



USDA Forest Service
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

Social and Economic Criteria

Revised May11, 2006

Process

The Forest Service mission, the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act, and the 2005 Planning Rule convey the goal of developing a forest plan that sustains “the multiple uses of its renewable resources in perpetuity while maintaining the long-term productivity of the land”. The forest plans outline what and how to maintain or restore the ecological health of the land in combination with meeting the social and economic needs of the public through sustainable flow of uses, benefits, products, services, and visitor opportunities.

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team began gathering ecological, social, and economic information from the public about their uses, interests, and values for the national forests of the Blue Mountains in June 2004 as part of creating a vision for sustainability. More than 300 people attended 10 collaborative community workshops at various locations across the Blue Mountains (Burns, John Day, Baker City, La Grande, Enterprise, Pendleton, and Heppner in Oregon; Dayton, Washington) and from larger metropolitan areas whose residents enjoy the Blue Mountains (Portland and Pasco).

Participants provided many comments about what they wanted from their national forests and why. They also noted where they wanted these on maps of the three forests. After receiving additional input by mail, the 1,745 comments were coded for the 17 distinct values listed below that represent many different tangible and intangible factors.

Type of Public Values, Definition, and Keywords from Public Comments		
Value	Definition	Keywords from Public Comments
Aesthetic	I value these places for the attractive scenery, sights, smells, sounds, etc.	aesthetic, beauty, beautiful, neat, park like, view, vista, visual, scenery, scenic, pretty, sight, sound, smell
Biological Diversity	I value these places because they provide a variety of fish, wildlife, and/or plants.	biological, diversity, endemic, variety, native, fish, wildlife, plants, animals
Cultural	I value these places because they are important places for me to continue and pass down the wisdom, knowledge, traditions, and way of life of my culture.	wisdom, knowledge, traditions, way of life, custom, culture, family, friends, home, social interaction, local community, rural, quality of life
Ecological	I value these places because they are ecologically functional and healthy.	ecological, healthy forests, fire, ecosystem, function, watershed health, natural process, grasslands, integrity, vigorous, balance, productive
Economic	I value these places for the economic benefits they provide, such as timber, fisheries, minerals, or tourism opportunities.	economic, timber, livestock, grazing, hunting, fishing, minerals, recreation, tourism, jobs, employment, income, local economy, production, goods and services, commodity, infrastructure, industry, money, market, wealth
Equity	I value these places because they provide me a sense of self-reliance, freedom, and independence.	equity, self-reliance, independence, freedom, rights, local control, equality, fair, empowerment, accessibility, multiple use
Future	I value these places because they will allow future generations to know and experience them as I have and others have in the past.	future, generations, children, kids, youth, grandchildren, longevity
Historic	I value these places because they are an important part of human cultural legacy to me, others, and/or the nation.	historic, history, heritage, legacy, nation, passed or handed down, artifacts, cultural resources
Intrinsic	These places are valuable just because they exist, no matter what I or others think about them or how we use them	intrinsic, exist, existence, irreplaceable, scarce, vanishing, disappearing, unique
Learning	I value these places because we can use them to learn about the environment.	learning, knowledge, education, inquiry
Life Sustaining	I value these places because they help produce, preserve, and renew air, soil, and water.	life sustaining, cycle of life, basic needs, life, clean water, clean air, soil, water is life

Recreation	I value these places because they provide outdoor recreation opportunities.	recreation, hunting, fishing, camping, biking, hiking, sports, horseback riding, motorcycling, cabins, gathering, snowmobiling, skiing, sledding, wildlife viewing, viewing nature, ATV, OHV, motorized, non-motorized, outfitter/guides, sports
Spiritual	I value these places because they are spiritually special places.	spirit, spiritual
Subsistence	I value these places because they provide important food, firewood, and other supplies that sustain my life.	food, meat, firewood, livelihood, stability, wild crafting, gathering, grazing, logging, medicine, survival, live
Therapeutic	I value these places because they make people feel better, physically and/or mentally.	feel, physical, mental, emotional, restful, relaxation, quiet, peaceful, solitude, passion, escape, fun, play, satisfying, enjoy, exercise, safe, inspiration, rejuvenate, retreat, tranquil, silence, good health, healthy people, pleasure
Tribal	I value these places because they provide important resources for treaty rights and tribal interests.	treaty, tribal, tribes, Native American, American Indian
Wilderness	I value these places because they provide unmanaged, pristine, unroaded areas.	wilderness, unmanaged, pristine, unroaded, roadless, wild, unconfined, untrammled, untouched

Source: Adapted from Brown, G. & Reed, P. 2000. Validation of a Forest Values Typology for Use in National Forest Planning in *Forest Science* 46(2), page 243.

Over the past two years, this information has been validated and refined by comments at additional workshops, field trips, and various internal and external meetings. In addition, information about social and economic values that has been compiled and collected from a variety of sources and is being used. This includes sources such as the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project; John Day/Snake River Resource Advisory Council; regional recreation demand and capacity studies; recreation niche and social ecology mapping; census data; information from interviews of residents in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management; and various state, county, university, and community studies and sources.

Products

Public comments reflect a diverse range of social and economic values. Residents and visitors have expressed deeply intertwined relationships between the ecological health of the national forests, their personal enjoyment, lifestyles, customs, culture, and the social and economic well-being of communities. They identify diverse connections to and meaning for these connections to the land – their *Sense of Place*.

The Revision Team is developing several products from public comments and other sources:

1. Sense of Place Maps and Descriptions – Many of the public comments are interrelated to multiple ‘values’ across the entire Blue Mountains, although more than one-third of the comments (635) were specific to particular ‘places’ based on watersheds. Maps for each of the 17 values show where participants said something about a specific value in a specific watershed.

A map of all of the ‘values’ together illustrates the *dominant values* for an entire area (based on the value that had the most responses for each watershed). Maps of the different types of values (diversity of values) and the number of total responses regardless of value (frequency of values) for each specific area provides an idea of common and/or competing values for those areas. These are the areas where conflicts between users and resources or different user groups are most likely to occur.

2. Socio-cultural Map and Descriptions – This product is under development and will be a synthesis of several existing or ongoing studies that describe social, economic, and/or cultural descriptions at various scales. The result will be an overall socio-cultural description and map at a consistent scale across the Blue Mountains.
3. County and Community Social and Economic Profiles – This product will be a series of profiles for several counties (10-18 in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington) and some communities that describe the range of social and economic uses and the conditions and trends related to public lands. It is based on a variety of socioeconomic measures at an appropriate scale related to assessing the

social and economic well-being of communities in the Blue Mountains.

4. Economic Impact Models – This is a series of input-output models that describe the economies of the area based on trade flows of ecological goods and services that are linked directly to public lands (such as timber, grazing, recreation, or water). The models describe economic relationships between industries, businesses, and services in the area and the economic impact in local communities (for example employment, income, and industry output).

How this Relates to the Revised Forest Plans

Inventory and Assessment - These products provide social and economic information about the diverse connections that residents and visitors have with the national forests and the mutually beneficial relationships and contributions between the national forests, local communities, and the region. This information allows an assessment of social and economic attachments and meanings people hold for these connections that can be tied to the ecological conditions of the national forests.

Part One Vision - Public comments indicate that people generally share a common vision for the Blue Mountains but hold conflicting or competing ideas about how to best achieve this vision. This has been and will continue to be used to develop and integrate social and economic desired conditions with ecological desired conditions.

Part Two Strategies - Much of what people value socially or expect economically is linked to and needs to be integrated with the ecological health of the forests, functioning watersheds, and diverse habitat conditions. Mapping this information helps to highlight where values are shared and also highlights the differences.

This information will be combined with ecological maps and other criteria to help determine *suitable uses* (such as timber production, fire, grazing, motorized use, wilderness, and minerals) and develop *management strategies* to achieve the desired conditions and resolve conflicts (user-user and user-resource). This *integration process* will also result in *determining management themes or categories* for geographically defined areas.

In the integration process, these maps, narratives, and measures will help us *evaluate social and economic needs and desires* that can be met within the ecological limits of ecosystems. It provides the baseline for determining *social and economic impacts* for making changes to how the national forests are managed.

Part Three Design Criteria – The social and economic information will be used to develop guidance that limits how management activities can occur (such as winter versus summer seasons of use).

Decision-making - Based on these potential choices, the forest supervisors can examine the range of potential ecological, social, and economic impacts prior to making the final decision.

Monitoring – Progress toward the desired conditions will be tracked. This information provides the basis for determining social and economic impacts from implementing projects using the Revised Forest Plans. It also serves as the baseline for *identifying changes in social and economic values and needs* in the future.