the feelings of distrust of the Forest Service by many interviewees, some individuals interviewed indicated that they did trust the Forest Service and believed that they should be left to "do their jobs." What "job" they needed to do, generally reflected the interviewee's own desires for forest management. In other words, the "job" could be preservation or protection or setting up large timber sales. In this section, we discuss the feeling that people should let the experts manage the forest (for related analysis, see the ***Science and forestry in management (4.4)*** section in CHAPTER FOUR, PERCEPTIONS OF FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT). An elected official and elected official from the St. Maries area discussed the need to allow the Forest Service to make decisions and do their job. From the context of the interview, we can assume the "opponents" referenced in this quote are environmental groups.

> What we really need to do is build confidence in the Forest Service and allow them to do their job. We need to be somewhat involved, but you can't live in their office or be in their face all the time and that is what our opponents are doing all the time. It is not ethical to be doing that.

A timber manager from Sandpoint told us about a recent public meeting he attended, and his frustration with the Forest Service's need to get public input on all of their decisions.

> They had a grizzly bear meeting and three people showed up or something. We have eight Forest Service personnel and some Fish and Game folks and they have three civilians. Part of it is that every decision they make now has a public hearing, it seems like. And they have constant requests for public input on all sorts of things, and you're just inundated. It's impossible to keep up with all the requests for public input. And I guess again we should allow folks to make decisions and let them defend their decisions and implement their decisions without having to have them check with us everyday on what they plan to do. Give them the authority and let them work with confidence that they're – they might make mistakes, but rather than have us look over their shoulder at every turn, go ahead and do it. You're the trained experts. You've met the requirements to be in your position, son of a gun, run with it.

This section and excerpt illustrate that despite local frustrations about forest management, some *also* believe Forest Service personnel are the experts and deserve the opportunity to perform the management aspects of their jobs.

Ironically, this attitude is in direct conflict with findings presented in the next section on the perceived "loss of the local Forest Service."

5.5.2 Losing the local Forest Service

Loss of the local offices and personnel emerged as another critical theme discussed by study participants. The trend of consolidating local offices and responsibilities to more centralized or more urban locations is perceived to impact the social well-being of communities and agency/community relationships. Although participants throughout the Panhandle alluded to this notion, the issue was especially prevalent and emotional within Silver Valley. The withdrawal of the Forest Service from local communities included relationship, economic and logistical problems according to interviewees. The following passages indicate some views of the effect on communities when longstanding Forest Service offices close.

One state of Idaho employee explained the general relationship structure eroding between the Forest Service and communities:

> They're losing their officers, and they have less and less experience in terms of connections to the community. They are more likely now to be put into more urban centers and have to reach out, rather than living in the communities. I think that has caused erosion in the relationships with the Forest Service. There's nothing like having people living in your community, rather than just driving in and out to mark trees.

A utilitarian interested business owner living in the Silver Valley expressed the perception of his community's loss:

> We had a ranger moving out of the area. Not only is that another loss of family to our community, but he worked well within the area. He was an integral part to the community. I would like to see more of that.

A native of the Idaho Panhandle and resident of the Silver Valley area explained her perspective the following way:

> The last three District Rangers stretched forth a welcome hand in working with the Forest Service and bridged the gap that had been left for some years and they did a lot to heal the bad relationships. With the closure of the Ranger's District office and moving all the management, the community had felt pretty well abandoned by the Forest Service. With as much national forest as we have in our county and no Forest Service office it leaves the impression of abandonment. It leaves the impression that the Forest Service is no longer managing the woods—rather they are managing their office. Their trucks need to be seen more in the woods and less on the highways.

Although many of those disgruntled with this loss of the local Forest Service perceive the problem is based at a national decision-making level, they have little outlet other than local venues to express their frustrations. One elected official from the Silver Valley area expressed the following:

> When I was growing up, the Forest Service was a favorable member of the community and a participant in the community's image. I don't think that's true anymore. The agency has become more task and paper-related, perhaps even top-heavy in some kind of management at certain things and that doesn't help community relationships. . . . I would like to see the Forest Service reestablish its presence in the rural areas where the trees are. That would enhance all of the decision-making and I am sure it would better gel the relationship between the Forest Service and the community. And I think the management of the forests would be better accomplished by that. That doesn't fit very well into the way that a bureaucracy works. So it will take strong people somewhere to make some things like that happen.

In towns suffering economic decline, the withdrawal of the Forest Service personnel means more than social abandonment. This trend of consolidation of district employees to urban areas is perceived to have economic effects on small towns. One business owner from St. Maries explained:

> Well I know for one thing that they have taken a lot of the labor force out of St. Maries recently. And so that has affected a lot of businesses, without the people working here, they don't have the money to spend here locally. And so I know the labor force has gone down here. They have moved people more into the city area. I don't know what they are doing but. They have less Forest Service personnel here than they did 20 years ago. And so that has hurt our economy here.

Another resident of Silver Valley discussed the perceived impact to their economy as a result of moving the local Forest Service office.

> Our big thing in the county has got to be just having them [the Forest Service personnel] be in the county. You know, we have told them numerous times that if they leave Kootenai County nobody would even know that they are gone. But here we're on their heels holding onto their coat tails' saying 'don't go! Don't go'! I think since the Panhandle Forest is here in our county, their presence needs to be here. I think I already mentioned that five times earlier. … It has affected us because of the loss of jobs. When they moved their duty station to Kootenai County, pretty soon there is a for sale sign on their homes. They move over there.

In addition to feelings of abandonment and concerns about the economic loss related to losing local district offices and personnel, some individuals, especially in the Bonners

Ferry area expressed concern that the forests were less easily managed by employees living away from the forest.

A bank employee and person active in Forest Service public input processes in Bonners Ferry explained:

> Within our local district one of the problems has been that they, through budget constraints I assume that's the reasoning, that they are consolidating more and more of the functions from the Bonners Ferry Ranger District out to the Sandpoint Ranger District. And removing that from this district, and so the farther you remove control, and local oversight, I think the less well managed your forest is. And that something that has been gradually, occurring over and over, and the only reason they're doing that, I presume the eventual result will be this will no longer be a I district here. That they will either move that to Sandpoint or Coeur d'Alene as the district. And I think that would be very unfortunate, and detrimental to the Forest Management process.

Finally, the loss of local Forest Service offices affects how local people obtain services from the Forest Service. An IPNF employee at a rural district office surmised the potential reductions in his community:

> So they have an understanding that we administer the laws, but that we're members of the community. If you get that sense, whatever. And there's been talk of reducing – once a year reduction of staff up here – and there's talk of more reductions. And the community is not supportive of that at all because of how we support the community in terms of families and, you know, economics, but also their day to day business in terms of getting their firewood permit or getting answers to questions. They don't want to lose the Forest Service up here.

The relationship between local Forest Service offices and personnel and community members is highlighted in the desire for the maintenance of local offices. In addition, the community members interviewed expressed a great deal of sympathy for local employees. As we moved up the hierarchy of forest, regional or national levels, sympathy diminished (see also the ***Perceived differences in local Forest Service and national Forest Service (4.1)*** section in CHAPTER FOUR, PERCEPTIONS OF FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT for a related discussion).

5.6 Communication and public involvement

This final section outlines the major themes participants shared regarding what sort of participation and involvement work best for building the relationships between the Forest Service and communities.

5.6.1 Comments on traditional methods of involvement

According to most participants we interviewed, people on the Panhandle get their information about Forest Service management and policy from three primary sources: in-person contact, public meetings, and the newspapers. A substantial number of individuals also appear to supplement information gathering via the internet and other electronic correspondence.

The degree to which each respondent perceived each of these as effective media to distribute information varied quite a bit. For instance, the following two comments represent the range of how individuals perceive public meetings:

> I guess that those public forums would be the best, to try and get people to participate, and do it in advance of things. Don't wait until the Forest Service has already made their decision.

> I think one of the least effective ways, although it is better than nothing, are these public meetings just because they do not encourage diversity of opinion. The Forest Service sometimes has these educational meetings where they put maps up on the wall, you know you can go in and get educated. And they often combine those with a public hearing, so you have education going on and public comment. But you know, it is hard in this community because it is so conservative, there is such a bias towards resource extraction, that whenever there are hearings or town meetings, it takes a lot of guts to present any other kind of side of the coin. To the extent the Forest Service could facilitate that, it would be great.

Another frequent comment offered by participants is the perception of district rangers caught in the bureaucracy and office work rather than being able to spend more time in the community providing direct contact. Emphasizing the importance of in-person time, a recreation business owner explained his view on this:

> I think the best way is for the local District Rangers to spend more time with various community groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and be more available so that there is direct contact with local community leaders and special interest groups—so a dialogue can occur more freely. I think that a lot of these District Rangers are just chained to their desks and they don't have the opportunity to be out and about.

Others pointed out that in rural areas the newspaper is often an effective means of getting the word out. A director of a non-profit organization in the Sandpoint area explained the benefits of being able to access multiple forms of information:

> I think I probably use everything they have available. I use their web sites. I'm on mailing lists for some of the projects they're doing. I go to Forest Service offices frequently to talk to people. I talk to them on the telephone.

> When they have public meetings, I go to those. And then often times stuff in the newspaper that describes what they're doing. Our newspapers here cover Forest Service stuff pretty well. I think we're better informed that way than larger or more urban communities.

The information from interviews regarding communication reveals a desire for more communication in general. At the same time, respondents want the Forest Service to concentrate on managing the resource, creating a dual mandate.

5.6.2 Best ways to involve people

In many cases, rather than simply saying these more traditional opportunities for public participation and involvement were adequate or inadequate, respondents offered new ideas and suggestions on additional ways to get community members engaged.

A number of those interviewed simply offered their vision of a futuristic approach, even if their methods were not yet completely defined:

> So what I'd like to see is that we find a way to improve the process to where we have a better established way of getting people to work together, so we don't tear the social fabric of small communities apart. I guess that would be my summary statement. Is there a way to do that? I think there is….There's going to always be the radical fringe on both sides of an issue and you're never going to satisfy them. But I think that leaves 80% of people that are closer and closer to the middle if you look at that spectrum. And if we start trying to get them to be the ones who can be part of the process—if we can do that we're going to have communities where people can be neighbors again and still disagree.

The notion that usually only the extremes are heard in the media, and perhaps by the Forest Service via public input were strong themes in both of the focus group sessions as well. Consensus across the focus group representatives on this point highlighted the desire to more closely involve the middle 80% rather than worry and concentrate on the "radical fringes" that appear to currently dominate policy and management debates.

This Hispanic interviewee suggests the Forest Service take on more outreach to the growing Hispanic communities to initiate involvement and use of the National Forests:

> I don't see and I don't hear a lot going on extended camping or hunting. I don't hear Latinos doing any of those activities although they might be doing it and I'm not aware of it. I think part of that is again that networking that sense of community of bringing them in telling them this is for everybody and not just for Anglos. I think that what they need is that outreach, that connection. The Latino communities from my experience works on you go to them. They don't necessarily go to your door. It works a little different with the Latino community. The agents here have to go to

them and build that relationship and that trust before they would seek that and use that resource.

A biologist we interviewed in Coeur d'Alene familiar with a Douglas-fir beetle project on the Panhandle from recent years used that example to explain his perception of how a new way of doing things worked well:

> I think the way the Forest Service dealt with the Douglas-fir beetle project, was a good move. They got the community involved and got a lot of input from people, and for the most part, people were happy. They ended up doing some restoration work in streams and they got some timber out which made some of the industry—or people living off of timber extraction—happy, and they did things to improve water quality and wildlife in my mind which made those people happy too. They got everyone involved up front. They met with the landowners and indicated how this could help prevent the spread of fire and disease. Those kinds of things—where you get the community involved and find ways to benefit all.

A community leader from Sandpoint explained a perspective shared by others:

> The Forest Service needs to have tenacity and patience. I'm sure that the Forest Service has even more difficulty than the city government in involving people because most people just kind of let things happen. Sometimes only a handful of people come out and they may not understand the full thing, but this is where the Forest Service needs to be tenacious and patient, and look for new ways of involving folks. On certain projects, get people into the area you're talking about. We took a tour with our group last year to learn about a project, and now we have a much better understanding of those issues now. We could see the effects and also see the improvements the Forest Service made. So public hearings on the site so people can really visualize it and absorb some of the geography of pending decisions.

Another outdoorsman from Sandpoint explained the value of hearing multiple sides to an issue as a part of the same meeting:

> I think a panel would be really good. I think where you have all the stakeholders come to a meeting—made up of community leaders, businesses, private citizens, and the Forest Service. And when there's an issue that is affecting people to the point where something needs to be done about it, that we form a panel and they lay the issues on the table and it gets worked out in that manner. I think it would prevent a lot of the litigation and the appeal process which the Forest Service knows has been a nightmare. You present it as, ok, we are a group of people, we're going to sit down here, look at the issues, and come to some resolutions and possibly even have the community vote on it.

A Coeur d'Alene focus group participant added the following about public involvement:

> In my opinion I think the first thing they ought to do is eliminate these shows that they do, calling them public meetings, by taping a bunch of maps up on the wall, having somebody stand there next to them and nod and have people wander around and do something. I haven't seen anything valuable come out of that --to be real honest with you. I think they need to sit down and spend some time educating folks on what, you know, what they're doing. What stage of the process they're in. What are they looking for? What's the rules of engagement, so to speak, as far as where they are in the process and what they're looking at. They need to go out and talk to folks and listen to folks – more than just the twice that they normally do it through an environmental process. Normally they're talking scoping, and the next time they talk is the comment period after a draft. They need to be out -- when the issues, concerns, and opportunities are developed -- they need to take those out on the street and talk to people.

Some of those interviewed acknowledged the complexities and logistics of involving "the public" in decision-making per se. However, some offered alternative suggestions on participation and involvement that was not necessarily tied to decision-making. An active community member in Silver Valley discussed volunteer activities as a practical way to build relationships and participation:

> I don't know if decision-making is the best way for involvement. I think most people are shooting from the hip and they don't really know the problem first hand. But if the Forest Service said 'We need these trails worked on and we have these resources to do it; if your club or family would like to work on a trail, we will provide this for you….' I think the volunteer thing would be really good to bring different user groups together because they don't just pass each other on the trail then—they are working beside each other, they are eating lunch together, they are talking some problems out, and things of that nature.

Many participants shared their view that the Forest Service has an irreconcilable challenge to cover all their ground and cover all their responsibilities with not enough resources. However, in most cases, the details of community interaction still matter a great deal and may suffer as a result of limited resources. One motorized recreation enthusiast we interviewed in Silver Valley illustrated this point with the following story:

> I don't mean to be nitpicking, but little things are noticed, and they create an impression on people and a willingness to cooperate. This was a minor thing having to do with the Hiawatha trail. The publication was put out about the trail, and I understand it was a Forest Service publication. For two months, we have been endeavoring to get copies at the local visitors center and we keep being told that this person is on vacation who does this. That is not a

> positive message that you want to give. We have a limited time for the use of that route. So I found myself going around town to see if anyone had extras they could share. To the extent a nice brochure has been made up, you know if you are going to do something you have to keep it available. That is a small example, but it has impact.

These examples constitute some of the ideas offered from community members who directly experience and relate to Forest Service issues and involvement. Although they do not reflect the personal time constraints and/or preferences of each individual, they may serve as a starting point to explore ways to improve public participation and involvement on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

5.6.3 Too much public involvement

Another theme within the data on public input, was the feeling that there was too much public involvement. This relates to the perception that the "experts" meaning Forest Service employees, should be able to do their jobs without so much public input noted earlier in this chapter. In addition, the requests for public involvement seemed overwhelming and tiresome to some interviewees.

Two individuals from St. Maries explained their boredom with the process. The first quote is from a relative newcomer and business owner in St. Maries.

> Unless your ox is currently getting gored, most of us stay home and watch baseball on TV. Probably most of us that are not directly earning a living off of the Forest are pretty bored with the Forest Service talks and or information about what is going on.

In response to a question regarding the best way to involve people in Forest Service decision-making, a long time resident of St. Maries told us:

> Jeez, you have enough people involved. Shoot all of the lawyers I guess. I don't know. I cannot answer that question. I have been to more of those, I am so tired of Forest Service meetings. We have been doing this since what, 1960 or something? You have this meeting and you have that meeting, and all the meeting does is breed more meetings. What I am here to tell you is that I am sick of the meetings. Because nothing happens and nothing is done. So the answer to your question is, I have no idea.

The perception that nothing is done with the results of meetings is a significant theme in the discussion of public input and trust within the Forest Service/community relationship.

5.6.4 Making community input count

Perhaps the most detrimental of the social impacts within the Forest Service-community relationships occurs when citizens make the effort to participate in forest management issues and feel their input does not count or matter. Obviously, the Forest Service, as a national agency managing public lands, cannot please every individual who cares enough to become involved. This impact, however, is not a question of reconciling such a dilemma. Instead, the impact of input not mattering is largely an issue of managing social interactions and acknowledgement.

In many ways, the odds are stacked against the Forest Service as a target for blame if there is a management problem. After all, the agency is responsible for stewardship of the national forests. An individual in Sandpoint provided a good description of how the benefits the Forest Service provides are often taken-for-granted, even if inadvertently:

> I don't think for the most part, in the Sandpoint community, the Forest Service management has been seen as a negative. It's probably a very slight positive in fact, since people don't think about it. But they're using the resource – there's a positive there, but the positive isn't focused enough for people to come back after a day in the woods when they've been out fly-casting or cross-country skiing and when they get home and they put their gear away and they're making a cup of coffee, they don't sit there and think, damn the Forest Service sure is a bunch of good guys (sic) because they've done such a good job of letting me get out in the woods and play.

This same individual continued this discussion and elaborated on why local input matters, even when it may not be easy, because it helps assuage the anger coming from people who feel unheard:

> I live here, so somehow I think my point of view ought to be more valuable than yours if you're from Santa Fe and never get up to North Idaho. But these are your national forests too. And so sometimes we make a mistake of trying to think that only local comments ought to be listened to. Somehow the Forest Service has to balance comments from people who live in the community that's impacted by its decisions with people who may live in a big city and never, ever get out in the woods. I think there's a lot of value in listening to the comments of local citizens who use the woods because they have some cultural values that might be missed otherwise. They also have some personal knowledge of land-use and land conditions that can help the Forest Service. I do think it's important to listen to people because you get the angriest people when they feel disenfranchised. And primarily, that happens when no one gives a damn what I think. And that's a mistake.

More frequently, participants were not this detailed in their comments about the issue. Instead, they expressed sincere cynicism in more blunt terms, such as this Coeur d'Alene area forester:

> I think local stewardship would be great—and people would actually be able to get some agency there. But not if it's just more public meetings the Forest Service has, collects input and then goes on and does whatever they're going to do. You know these meetings they had in support of the roadless initiative were a joke, and people were incredibly cynical about that. I happen to think a lot of areas they put into roadless should be roadless, but the way they went about it, just deepened people's cynicism about the Forest Service.

Another participant from Silver Valley, who interfaces with the Forest Service through his business, commented on the issue this way:

> There is always a slow burn going on with a lot of people. I don't think communication between the Forest Service and the community is good. I don't think there is follow-through on presentations that are made. It may be that the Forest Service is simply under budgeted and understaffed, maybe they are taking on too much. But there is an authoritarian attitude with the Forest Service. They go through the motions of listening to the local communities but many times the decisions are already made. They go through the motions. They need to work more closely with the communities and listen to them.

Lastly, the details of public input opportunities often matter a great deal. Everything from the remote location of many communities in the IPNF region to the amount and type of information distributed affects how public input may be gathered as well as processed. An individual interviewed in Priest Lake stressed these points with the following:

> I would propose a lot more local control. I would propose that the local control would involve meetings with the community. And those meetings would have to be well-prepared—the information, or the subject at hand, whatever it was, the documentation would have to be prepared for the public, and the public would have to digest the information, and it would need to be explained to the public, because just handing this stuff out when you get books four inches thick and trying to expect the public to even take the time and still make a living and be able to deal with this. And then to be able to come back and comment over a period of time. Because the educated public is going to take the time. But they need to be educated and they need to be brought into it, and that can't be done if you're in Priest Lake and they are holding the meeting in Coeur d'Alene, the people can't go to it. If you are holding the meeting in Bonners Ferry, we can't go to it, because we have to work, we have to get up and go to work. They have to have the meeting in Priest Lake. They have to have the meeting in Bonners Ferry for those people.

These opportunities for public input are one primary means for citizens to connect to the Forest Service in an everyday sense. Thus, even the slightest perception of whether that input matters or counts makes a substantial difference to those involved.

5.7 Education

It seems that much of the disappointment, anger, frustration and confusion that people express arises because they do not understand why certain management regimes happen, why certain moratoriums exist, why an action is good or bad, or why their opinion may conflict with what needs to be done. Interviewees suggest that the Forest Service needs to improve their outreach and educational programs. People want to know why certain things are done. This outfitter/guide from Sandpoint attests to the general lack of knowledge by the public and the related consequences:

> Education. People need to be educated. And I think the Forest Service has been doing that, but it's amazing when you get out there in the general public and you start talking to people about reforestation issues, how naïve people really are. I mean the concept of tree planting to most people is a truck coming with a giant shovel and a tree that's fifty feet tall, putting it in the ground. And you tell them that you planted millions of trees in your life and why are you doing that and they think education about the relationship in our ecosystem between the forest, the river, wetlands, and also people relationships as well. How people affect the cycle. You know, we need all this timber because people buy an awful lot of toilet paper. You know and I mean it's all related. I kind of go with the we all live downstream theory a lot because really on the planet that's one thing we can all say is true for everyone of us. Whatever that guy does upstream is going to end up in my back yard. And I think a lot of people – they sort of isolate themselves from this forestry issue and they look at it and make judgments on it, but they don't realize that they're a big part of it. I used to make a joke that all my friends could use toilet paper for the rest of their lives if I planted their share of trees.
>
> So I think education's really important and I think it needs to start at the elementary level. I think kids in school need to get reconnected with where we get wood from, where we get food from. People have sort of become isolated and because of that they're emotionally unattached. And what happens unfortunately is suddenly they're twenty years old and they go out to their favorite hiking spot and the trees are gone. And that a lot of times is their first reaction to maybe what the Forest Service is doing. And without any prior education they're going to, you know, overreact.

Using prescribed fire as an example, this schoolteacher in Sandpoint expresses the need for people to learn more to avoid misperceptions of management decisions employed by the Forest Service. This individual acknowledges the efforts made to specific groups by the Forest Service, but suggests more outreach is needed:

> When they see them doing prescribe burns then there are people that say, you know, they look at New Mexico and say, 'Oh, no!, We can't do that.' And I think it just all comes down to education and communication. Let them understand what's going on. Is what's in the paper really true? But a lot of communication that way and make sure that what gets printed is right and get the word out so at least people will come and discuss it, you know. A lot of times in this community the uproar comes after the fact. They're not interested in it before, but then when it's over and done, then they want to complain. So find a way to get the discussion before it happens. They don't just let it burn -- watch it burn. So people need to understand that. They're very open to taking groups out and showing them. I'm taking a group of teachers next week. We're going to spend a day with the Forest Service. We're going to go out to the sights and look, and I think the more you can do that, the more that people understand what's going on. One thing about the Forest Service is I know they're always so open to coming out and talking to the schools to, to groups, whatever. And so they just need to somehow reach the general public more.

This lifelong resident from Priest River states her desire for more educational opportunities:

> I think there could be more public education programs and things like that. So the public is educated on what is going on and how the system works and all that. Because, you know, I've lived here all my life and this near Forest Service and I don't know all that much about how it works. So I don't know. I think more maybe the papers, something like that, something that people see all the time. So, you know, if they do feel like picking something up, you know, to read about it – it'll just be there. So I prefer something like that.

A Hispanic community member stresses her desire to see education as a future focus for the Forest Service:

> Education, education in the community, I'd like to see them go into private lands and teaching people how the keep the forest healthy. I like the stewardship program they have already, I think that's really good, I think more of it is necessary.

5.8 Summary of the Forest Service/community relationship

The relationship between communities and the Forest Service is rooted in some difficult realities: federal control of large land-bases, faltering extraction economies, national-level regulations and the large bureaucracy of the Forest Service. These realities are exacerbated by blaming the Forest Service for the decline of extractive industries (rightly or wrongly), feelings of abandonment by rural communities through the perception of the increasing consolidation of IPNF offices, a lack of trust of the Forest Service by some community members and difficulties in formal communication processes such as those formulated in the public involvement process. The relationship is bettered by active informal communication and community involvement of local Forest Service employees. In closing, the idea that re-establishing trust and connection between the Forest Service and communities in order to improve the resource was summarized by a natural resource manager interviewed for this project:

> So you gotta re-establish a real positive connection between agencies and communities. That's obvious whatever side of the political spectrum you sit on. Whether you're on the, you know, kind of the eco-warrior side or you're on the, you know, the extraction side, you need to re-establish these links with these communities and bring them up to speed and try to get a better common understanding of what's going on. That's a difficult, difficult task. And it's going to take a long time. It's taken a long time to destroy it and it's going to take an equally long period of time to re-establish that. But I think that we owe it to our national forests and these common resources to do that.

CHAPTER SIX: NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FORESTS

6.1 Introduction

Three Native American Tribes have strong connections to the Idaho Panhandle National Forest – the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe, and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (Kootenai). Each of these Native Tribes has ceded land within the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF). These lands are ancestral homelands in some cases, as well as hunting and gathering lands used by the Tribes. Each Tribe has treaty rights that allow them access to lands within the IPNF. These Tribes differ greatly in size and development. The Kootenai have a 12 acre reservation near Bonners Ferry and 125 enrolled members. The Kalispel have a 4,600 acre reservation in eastern Washington along the Pend Oreille River and 330 enrolled members. The Coeur d'Alene have a 345,000 acre reservation along the Washington/Idaho border west of the St. Joe National Forest and 1,753 enrolled members. The Coeur d'Alene reservation is not completely owned by the Tribe because of past sale and distribution of land (see map on inside cover of this report for reservation locations).

Within this report, these three Tribes require unique consideration due to their status as sovereign nations as well as their cultural development issues associated with their communities and the IPNF lands or resources. While the Tribes are part of other communities such as Bonners Ferry, Coeur d'Alene, Plummer or St. Maries, it is appropriate to focus on Tribal interests, rights and uses as a separate component within this chapter.

6.2 Methodology

The assessment of the Kalispel, Kootenai and Coeur d'Alene Tribes depends on both primary and secondary data collection and analysis. Primary data was collected through interviews. Secondary data was collected through literature, interpretive materials and Tribal web sites.

6.2.1 Participation

To develop participation from Native Americans, we contacted designated Tribal representatives via mail, electronic mail or phone. The IPNF and regional Forest Service employees helped identify liaisons with the Kootenai, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene Tribes. Prior to interviewing representatives of these Tribes we provided an explanation of the research project and if requested, a list of questions to be asked. Tribal contacts then recommended how to proceed with the interviewing process.

For the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, we were asked to discuss the IPNF questions with the Tribal Council. The Council specifically requested that we not tape record this group interview. Two researchers attended the meeting and took in-depth notes. Notes were compiled and sent to representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho for review. The Kootenai Tribal Council approved these notes as accurate and indicated they felt no other interviews were necessary with Kootenai representatives. Notes were coded and entered into the computerized data analysis program as the equivalent of an interview transcript (see CHAPTER TWO, METHODOLOGY for more information on computerized analysis).

The Kalispel Tribal liaison requested that we interview one individual with a thorough understanding of both cultural and ecological issues relating to the Tribe and the IPNF. This interview was recorded and transcribed. It was coded and entered into the computerized data analysis program as an interview transcript.

For the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, we sought recommendations from Tribal officials as to the appropriate representatives available for interviews on this project. To date, we have interviewed four representatives from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Two Coeur d'Alene interviewees permitted us to record interviews and two requested that we not tape record. The tape-recorded interviews were coded and entered as all other transcripts. Two members of the research team took comprehensive notes during the unrecorded interviews and these were compiled and entered as transcripts.

Because of the low numbers of interviews for the Tribes, it is difficult to assess how representative the statements made here may be. However, Tribal government members and natural resource management employees of the Tribes served as the original contacts for the Tribes. The opinions in this report are only as representative of the range of perspectives of Tribal members as the selection by the Tribal liaisons and Tribal government members' choices may have been.

6.3 Tribal communities and people

Like many communities in the Panhandle, Tribal communities are dependent upon natural resources. Representatives of each Tribe discussed their dependence on resource extraction – mainly logging – for the economic health of their Tribe. Each of these Tribes operates a casino. These gaming operations have taken some economic pressure off the Tribes to use timber from their own lands as an economic base. However, timber production is still a part of Tribal economic well-being for individuals, families and the community.

Discussing the Kalispel's situation, the interviewee describes that Tribe in the context of the surrounding Pend Oreille County:

> Presently the kind of economic situation of Pend Oreille County (WA) anyway is severely depressed. Its entire economy is based on extraction of resources – formerly timber – that's taken a real dive lately in the last ten

> years or so. There is a pulp mill up there that makes newsprint, which they scour the forests for, you know, sub-optimal – you know, things that they aren't going to harvest, pulp wood, things like that gets brought in, turned into pulp, and then they make newsprint. It's a huge facility up there on the Pend Oreille. It's like a six or seven hundred million dollar plant. It's big.
>
> But other than that you've got some small scale tourism, things like that. The Tribe itself is a government and so we operate on, you know, contracts and grants. Plus we have some industry there. One is the Tribe has an enterprise of making metal boxes, which are gun cases, camera cases, really heavy duty stuff that is virtually indestructible. And so they're trying to get that more off the ground, basically, more aggressively marketing it across the country. And the Tribe has a buffalo herd that it has as an enterprise. Plus we've also just within the last year or so opened up the casino here in Spokane, which employs about 600 people. So it's a pretty big facility – a 30 million dollar building.

Representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho focused a great deal on the need for logging jobs for people in their Tribe and community. They believe that their economy is timber-based and that more timber harvest needs to be done to support the economy and families within the Kootenai Tribe.

A Coeur d'Alene interviewee expressed similar feelings about the dependence of the Coeur d'Alene on several kinds of resource extraction:

> I think, in general, the reservation community is interested in maintaining a rural type of lifestyle. A lot of people that I work with in my position are making a living working the land or as farmers or ranchers or foresters… and most of those people want to continue to make their living that way.
>
> Well, it [IPNF management] certainly affects that part of the community that makes their living off forest resources. I don't know how the forest service contracts with private companies and so forth work, but there's a pretty substantial segment of the population that is affected when they change their cutting volumes, I think.

This Tribal perspective reiterates the broader trend across the IPNF as to the community-level effects of changing amounts of timber available for harvesting from these national forests.

6.3.1 Tribes' battle with poverty

Representatives of the Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel Tribes discussed their Tribe's long-term battle with poverty and need for economic development. In addition, several representatives discussed the strides their Tribe was making to combat poverty and that the economic situation of the Tribe was improving. Both the

Coeur d'Alene and the Kalispel Tribal representatives discussed their goals of improving the community conditions for Tribal members.

To the Kalispel Tribal representative, the historical context of Tribal poverty highlights recent progress the Tribe has made towards improving economic conditions.

> There's been a vast amount of change to the Kalispel people through time, you know, with the first white man who came into the area – a guide named David Thompson came in around 1809. The influences of white settlement and exploration were felt long prior to that, you know, with the introduction of the horse, disease, and those kinds of things that ravaged – really to be quite honest – Kalispel …… And it's just basically gone in a spiral down hill. And there's a variety of different reasons for that. But these people are very – still continue to be very traditional. And many of the people in the community work for the Tribal government itself – they work at the casino. Some work off reservation in other places. But by and large they are at the bottom percentage of people who are basically at the level of poverty. And one of the key goals of the Tribe is to raise that standard of living, focusing on traditional kinds of activities, foods and things, and maintain a healthy life. But to try to raise that poverty level. I mean – poverty is just not exclusive to the Kalispel. There's a lot of poor white folk up there. And actually they're probably even lower on the poverty scale than the Tribe. The Tribe has made some great leaps and bounds over the past ten or fifteen years in terms of raising the level of economic prosperity to its community.

These sentiments are supported by the Kalispel's description of their conditions on the Tribal web site (Kalispel 2002)

> As the new millennium approaches, we face the challenges of a continuously changing world. Our land largely consists of floodplain and steep slopes, which make it virtually un-developable for economic purposes. Due to the characteristics of the land, the Tribe has struggled with unemployment, inadequate housing and limited economic opportunities. However, by working together we are certain that we can improve the lives of our children and future generations while maintaining our unique cultural heritage.

6.3.2 Resource of knowledge for the Forest Service

The Kootenai of Idaho, Kalispel, and Coeur d'Alene Tribes each believe they possess historical and current understanding of the ecological systems and management of natural resources in the IPNF area. Representatives of the Tribes believe that they can be an asset to the management of the IPNF based on their historical ties to the area as well as their current levels of use of the land both within and around the IPNF.

The Kalispel have documented their existence in the Pend Oreille region for 6,000 years. In addition, they have documented the management of the natural resources in this area for up to an estimated 4,000 inhabitants over millennia. This long-term understanding of the region could be a source of knowledge for managing the resources of the IPNF now and in the future.

> The Kalispel Tribe is an indigenous group of people that have lived in the valley -- at least the last six thousand years. We have archeological sites that date back 5,000 to 6,000 years – so there's been a human occupation of the Pend Oreille River valley ever since -- basically, almost since the ice retreated. Those people have a long occupancy of the valley and have lived within that valley inside of the environmental parameters for a long period of time.

In the following quote, the Kalispel representative describes the historical resource use and how that understanding might be useful in current management.

> But there are other families that still go to certain places. … To understand what goes on at Priest Lake or what went on and what can continue to happen over there in terms of resource use – fishing or hunting or berry picking, you know, mostly plant-type or oriented resource use is important. Share those things that we know of what happened about the past with the people of the present – have that, inform them about how, you know the old-time Kalispel did things. And there are reasons why the old-time Kalispel did things in certain ways -- because it was sustainable. I mean, this community has survived through thousands of years of occupancy in the valley. And at one time the population was around 4,000 people that lived diffusely along this river corridor. That's a tremendous amount of people. And it was dependent upon resource extraction. … And they've figured out ways of living with that environment that was sustainable. You know, but they didn't impact, they didn't continually go to one patch to pick huckleberries. It was diffused across the landscape. They burned prescribed fire to enhance certain types of resources. You know, they just – you go out, they knew where they were going and then they'd torch a part of the forest. And then in a year or two they'd know that the berries would come back more dense or something like that. So fire is an important management tool that the Tribe used on a local level -- Maybe not on a landscape level, but in certain local areas where they knew certain types of resources existed that responded well to fire. And that's what they do. And so the land has been intensively managed let's say for several thousands of years. But re-establishing the connection with those lands or maintaining and enhancing those connections that continue to exist is very important.

Coeur d'Alene and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho interviewees also discussed the unique knowledge of Tribal elders regarding traditional and sustainable use of lands managed by

the Forest Service. This knowledge was important to Tribal representatives as a part of understanding appropriate methods and levels of resource use. Those interviewed indicated this was especially true in the context of non-timber resources such as huckleberries, roots, hunting and fishing.

In addition to historical knowledge of the landscape, the three Tribes represented in this social assessment have expanding natural resource departments and as well as increasing numbers of personnel with expertise in areas such as fisheries, forestry, wildlife management, stream restoration and natural resource planning. In some cases, such as with the Kootenai's involvement in facilitating and leading a resource advisory group in Bonners Ferry, the Tribes have shown their willingness to help solve natural resource management problems.

6.4 Rights and relationships

The treaties governing the relationship between the sovereign Tribes and the federal government create a unique situation for the interaction between the Tribes and the IPNF Forest Service. Each Tribe has treaty rights that incorporate land held by the IPNF. The impact of the IPNF on Tribal rights differs among the Tribes.

Representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho focused on the need for the IPNF to recognize their rights through the Hell Gate Treaty. They indicated that instead of using this Treaty as a governing document for decisions and relations with the Kootenai that the IPNF was making decisions without understanding the Treaty. According to the Kootenai, the Hell Gate Treaty should be the formalized basis of policy and decision-making regarding the Kootenai use of their ancestral lands that should be understood at administrative levels of the Forest Service. In addition, the Kootenai Tribal Council reflected that each time the local Forest Service personnel changed "We have to fight over every issue, every time." This issue for the Kootenai complicates their views on special forest use permits – such as for huckleberry picking. According to the Kootenai representatives, one solution discussed by the Forest Service to competing use of huckleberries has been to issue permits. This management solution offends the Kootenai because, by their definitions, they do not need permits because of their treaty rights.

The impact of the IPNF on the Kalispel begins with the original impact of restricting the land available for the Kalispel reservation. Because the reservation was created after the national forests in the area, the boundaries of the Kalispel reservation were limited to land outside the national forest.

> Well by the very act of creating national forests you've limited access to that forest by certain communities of people. And so by its very nature you're limiting access by certain segments of the population. I think the Kaniksu National Forest was created in 1910 or 1911. That was prior to the creation of the Kalispel Reservation. And interestingly enough I think that that had an influence on the size of the reservation that's created later because those lands

> were not available. They were already occupied by the government. And so the original size of the reservation – it's incredibly small, 4600 acres. It's not the smallest, but it's close. You know, the bottom ten percent of the reservations nationwide. But it certainly isn't enough land to support the purpose of the creation of the reservation, which is hugely important.

Two Coeur d'Alene Tribal representatives discussed the ancestral lands that are now within the IPNF as important to them and appeared to have a strong emotional attachment to the land ceded during their treaty negotiations. In addition, they made a special note to emphasize the traditional non-timber resource use of these lands – hunting, fishing, root gathering and berry picking.

Each Tribe's ancestral lands are of great importance according to our interviews. And, the use and knowledge of these lands is something that the Tribal representatives from the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene focused on as necessary for the maintenance of their Tribe in terms of culture, education and subsistence.

6.4.1 Considerations for Tribal use of resources

6.4.1.1 Recreation and cultural use

Native American use of natural resources has a different underlying basis from many other users. The difference exists in the relationship between recreation, culture and subsistence. While there are also non-Tribal people who feel that resource use is part of their culture and way of life, and people who use non-timber resources as part of their subsistence, the Tribal representatives never discussed or focused on natural resource uses such as hunting, fishing or berry picking as recreation. While in many cases it may be ambiguous this distinction between recreation and cultural use, it is important for the IPNF decision makers to understand that there may be much different meanings associated with Tribal use of natural resources than recreation.

When Tribal representatives discussed uses of the IPNF, they focused on consumptive use of non-timber products – hunting, fishing, root gathering and huckleberry picking. These activities were seen as important components of Tribal culture and the enculturation of Tribal youth. Tribal representatives emphasized the use of natural resources as a cultural education that needed to be passed on from Tribal elders or other more traditional Tribal members to younger, less experienced members.

This representative of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe discussed traditional use of resources:

> Of course there is a big interest among Tribal members to maintain some of the traditional customs and be able to subsistence hunt, to fish and gather berries in traditional places. So, by and large, you would find most people want to continue with some of the things they have been doing for centuries.

In addition, the Kalispel and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho representatives discussed the need for supplementing income or family resources through harvesting of huckleberries, roots, game and fish. The competition between Indian users of these resources and others, especially commercial users, frustrates Kootenai Tribal members. Representatives that were interviewed believed that significant growth in the commercial huckleberry harvest lead to limited resources Indian and other non-commercial users.

6.4.1.2 Roads

Tribal representatives interviewed held mixed feelings regarding roads and road closures on the IPNF. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho representatives were generally not in favor of road closures for both resource management and access reasons. The Coeur d'Alene and the Kalispel Tribal representatives focused more on issues related to access. While these Tribal representatives generally supported road closures and obliteration for the protection of the watershed and wildlife, they also understood access needs, especially in relation to traditional use areas for the Tribes. Interestingly, this relates to the gap in knowledge of traditional use of the forest resources by the Tribes. Tribal representatives believe that elders have important knowledge of the historical trails and use of the landscape that needed to be preserved and passed on to younger generations. This requires elders to be able to access the forest. Historically, elders would not be the ones gathering resources for the Tribe or for families – the younger and more physically able members would do this. But, due to a diminution of cultural understanding of these natural resources in the past 50 or so years, the responsibility to educate and re-establish the knowledge of resource use now rests on the elders. As such, this may necessitate their entry and access to the forest. This exception to the rule of reducing roads and their impact on the forest makes it difficult to find a clear preference regarding road closures for the Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel. The complexity of such an issue, however, highlights the need to be sensitive and respectful toward Tribal understandings, rights, and uses of these resources.

6.4.1.3 Special resources

The resources and special or sacred places that exist within the IPNF lands and the rights to ancestral territory for the Tribes creates a dependency relationship of the Tribes on the IPNF management to protect important sites. The IPNF holds fragments of plant populations that members of the Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene Tribes use. In addition, historically important and sacred places exist on the IPNF that the Tribes want to protect and preserve. However, as described by the Kalispel representative when discussing that Tribe's ability to comment on a timber sale, sometimes Tribal members find themselves in awkward positions, thus making it difficult to share information on special places with the Forest Service.

> You know, you've got counter-running currents -- ok, we've got a timber sale running here and yet we want to save this section of land because it has this particular resource. It doesn't jive very well with the planners in the Forest Service. They don't understand it. The Tribe is loathed to share detailed

> information about these resources because they don't know how it's going to be used. They're afraid of that. So they won't disclose anything. You know it's a paradox. So you can't save these places without divulging information. If they get the information they may not save it anyway and then it's out there, so, you know, it's catch 22. So those are types of kind of specific impacts.

6.4.2 Collaboration, consultation, and communication

Tribal representatives indicated a desire to collaborate with the Forest Service. The Kootenai Tribe of Idaho representatives we interviewed perceive that they have common goals with the IPNF and that they would like to work together. In fact during the group interview they were generally eager to work with the IPNF as they are doing with their leadership in the Bonners Ferry community of the resource advisory council – a diverse group of natural resource stakeholders trying to solve resource management problems in their area. However, each Tribe characterized the Forest Service as having a "bunker mentality" regarding working with the Tribes. Those interviewed felt they could be an asset to the IPNF but were treated as a liability.

Representatives from the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho told us:

> If the Forest Service would come and talk to us, they'd find we're very reasonable.

Coeur d'Alene Tribal representatives explained how they felt the increasing power of the Tribe frightened outside entities, including the IPNF. The representative of the Kalispel Tribe also discussed this point and the balance between being an asset or a liability based upon the reaction from the Forest Service.

> We're trying to re-establish those connections [with the land] and that harbors a lot of resentment. You know, it harbors some resentment in local communities where the Tribe starts to play a role. They look at Tribes as a threat. And I think the Forest Service does too. As the Tribe becomes more and more organized -- Tribes are very colorful organizations of people. There's a lot of law associated with being a Tribe – that is viewed in general, I think, as a liability in the Forest Service, not as the positive -- not, you know, 'Oh shit, the Tribe's coming in', you gotta duck and cover, armor up, get into our bunker and wait 'em out. I think that's a strategy that they've use. Instead of looking at the Tribe as an asset to reach the common goals because we can leverage money much more easily than the Forest Service can do. We can make their job easier. We can also make it an absolute nightmare. So we're in a very luxurious position, you know. We can be the savior or we can make it not happen through our exercise of rights, legal process, we know more about NEPA than just about any other agency out there. We know how to play the system. I mean this is how we've had to survive for the last ten years, anyway and even longer than that. So Tribes are an asset. They can work together with an agency to do great things, but if the leadership of the Forest Service

> continues to look at Tribal organizations as a liability, then that's exactly what the Tribe is going to be.

Because of the treaty rights of the Tribes, they hold a special relationship to the federal government and therefore to the IPNF. This government-to-government relationship, they believe, requires an enhanced level of consultation and communication between Tribal governments and representatives of the IPNF. One representative of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe explained her views on the government-to-government relationship:

> I think the Forest Service needs to have a better handle on government-to-government type of communication with the Tribe. Involving the Tribe more in their long range planning for the St. Joe district, which is pretty much, all ceded in the Tribe. I don't think currently, that there is much effort put into it, for government-to-government type of relations. The opportunities that we get to comment, like I said earlier, is mostly what the general public gets involved with; I think some formal consultation is probably more appropriate.

Representatives of each Tribe noted the perceived lack of understanding or follow-through regarding the government-to-government relationship between the Tribes and the Forest Service. As stated earlier, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho felt that the Forest Service needed to understand and uphold the Hell Gate Treaty. In addition, they felt very strongly that the IPNF had "no communication" and that the Tribe was unheard and disregarded. The Kalispel representative characterized the relationship between the Tribe and the IPNF this way:

> They try to attempt to consult with the Tribe and get our opinions on things. But, most of the time I'd say that's pretty much a good deal of lip-service.

Both the Coeur d'Alene and the Kalispel Tribes characterized the communication between the IPNF and the Tribes as based mostly on the IPNF sending them draft EIS or other plans for comments. Sometimes the issues were relevant to the Tribes and sometimes they were not. This "read and respond" mode of communication was considered inadequate to the Tribal representatives.

> I think the lines of communication aren't used very well between the forest service and the Tribe. In general, we may get draft documents to review but, when we get those draft documents, there's not a lot of person to person contact in explaining the project for us, or trying to lay out the long term plans for the forest…forest management. And I think that is probably something that should be initiated by the Forest Service too. Consultation with the Tribe to find out how Tribal concerns can be addressed in long-term management.

Most Tribal interviewees discussed a willingness and desire for open two-way communication with the IPNF. Historical knowledge, use of the resource and Tribal sovereignty combine to create a powerful desire for communication and collaboration

between the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe and the Forest Service.

6.5 Views of forest management

6.5.1 Forest management

Each Tribe, through their representatives interviewed, expressed an interest in sustainable use of the national forests. As Tribal members are tied economically and culturally to timber harvesting, a balance was sought between resource extraction and protection. Each Tribe mentioned aspects of unsustainable use in the past including poor logging practices, over-harvesting, clear-cutting, fire suppression and planting even-aged monocultures.

One interviewee from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe told us:

> My perception is that, dating back to probably the '70's there was a lot of unsustainable harvests done, and I think the Forest Service, now a lot of their actions are probably in reaction to a lot of over cutting dating back to the 70's. What I know about forest composition is that most of the native species that…the composition of the forest community has really changed, and what you see now is mainly a shift in species composition.

6.5.2 Native species

The Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel Tribal representatives discussed native and diverse species for both cultural and ecological health concerns. The Kalispel representative noted concerns about forest health and how the Forest Service had begun to focus on the problems with even-aged monocultures.

> And so what you have out there is a wasted ecosystem that is not even remotely close to what it used to be. Now we're always harping back to this great American past, but we gotta deal with what is going on today. And so one of the ways I see that the Forest Service has changed in the last ten years anyway is -- try to get a little more ecological in its orientation. You know, we're gonna – we've altered these ecosystems so much we've got basically mono-crop forest of Doug Fir when it used to be mixed, and all these other kinds, let's say. And you've got to go in and harvest to get some diversity back. And gets some different … stages going, you know, successional stages going on.

The Coeur d'Alene and Kalispel representatives concentrated on forest restoration of forests that incorporates native species and healthy ecosystems. In addition, each of the Tribal representatives perceived a need for continued timber harvesting.

6.6 Summary

The relationship between the IPNF and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and the Kalispel Tribe is unique and needs close attention. The legal, cultural and historical association of Tribal members with land now managed by the Forest Service requires consideration with particular emphasis on increased communication and collaboration. These Tribes feel they can be assets to the IPNF management. Their willingness to collaborate and even provide resources and leadership regarding natural resource management in the Idaho Panhandle is noted here as an important value and dimension to future relationships for the Forest Service.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FOCUS GROUPS

7.1 Focus groups

Focus groups were included in the design of this study to develop some targeted input from representatives of urban user groups and interests proximate to the IPNF. Prior to the design of the study, the Forest Service indicated a belief that focus groups were an important part of the social assessment process given the large volume of IPNF users and interests based in these two urban areas. In response, two focus groups were conducted as a part of this study during the Fall of 2001. One session was held on December 4th, in a hotel meeting facility in Spokane, Washington, and the other at a comparable facility in Coeur d'Alene on December 6th. This chapter is included to provide a more representative account of the focus group sessions than examples included in previous chapters.

The intent of a focus group is to create a comfortable atmosphere that will promote discussion and interaction among the participants. Focus groups vary in size, but generally include between 5 and 10 participants. The participants in a focus group should not be closely acquainted but they should ideally have at least some common characteristics important to the study. Discussion in a focus group is directed and has a predetermined sequence (Kruger and Casey 2000). A facilitator poses carefully organized questions to conduct the session. Trained staff from the University of Idaho's Social Science Research Unit assisted research team members to facilitate the two focus groups for this study.

7.1.1 Focus group instrument

We derived the focus group instrument using the same background and procedures as the interview/discussion guide. The list of questions was reduced to allow all participants adequate time to discuss the issues in the three-hour timeframe allotted. Figure 7.1 lists focus group questions used for the IPNF social assessment.

7.1.2 Sampling

Focus group participants for both sessions were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods, beginning with targeted informants based on the multiple interest areas represented in this study.

Figure 7.1 Focus group questions of the IPNF Social Assessment

Focus Group Guide

1. What are some ways people in this community **use** and/or **benefit** from the Idaho Panhandle National Forests?

   1a. *How do you spend time in the forest?*

2. In your opinion, how has the Forest Service **managed** the Idaho Panhandle National Forests over the last ten years?

   2a. *How do you feel about road closure/removal?*
   2b. *How do you feel about the type of fire management happening on the Panhandle?*

3. Can you tell me how the management plan of the Forest Service has **affected** people in your community?

4. As the Forest Service prepares a management plan for the next decade, what would you like to see as their **main** emphases?

5. What do you think is the best way to **involve** people from the area in the Forest Service decision-making process concerning forest management?

6. How should the Forest Service **balance** the opinions of local people near the Idaho Panhandle National Forests with the views of people from the region or all over the nation concerning forest usage?

7. Those are all the questions I have; do any of you have anything else that you would like to share about the Idaho Panhandle National Forests?

(*Possible follow-up questions are in italics;* **bolded terms indicate emphasis**)

Although these two focus groups were in no way representative of the full array of perspectives that might be collected in Spokane and Coeur d'Alene, the information gathered at these sessions is used to compare and contrast with interview data from the IPNF communities of focus.

Eight participants were invited to participate in the Spokane focus group. Each participant had a background in one or more of the following areas: conservation, mountaineering, non-motorized backcountry recreation, economic development, hunting and wildlife conservation, motorized recreation, environmentalism, labor, and environmental consulting. Seven participants attended the Spokane session. Each participant was offered a lunch prior to the session, as well as a nominal honorarium for their participation.

Eight participants were invited to participate in the Coeur d'Alene focus group. Each participant had a background and/or interest in one or more of the following areas: non-motorized backcountry recreation, hunting, forestry, motorized recreation, and guiding/outfitting. Seven participants attended. Each participant was offered a lunch prior to the session, as well as a nominal honorarium for their participation. One participant, because of his status as a federal employee declined the honorarium.

7.2 Focus group responses

We present the focus group responses in a format that correlates to the structure of each session. Questions that were used in the focus group sessions are followed by a variety of responses, organized by topic areas.

Q1. What are some of the ways people in this community use or benefit from the Idaho Panhandle National Forests?

The most frequently mentioned use and benefit of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) was different **recreational opportunities**. Recreation on the IPNF takes many different forms: hiking, mountain bicycling, camping, fishing, and motorized vehicle use are the most common. Other key benefits noted by focus group participants included **industrial resources**, **economic opportunities**, and **scenic and landscape values**. Participants recognized these multiple aspects are intertwined. For instance, tax receipts that go to a communities schools as a result of timber harvests relate both to the economic viability of a community as well as long-term environmental impacts.

Recreational opportunities

- The trail system is kind of unique for this area. A lot of bicycle enthusiasts come up for that. It's a trail system that is maintained well.
- Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, motorcycle riding, ATV, horseback riding, cross-country skiing…The whole list. We all benefit from being able to do all of this. Recreation also goes back to the dealers—the people who sell all the equipment and instruments people use.
- With the local folks, it provides that connection back to the land. There's people who think milk comes out of boxes and boards come from the board store and they don't have that connection, whereas we have the forest close enough that maybe we can make that connection.

Industrial resource

- A lot of people benefit from the logging—the industrial base that are our resources.
- We could add some facts about the amount of meat that comes out of the mountains in the Panhandle area where there's large game that still roam.
- The rural schools benefit from the timber harvests.

Economic livelihood

- I benefit through retail sales, through guided trips. You've got to have a core base of people to turn around to do anything I do. I generate money from about five or six angles off of the IPNF. It becomes a really personal issue of what that resource can provide for those people through those things. It's the heart of the whole economy of this area.
- Water is definitely a commodity, as well as fish and big game and timber too. And the mining and the grazing takes place out there. All the other aspects of some of the subtle commodities that come off the forest. There are lots of users and a lot of that does get directly tied up in supporting our communities.

Scenic value and open space

- The use and benefit for a lot of people is just the scenic value and the open space. And even for those folks who never get in there, just knowing it's there is of some benefit to them. I've heard that a lot.
- Others were talking about economics, but not just commodities come off the forest. Obviously lumber and the rest of that stuff, but also clean air. All the rest of those things come off too like scenic quality and creature comforts—just the ability to get out and wander.

Additional aspects mentioned:

Medicinal supplies	Air quality
Collecting food products	Wildlife habitat/viewing
Prospecting	Exploration

Q2. In your opinion how has the Forest Service managed the Idaho Panhandle National Forests over the last ten years?

This question evoked a great deal of frustration. Several key points, exemplified below, revolved around a central theme: the Forest Service, as an agency, has lost sight of its direction and mission. This perspective manifests itself in multiple ways such as a perceived increase in **bureaucracy**, distractions because of **environmental litigation**, issues with enforcement of laws and regulations, a lack of **accountability**, and most of all, **external constraints** on doing the job the Forest Service has been assigned to do. Participants also recognize changes that have occurred for the agency, the economy, as well as shifts in the political climate.

Despite their frustrations, nearly every participant distinguished between *local individuals* and the *agency as an institution* when explaining the management problems they see. Usually, the latter is under attack, while the former is praised and/or given

sympathy as the victims of a system in decline. As a result, stakeholders do not necessarily blame the local Forest Service personnel for the management problems they experience. Instead, they often target the national-level Forest Service Policy as the core problem.

Constraints to management

- They [the Forest Service] haven't been able to manage the forests. In forest/land management, it's a new world and there is a new generation of managers, and their hands are tied.
- We're seeing fuel loads in the national forests—we're going to have fires—and the Forest Service is stopped by courts from going in and cleaning up.
- So even though from a professional standpoint, they know what needs to be done on the land, in a lot of cases they were reluctant to start because they know as soon as they say that 'harvest' word, they're in court.
- But people are also reluctant to make decisions because Washington [D.C.] is calling the shots. So it's not just external in the courts; it's also internal as far as mandates and political direction coming out of Washington.
- You have people that are actually on the forest itself have those good ideas that are very, very gun shy to make any decision, whether it's a good decision or a bad decision.
- Timber production was one of the basic reasons why national forests were created back about 1905. I don't think the Forest Service can function because there are so many thousands of interest groups that are trying to run the national forests.
- The professional people in the Forest Service are as good as any organization in the world—they're just hamstrung.

Bureaucracy & accountability

- There are some flaws within the agency itself as far as a lack of accountability. For example, if a manager does something or makes dumb decisions there is very little accountability within the agency, so they get promoted and move on.
- The Forest Service has an excellent cadre of professional people, but it kind of reminds me of the childhood book I saw called *Gulliver's Travels*. This hapless giant was all strapped to the ground with millions of ropes and that's the U.S. Forest Service.

Enforcement

- When you're responding to a million people's comments and you're sending out three volumes to every household that wrote a letter, it's pretty hard to be out there doing trail work and enforcing the people that are tearing down your roadblocks and putting up teepees in riparian zones.

- We should talk about enforcement. So many times the forest user is blamed for a management problem. The manager doesn't put signs out that say these roads are closed. And so people don't know what kind of behavior is expected. But the agencies can't step back and say, 'well, these areas are damaged by off-highway vehicles' when there's no maps, there's no signs, there's no management and there's not enforcement.

In response to this question, participants also generated numerous comments on the particular management issue of **road closures**. Participants varied in their perspectives on whether there ought to be more or less road closures, as well as their understanding of the ensuing impacts. In almost every case, however, participants outwardly acknowledged what difficulty and complexity this issue entails as a public concern.

- Road closures are a good thing for wildlife. Sportsmen complain about them bitterly. Yet, after they complain, they say, you need to hammer the Forest Service on better habitat management, not realizing that the road closures provide secure habitat. Personally, I think we need a few more road closures in this area. As I pointed out earlier, the Coeur d'Alene National Forest is the most heavily roaded forest in the nation. It doesn't need to be that—they're improving.
- With respect to legacy roads—the old logging roads, the jammer roads, the roads up the bottom of drainages—the closures, the walk-in access for habitat, and things like that I feel are really positive changes made in land management.
- I don't think any of us want to see the lands damaged. Most of us, if you want to close the roads during hunting season, fine. Let the people walk. There's areas that need to be closed and needs to be managed. Then there's areas we don't damage and should be left open.

Q3. Can you tell me how the management plan of the Forest Service has affected people in your community?

Participants' responses to this question overwhelmingly focused on **economic-related impacts** to local communities, businesses, and individuals related to the Forest Service management plan. Included in these comments were accounts of significant loss of direct and indirect resource-extraction based employment opportunities as well as limited but significant development of jobs related to recreational use of resources. Additional comments about economic issues within forest management included a loss of local revenue from declining federal timber harvests and changes in the "price" of recreation.

In addition to economic costs and benefits, participants also noted **environmental effects** and changes in the **public participation** processes as a result of Forest Service management. Increases in **regulation** that affect local-level decision-making are affects to people in the IPNF region.

Economic effects

- There's been a large shrinkage inside our forest products community in northern Idaho. The survivors are struggling too.
- The loss of mines was a huge economic impact to this area. Some of it's Forest Service related. The logging—we've lost several big mills. And these were all higher paying jobs than any of the jobs you're going to find in recreation. As it came down, the logging trucks needed tires, so there were people in tire shops or fuel stations. Mechanics drew a higher wage and all these trucks had to be maintained and repaired.
- There is some stuff on the IPNF that is actually working and they're moving, diversified, into a different direction. The forests aren't going anywhere. The management has to adjust to turn around and address those changing situations. I don't belong to any special interest groups whatsoever. It comes down to bottom-line dollars on how I put food on my table and I don't weigh up against the big timber conglomerates.
- There's a certain amount of my money through my business activity on the forests that gets put into the general Forest Service funds in use fees, which I don't look at it quite the way the lumber industry would look at stumpage fees propelling the forest stewardship. That's a minor amount of money, but that money I turn around to those same four kids working as guides for me in their twenties. This past summer, one of my managers was able to buy a house. He is a hard-working individual and he gets to do what he loves to do. The reasons those dollars are there is because of things that have changed in forest management in the past ten to twenty years.
- The mills that are left have also had to re-size their log processing in order to diversify. It's been tough on some of these companies. Some of the timber companies have disappeared.
- They're trying to generate revenue from different sources now than the old traditional timber-based revenues they used to get.

Non-economic effects

- We talked about the smaller diameter trees. I want to bring up one thing there. It's my understanding, there's a big move to keep our old-growth forests. They don't want them cut. And I agree that there should be some left, so that people see them, but the old growth forests do not clean air as well as the small forests. The growing trees actually use more of the carbon dioxide and that, and actually clean the air faster because it's denser and is actually more beneficial to us.
- He was talking about how the fisheries have improved—and I'm sure they have from the old photos I've seen. But they start mandating like they are for certain species, then they start to tighten the definition of native, and those kinds of things, we need to look at what the land can support. The forest needs to be managed to provide those commodities.

- It amazes me that they can get anything out of some of the logs that I see on the trucks. But you know, that's great if they can. But at the same time, there are larger logs out there that are merely being left there to die. We've gotta answer the question: is that right or not? I would submit that in many cases it's not.
- I go Nordic skiing at 4th of July pass. The local club has a groomer for those trails, and they work in conjunction with the Forest Service. And the trail system on Canfield Mountain—there's a good coalition there—[motorized and non-motorized groups] that does some trail maintenance work. You would think maybe those two groups wouldn't be compatible, but it's managed by the Forest Service.
- The management in place now has improved their science and research and analysis areas. Take a lay person like me—I can go into a open public forum, have the alternatives spelled out, then put in an educated comment.
- The current management plan needs some improvement and some vigilance with the process from other educated people giving input on land exchanges.

Q4. As the Forest Service prepares a management plan for the next decade, what would you like to see as their MAIN emphases?

Three key themes emerged from the sessions in response to what participants would like to see as the Forest Service's main emphases in future management plans. These include: address the **scale of control** and decision-making; **balance planning** between flexibility and long-term needs; and strengthening **collaboration** among diverse special interests. These comments present the Forest Service with information about the duality often found in contemporary natural resource management. Many interests demand dynamic management to account for changes, as they see that as a constant. Others focus on the need for even greater stability and continuity in policy in order to sustain biotic communities inherent to the natural resources. These points, in effect, are even more complex than "multiple use" in that they exemplify opposing management approaches and make the agency's efforts more vulnerable.

Scale of control

- Somehow narrow this cadre of the population that has a say in the national forest management down to reasonable sizes. I don't see there's any way we can answer to the entire United States citizenry for these three little forests here. Somehow we've got to regionalize the pressure group control of the forest. There's no way you're going to get consensus.
- The Forest Service looks at these thousands of names of people that have never been here, have never seen the forest, and have no desire to be causing the management to be done the way it is.
- Okay, so if we don't want the U.S. to control our Panhandle forests, do we want the [Idaho] Department of Lands to manage our forests? We know what

that looks like! The national forests here are in much better shape than the state lands.

- But that's the synergy, that's what made America—the same thing that's shooting us in the foot as far as a national forest: everybody managing it. Whether it's from Chicago, Los Angeles, or wherever. That's still a national forest, and it's part of their heritage of what they can do.

Balance planning

- A decade is not long enough for a tree—it's not a tree's lifetime. We can do elk plans for a decade because we can make some effects in a decade that way, but a decade is nothing to a forest.
- We have to consider the human attitudes, the personal attitudes. There are some significant changes in how people looked at the national forests ten years ago and today. The plan needs to be able to respond to those kinds of things. They should set some specific criteria they will use when they're going to analyze changes that occur.
- You've got to set some basic management techniques and goals that are going to be stuck to and sustained for 100 years. They need to be able to at least have some basic objectives that are good for that long.
- We talked about a twenty-five year plan on the forest—that's critical. I mean, that's the next 25 years of my livelihood. That's the next twenty-five years of his livelihood too. This is important stuff to us. And there are resources available to try to keep the middle ground through the process.
- Their emphasis should be on balancing all these needs. They need to be able to develop a process that they can work within—a framework. They are so balled up in bureaucracy that the half-full goal isn't there. They need to set up their parameters so that the ten or fifteen percent on either side isn't satisfied and that the seventy or eighty percent in the middle of the ground is satisfied and go from there.

Strengthen collaboration

- The polarization of groups…the extreme environmental groups—I've worked inside of some, and the extreme timber industry groups, or the extreme recreational group or the mining group or whatever. I mean everybody's standing on the outside of the circle looking at the guy standing next to them, afraid to be that first person to take a step inside of that circle, the one that gives a little ground to where everybody else needs to be—that balance of commodities and trades and whatnot. The Forest Service needs to figure out how to set up, not short-circuit that process.
- Collaboration is the new thing. We're going to get this altogether and we're going to sit down and agree on what's going to get done.
- I go to work and try to make my life better. And you guys are all trying to do the same thing. None of us are different. We're all trying to survive in the world and do our things. If you can get a nice middle ground coalition going,

though, that can sit down and have discussions like we've had here, the we can get something done. Chastising the Forest Service—that's not going to do us any good, or the timber industry, or Fish & Game….

- You do something really un-American and you censor the extremes from one end to the other, that wastes everybody's else's time and we can start doing things.
- The Quincy Library group was a great coalition that was formed in California. That was a group that sat down and came up with a good management plan that was balanced. The minute that plan hit the streets, it was disavowed by the national organizations, even though they were theoretically represented, because it didn't meet their national interests. And the Forest Service is going to be working on collaborative efforts and all the rest of that. The bottom line is that the Forest Service has got to respond to the mission of the Forest Service.
- On the home front sitting here, what we need to do is we all need to get together like we're doing here and figure out how not to run from the special interest groups. Those people all need to be put together on a coalition on a middle ground. You need to turn to be able to turn around and say, 'look, this guy is a wacky fisherman; and this guy is a tree-hugger; and this guy is this, and this guy is that.' We can affect the local media.

Q5. What do you think is the best way to involve people from around the area in the Forest Service decision-making process concerning forest management?

Two main themes emerged from the question asked about how to involve people in Forest Service decision-making processes. The first of these is to **engage people actively** in interaction and education about forest management. According to these participants involvement is distinct from input, but having your voice heard is the first and an important step in the process. This relates to the second them—**process**—that Forest Service personnel should maintain the perspective that community members often see planning as an ongoing reality often up for debate and negotiation, rather than from an institutionalized standpoint of a fixed policy.

Active involvement

- Eliminate these shows that they do, calling them public meetings by taping a bunch of maps up on the wall, having somebody stand there next to them and nod and have people wander around and do something. They need to sit down and spend some time educating folks on what they're doing. What are they looking for? They need to go out and talk to folks.
- They need to take it out as the alternative development process is working through. They need to share those and be open with it about what's happening. Go out and talk about the options in the area of influence.
- Get the general feeling of what's happening, as opposed to the normal process that's happened in the past—they come out during scoping, they ask for

questions, they do their new non-involvement involvement process. And get information and then go into what appears as a secret process of evaluation and alternative development. And they need to involve the public on the whole process. They could reduce the surprises that come out at the end—which is when the opposition starts jumping up and beating them.

- They need input from Joe Blow, Jane Smith, and these different groups that make up their special interests—right, wrong, or indifferent, just do what we're doing here. Sit down at the Ranger Station and have a long discussion. Bring the groups together and have a summit.
- The people that come to that public hearing are that five or ten percent. So sometimes it's kind of counter because what the public officials hear, they assume that's the minority.
- I think a lot of people don't get out and recreate—it's been my experience that a lot of people want to get out and recreate, but they don't know where to go and they don't know how to do that. Maybe survey those people and do education & outreach to those people would be a way to shift the focus of the Forest Service.

Planning as a process

- What we do on the forest today is going to have impact for 100 years Your objectives can and will shift and change as you go along, but you've got to have some solid ones to start or we'll be in a shambles continuously.
- You need to maintain the flexibility in order for the agencies to respond to what needs to be done out there in the forest. The process—if you develop a good process and good criteria, then those probably don't need to be changed. What gets changed is the direction that those are focused.
- What I hear around the table, we all talk about it's still a national forest. But if we're going to control our own destiny, we on the street here have to turn around and be middle-of-the-road. And you don't want to shove. Sell them something, and then turn around and provide what you're going to sell them.
- If agencies are going to hold public meetings like that, I think they need to present information, particularly in the form of choices. And then ask the public who attends, 'well, which would you rather do, or can you think of another alternative that might work?'

Q6. How should the Forest Service balance the opinions of local people near the Idaho Panhandle National Forests with the views of people from the region or all over the nation that are interested in our forests?

On the last question, participants debated the value of non-local input to Forest Service management decisions. Although no one got argumentative during these segments of the focus group sessions, this issue of **local vs. non-local control** of decision-making evoked more divergent opinions than any other question. Participants did not represent "black or white" perspectives, but many argued

philosophical positions about whether local or non-local preferences should carry more weight. Although the prevailing attitude among these participants appeared to be more toward greater local control, both perspectives are presented below.

Participants recognized the complexity and improbability to develop consensus on this issue. As such, they also made additional recommendations about developing **policy criteria**, targeting those with more **balanced perspectives** for input, and alternatives for organizing **public participation**.

Strengthen local control

- If I may add, local comments or local people, as we are talking right now, I think should have a great impact on the decision of a local vicinity. We that live around this area are using that more than someone from Alabama. So the interests that we might have here in the Northwest are going to be different than someone living elsewhere. Therefore, I think our input should be more—I think weighted more.
- She said it's our right—that we [publicly] own the property—well I think it's really a privilege of ours, as much as it is a right for us to have the places we do have. So, as far as ownership goes, we all own it the same, but I think it's our responsibility to take care of our part, because I can't take care of Arizona—I'm not there. I can take care of the Panhandle because I am here.
- I think the local community should carry a greater weight than a regional or a national person. Local communities' involvement is more personal.
- The guy from Maine comes with perceived ideas of what we have—it's all logged off. A trick we use is we'll take them on a show-me trip. We've taken anti-snowmobilers, put them on a snowmobile, taken them into the backcountry, brought them back out, and they'd say 'wow, when will you take me again, that was fun.' If everyone could just send a reasonable person that isn't going to sit there and say 'nope, that's not right.' We could come up with a management plan then.
- But, you know, if they look at the national forest and see what's here and they understand what's here, then you know most of them are going to sit down and say 'yeah, that's fine." But what happens is when they talk about timber management you see the eighty acre clear cut.

Maintain non-local input

- So to me it sort of seems like what we have is potentially a situation where local communities feel an ownership of something that they don't own. I'd almost say local input is over-rated. But I will say that the local people definitely enjoy and love those Forest Service lands.
- I'm a little concerned about how much power the local communities have when deciding national forest related decisions. I think some of their opinions are going to be pretty biased towards the economy over the future

of their habitat. And I don't think they should have more of a say so in how those are managed than, you know, other people from other areas.

- Why not include somebody who lives in Denver or Maine or Connecticut, to be representative, if you will—of the eastern interests. So that at least we have is their voice.

Balancing criteria, perspective, and participation

- We need to be focusing our energy on the middle of the road. I think that's what the Forest Service needs to do—develop a balanced set of criteria so that they can make decisions in the future based on consistent criteria that have definite objectives in mind—not the objective of the maximum timber harvest, which has been the only criteria that's been visible anyway that the Forest Service has ever operated on. There needs to be other criteria than that. And we don't necessarily know what they are yet.
- The well-managed projects—they meet those middle-of-the-road criteria whether it's national or local. It's producing economic benefits in the local areas. It's producing environmental benefits that may be spread in the watersheds and larger areas. And it's providing opportunities for people that come from wherever to visit. And if it's well-managed, it's providing the person in Maine the knowledge that you've got a forest out there that's preserved as a forest. It's still managed, and we can manage forests….we do and they're still forests.
- If we can get that perspective of that guy from Kentucky, or that woman from Florida, then I can mesh those concerns into the local concerns. And by that, I've achieved a balance. Right now, there's not a balance.
- Field education works really well. That just triggered something with me. If the Forest Service never held a meeting in another hotel meeting room but held all their meetings in the forest, then all of a sudden you're talking real. Go to the people and let them pick spots in the forest.

7.3 Summary

In sum, the participants within these two focus groups elaborated on a variety of points of concern, ranging from local control, to access, to getting more public participation incorporated into Forest Service processes. Again, the points raised in these sessions are not intended to be comprehensive in scope. Rather, their purpose is to begin to shed light on some key management issues identified and described by many different forest users from the more urban areas proximate to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

Additional points made by the focus group members reflect on their emphasis on making public participation collaborative as well as the positive effect that process can have on those who participate.

- If you take all the special interests, all of them equally, all the way across, trying to manage and put that all together, that is a huge art. I love that word to describe what we're doing here….that's very, very important. And we all have our own special interests in being here. But overall, at least we're trying to make something better and have that resource sitting there.

- Now what I'm really, really surprised with was the cross section that you guys polled today here. Because I think everybody that's sitting here in the room could turn around and work with everybody else. Which is saying a lot for the other things that I've been to—other Forest Service scoping meetings, Forest Service initiative plan meetings. Most of the time they are so—there's one really, really ultra-conservative in the room and there's one really, really ultra-liberal in the room and they're going back and forth and the squeaky wheel gets the grease and all they do is chew up a bunch of time. But listening to everybody talk about all their needs, there is a middle ground on anything. If you could get a coalition of those people together to work on the same problems, like we're trying to do today, which—this is a step in the right direction on doing that because—I don't know, again, I don't know how you guys got—I don't know how—what happened but you got a good diverse group here, but yet you don't have—we're not all hung up on, you know, just the argument back and forth.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Summary of the study

The purpose of this social assessment is to "assess public perceptions, values, attitudes, behaviors, lifestyles, community characteristics, and other sociocultural factors that affect the interaction of nearby communities with the natural resources of the IPNF." (USDA Forest Service 2001). This project is designed to support the development of the upcoming IPNF Forest Plan Revision. In this concluding chapter, we briefly summarize the main concepts within each of the study areas: communities, forest resource management and Forest Service – community relationships, and discuss the potential implications of the findings.

8.1.1 Communities, change, and transition

Communities in the Idaho Panhandle are defined by the change that each community is experiencing. The type of change differs by community (i.e. a community may be growing or shrinking; declining or increasing economically) but the process is similar for each community and for the region as a whole. Change is difficult for individuals and communities and can cause feelings of a loss of way of life and frustration over a lack of control over one's own town.

It would be convenient to be able to place communities into exclusive categories of 'timber dependent' or 'tourist towns' but those strict labels are inappropriate for Panhandle communities. Each of the communities in this study had some combination of traditional extraction economies and lifestyles and increasing diversification into other areas including tourism and amenity-based growth. Labeling communities by specific type ignores the diversity within the communities. For example, while Bonners Ferry may be highly dependent on logging, a small but strong environmental community exists within the town. Or, in another example, while Coeur d'Alene may be the most urban and least dependent on timber extraction for its economy, some of the people most tied to timber and the culture, economy and identity associated with it lived in Coeur d'Alene. In short, we found loggers in Sandpoint and environmentalists in Saint Maries and Priest River.

8.1.1.1 Types of change in the Panhandle

All communities exist within a state of flux. The states of transition we report are a reflection of the perceptions of residents we interviewed, not an economic analysis of the area. Continued resource extraction dominates the communities of St. Maries and Priest River. Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint have experienced significant transition and many in these communities have shifted away from the identity of being in a timber-dependent

community. Bonners Ferry, the Silver Valley and Priest Lake are harder to define. In Bonners Ferry strong ties to timber still exist but change has occurred in development of tourism, tree nursery enterprises, specialty agriculture and psychological services. For Silver Valley, the decline of mining is nearly complete; the emphasis on developing other industries especially in recreation and tourism is growing. However, the communities within the Silver Valley are unique in their position of having lost a great deal of extraction-based industry rapidly, the struggle with the stigma and limitations placed on the region because of mining contamination, and their more urgent need to essentially redevelop with a focus on other industries. The Priest Lake area is dominated by a large influx of seasonal second-home residents, but some residents (especially year-round residents) rely on timber or some combination of timber and tourism work.

8.1.1.2 Defining characteristics of Panhandle communities

Communities near the IPNF are essentially rural in nature. With the exception of Coeur d'Alene and its suburbs, these communities have traditionally rural characteristics -- both good and bad. People we interviewed discussed the quiet, safe and supportive aspects of their communities. They also discussed the lack of amenities and the trend towards going elsewhere for goods and services. While a big town by Northern Idaho standards, the growing and urbanizing greater Coeur d'Alene area is by no means a metropolis by national standards. The area still retains some of its rural qualities of isolation, extraction natural resource industry representation and surrounding undeveloped land.

8.1.1.3 Resource dependency – past, present, and future

All communities in the Idaho Panhandle are dependent on natural resources. Some communities are dependent on amenities such as aesthetics, others for products extracted from the forest such as timber. Currently, many of the communities in the Panhandle region hold on to the resource-dependent ways of life that characterized their homes and workplaces in the past. These relationships are part of the communities' identities and strongly affect their views of themselves and of the IPNF. This is especially important for communities struggling with diversification -- specifically Priest River and St. Maries. These communities face ongoing challenges with respect to the transitions that affect the region in its entirety.

8.1.2 Forest resource management

Interviewees' perceptions of forest management focused on the state of the IPNF forests and the perceived barriers to managing the forests. In addition, while the vast majority of interviewees discussed their desire for healthy and sustained forests, through data analysis we began to understand a fundamental difference among participants' definitions of forest health and sustainability. The context in which interviewees discussed forest management is also important to note. Frustration with gridlock inhibiting forest management and the widespread belief that local IPNF employees – especially at the district ranger level – were good people trying to do their jobs with serious limitations

placed upon them constitutes the context in which interviewees commented on forest management problems.

8.1.2.1 Differentiation between local and national managers

Most respondents differentiated between local and national Forest Service and relayed an appreciation for the local IPNF employees, especially at the district level. Individuals in these positions have multiple roles in the local community and are perceived to have an influence on the development of the community. However, respondents complained about non-local levels of the Forest Service and their lack of interest in or understanding of local issues -- both ecological and social.

8.1.2.2 Perceived barriers to resource management

An overriding trend in the perception of the current and recent past management of the IPNF is that it is not being managed. Respondents focused on the lack of timber management, neglect of recreational facilities and the lack of restoration work. The perceptions as to why there is a lack of management fall into three broad categories: 1) the litigation and appeals process, 2) the federal-level policy, and 3) environmental legislation. For recreation, varying publics viewed minimal budgets and personnel as barriers to adequate management.

The litigation and appeals process on timber sales were the focus of many residents of extraction-dependent communities and individuals associated with the timber industry. Many locals perceive that the appeals of timber sales by "anyone and everyone" in the East have taken on mythic proportions in the Idaho Panhandle.

The perception of one-size-fits-all nature of national-level policy for the Forest Service is a frustration to many. This concept has strong ties to the local/national control debate. Locals addressed that the roadless initiative served as the primary example of how federal rules on defining roads and closing them does not necessarily fit local conditions. On the environmental side, the determination of timber volume output level for the IPNF by Washington D.C. was a source of frustration for those who believed that those numbers did not reflect the current conditions and capabilities of the IPNF.

The focus on constraining environmental legislation consistently emerged as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The perception of ESA constraints seemed most focused around Bonners Ferry where there are a number of road closures due to threatened and endangered species. Residents of Priest Lake also relayed concern over the potential decreasing access due to grizzly bear habitation protection. NEPA was blamed for unlimited timber sale appeals.

Many participants expressed a strong desire for the IPNF administrators to try to make an acceptable forest plan and implement it. Changes in the previous IPNF plan, have been unacceptable to many who worked on its development. A direction and a plan are seen as a way to move ahead with management of the resource – whether focused on restoration or extraction.

8.1.2.3 Local vs. national control of forest resources

Views on local control were split with environmentalists generally advocating national control and most others advocating a balance between national and local interests with local interests weighted more heavily.

In view of the volume of material contained in interview transcriptions focusing on local control, this is an extremely important and sensitive issue to people in the Panhandle. The feeling that outsiders have so much influence on a community's way of life because of their surrounding land base is a great frustration to many. In many respects, Panhandle residents acknowledge Forest Service lands as "public," but also consider themselves stewards of those lands in their own backyards and feel that they would take good care of the forest if they had more control.

8.1.2.4 Forest health and sustainability

Finally, there is a common desire among participants in this social assessment to have a healthy, sustainable forest. The particulars of defining desired forest health and current forest conditions range from a functioning ecosystem to a healthy tree farm producing a sustainable-level of timber. Further, the methods by which we obtain forest health are quite controversial. Some respondents focus on human-management of the forest through practices such as thinning and logging to maintain forest health. Other interviewees emphasized natural ecological processes to arrive at forest health.

8.1.3 Forest Service/community relationships

Given the amount of Forest Service land and the dependence of local communities on the forests for both amenities and extraction, the relationship between the IPNF and the communities surfaces in the daily lives of individuals within the communities and the local IPNF employees. In order to maintain healthy communities and implement forest management effectively, the relationship between the communities and the IPNF needs to be addressed.

8.1.3.1 Influence of the IPNF on local communities

Most individuals interviewed acknowledge some influence of the IPNF on the community. The level of influence varied mostly based on the size of the community with smaller communities feeling a larger impact.

8.1.3.2 The costs and benefits of the IPNF

Most respondents from Priest River, Silver Valley, Bonners Ferry and St. Maries, perceived negative economic impacts from the IPNF. Study participants from other areas perceived a negative impact on people working in extractive industries, but overall a lesser impact and sometimes a slightly positive one for their community as a whole. The

downturn in extractive industry jobs resulted in a loss of a way of life and collective identity, and resentment for federal Forest Service policies that were at least partially blamed for the decline. Benefits of the IPNF were generally viewed in two areas: 1) the positive influence of district rangers and district-level staff on small communities, and 2) recreation. Other benefits discussed included watershed protection, especially in Coeur d'Alene, economic benefits, and educational opportunities.

8.1.3.3 Trust

While it was acknowledged by some participants that the Forest Service seemed to be attempting to improve their credibility, a lack of trust in the IPNF was a recurring theme in the interviews. This was acknowledged by both Forest Service employees and by a wide variety of interviewees. One of the mitigating factors in the issue of distrust came once again in the local versus national level Forest Service. Participants viewed local employees as more trustworthy partly because they knew that these employees would have to face the community eventually.

8.1.3.4 Representation of the IPNF in communities

It is important to note the recurring theme in interviews regarding interaction between local, district level, IPNF employees and the communities. Personal relationships between district-level employees and respondents were a mitigating factor in community-Forest Service relationships. The loss of district-level employees resulted in feelings of abandonment especially in the Silver Valley. In small towns in the Panhandle – especially Priest River, St. Maries, and the Silver Valley, when interviewers asked respondents "where do you get your information about the IPNF," respondents would often look a bit perplexed by the question and answer by naming the local district level employee. They responded as if it should be expected that local people would have direct personal contact with the district employees making the question seem superfluous.

8.1.3.5 Communication

Our respondents receive most of their information about the IPNF from personal contact, public meetings and the newspaper. Direct contact with the district-level Forest Service was a primary part of information gathering. Traditional methods of public involvement were seen as problematic to those who used these channels. Public meetings were often a source of frustration for those who attended. Some individuals pointed out that these meetings seemed to bring out the extremes and failed to involve the larger middle ground within the Panhandle. Others mentioned frustration with the intimidating planning documents put forth by the IPNF. Ideas for other types of public involvement included outreach by the IPNF, volunteer opportunities for community members and citizen advisory boards.

8.1.4 Native American perceptions of the IPNF management

Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the Kalispel Tribe. These three Tribes were identified as having significant ties to the IPNF through ceded territory and historical and current use.

Methodologies differed for data collection from the Tribes. Tribal members and Tribal governments are sometimes leery of researchers in search of information about or from Native Americans. Formal processes and flexibility in appropriate data collection methods need to exist for research involving Native Americans. Thus, interviews were allowed sometimes by individuals and sometimes as groups. Very little tape-recording was permitted by Tribal representatives and note-taking had to suffice. In addition, sampling was dictated by Tribal representatives and/or Tribal governments in some cases.

Similarities exist between Tribal communities and their neighbors in the Panhandle region. Tribal communities are dependent on timber extraction and feel the need to balance economy with forest health and sustainability. Each Tribe is changing rapidly with economic conditions improving for the Kootenai, Kalispel and Coeur d'Alene as they diversify their economies.

The Kalispel, Kootenai and Coeur d'Alene Tribal representatives focused their comments on forest management, sustainability and natural processes. Especially important to these Tribes was the return of native plant species. The Kootenai also focused on the need for increased availability of timber to support individuals working in logging and in other forest industries.

Cultural use of the forests focused on non-timber products – huckleberries, roots, fish and game. The continuation and increase in traditional uses of the forest were extremely important to Tribal representatives. Maintenance of these activities by younger generations was seen as an essential part of cultural survival of the Tribes. Highlighting the need to understand different cultures and their needs, one of the needs of the Tribal communities for road access was unique. Tribal representatives from each Tribe discussed the need for knowledge of natural resource use to be passed down from generation to generation. However, knowledge of traditional use rests with Tribal elders at this point. While traditionally, elders would not be required to go into the forests to collect natural resources, in order to transfer knowledge to younger generations the Tribes now needed elders to travel into the forests. This need has created a desire from Tribal representatives to keep road access to remote areas of the forest traditionally used by Tribal members. This desire for road access is generally incongruent with the Tribal representatives desire for forest restoration.

Tribal representatives viewed communication between the Forest Service and the Kalispel, Kootenai and Coeur d'Alene Tribes as inadequate. Interviewees described a feeling of being unheard, ignored or given 'lip service' by the IPNF. These Tribes felt that they had much to offer in terms of knowledge and expertise regarding forest

management. There was a strong desire for communication on a government-to-government basis from each of the Tribes.

8.2 Implications and Recommendations

Forest management does not exist in a vacuum. The understanding of forestry and science must be taken within a social context. What do people value? How do people use a forest? What do people perceive as the truth? How does resource management affect peoples' lives?

Communities in the Idaho Panhandle are part of the forests and the forests are a part of their lives -- economically, socially, physically and psychologically. People, the forest and the Forest Service are inextricably linked.

As IPNF management changes, communities change. Change is challenging and can be painful for people. The IPNF is certainly not the only influence on communities in the Panhandle but its management is perceived to have substantial effects. An understanding of the human aspects of the Panhandle will help resource managers make informed decisions, understand the needs of local communities and ways to assist resource-dependent communities as they deal with change.

The following is a series of implications related to forest management, control and decision-making processes that extend from the research conducted for this social assessment. Each implication is followed by specific recommendations for action by IPNF administrators and decision-makers.

8.2.1 Local and regional understanding of Panhandle communities

Within the constraints of external forces – changing economies and national politics – it is perceived that the Forest Service has little latitude to determine their effect on local communities. Because of the perceived limitations of the IPNF management on decision-making regarding forest management itself, the most significant area that could benefit from efforts by the IPNF is developing the relationships between local communities and the IPNF. This relationship is the critical passage through which forest management decisions and community development flow. Without good working relationships in local communities, forest management actions will not be readily accepted.

One way of bolstering the relationship is for the IPNF to maintain a significant presence in small communities around the Panhandle. Losing local Forest Service offices and employees has exacerbates feelings of alienation of rural communities from federal land management decisions. Keeping ranger districts in rural communities gives the Forest Service a neighborly face and allows employees to have life experiences similar to people

most directly affected by forest management. Being a part of a community helps build bridges between the federal Forest Service and community residents.

Dale Bosworth, current Chief of the U.S. Forest Service commented on this problem on a national scale in a recent question and answer session with the Idaho Statesman (2001):

> Since becoming chief, I have been working towards establishing a "reconnection" between the headquarters and the field. One of the greatest strengths of the Forest Service is the ability of line officers at the forest and ranger district level to make and implement decisions that take local community interests into account. I am concerned that in recent years this ability has been limited by an over-reliance on top-down initiatives that have un-empowered local decision-making and have prevented the greatest possible funding from reaching the field unit level.

8.2.1.1 Recommendations regarding local presence

- **Keep local offices open and staffed, especially district ranger offices.**
- **Encourage Forest Service personnel who work in district offices to live in those communities. Forest Service administrative and hiring personnel should:**
  - **Emphasize the importance to being in and a part of local communities;**
  - **Emphasize the qualities of local communities in job announcements (as opposed to promoting proximate urban areas such as Coeur d'Alene or Spokane);**
  - **Enlist local realtors, chambers of commerce, school districts and organizations to create a 'welcome' packet for the IPNF to distribute to in-coming personnel;**
  - **Consider supporting spouses or partners of in-coming and existing personnel by packaging professional positions for dual-career couples or assisting in placing partners of hired Forest Service personnel locating to communities with limited opportunities.**

8.2.2 Regional considerations due to interdependence among Panhandle communities

While it is important to maintain local ties to communities, it is also important for the Forest Service to understand the interaction among communities in the Panhandle how they overlap and relate to one another. People may work in one community, shop in another and live in another. Or, relatives may be scattered throughout the Panhandle making the region feel like home. While some categorization can be done regarding communities in the Panhandle, we believe the region is diverse and interconnected enough that the sociological considerations in planning should be viewed from multiple levels including the regional level. What is done in Priest River affects people in Priest Lake. What happens in the Silver Valley has an effect on residents in Coeur d'Alene.

Timber flows through the Panhandle region, and the impacts of harvesting are felt by people and communities throughout. Thus, the context of the Panhandle region should be taken into consideration in planning for the IPNF.

8.2.2.1 Recommendations for level of impact analysis

- **Analyze implications of decisions in the IPNF on two levels – community level and regional Northern Idaho level.**

8.2.3 Language, communication and education

Language and communication are important components for developing relationships between the IPNF and Panhandle communities. While we saw superficial agreement on issues such as forest health and sustainability, the language used in these general forest policy terms is not precise enough for real understanding of the meanings of these concepts. Forest health means different things to different people and can be very wide ranging – from maintaining trees as a crop to allowing natural processes to dominate. If the IPNF wishes to develop relationships with local constituents time needs to be taken to get beneath the surface of forest policy language. This would help lay the groundwork for meaningful and credible communication.

Communication is critical to the development of healthy community/Forest Service relationships. Two-way communication is preferred by interviewees. The 'read and respond' model of communicating and the formal public input process are not seen as legitimate communication. Relating back to maintaining local presence in rural communities, informal communications seemed preferable to respondents. Seeing your district ranger at a ball game and asking him/her about a recent road closure has greater meaning and impact than sitting in a gymnasium listening to a formal presentation on the roadless initiative.

Most people showed an interest in learning more about forest management. While public "education" is not the only answer to conflicts over resource management, giving more clear factual reasons for practices like road closures could have an impact on the level of conflict between communities and the Forest Service as well as between multiple constituent groups at odds with one another. Again, people prefer informal education, one-on-one education or outreach activities rather than formal presentations of plans or Environmental Impact Assessments. An increased focus on outreach would help the IPNF find and inform interested parties. However, the ability to listen to input and accept local knowledge of forests and communities would help complete the two-way communication model and would likely increase the IPNF decision makers understanding of what is happening in the Panhandle. This point is especially important for Native American communities tied to the IPNF.

In this social assessment, we see the most intense and emotional conflicts arising from feelings of a perceived lack of control of the community's destiny as it relates to forest management. As communities experience change, people sometimes need somewhere to

look for reasons behind change. The barriers to the IPNF having control over their own destiny – litigation, national decision making, environmental regulations – are sometimes seen as being to blame for community changes. Or, other times, respondents did not consider constraints on the IPNF and more directly blamed the IPNF management for change that they did not like. The nature of the Panhandle with so much federal land in the region as well as struggling communities (especially smaller towns) creates a bond that is difficult to see beyond. Changes in IPNF management will affect communities. One way of dealing with this inextricable link is to focus on maintaining communication and healthy relationships between the entities. Another way is to weigh local needs while making decisions regarding forest management.

8.2.3.1 Recommendations regarding communication

- **Acknowledge that commonly used words in forestry such as: forest management, forest health, sustainability, and restoration have multiple meanings:**
  - **Clarify your own meanings behind words;**
  - **Listen to stakeholders definitions of these words;**
  - **Early in collaborative processes such as resources advisory councils create a common definition for forestry-related terms.**
- **Use focus group models in local communities to develop open communication between stakeholders and IPNF personnel.**
- **Be proactive and go to stakeholders, community groups, tribal governments and activist groups to establish open two-way communication regarding forestry-related issues not just when an impending decisions require the IPNF to conduct public hearings and receive public input.**
- **Organize on-site educational opportunities. This could include:**
  - **educational field trips**
  - **restoration volunteer opportunities to learn and help**
- **Produce clear concise information about forest issues in the form of World Wide Web sites, brochures and brief documents without excessive technical jargon and volume.**
- **Document impacts of national, regional and forest-level policies on local communities, and provide open two-way communication for discussing these impacts.**
  - **Use a model of 'field notes' for district-level Forest Service personnel to document local impacts through relevant comments by local people and personnel, newspaper clippings and data provided by local entities such as school districts and Chambers of Commerce.**
  - **Ensure that these field notes will be passed up to higher-level decision-makers with minimal filtering and interpretation by bureaucratic layers between line staff and policy makers.**

8.2.4 Small scale timber sales and local community support

Interviewees had specific suggestions on considering the needs of local communities in forest management. A compilation of viewpoints from the interviews suggests a potential method of management that might alleviate some of the difficulties – economic, political, social and ecological – facing the IPNF and Panhandle communities. Interviewees often discussed the need for small timber sales accessible to small-scale local logging companies. In addition, interviewees discussed the need logging to satisfy the need for timber in mills, the threat of wildfire, and the need for thinning and restoration. Interviewees also discussed the need to reduce large-scale logging operations and to not allow the sale of large amounts of timber to go forward under the guise of restoration. The combination of economic and ecological needs in the Panhandle suggests a solution. Small scale timber sales with restoration in mind would benefit both the forest and the communities. In addition, small scale sales would not likely raise the ire of local environmental constituents – most of whom did not negate the need for logging – and would likely be too small to be of concern to regional or national environmental groups.

8.2.4.1 Recommendations regarding small scale logging

- **Create small-scale timber sales that focus on restoration of forest health.**
  - **Openly communicate about the value of these sales to both the communities and to local environmental stakeholder groups.**
  - **Use the collaborative focus group process to reach consensus on the parameters of these sales.**

8.2.5 Tribal involvement

As discussed in Chapter Six, all three Tribes included in this assessment expressed dissatisfaction with the efforts of the Forest Service to include their perspectives concerning forest management. The three Tribes feel that collaboration between the two government entities would be worthwhile and create positive ramifications for the forests and the communities of the IPNF. Thus we suggest applying the same outreach and involvement opportunities suggested to work with all other stakeholders of the IPNF. Interactive collaboration is essential to healthy functioning relationships with the Tribes rather than the "read and respond" mode of communication that Tribal representatives have described as the norm of past communication.

8.2.5.1 Tribal Recommendations

- **IPNF administrators all levels (including the Forest Supervisor) should communicate with tribal governments first and foremost;**
  - **If it is deemed necessary by Tribal chairpersons or councils and the Forest Supervisor, then specific Forest Service or Tribal employees can be involved**

in or take responsibility for discussions or actions to be taken based on initial higher-level contacts.

- **Respect and seek out Tribal input regarding forest conditions to understand long-term ecological issues in the forest.**

8.3 Limitations of this Social Assessment

Our recommendations are limited to local constituents because that is our charge, national and regional social considerations should also be addressed by the IPNF in their development of a forest plan. This assessment reflects facts and perceptions as they were expressed by individuals. While specifics may be true or untrue in some statements, we feel it is important for the IPNF management to understand the beliefs people in the Panhandle hold about the National Forests and their management.

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