“Social Trends, Indicators and Lessons Learned—Forest Management for Community Health and Social Acceptability”

Kevin Preister
Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy

Workshop
“People and Ecosystems of the Rogue Basin”
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
July 30-31, 2014
The National Environmental Policy Act

Section 101(a):

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.

Section 101(b):

Preserve important historic, cultural and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice;

Section 101 (c):

The Congress recognizes that each person should enjoy a healthful environment and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment.
Nonindustrial Private Forest Lands
Family Forests

• Unique contributions
  – motivated by personal and family values
  – ties to land – rootedness
  – long term perspective
  – strong work ethic
  – independent thinkers
  – distrust government
  – civic engagement
  – disinclined to get involved in affairs of neighbors
  – legacy; link to past and future generations
  – social and ecological diversity
  – moderating force

(Bliss 2008; Main 2008)
Identity - Community of Place

• Integrated way of life
• Family legacy
• Occupational pride
• Self sufficiency
• Ethic of land stewardship
• Attachment to place
• Sense of mutual obligation and cohesion
• Distrust of government and urban centers
OLD MODEL--Ineffective

Formal Impact Model

Traditional Approach

• Design
• Propose
• Defend

Community boundary

Project Intrusion

Community Culture
NEW MODEL--Effective

Social Ecology Approach

• Learn
• Engage
• Benefit

Informal Absorption Model

Community boundary

Community Culture

“Our Project”

©2014 Center for Social Ecology and Public Policy
Lessons Learned

If the goal is greater citizen ownership, then:

1. There is no short cut for direct contact with citizens.
2. The most effective form of citizen contact is through informal networks, because you are matching the communication patterns already at work in the community. In a watershed, can you name the 5-8 people that should be talked with before announcing a project?
3. Early involvement prevents surprise. Surprise is the #1 cause of disruption.
4. Meetings are ineffective in sustaining action. Instead, mimic the natural routines in the community—use of gathering places, respected individuals, local routines.
5. If you are only working with groups or organizations, you are reaching less than 2% of the population.
6. Relations with “caretakers” and “communicators” keep you grounded in the culture and represent your “key contacts.” Those are the names you get frequently when you ask, “Who else should I talk to about this?”
7. Responding to emerging issues offers the best opportunities for developing a “moderate middle.” Emerging issues are the cheapest and easiest to resolve.
8. Active incorporation of local knowledge helps establish mutual relationships and trust.
9. Extreme voices gain ascendance when there is no other game in town. The antidote is to foster ongoing and meaningful communication that reflects the social diversity.
10. Unresolved citizen issues get appropriated by formal interest groups for their own agenda. The “feeder system” for the disruption in social discourse about ways to go forward relates to unresolved citizen issues.