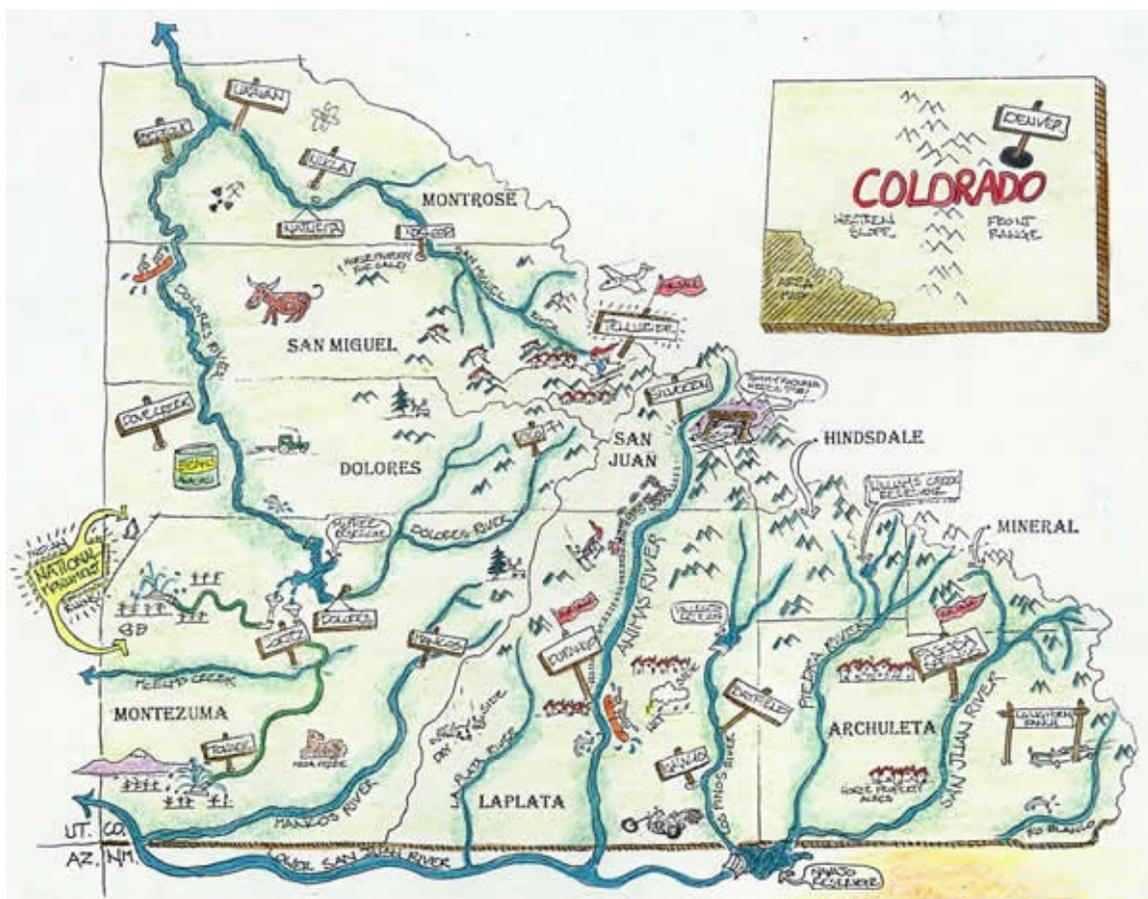




Productive Harmony Analysis



**Interpretative Framework
for Social and Economic
Assessment for Southwest Colorado
Communities and Public Lands**



Productive Harmony Analysis (October, 2005 Version)

Interpretive Framework for Social and Economic Assessment of Southwest Colorado Communities and San Juan Public Lands

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Purpose and Key Findings:

This interpretive framework is designed to provide a social and economic context for the development of the San Juan National Forest and Bureau of Land Management Plan Revisions including the formulation, analysis and implementation of Plan Revision Alternatives supported by active citizen engagement. This framework will also have utility in decision making related to the land and resources under the jurisdictions of other Federal agencies as well as State and local government entities with an interest in the San Juan Public Lands.

A key finding of this assessment is that Southwestern Colorado is a mosaic of natural features, settlement patterns, economic activities, recreational activities, social values, formal institutional relationships and informal communication networks, all of which are tightly interrelated. From a social standpoint these elements represent “attachments to the land,” that define the historic and contemporary context within which decisions about the future should be made and executed.

To the extent that these “land attachments” are isolated and dealt with as competing interests in a “zero sum game,” the result will be polarization, conflict and gridlock. To the extent that these land attachments can be understood in their critical biological and social interrelationships, the opportunity exists to move these land attachments towards a higher degree of productive harmony.

The concept of “productive harmony” is taken directly from Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 which states:

“ . . . it is the continuing policy of the Federal Government, in cooperation with State and local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, . . . to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.”

Meeting the intent of Section 101 of NEPA is, fundamentally, a social process. While the biological and ecological sciences are at the core of this process, the utility of these sciences in land management depends on the ability of people to build and incorporate scientific data and information into knowledge and wisdom about the relationships between land stewardship and community health and to put this knowledge into practice. In the same way that ecology has served to integrate the reductionist knowledge of the physical and biological sciences, a “social ecology” is needed to understand social interrelationships in a way that facilitates ecological or “ecosystem” stewardship.

This interpretive framework is built upon a set of “Cultural Descriptors,” capable of exploring this interrelated mosaic of natural features, settlement patterns, economic activities, recreational activities, social values, formal institutional relationships and informal communication networks, that can be instrumental in developing plans, policies and action strategies that bring together land stewardship and community health. Or in the language of NEPA, “to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.”

It should be stressed, from the outset that the foundation for this approach to social and economic assessment is the collaborative relationships, and the social capital that has been built in over a decade of constructive engagement between the San Juan Public Lands Center (SJPLC) which manages the San Juan Public Lands and local communities. Below, additional phrases from Section 101 of NEPA will be used to describe some of the social and institutional capital that has been instrumental to this approach.

Federal, State, Local, Concerned Public/Private Cooperation by “All Practicable Means:”

There is a ten year history of institutional collaboration at all levels of government in Southwest Colorado. There is no need for this assessment to be a start from scratch data compendium, because substantial, collaboratively developed data and analytical products are already in publication including:

- The Region 9 “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy” (CEDS) of 2004 reflecting the cumulative efforts to analyze economic trends and monitor regional and county level economic development goals dating back to the first “Economic Development Plan published in 1994 as a result of a collaborative efforts involving the Region 9 Economic Development District, the SJNF and the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College (OCS/FLC). http://www.scan.org/reg_9.html#ceds
- An Economic Base Analysis begun by a partnership between the SJNF, OCS/FLC and Colorado State Demographer, which accounts for employment and earnings from tourism, amenity migration, and regional services in relation to traditional direct base, export effect industries. This effort began in the five Southwest Colorado Counties and has been exported to all 63 Colorado Counties. <http://dola.colorado.gov/demog/leifa1.cfm>
- An Index entitled Pathways to Healthier Communities, the fifth edition of which was published in 2005. The index focuses on social issues such as education, quality of life and family health indicators. <http://www.operationhealthycommunities.org/>
- “Gaining Ground or Shaky Ground?: Tourism Employment in The Southwest Colorado Travel Region.” http://www.scan.org/tourism_report.pdf

There are also a variety of collaborative community-based stewardship initiatives that have emerged out of this decade of collaboration including:

- The Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership which has brought together, land managers, county commissioners, scientists, loggers and environmentalists in a sustained, science-based process of restoring ecological health and reducing fire hazard in the ponderosa pine forests that overlap the boundary between much of the San Juan Forest and local communities. Publications, journal articles, and a review by an independent science team have addressed the social, economic and ecological knowledge and results that have accrued from this project. <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/Stewardship/default.htm>
- Community Fire Plans outlining strategies to reduce fire hazard risks have been developed in cooperation with local fire protection districts, presented in a regional forum, which provided the basis for formulating region-wide strategies as part of the National Fire Plan. <http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org>
- There is a Management Plan for the San Juan Skyway, one of the premier scenic by-ways in the country, which links local communities via the San Juan and GMUG Forests.
- A Plan for the Preservation of Historic Mining Structures has lead to site preservation and acquisition of key parts of historic mining districts.
- The Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) a non-profit mountain research and education center established in 2002 in Silverton, Colorado to enhance understanding and sustainable use of the San Juan Mountains by facilitating field research, academic studies, and experiential learning opportunities. <http://www.mountainstudies.org>
- A Site Stewardship Program, to train and support volunteers to monitor archaeological and historic sites, is being operated by the San Juan Mountain Association.
- The San Juan National Forest: At the Crossroads of Many Cultures, An Ethnographic Overview, FLC/OCS

Beyond the institutional collaboration, all of the above efforts involve “plans” that are being actively implemented on a foundation of active citizen engagement. This combination of collaboratively developed data and analysis, citizen engagement and action creates the focus for a social and economic assessment:

How can a social and economic assessment be framed in a way that taps into the institutional collaboration, the citizen engagement, and the wealth of information, communication and knowledge that have resulted? How can this assessment add value to the Forest Plan Revision that will continue to build social capital that can contribute to improved land stewardship “by all practicable means”?

“Create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony”

Between April 1996 and January of 1998 geographically based Study Groups and issue based Working Groups were convened as part of pre-revision dialogue in preparation for Forest Plan Revision. What Section 101 of NEPA refers to as “man and nature”, became focused on the community-public land relationship in these discussions. Roughly 100 participants in discussion groups spread over three counties had the opportunity to share knowledge and values with agency managers and specialists and other citizens with wide spectrum and backgrounds and perspectives. <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/forestPlan/past.asp>

A second series of Study Group activities occurred in 2005, with a series of twenty three meetings in the three San Juan Public Land Center Districts. This round of Study Group discussions focused on a series of landscapes to develop community perspectives on public land uses, outstanding features, concerns and opportunities followed up by interactive discussions with SJPLC District staff on options for land use allocations, and the development of desired future statements for the Districts as a whole. All input is in a data base and available for use in the planning process and public review. <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/forestPlan/>

Along with learning a great deal from one another, many Study and Working Group participants commented on how much more complex public land management became once they were exposed to the full range of values and interests that are part of public land attachments. There was also progress on the part of many in moving from narrow advocacy for a particular interest towards problem solving and opportunities for “productive harmony.” Additional questions relative to social assessment comes into focus as a result of the study group/work group experience:

How to create a framework that allows interested people and organizations to add value to the social and economic assessment and it’s ability to contribute to productive harmony?

“Fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations”

Public Land Management Plans tend to be long on biological information and analysis and short on social and economic analysis. The social and economic data that is included is generally treated as background rather than in dynamic interaction in the formulation and analysis of management alternatives. The most direct applications tend to be projected economic gains or losses as commodity outputs or skier days move up or down.

One thing that can be learned from the polarization, conflict and gridlock that has followed the first round of forest planning in the 1980s is that accomplishing anything in public land management is essentially a social process. The Study and Work Group experience provides an added insight about the potential that understanding social dynamics holds for moving from adversarial to problem solving relationships. Another question becomes:

How can social dynamics be utilized to support constructive planning and land stewardship?

In order to address the above questions this assessment method is built on “cultural descriptors,” grounded in Section 101 of NEPA, to create a social framework to support planning and active stewardship. This framework is intended to be open to community members and land managers to support additional knowledge building and problem solving in the search for productive harmony.

The narrative, statistical, and graphic information that will be organized under these cultural descriptors is structured to be open to the knowledge of citizens who choose to engage the public land planning process. The intent is that participants will add value to, and take ownership of, the social and economic assessment process and the resulting knowledge and stewardship strategies.

Study Area and Methods

The primary focus of this assessment is the communities adjacent to the San Juan National Forest and BLM lands. In depth analysis will be focused on the five counties, which make up Colorado State Planning Region 9 of Southwest Colorado and encompass most of the San Juan National Forest: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties. These five counties share institutional and human geographic relationships that facilitate such analysis.

From a “human geography” perspective, the five counties represent three “Human Geographic Units” or “HRUs” the boundaries of which have been defined by using the cultural descriptors that are a key part of the assessment framework (See Figure 1, The Four Corners Social Resource Unit/Human Resource Unit (HRU) Map on the following page).

A Human Resource Unit “is characterized by a sense of place; a sense of identity with the land and the people; a sense of common understanding of how things are normally done.

Human Resource Units are characterized by frequent and customary interaction. People’s daily activities occur primarily within the HRU including work, school, shopping social activities and recreation . . . The regularity of interaction within the HRU reinforces recognition by the residents of natural and man-made features as “home.” [James Kent and Associates, “Delineation of Human Geographic Units and Their Working Definitions”, Project Working Paper for the USDA, 1989, p. 6-8] <http://www.naturalborders.com/index.htm>

Montezuma and Dolores Counties are in the Montelores HRU, La Plata and San Juan Counties are in the La Plata HRU, and Archuleta County is in the Pagosa HRU.

The social assessment will take up each of the Cultural Descriptors, defined below in the order that they will be presented:

Cultural Descriptors

Geographic Boundaries and Natural Features: *A geographic boundary is any unique physical feature with which people of an area identify. Physical features separate the activities of a population from those in other geographic areas.*

Settlement Patterns: *A settlement pattern is any distinguishable distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement in the area. This cultural descriptor identifies where a population is located and the type of settlement . . . It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.*

Work Routines: *A work routine is a predictable way in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels and the natural resources required . . . the opportunities for advancement, the business ownership patterns, and stability of employment activities . . . can be used to evaluate how alternative uses of natural resources will affect the ways people earn a living and how changes in work routines, in turn will impact future natural resource uses.*

Recreational Activities: *A recreational activity is a predictable way in which people spend their leisure time. Recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved and money and time required are aspects of the recreational descriptor. The frequency of local/non local uses . . . the preferences of local/non local users, and the location of the activities are also included.*

Publics: *A public is any segment of the population that can be grouped together because of some recognized demographic feature or common set of interests . . . it may reside permanently in the geographic area, or may live elsewhere and have an interest in the management of the natural resources.*

Networks: *A network is comprised of individuals who support each other in predictable ways and have a shared commitment to some common purpose. Networks may be informal arrangements of people tied together for cultural, survival, or caretaking reasons. Networks may also be formal arrangements of people who belong to an organization, club or association, which have has a specific charter or organizational goals. Networks may function in a local geographic area or may influence resource management activities from regional or national levels.*

Support Services: *A supporting service is any arrangement people use for taking care of each other. Support services occur in an area in both formal and informal ways.*

Figure 1
Human Geographic Units:
The Four Corners Social Resource Unit/Human Resource Units (HRUs)*



*Creating Productive Harmony Between Human and Natural Environments
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