1997

Measures of success in public involvement processes: An investigation of how managers researchers and members of the public define success

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Measures of Success in Public Involvement Processes: An investigation of managers, researchers and members of the public define success

by

Kathleen Meyers Guthrie

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MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Resource Conservation

1997

Approved by :

Committee Chairman

Dean, Graduate School
Measures of Success in Public Involvement Processes: An investigation of how managers, researchers and members of the public define success

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There is increasing demand for public involvement in natural resource management decision-making processes. Providing additional opportunities for meaningful public involvement is a challenge for federal resource management agencies that is complicated by two factors: (1) there is widespread disagreement about goals for natural resources and (2) there is scientific uncertainty associated with natural resource management. These two factors combine to create a complex situation — one that will not be addressed by simply providing additional opportunities to participate. A new paradigm that can enhance the kind of public involvement that occurs is needed to address this complex situation. More public involvement does not necessarily lead to resolving scientific uncertainty or disagreement about goals, but improving the kind of public involvement that occurs is a place to start. In theory, transactive planning provides enhanced opportunities for members of the public to participate in decision-making processes. It is important to understand participants' expectations — why they get involved and what they hope to gain from their involvement. Understanding this leads to an understanding how they define success in public involvement processes.

While it is important to understand how members of the public define success because they are the driving force behind public involvement efforts, they are not the only contributors or players in the process — managers and researchers are involved as well. Managers who are charged with conducting public involvement processes have certain expectations for the process as well as their own definitions of success based on their particular role. And, as scientists and researchers become more involved with decision-making and public involvement processes, their expectations and definitions of success need to be explored. All three types of participants have valid definitions.

In this study, I interviewed a total of 42 managers, researchers and members of the public. The purpose was to investigate this notion of success -- how do these different types of participants define success in public involvement processes. All 42 interviewees participated in one of two public involvement process on the Stevensville Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest, either the Stevensville Southwest or the Stevensville West Central public involvement process. The intent of this study is not to evaluate these processes, but to use these processes as a case study. I asked the interviewees to describe their experiences, including their thoughts on what they liked or disliked about the process -- what they thought worked well and what they thought didn't work. Four working propositions were developed to help understand success and explore how managers, researchers and members of the public define success. Eight measures of success emerged and are supported to varying extents by the data.
Acknowledgments

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and support of my committee members, Dr. Stephen McCool, Dr. Wayne Freimund, Dr. Jim Burchfield and Dr. Jon Driessen. While they challenged me in many ways, they also helped me keep things in perspective and develop a thesis that I not only could be proud of, but one that I could also understand. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Clint Carlson, Director of the Bitterroot Ecosystem Research Project from which the funding for this research came. Dr. Carlson was truly an ally for human dimensions research. I would also like to thank all of the people I interviewed as part of this study -- I truly appreciate their time and the insights they shared with me. This acknowledgment would not be complete without thanking my parents, my brothers and sisters for having faith in me and encouraging me throughout my “academic career”. Last but not least, I need to thank my husband, Sam, for all of his patience, support and sacrifices. Laissez les bon tempts rouleau!
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Chapter One ....... Setting the Stage

Background

The right to participate in the decision making process of our government is as old as the government itself. "At the core of all public and government interaction in America stands our fundamental convictions in democratic idealism" (McCoy et al., nd: 1). The notion that authority rests with the people of this country is strong. Fiorino (1990) conducted a study on institutional mechanisms for public involvement in environmental risk decisions. He found that citizens wanted to participate in decisions that affected them and their community. He called this "subjective competence" -- which is the belief that one should be able to influence decisions that affect them. This belief is evidenced in increased participation in public involvement processes. While it seems that increased participation would lead to decision-makers having more information on public needs and desires, this is not always the case.

Natural resource managers tend to have more information on biological and physical conditions, patterns and processes than they do on social, economic and political dimensions. In the past, the standard approach to defining and resolving natural resource issues had a technocratic orientation. In other words, technical solutions were offered for multifaceted situations without significant public involvement. As people chose to be more involved in natural resource management, a more democratic approach was warranted. The collective choices inherent in a democratic approach will allow a greater number and diversity of participants and viewpoints. Public values as expressed in viewpoints regarding natural resources have changed as American society has become more diverse (including age, ethnicity, education, income). The number of public interest groups has increased in recent years. So, to ensure their particular values are being represented,
publics are getting involved with federal agencies in order to influence the decision-making process and public resource policies.

Traditionally, the social dimension of natural resource planning has taken a back seat to other dimensions of resource management (economic and biophysical for example). This is due to the domination of the scientific-based management paradigm that has guided the natural resources field for decades. But as social concerns and issues become a greater part of resource management, managers will more often serve as social change agents, or what McCoy et al. (nd: 8) call “key individuals who determine how to include the public in defining what societal changes should occur.” Social agents are gaining ground though, and as Wallace et al. claim, the paradigm of planning is changing. “[T]here is a growing awareness of the social context within which resource management takes place” (Wallace et al., 1994: 1).

**Ecosystem Management**

An integrated, ecosystem-based approach to natural resource management promotes the social context of natural resource management. Some managers and scientists believe that ecosystem management is capable of simultaneously addressing the increased complexity of the natural resource field and the broader set of public values that is emerging. Ecosystem management has multifaceted goals and according to Wallace et al. “a primary goal of ecosystem management is to maintain healthy ecological conditions to ensure species, plant, and ecosystem viability.” Soliciting and integrating social dimensions is combined with this primary goal of managing for biophysical conditions in an ecosystem approach. “While grounded in the ecological sciences, ecosystem management has a large social component. It is as much a social endeavor as it is a scientific endeavor” (Wallace et al., 1994: 28).
In 1994, Moote et al. completed a review of social science literature that included discourse on ecosystem management and adaptive management philosophies. Five principles that were consistent throughout the literature were outlined. They are:

1) *Socially defined goals and management objectives*: There is a need to recognize that scientific concepts (i.e., ecosystem management), and related management goals and objectives are socially defined.

2) *Integrated, holistic science*: Resource management needs to shift from a systems analysis approach that emphasizes individual parts and their outputs to an approach where the dynamic interrelations of all of the components (including social, political, economic, biological and physical) are integrated.

3) *Broad spatial and temporal scales*: Management must take place both on a larger spatial scale and a longer temporal scale. While specific scales should be determined locally, ecosystem management will cross ecological, political, generational and ownership boundaries.

4) *Collaborative decision building*: There is a need for cooperative efforts that aim to integrate knowledge and values so that community learning can occur. This is characterized by “open communication among scientists, resource management agencies, and private interests.”

5) *Adaptable institutions*: The experimental nature of ecosystem management requires that institutions be flexible and “treat management as a learning process in which decisions are continuously revisited and revised.”
While these principles may not be all encompassing, they provide a starting point for understanding what an ecosystem-based approach means to natural resource management. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, enhancing the social context of natural resource management is an important part of ecosystem management. A public involvement process can provide the occasion to increase understanding of the social context while at the same time foster social interaction about ecosystem management. In order to successfully implement ecosystem management, natural resource managers need to involve members of the public in the decision-making process. “[T]he ability to maintain a healthy environment and economy, integrate scientific knowledge, and pursue a participatory democracy lies at the heart of achieving a sustainable ecosystem” (McCoy et al., nd: 3).

_Ecosystem Management and Public Involvement_

In order to get social acceptance, decisions regarding public lands need to reflect public values and concerns. While “public needs and values are not absolute or ever fully defined” (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 1994: 2), integrating public values into the decision making process is vital to the successful implementation of ecosystem management. Also, public involvement can help achieve two other key components of ecosystem management - economic viability and environmental feasibility. Input from members of the public can bring a balance of knowledge and information into the decision-making process.

Unfortunately, typical public involvement processes have included only a one-way flow of knowledge and understanding from managers to members of the public. Frequently, this is the part in the process where managers or researchers educate members of the public on existing resource conditions or research findings. While scientific or technical knowledge is a significant part of the decision-making database for natural resource managers, there is another source of data that needs to be included. Public involvement processes can be seen as a mechanism for not only disseminating information, but also for collecting information
on public perceptions and opinions. "The translation of science to the public is important if behavior is to be influenced, but so too is it important to infuse technical data with public reality, public values, and creative responses" (McCoy et al., nd: 12). Public input, or what Fiorino (1990) calls "lay judgments" are at least as valid as judgments made by scientists or managers. Members of the public or "nonexperts", have the capacity to make decisions based on their everyday experiences. In addition to this, members of the public tend to have a greater awareness of local problems, issues and solutions that scientific experts often miss or models fail to acknowledge.

Greater public involvement and a wider range of desired goals for resources under ecosystem management can result in even more debilitating conflict. Additional information from multiple sources will intensify resource conflicts by making it difficult to reaching agreement on desired goals or outcomes. "The mix of individuals who will be involved and the mix of their level of involvement expands as we accept and coordinate ecosystem management efforts" (McCoy et al.). Within the context of growing public desire for involvement there is increased scientific uncertainty about natural resource conditions and management implications. As a result, evident courses of action become increasingly obscure.

Information regarding public values and opinions that natural resource managers consider is often gained through different means (i.e., telephone calls, general population surveys, field trips) and from potentially different segments of the population (organized special interest groups or adjacent property owners). For managers, the translation of this additional input can be complicated. "The issues for resource managers is not so much knowing how meaning in general is created, negotiated or lost (the work of social scientists), but knowing what meanings various individuals, groups or cultures assign to what pieces of the landscape" (Williams, 1995: 11).
Shifting public values and evolving management paradigms present quite a challenging management environment. "In theory, government retains all decision making authority on public policy decisions for federal lands. However, as the human population grows, technology changes, and as pressures to use the environment increases, citizen acceptance or rejection of proposed land use policies will become an ever more critical component of policy implementation" (McCoy et al., nd: 9).

A resource manager's job is further complicated by the fact that members of the public who participate are not necessarily representative of the larger community. Shindler et al. (1993) claim that ensuring representative participation is a significant challenge for managers. "Established groups frequently express opinions in loud and powerful language, and their polarized views are well known." The dominance of a special interest group can limit the potential for representative participation. Reliance on public participants who make their views known can lead to a substantial number of other citizens being excluded. If a diversity of interests is not involved, the process may not lead to social acceptance of the decision or the larger management framework. This may be especially true with ecosystem management which continues to evolve. "In the polarized forestry political environment, any new program is likely to be viewed with suspicion" (Shindler et al., 1993:41). In order to alleviate this difficult situation, two things need to be acknowledged and addressed: scientific uncertainty and disagreement or confusion about resource goals. These are two underlying conditions that are driving the confusion and conflict found in natural resource management. The conditions combine to produce a variety of situations, each of which requires different planning and public involvement processes.
A Shift

The complex, dynamic relationships of ecosystem components are being explored and evaluated in a new way through landscape-scale analyses. Such scales of analysis are relatively new in ecology. Shifting to this level of analysis in ecosystem management has lead to increased uncertainty about the effects of management on the ground. As a result, the scientific understanding of the physical and biological components is being re-evaluated. As a result, the first underlying condition is that there may be little scientific agreement about cause-effect relationships.

The scientific component of ecosystem management has, as one goal, the reduction of uncertainty through the attainment of knowledge, but simply acquiring more knowledge is not the complete answer to questions of what resources should produce. While the Forest Service views itself as technical expert with the “right” answers, bureaucrats and technical experts are often suspect in the eyes of the general public. One of the strong forces behind the increased demand to participate is “pressure from an informed public that increasingly, distrusts bureaucracies” (Shindler et al., 1993:40), to ensure that certain values are protected.

Conflict or disagreement about goals for our natural resources is a second factor that complicates the implementation of ecosystem management. The on-going debate over broader goals and expectations is fueled by the increasing number of interests involved and the values they hold.

Wicked Problems

Scientific uncertainty in conjunction with conflict about goals leads to wicked problems. Allen & Gould (1986) claim that wicked problems are symptoms of larger problems and no correct answer exists, only “more or less useful ones.” How managers define wicked
problems, as well as possible solutions, is based on their individual experiences and perspectives, as according to Allen and Gould (1986:22) “wicked problems are defined in the mind of the beholder.”

Federal resource agencies, required to respond to multiple values for diverse landscapes, are faced with wicked problems. “Strategic planning, particularly on multiple-use public forests, is definitely a political problem of wicked proportions” (Allen & Gould, 1986:22).

An Amicable Solution

One way to address these concerns is by providing an opportunity for all stakeholders (managers, researchers and members of the public) to come together in an environment that encourages dialogue and mutual learning. Dialogue occurs when participants engage in two-way communication. It requires all participants, whether they are managers, researchers or members of the public to be sensitive to other points of view and willing to initiate a relationship based on communication. McCoy et al. (nd: 11) claim that deliberate efforts need to be made to create an environment that supports collaborative relationships and discourages conflict between participants. The benefits of establishing dialogue are then carried over into the learning component of public involvement processes.

Mutual learning occurs through the free exchange of values, ideas and concerns. It is a “[D]ynamic process in which an individual becomes aware, comprehends and ultimately gains an ability to evaluate knowledge for decision-making” (McCoy et al., nd: 8)

Warfield (1993) developed a model that represents the correlation between policy inclusiveness and stakeholder relationships. He looked at how the degree to which stakeholders were included in a decision-making process (high or low) corresponded to the status of relationships between stakeholders and an management agency (positive or
negative). I have adapted his model and transposed some of the terminology to fit the
notion of effective dialogue in public involvement efforts (Figure 1). The extent to which
relationships are improved relates to the amount of public involvement. Effective dialogue
results from better relationships and more public participation. The following diagram
displays the correspondence between relationships and public involvement with dialogue as
the outcome or product.

My adaptation of Warfield's model shows that dialogue is an important component of what
can make public involvement processes successful, but there are undoubtedly other
components. I have developed a study question to address what those other components
might be and to gain an understanding of what successful public involvement means to
different participants.

**Statement of Question**

"How do managers, researchers and members of the public define success in public
involvement processes?"

Diagram of Effective Dialogue

---

High Effective Dialogue

Level of Public Involvement

Low

Effective Dialogue

Positional Dialogue

Relationships

--

Negative Positive
The previous sections suggest that the desire of members of the public to be involved in natural resource management is on the rise. Federal resource management agencies have responded to this rise by investing a considerable amount of effort into processes that involve members of the public. As a result, questions about the effectiveness and success of these efforts have developed. While there are many perspectives on what constitutes success, if federal resource management agencies are going to invest additional time and money in public involvement processes, they need to know if their efforts have been successful. Public involvement in natural resource planning has become essential, but traditional involvement strategies are not fulfilling or satisfying to many participants. It is assumed that participants, whether they are managers, researchers or members of the public, have different expectations and motivations related to their involvement in a public process. In order to meet the diverse expectations of participants, a greater understanding of the multiple measures of success is needed. The purpose of this study is to investigate and describe those multiple measures of success.

Objectives

In order to address this question, several study objectives have been developed. The main objective is to investigate the various measures of success used by managers, researchers and members of the public to evaluate a public involvement process. In order to provide a context for this main objective, the following objectives will be addressed first:

1. Develop an understanding of the changing nature of natural resource management.
2. Summarize other research studies that presented multiple ways of defining success in public involvement processes.
Introduction

The overall purpose of this chapter is to create a greater understanding of the importance of identifying various methods of increasing successful public involvement programs. To do this, the chapter is comprised of four sections. First, I discuss the changing nature of planning and management and how a different attitude towards public involvement processes is required as a result. Secondly, I briefly review some other research findings on the various measures of success. In the third section the theory of transactive planning is examined as a way of addressing the question of how people define success. Finally, I identify and elaborate on four working propositions that guide this study.

Public Involvement and the Current Planning Paradigm

In order to investigate how people define success, it is important to understand the environment in which success is or is not achieved. Examining the larger context of decision-making processes will provide a better understanding of external factors that may influence how people define success. The following section elaborates on the current planning paradigm and presents an argument that a change is warranted. The implications for public involvement and success are noted.

Rational Comprehensive Planning

As described in Chapter 1, members of the public are seeking to be involved in decision-making processes more and more. Friedmann agrees by saying that there is an “[I]ncreasing presence of organized civil society in public decision-making. This is a relatively new but increasingly salient phenomenon in the public life of cities and regions. It means that a space for participation must be found for a whole new set of actors” (1993:482). Public involvement processes are a function of kind of planning paradigm.
The current planning paradigm -- rational comprehensive planning is not particularly suited to meet an increasing demand by members of the public to be involved with decision-making processes. While it has dominated American planning for many decades (Hudson, 1979), rational comprehensive planning was not designed to encourage or utilize public input to the extent that is needed today. "[Rational comprehensive planning] typically looks at problems from a systems viewpoint, using conceptual or mathematical models relating to ends (objectives) to means (resources and constraints), with heavy reliance on numbers and quantitative analysis" (Hudson, 1979: 389).

While rational comprehensive planning provides a framework for making decisions, Thompson and Tuden (1989) present a different view of decision-making processes and suggest that there are two main dimensions that need to be considered. The first dimension related to beliefs about causation or cause-effect relationships, and the second dimension is about whether there is agreement on possible outcomes.

To better explain different situations decision-makers find themselves in, Thompson and Tuden (1989) examined how the relationships between beliefs about causation and preferences about outcomes lead to four different institutional structures. While it was originally created to reflect situations in which organizations make decisions, Stankey et al. (in press) have adapted the matrix to reflect situations in which planning takes place and it has been further adapted as shown in Figure 2.

When there is agreement on both preference and causation (Cell A), Stankey et al. (in press) assert that a rational-comprehensive planning paradigm is suited to this situation because decisions are mechanical and implementation is straightforward. Decision-makers know what they want to accomplish and how they can accomplish it, so minimal input from the public is needed. When there is agreement on preference, but not on causation
A Matrix of Planning Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs about causation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Preferences about possible outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agreement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagreement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational-Comprehensive Planning</td>
<td>Negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Management</td>
<td>Transactive Planning or Collaborative Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Cell B) experimentation or expert “triangulation” may be required to understand causation. Adaptive management would provide an opportunity to gain a better understanding of cause-effect relationships. In this situation, decision-makers know what they want achieve, but there is scientific uncertainty associated with the “how to” part of the decision-making process. While input may be solicited from members of the public, the solution to this situation rests with scientists and researchers. A negotiation approach (Cell C) would be appropriate when there is agreement on causation but not on preferences about possible outcomes. In this situation, scientific or technical knowledge does not play an important role because the conflict is over whether or not something needs to be done. However, public involvement, or more specifically communication on issues and concerns plays a significant role in reaching agreement.

In Cell D lies the “wicked problem”. (See Chapter 1, p.7 for brief discussion) In this situation, there is not agreement on neither causation or preference. Goals are ambiguous and scientific understanding is questionable. Also, it is in this situation that natural resource managers find themselves today. As in the other cells, this situation has implications for how members of the public are involved in the decision-making process. “Wicked problems” need an expanded public involvement process where members of the
public are encouraged to participate and their input is incorporated into the decision-making process. While this is not an easy task, it is an important one. Transactive planning is well suited to this situation because it provides an opportunity for public participants to interact with natural resource managers.

**Review of Literature**

Achieving success in public involvement processes is an on-going quest for natural resource management agencies. But success is an inexact term and it can be elusive. According to Webster's Dictionary, success is, "[T]he achievement of something desired, intended or attempted" (1994). Success is something everyone wants to achieve, but it frequently means something different to different people. In a general planning situation, success can mean meeting objectives or soliciting input from public participants.

Commonly, a successful public involvement process includes completing a document (i.e., a management plan). When describing what was successful about five long-term public involvement processes, Shindler and Nebruka (1997) stated that good leadership, basic organizational skills, attention to details, and commitment to constituents are key characteristics of success. The following section will elaborate on the notion of success by briefly summarizing some of the literature and research studies on this.

The Forest Service addressed the notion of successful outcomes in a booklet entitled "Strengthening Public Involvement" (USDA-FS, 1993). Developed by the National Public Involvement Task Group, the booklet outlines a model for involving members of the public in the decision making process at the Forest Plan level. The model can be used by managers to design effective public involvement processes. A matrix that identifies 23 methods of involving the public and lists 10 potential outcomes or dimensions of success was developed to highlight the relationship between methods and success. Some of the more successful methods include creating a Citizens Oversight Group, hosting open houses
and using other planning efforts to share information and solicit input. The dimensions of success achieved by these methods include building relationships, sharing knowledge and understanding and identifying problems and solutions.

In the report "Building Bridges Across Agency Boundaries" Wondolleck and Yaffee (1994) looked at how creating linkages between Forest Service managers and members of the public could make public involvement processes more effective and efficient. They surveyed agency personnel and members of the public about their experiences with public involvement processes and developed “snapshots” of success. Their results suggest that success is multidimensional. They discuss success in a variety of ways, including how collaborative decision-making processes involve stakeholders and build relationships. Communication and cooperation across the agency/non-agency boundary also contributed to the notion of success. Acceptance or support from people affected by a decision and whether or not a decision can be implemented and endure over time are other dimensions of success presented by Wondolleck and Yaffee (1994).

Shindler and Neburka (1997), compared five long-term planning processes. They interviewed 31 participants including both Forest Service personnel and members of the public. Interviewees were asked to describe their thoughts and experiences related to their participation. The data was analyzed and elements common to all processes were identified. From these common elements, eight attributes of success were developed. They are:

1. Groups whose members are selected for their understanding of the issues and willingness to commit to a group process are more effective.

2. Meetings are much more productive if structured to promote full group interaction, rather than simple information sharing and feedback.

3. A group whose purpose is defined and whose end product is identified at the outset is inherently more successful.
4. Groups in which the decision-maker has a regular presence believe their contributions are taken more seriously by the agency.

5. Working with current and reliable information adds considerably to a credible process.

6. The "care and feeding" of participants is important.

7. The experience of getting to know "the other side" is beneficial to outcomes.

8. Willingness to filter out "noise" from national interest groups can help participants focus on their common goals. (1997: 18-19)

While no process is ever completely successful, Shindler and Neburka contend that every process has some elements of success. They conclude with an important message: "Basic organizational skills, attention to detail, commitment to constituents and good leadership -- all things people normally expect from our natural resource agencies -- often mean the difference between success and frustration" (1997:19).

In 1994, Moore investigated how people interacted when trying to resolve environmental disputes. She used two groups -- the Bob Marshall Task Force and the Fitzgerald River Advisory Committee to explore how long-term negotiation efforts are resolved. (The Fitzgerald River is a National Park in Western Australia.) In part, Moore concluded that successful resolution is multifaceted. Five categories of success were developed in response to these findings. They include product, political, interest, responsibility and relationship.

Part of Moore's research looked at measuring the success of negotiation efforts based on five categories of success. She determined that each category is either product or process linked (see Table 1). The categories of success that are product linked have the following characteristics: a technically-sound agreement between stakeholders was reached and on-the-ground management was improved. Process linked categories of success can be defined as stakeholder's ability to influence the process and develop meaningful, open
relationships with each other. Their perception of fairness and efficiency of the process, and the extent to which their understanding of the issues evolved further define a process linked success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linked Outcomes</th>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Link</strong></td>
<td><strong>Product</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Product-oriented success is the first category of success defined by Moore. It includes the what Friedmann (1978) calls “societal guidance.” It is a tangible outcome - a management plan for example. A product-oriented success initiates action on the ground and protects the resource. Another dimension of this measure is the extent to which it addresses relevant issues. For example, whether a good decision that will endure over time was produced is a characteristic of product-oriented outcome.

Politically-oriented success, like the first measure, is focused on what the process produces as an outcome. It can be defined as the extent to which the planning process and the plan was accepted by the local community and represented all interests. This measure may also include the amount of ownership participants felt towards the plan, and a related absence of appeals. This definition of success may also include whether the decision or plan was not challenged or whether it withstood a challenge/appeal. Public forest management takes place in a political environment where competing forces exert pressure on managers. “If they (managers) do not work to build support for agency direction in the political environment, they will not succeed in sustaining desired courses of action” (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 1994: 9).
Interest-oriented success is measured by the degree to which diverse interests are involved in the process and represented by the plan. This includes whether an individual’s interests were protected or enhanced by the plan (Moore, 1994: 75). Interest protection is one motivation for getting involved. “A technical decision-making paradigm must yield to a more pluralistic and consensus building one, where groups influence direction based on the legitimacy of their interests and the information they muster” (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 1994: 7).

Responsibility-oriented success occurs when participants develop a sense of ownership towards the plan. It has both dimensions of success - product and process. Incorporating stakeholder input into the plan is a product dimension, and establishing and maintaining responsibility towards the plan is a process dimension.

Relationship-oriented success occurs when lines of open communication are established and nurtured among stakeholders (members of the public, managers and scientists). This measure included promoting positive contact between everyone involved in developing the plan. A relationship-oriented definition of success has an added feature. If a process establishes long-term relationships, it also creates “a seedbed for future decision making.”

There are a multitude of planning styles and techniques with a variety of strengths and weaknesses, including the kind of public participation they afford. Public involvement efforts can be the “the critical point of social intervention” that provide an opportunity to “join scientific and technical expertise with personal knowledge” (Stokes, 1982:41). Hudson (1979) evaluated five major planning traditions -- synoptic, incremental, transactive, advocacy and radical. He used six criteria to examine each tradition’s strengths, weaknesses, intentions and accomplishments. Based on his evaluation, only the transactive planning tradition provides an opportunity for members of the public to have
fact-to-face contact with managers and scientists. Transactive planning "[H]umanizes the acquisition and use of scientific and technical knowledge" (Stokes, 1982: 42) because it provides a way to merge the expert knowledge of managers and researchers with the experiential or personal knowledge of the public in a neutral setting. Transactive planning can provide the forum needed to address wicked problems in natural resource management and provide non-traditional solutions.

The keystone element of transactive planning is interpersonal dialogue. It creates an environment in which learning can take place. "Transactive planning seeks to draw potentially affected populations into the planning process from the very beginning when problems still need defining" (Friedmann, 1993: 484). Problems and solutions are discussed and developed in an atmosphere where participants, whether they are managers, researchers or members of the public have equal standing.

**Overview of Transactive Planning**

Transactive planning will be used to provide a framework for this study. John Friedmann has been writing on this planning tradition for more than 30 years. His book, *Retracking America -- A Theory of Transactive Planning* (1973) is considered by many to be a landmark text in the planning field. This book will be referenced extensively in this section.

There are three main components that form the backbone of the theory of transactive planning: (A) dialogue, (B) mutual learning and (C) societal guidance. "Transactive planning integrates processes of natural learning with an organized capacity and willingness to act" (Stokes, 1982:42). If a manager's goal is to improve the ecosystem by implementing a plan that all participants have a sense of ownership of, then encouraging open communication is the first step. When the participants recognize the legitimacy of the
process and understand their role and the role of their cohorts, the phase of mutual learning begins. In a public involvement setting, learning occurs when participants share concerns, values, ideas and knowledge. This transactive planning phase lays the foundation for the development of societal guidance.

Detailed Description of the Major Components of Transactive Planning

A. Dialogue

Dialogue is the primary level of communication that occurs among stakeholders. It includes the free exchange of values, ideas and concerns. Friedmann (1973: 178-181) proposes seven characteristics to describe this person-centered form of communication. All six characteristics must be present in a public involvement setting for the “life of dialogue” or two-way communication to occur.

The first characteristic of dialogue, authenticity means “to discover yourself through dialogue with many others” (Friedmann, 1973: 178). It requires a basic level of self-confidence, an ability to integrate new learning and a willingness to be open to other participants. Integration of person is the second characteristic. It is defined as “a relationship in which thinking, moral judgment, feeling and empathy are fused in authentic acts of being” (ibid: 179). Friedmann labels the intersection of these four states of being as the center of a fully integrated person ready to partake in the life of dialogue. Conflict acceptance is the third characteristic. It recognizes that relationships cannot always be harmonious and that conflict arises out of the different world views people have, but “[C]onflict can be overcome by mutual desire to continue in the life of dialogue” (ibid: 179). A relationship of total communication, the fourth characteristic, is where every gesture or non-verbal form of communication has meaning to the other person engaging in the life of dialogue. Engaging in two-way communication initiates a contractual relationship, which is the fifth characteristic of dialogue. Differences are accepted by
various participants, whom in turn, assume responsibilities towards one another. This characteristic includes accepting differences and assuming responsibilities. “To the extent that you are willing to ‘accept’ the other, your obligations to him (or her) will increase, and you must be willing to give at least a part of yourself in return” (ibid: 181). Finally, the development of dialogue represents a time-binding relationship that continuously evolves. “Dialogue takes place in the “here and now” even as it relates what has gone before to what is yet to come” (Friedmann, 1973: 181). Once these characteristics have been realized and a relationship of dialogue has been established, the focus of a transactive planning process shifts to exchanging values, ideas and knowledge.

B. Mutual Learning

Mutual learning is the intermediate component of transactive planning. It is a process in which two types of stakeholder knowledge are combined in an effort to jointly define problems and generate solutions. The terminology used to describe these two types of knowledge have evolved as their application has evolved. What Friedmann called “processed” and “personal” knowledge in his book, Retracking America (1973), he now calls “expert” and experiential” knowledge (Friedmann, 1993: 484).

Managers and planners use expert, or processed knowledge to help them in their job duties. They use this systematized, orderly type of knowledge to address technical or scientific aspects of their job. Expert knowledge includes theoretical concepts, analytical techniques and scientific data. Expert knowledge is limited though, in that it offers only a “general explanation for the behavior of a small number of variables operating under a specified set of constraints” (Friedmann, 1973: 173). Although this style of communication is professional, it is impersonal and as a result, it is increasingly unsuccessful in joining knowledge to action. Expert knowledge needs to be combined with experiential knowledge, a type of communication that is rich in content.
Experiential or personal knowledge is generated by members of the public, generally people who will be affected by the outcome of the process. Experiential knowledge is typically anecdotal, emotional and based on personal experiences. It includes personal information people have about the area as a result of living, working, or recreating there. An understanding of the local social environment and existing norms also describes this type of knowledge.

Mutual learning is an integral part of the theory of transactive planning because it fosters the integration of these two types of knowledge so that the productive aspects of each type can be maximized and the deficiencies minimized. The goal of mutual learning is to unite two distinct types of knowledge that on their own are inadequate as a basis for action. Friedmann defines action as “[A]n intentional mobilization and use of resources to produce a given effect” (Friedmann, 1973: 243). If mutual learning is effective and a basis for action have been established, the next step is societal guidance.

C. Societal Guidance

The third component of the transactive planning theory is societal guidance. Friedmann defines it as “[T]he process by which the incidence, rate, and direction of change in society are controlled” by a variety of players performing roles that are distinct but related (ibid: 246). He outlines six characteristics that must be present in the planning process for societal guidance to develop. For a further discussion of autonomy, responsiveness, innovation, effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy, see Friedmann, 1973: 246. The combination of these six characteristics though leads to multiple definitions of societal guidance. In the most simplistic terms, the product of a transactive planning process that embodies both dialogue and mutual learning is a management plan. This is a legitimate, but narrow definition of planning outcomes.
Commonly, the development of a management plan is viewed as the main product of a public involvement process, but there are numerous other products or outcomes. A few of these include a sense of ownership in the plan given that the public was involved early on in the planning process. They may also be satisfied with the process if they felt their interests were heard and are reflected in the plan. The opportunity to build relationships is another positive outcome. Depending on the structure of the plan though, negative outcomes of the planning process may develop. For example, when Federal agencies fail to effectively engage the public in a timber sale proposal or some other prescriptive treatment, the result can be additional distrust towards the agency. This kind of situation can also lead to appeals or litigation.

**Working Propositions**

All participants, including managers, researchers and members of the public bring different perceptions to the planning process. It is assumed that these different perceptions also lead to different definitions of success of public involvement efforts. Four working propositions were developed so that the perspectives on success of each participant type could be compared and contrasted against the other participant types perspectives’. In this section, I will present the working propositions and provide a brief discussion of how each relates to successful public involvement.

Typically natural resource managers use a scientific-based planning approach to guide their management decisions. Because this approach has dominated the planning field in the past, manager’s may simply define success as completing a management plan. Therefore:

**Working Proposition One:** "Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of the product."
Researchers who participate in transactive efforts are responsible for the generation and dissemination of knowledge related to the current research projects or scientific understanding. They may have a variety of opportunities and forums in which to share their knowledge. As a result, researchers may define success in terms of how well the public received their knowledge, or the extent to which members of the public and managers learned or benefited. This notion of how researchers define success is represented by working proposition two:

**Working Proposition Two:** "Researchers are more likely than managers or members of the public to view success in terms of the learning."

There are numerous laws and mandates that influence how natural resource managers solicit public input and what they do with that input. Getting members of the public and other important political players to accept a decision or management plan is the goal for some managers. Therefore:

**Working Proposition Three:** Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of political measures.

Members of the public may have the most complex definition of success. Not only are they concerned about what happens on the ground when the plan is implemented, but they are also concerned about how their input influenced the process. They may also measure success in terms of the type of relationships that develop during the process. Thus:

**Working Proposition Four:** "Members of the public are more likely than managers or researchers to have broader measures of success."
Chapter Three ....... Methods

The Study Area and Public Involvement Process

I have chosen to study the Stevensville Southwest and West Central public involvement processes on the Bitterroot National Forest for the following reasons:

(1) The public involvement efforts for these two landscape-scale analyses were very intensive, and involved a wide variety of participants, including members of the public, managers, and researchers. These conditions facilitated the testing of the working propositions.

(2) Funding from the Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project (BEMRP) was available to conduct this study. BEMRP is a five-year project (now in year 3) with research being conducted on flora, fauna, technology and human dimensions. This study of public involvement on the Stevensville Ranger District is part of research being conducted by the Human Dimensions committee of BEMRP.

Stevensville Southwest Landscape Scale Analysis

The Stevensville Southwest analysis area covers approximately 60,000 acres on the Bitterroot National Forest. Approximately 60 percent of the analysis area is wilderness and represents an important component of the greater northern Rocky Mountain ecosystem. The Southwest public involvement process began in September, 1992 with an open house. The process lasted approximately 10 months (from September through June 1993). There were 11 public meetings and two field trips. A core group of 14 members of the public attended the meetings regularly.
The initiation of the Southwest process is significant because it marked the beginning of ecosystem-based management on the Bitterroot National Forest. Managers wanted to develop a partnership with members of the public and actively involve them in the development of a management plan for Stevensville Southwest. Presentations were given by the various resource specialists to educate the public participants on the existing conditions. (See Appendix X for a complete list of presentations.) The Interdisciplinary team worked closely with public participants to develop management proposals that met ecosystem management goals. The focus then shifted to site-specific actions. A set of alternatives was developed by the Interdisciplinary team and public input was again solicited. A draft environmental assessment with the selected alternative was released in May, 1993. After the 30-day public comment period, a final environmental assessment with a decision notice was published. An appeal was filed in July, 1993. The Forest Service responded by initiating a supplemental analysis that addressed the issues raised in the appeal. The supplemental analysis was completed in July, 1994. No further appeals were filed against the Stevensville Southwest management plan. To date, parts of the plan have been implemented, including reconstructing a trail head and restoring wildlife habitat, but a timber sale has not been made.

Stevensville West Central Landscape-scale Analysis and the Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project

Stevensville West Central is a 40,000 acre analysis area, but what sets this process apart is that the Bitterroot National Forest and the Stevensville District became partners with the USDA-FS Intermountain Research Station and the University of Montana in a cooperative effort to research and implement ecosystem-based management practices. The main objective of the Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project (BEMRP) is “[T]o determine the level of influence vegetation management has on multiple resource outputs and values in an altered Rocky Mountain ecosystem, and to demonstrate to the public the
feasibility of landscape-level rehabilitation management” (BEMRP proposal, FY 94-95:1). BEMRP has six components: flora, fauna, aquatics, landscape ecology, landscape application and human dimensions. The Stevensville Ranger District is the focus of human dimensions research for the project and this study.

Stevensville West Central was an expanded public involvement effort in many ways. The process was more than twice as long as the previous process. The Stevensville West Central process started in January, 1994 and went through August, 1996. There were over 40 meetings. While managers solicited public input throughout the process, they also provided many educational forums. Researchers and scientists gave presentations emphasizing biophysical conditions, both past and present in the analysis area. Researchers also described the ecosystem-based principles and management approach. (See Appendix Y for a complete list of presentations.) The Interdisciplinary Team drafted desired future condition statements and public participants responded to them. In an attempt to increase the efficiency of the public meetings and encourage equity among participants, a neutral facilitator was hired. During facilitated public meetings, members of the public responded to the desired future condition statements. Based on these revisions, the Interdisciplinary team developed management proposals. At this point in the process, field trips were scheduled. They provided important opportunities for managers and members of the public to discuss the specific details of the proposals. Like Southwest, a set of alternatives were developed and public input was again solicited. A draft environmental analysis with the preferred alternative was released in July, 1996. After the 30 day public comment period, a final environmental assessment with a decision notice was published. A joint appeal was filed by several environmental groups in the Bitterroot Valley. The appeal was then reviewed under the Regional Appeal Review process. The Appeal Review officer then determined that the West Central environmental assessment was adequate and the appeal was dismissed. As a result of the initial environmental
assessment being upheld, planning and management was able to move forward at that point in time.

The Population

There are three main types of participants in the population of this study. I will provide a clear definition of these types so that their use and meaning will be understood throughout the rest of this thesis.

For the purposes here, managers are defined as those participants employed by the National Forest System who work on the Bitterroot National Forest and were involved in the Stevensville public participation processes (Southwest, West Central or both).

The population of researchers includes participants who are employed by either the USDA-FS Intermountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory or the University of Montana, School of Forestry. Participation by researchers is limited to the Stevensville West Central public involvement process.

Members of the public include residents of the Bitterroot Valley who attended more than one public meeting or other event sponsored by the Stevensville Ranger District. This type of participant includes citizen who contributed to the process in meaningful way, either by actively participating in the public meetings and field trips or responding through letters.

Sample

The manager, researcher and public populations were represented to varying degrees throughout the processes (i.e., at some meetings, members of the public outnumbered researcher and managers put together). As a result, the sampling methods varied. I selected participants who had attended at least two meetings or field trips in either
Southwest or West Central. Because I was interested in how people define successful public involvement efforts, I decided that people who attended at least two meetings or field trips would have participated enough to form an opinion and reflect on their experience. The range of participation among interviewees varied greatly. While some interviewees participated only in parts of Southwest or West Central, others participated extensively in both processes. This provided me with "snapshots" of the processes, which when combined, provided me with a thorough, detailed analysis of both Stevensville processes.

I interviewed twelve managers and twelve researchers. These numbers represent essentially a census of those managers or researchers who were involved with either of the Stevensville processes.

I interviewed eighteen members of the public. I developed a preliminary list of interviewees from the Stevensville District mailing list by consulting with the District Ranger who helped narrow the list by eliminating people who had moved from the area, had passed away or who were only on the mailing list and had not attended any of the meetings or field trips.

All but one interview was conducted in person. The exception was a manager who was extensively involved in both Stevensville Southwest and Stevensville West Central, but had transferred out of the area. I initially contacted this manager by telephone and informed them of my study. Then I electronically mailed a questionnaire to this person and their responses were returned likewise.

I attended three public meetings and one field trip for the Stevensville West Central process. At that time though, the methodology for this study was not developed, so my experience does not count as participant observation. It did, however, provide me with
some first-hand experience in the process and the opportunity to become acquainted with the people I would later interview.

**Data Analysis**

Data collection and analysis occurred concurrently, although the bulk of the analysis took place after data collection was completed. The interview transcripts form the basis of the project data. Coding was used to label, separate, compile and organize topics from the interview data. Coding also enabled me to summarize, synthesize and sort many of the topics embedded in the data. Most code words emerged from the interview data while some were derived from previous research (Moore, 1994). Code words evolved from lesser to greater complexity as the analysis proceeded.

**Measurement Instrument**

I used a semi-structured interview process with an open-ended questionnaire. This method was coupled with probing for important points. Interview questions, shown in Appendix A, are derived from the research objective and working propositions. These questions served as a guide rather than a rigid framework that evolved after several interviews were conducted. Some questions did not elicit rich responses, so they were modified and then proved to be more fruitful. Also, the order in which some of the questions were asked varied slightly from interview to interview.

Other sources of data include video-taped recording of public meetings on the Stevensville District, meeting notes and other forms of Forest Service documentation including correspondence sent to the District Ranger. Combined with the interviews, these multiple sources of data represent a broad scope of participant perspectives.
Analysis Procedures

The Ethnograph (v4.0) was used to conduct a computer-aided qualitative analysis of the interview data. After the data has been transcribed verbatim and formatted according to the software requirements, it was coded by topics and sub-topics that emerged. These topics and sub-topics included eight measures of success and were used to establish the foundation for the examination of the results.

Quotes were sorted according to topics and sub-topics. For example, if a member of the public said that getting to know their neighbor was a positive result of the process, the quote was placed under topic "relationships" and sub-topic "positive". From the more than 60 hours of interviews, quotes used to illustrate the results of this study were selected based on their descriptive nature. While no attempt was made to equally represent interviewees, it was my endeavor to remain faithful to the entire body of data when selecting quotes to use. Typically, most quotes used represent more than one opinion. All quotes selected describe one of the eight measures of success, but not all in a positive light. A clear description of the topics (i.e., measures of success) was the primary selection criteria for the quotes. Direct support for the four working propositions was not a selection criterion.
Chapter Four ....... Examination of Results

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the results of my interviews and examine the working propositions in light of the data collected. Text in quotation marks is quote directly from the interviews - words that the interviewees used themselves to describe their thoughts and experiences. Words in brackets [ ] were added for the benefit of the reader to provide a context for the quotes or to increase the clarity of their meaning. The embedded meaning of the quotes have not been altered.

In this study, I conducted 42 interviews. The interviews took place in a variety of formal and informal settings, including offices, conference rooms, restaurants, kitchens and living rooms. Sometimes I shared a meal with the interviewee, while other times we shared a piece of pie or a cup of coffee. The interviewing process took place over a four-month period, from August to November, 1996.

Interviews in person were recorded with a microcassett recorder. I also made hand-written notes. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts, combined with the hand-written notes provide a complete and detailed account of the interviews. Interviews ranged in length from 40 to 200 minutes.

A list of 18 questions provided the foundation for each interview. (See Appendix A). Our conversations centered around their experiences at public meetings and field trips. Some of the main topics included perceptions of the planning process (its goals and how it evolved), how a successful public involvement effort is defined and if success was part of the experience in Stevensville. We also talked about relationships, learning, technology...
transfer (the suitability of bringing research and technology to public meetings), and consensus (definitions and its role in Forest Service public involvement efforts).

While it is not the objective of this study to evaluate Stevensville Southwest or West Central, many of the comments are inevitably evaluative in nature. The primary reason such comments are used is to show the importance interviewees placed on the various measures of success.

I interviewed 12 managers, 12 researchers and 18 members of the public. Table 2 displays the gender breakdown of the three types of interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Breakdown of Study Interviewees</th>
<th>Table 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The total number of managers and researchers closely represents a census of those involved with the Stevensville Southwest, and West Central public involvement efforts or the Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project (BEMRP). It is interesting to note that the gender breakdown of managers is practically split down the middle. While this gender breakdown may not be reflective of the Forest Service as an agency, at the time of these interviews, it was true of the Stevensville Ranger District. Researchers, on the other hand, are dominated by males.

The total number of members of the public who participated in either Stevensville Southwest or West Central is difficult to determine exactly due to fluctuating participation.
over the life of the process. Of 18 members of the public I interviewed, approximately seven participated in both processes. Like the pool of researchers, the total number of public interviewees was dominated by males. This is somewhat true of the Bitterroot Valley according to a general population survey conducted by the Institute for Recreation Research (ITRR). Their study shows males slightly outnumber females in the Bitterroot Valley, 59 percent to 41 percent (ITRR, 1994). This phenomena (of male dominance at public meetings) is further confounded by the fact that when I met with male public participants, typically at their residences, they frequently asked their wives for input or help in recollecting their thoughts or experience. From time to time, the wives would also speak-up on their own and share their thoughts about the process, even though they had not participated. While these women were not members of the scene (meaning they did not go to meetings or field trips themselves), clearly they participated indirectly through of their spouses. In cases where wives interjected comments, it did not become a separate interview. Their dialogue became part of their husband’s transcript and was coded along with the rest of his dialogue.

While the number of managers and researchers interviewed is the same (12), I feel it is important to qualify the amount of data. Managers’ transcripts were more rich with data than the other two types of participants. Through the interviewing process, a lesser amount of data was collected from researchers than from managers. I believe there are three main reasons for this:

1. While managers were able to reflect on their thoughts and experiences from Stevensville Southwest, West Central or both, researchers were only able to reflect on West Central because that was the only process in which they were involved for the purposes of this study.
2. For some researchers, Stevensville West Central was the first joint research-management project in which they had participated. It is my impression that their lack of exposure to public involvement processes related to fewer comments overall. This was not the case for all researchers though, as some have been involved with public processes quite extensively in the past.

3. While public involvement can be a daily part of a manager's job, this is not the case with researchers. I feel that this may be the main reason for the difference in amount of data collected from these two types of interviewees. Public involvement was not part of a researchers' jobs on a daily basis, even with their extensive involvement with Stevensville West Central. The role they played in that process was somewhat limited to presenting their research and answering questions. I got the impression from some researchers that they had not reflected much on the process or their experience previous to our interview.

I feel that it is also important to qualify data collected from members of the public as well. While some of the 18 public interviewees talked extensively about their experience with Stevensville public involvement processes (either Southwest, West Central or both), other members of the public talked about a variety of other topics, including: historical perspectives on natural resource management in the Bitterroot Valley, past public involvement processes with the Bitterroot National Forest, and other personal philosophies on a variety of subjects. While these divergent topics of conversation initially seemed distractive, they proved to be quite valuable in contextualizing their specific comments on public involvement.
The Ethnograph, v4.0, a qualitative software program, was used to organize, code and search the interview data. The DOS-based program enabled me to perform a content analysis and search for key quotes by code word.

Overview of Results
At the beginning of this study, I intended to explore and investigate five measures of success based on previous public involvement research (Moore, 1994). These five measures include product, political, interest, relationship and responsibility. After transcribing, coding and analyzing my interview data, I added three dimensions of success to my overall framework. In addition to being complimentary to Moore's five measures, I felt the additional measures of success more fully represented the interview data. Education, learning and implementation are additional dimensions that interviewees discussed enough to justify expanding the number of measures. Education is defined as a one-way flow in information typically from managers or researchers to members of the public in a somewhat formal setting. Learning is distinguished from education; it is a more interactive experience where knowledge is actively shared between two or more participants (managers, researchers or members of the public). Implementation is defined as moving beyond the planning stage to actually doing something on the ground.

One of the guiding questions behind this study is, "How do different participants define success? Four working propositions were developed to help investigate that question. The working propositions served primarily as a sorting mechanism for the data. This chapter has been organized around these working propositions. The data was used to generally show support for the working propositions. All eight measures of success were discussed by all three types of interviewees to some extent. For an overview of support for these working propositions, see Table 3.
Examination of Working Propositions

Product-oriented Measures of Success

I. Manager Discussion of a Product-oriented Measure of Success

Working Proposition One: "Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of the product."

Managers described a product-oriented measure of success that has two properties: (1) Completing a public involvement process and, (2) Developing a document or management plan.

The process property includes sponsoring a process and meeting the public involvement objectives. Three managers commented on this property. One comment related to Stevensville Southwest:

We were able to accomplish our objectives for public involvement and for the analysis within a relatively short time frame.

Two other managers' comments described process success in Stevensville West Central:

Was the process[successful]? Yes. And, I say that because I know the effort that went into it. There was an extraordinary amount of effort that went into getting that on-line.

I think we met our objectives for public involvement.

While another manager feels that the process was successful, this person felt that there is room for improvement:

I think overall [the process] was successful, but I feel that if I had West Central to do over again, the next opportunity would be handled differently as far as really optimizing the value of having the public involved and really honing in and focusing in on what our objectives are for that involvement. As it relates to meeting
our goals, it relates to meeting the public goals. It's a long process. There was a lot of energy expanded for it that I think could have been compressed and done more rapidly.

Developing a management plan or EIS was a second way managers described a product-oriented measure of success:

I think we produced what's now viewed as the production goal for the [Interdisciplinary] team, which is the NEPA document. It has a decision notice with it from the Ranger or Forest Supervisor. So ... that deal was successful.

One manager felt that applying new concepts to document was successful:

We looked at ecological land units and historical ranges of variability by species. We'd never done that before. So, we were successful in being able to apply those kinds of concepts and theories. And, come up with a decision. So, from that standpoint it was successful.

Also, some managers felt that the effort was successful because public input influenced the proposals:

So, it's through public involvement like on these two projects and we've had on the last decade, maybe almost two decades, that we've a very much different arena of proposed actions now, than we had not very long ago.

So, from my viewpoint... we have a very light, low impact forest management actions compared to not very long ago. And, I think it's only from the very intense public involvement that that's happened. We were very intense about getting high volumes of board feet when I moved to the Bitterroot. And, now we're not. And, that's because of the public and only because of the public.

II. Researcher Discussion of a Product-oriented Measure of Success

Researchers provided little support for a product-oriented measure of success. Only one researcher perceived a product-oriented measure of success within the context of the Stevensville West Central process. The researcher talked about being successful by carrying-out a public involvement process:
Yeah, we did what we said we were going to do. We invoked that long assembly of public meetings. We were going to give it a try. At the end, we were going to evaluate the successes and failures of it and see if it was worth while. So, from my perspective...yeah, we laid out what we were going to do and we did it.

Another researcher felt that there was a lack of product-oriented success because the management plan or document was not influenced by public input, which is in distinct contrast to a comment from a manager in the previous section:

A lot of those meetings didn't really affect the decision one way or the other.

Comments from researchers about Stevensville Southwest were not expected or received. As stated before, researchers were not involved in that process. However, it is interesting to note that only two researchers who participated in Stevensville West Central made a direct reference to a product-oriented measure of success. The lack of importance they place on this measure of success may relate to the role they played in the process. They were mainly on the peripheral of the public involvement process and came in primarily to give scientific presentations, provide information and answer questions.

The lack of comments may also be explained by the fact that research is separate from the management in the Forest Service, so researchers may not be as aware of or concerned about the outcomes of a public involvement process as managers are because it is not a regular part of their job.

III. Public Discussion of a Product-oriented Measure of Success

While the following discussion does not support a specific working proposition, it is important to examine how members of the public discussed a product-oriented measure of success to have a better understanding of the first two working propositions.
Members of the public, like managers, seemed to distinguish between two properties of a product-oriented measure of success - completing a public involvement process and developing a document or management plan. Members of the public thought neither property of success was experienced much in the Stevensville processes:

I think the success was that they proved that type of public meeting is totally ineffective for public involvement.

I can't say from any aspect that [the process] was successful. Not from my perspective. But I didn't think it would [be] at the beginning, so it wasn't like, 'Oh, gee, I'm super disappointed'.

Public participants felt that the process failed because it was not outcome-oriented:

The Forest Service is historically known for process. But very little in actual solutions.

In my words, there's no results coming out of the process except more process. Can the public afford it? No.

They keep refining their process. In other words, when the original forest planning process failed, they then wrote more new laws and they complicated the process and they made it more finite. So, they spend more time with more specialists to come up with more science and they haven't accomplished anything.

I don't think we ever had a good feeling about the process, because anybody that's worked out in the world for a while, any level of government knows that they [the Forest Service] thrive[s] on process. And process doesn't equate to common sense and good decisions. It only involves a certain degree of participation by the public.

Simply completing a document or management plan was not enough for members of the public to say the process was successful:

Now, we got a lot of documents out of it, a lot of nice pretty paperwork and it's all bullshit. Every bit of it.

These 'phone book' EIS's - they are not only tremendously expensive, but they put so much time in them.

I think [public input] watered [the Southwest plan] down so bad that the result, the end result was very weak. As I recall, the timber sale that came out of that didn't sell because of the economics. It got watered down so bad that it just wasn't
economically feasible to do the thing that they were asking. The system they were carrying was so expensive, it made it so that the sale was going to be non-economical.

Well, it [West Central] certainly was more successful than not having it at all.

Was it successful from the point of view of the Forest Service, that they went through a public process and come up with a NEPA document? Yes, but they could have come up with a document without the public process as well.

IV. Summary of Product-oriented Measures of Success

Working Proposition One: “Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of the product.”

This proposition was partially supported by the data. Managers described a product-oriented measure of success significantly more than researchers, as this measure of success was directly talked about by only one researcher. (See section II, pg. 31). When comparing managers to members of the public though, it is difficult to determine which type of interviewee supported this measure of success more. While managers discussed the product of West Central (both the process and the document) in a more positive sense than members of the public, that is not to say that managers placed more emphasis on a product-oriented measure of success - they just perceived more product-oriented success in Stevensville West Central than members of the public.

Learning-oriented Measures of Success

Learning is defined as an interactive method of acquiring knowledge, where expertise and experience are traded back and forth among all participants. Learning occurs in this type of “give and take” environment.
I. Researcher Discussion of a Learning-oriented Measure of Success

Working Proposition Two: “Researchers are more likely than managers or members of the public to view success in terms of learning.”

Researchers’ description of a learning-oriented measure of success was based on their own experience in Stevensville West Central. Several commented on learning about the public involvement process, including the need for evaluation. Researchers felt that recognizing some “do’s and don’ts” was a valuable part of their learning experience:

I think everybody gained a lot of insight on the public involvement process and recognized that there were some things that we wouldn't do again. That certain aspect is good.

We’ve struggled quite a bit through some of those meetings so hopefully, that’s part of the learning process - to come to better ways of presenting the information.

As they learned more about the public involvement process, some researchers expressed a concern for the length and cost of a process like Stevensville West Central:

So, I think for those research people who haven’t been involved in a planning type of exercise in the National Forest system [before], there was quite a bit to be learned about the process.

I think there is some things learned from the process which won't be repeated. For example, I think the facilitator will be given a set of guidelines and be asked to have participants follow those guidelines a little bit closer. I also think the Forest Service will list their agenda ahead of time now. Let the public know what they have to do and also let the public know that reaching that agenda, they can be influenced by public participation. And, I think the length of the meetings, I don't think they're going to ..I think they're going to try to cut the length of the process down. Instead of having two and a half years, I think they'd cut it back or at least I'd hope so. They'd probably get more participants if they did that.

It was extremely expensive. I'm sure of that. So, I think the success of all of this will in part come from the lessons learned - so that future processes are done more efficiently.

One researcher expressed frustration with what he/she had learned:
I guess I learned that I'm not sure its a good process. I'm not sure that going through all these meetings is all that productive.

Researchers typically do not have much opportunity to interact with members of the public, so recognizing and understanding the role publics played in Stevensville West Central was a successful learning experience for some researchers:

I learned more about the public and [a special interest group] and how they operate. And, I sorta knew who they were and what they were about to begin with.

I certainly have a better feeling for the public interaction system, a better idea of the different concepts of the way the public perceives things.

One researcher commented that he/she learned how to deal with members of the public from an example set by the District Ranger:

I think number one, I learned a lot from [the District Ranger]. [For example], conflict in group situations. The way [the District Ranger] handled members of the public, I felt was so good. I've been able to carry that over to some of my own interactions, and I think other [researchers] would say the same thing.

Two researchers felt that learning was not a part of their experience:

I don't think learned. Really, I've had a lot of involvement in public meetings and other roles before and [West Central] didn't really bring anything new. Just a new group of people and a little different setting.

I didn't learn...I learned generalities, but I didn't learn any real unique insight.

Researchers made two references to a learning-oriented measure of success from a manager's perspective. One comment alludes to learning as an asset - something of value that can be gained or lost, and while the learning part of it was successful, losing a participant, (in this case, the District Ranger) may be the same as losing the learning that took place:
It seems managers learned some things in West Central. I guess my fear is that a lot of what they learned may have left with the District Ranger.

A second comment relates to managers becoming acquainted with the research branch of the Forest Service. One researcher thought this was a positive learning experience for managers:

I know managers learned a lot about the way the research functions. We have a lot of people in the National Forest Management don't have a clue that there is a research arm in the Forest Service, let alone that we do have a function. They don't have a clue that we're an independent arm of the Forest Service. I think that they learned that. Secondly, I'm convinced the National Forest people have learned that research can definitely be an asset to their planning activities. If they can bring research in, the public see research as credibility to an organization.

II. Manager Discussion of a Learning-oriented Measure of Success

When managers talked about learning, they talked about it from the perspective of what they themselves learned as a result of their involvement in either Stevensville Southwest or West Central.

The following comments show managers’ optimism about learning in general:

Anything you learn is positive. You learn it, you can tap it into your database.

This process is, and hopefully will continue to be, a learning experience for all persons involved [with the] agency, academia, public.

Live and learn!

Sure, anything you do is a learning experience.

Yes, I view it as being successful because the majority of participants came, they learned...[they] learned about us and we learned about them.
Managers, like researchers felt that they learned about the public involvement process, including the mechanics of it:

I have a better understanding of what we can accomplish with our public involvement process. In terms of, if we involve the public to the degree we did West Central, what the results are going to be in terms of our product.

Also, managers felt the evaluating past processes in an effort to improve future processes was important:

A lot of times we go through these efforts and we never turn back and really chew on it and evaluate [it] and say what worked, what didn’t. This time we need to.

I'm not really sure if we're going to use the same strategy over again on Stevensville Northwest or East Central or any of those upcoming areas...having gone through [the West Central process] has gotta help.

But, [Stevensville West Central] isn't all bad, because we learned from it. Drawing it out like that, probably isn't all that good, but that's part of lessons learned. That's part of research.

I think what was learned could assist resource managers develop a successful public involvement process for future projects.

One of the biggest lessons learned by managers was the time and money a process like Stevensville West Central costs:

And, we've learned from [West Central]. We can't afford to do that level of analysis and that level of effort on every project. We just can't afford to do that. So, we need to learn from those projects, so that we can simplify in the future or build on the public involvement that we already have in an area like that. It was a very lengthy and costly process to take that through to completion.

Again, it was a lengthy process. A costly process, time consuming. We need to learn how to do that better. To shorten that process, because again we can't afford to do that level on each thing that we take on. That level may be appropriate for something like our forest plan revision, but for individual project areas, it was very intensive. And, we need to learn from our experience how to shorten that. Not the quality of it. But, how can we get the same level of public involvement, public commitment with trying to cut time and cost down.
With West Central, we still had too many meetings. We probably needed to do a better job of presenting the information and getting the feedback we needed and then going on to the next step.

Learning requires a willingness to be open. Some managers felt learning did not occur for some members of the public because they were not open to new ideas:

In the meetings I went to, I got the perception that people weren't willing to learn, but from a biased position. They went in with their prejudices and weren't willing to listen. Their prejudices and preferences...they definitely had their biases.

In addition to learning about the public involvement process, managers commented on substantive learning they experienced. While each manager typically has an area of expertise, the following comments show that the managers took advantage of the opportunity to learn about other resource areas:

I learned a lot about forest ecology, landscape ecology, wildlife ecology, fire ecology.

There's a lot better understanding of ecosystem management, what our general goals are across a larger landscape. The role of ecosystem management and that kind of thing. I have a better understanding.

We learned from it. I learned, if you really want to market the timber, you have either wait until the markets are higher or mark more trees per acre.

I always learn things. I did learn a lot from the research presentations. I learned a lot from the IDT members presentations. Not being familiar with each of the land areas, I always learn a lot about the specific resource conditions and things like that.

III. Public Discussion of a Learning-oriented Measure of Success

A learning-oriented measure of success was frequently talked about by public participants. The number of positive comments about learning can be seen as an indicator of how important learning is to members of the public.
Successful learning was described primarily in the context of substantive learning. Topics include ecosystem management, the historical role of fire, local hydrology, wildlife issues and legal requirements of the Forest Service:

And, I actually learned some things that I didn’t know about ecosystems on the landscape and specific diseases and the white bark pine....So, I could say I learned.

Yeah, I learned a lot actually. I learned about the photographs and about the fire historical condition stuff and about the white bark pine, which I didn’t know about before. Its kinda a neat tree, I guess. And, about some fire history....so yeah, it was a learning experience. And all the soil stuff which you never hear about in a detailed fashion. So, it was interesting. I would have to say I learned quite a bit about it.

I guess there were some of those social parts of ecosystem management, I kinda had an intuitive feeling for, but after hearing [a researcher] go over it, I had a little better understanding of it.

I'm a forester by trade, but I always learn something about the wildlife or hydrology or soils or something that I didn’t know about. You learn something new almost every time you go to one of these things. I guess that's one of the things I look forward to at these meetings.

Some public participants felt that learning about the legal process the Forest Service is required to follow was important:

I learned more about the legal requirements - about what the Forest Service can and can't do relative to what the public wants. In other words, some special interest group may have a very certain thing that they'd like the Forest Service to do, but Forest Service is legally required to seek out and do more than one interest group wants. So, that was probably the biggest thing, to find out that actually does happen. That they do seek out other points of view.

Learning requires a safe environment where there is legitimate "give and take" among all participants. One public participant felt that the potential for learning was inhibited by a prevalent special interest group:

No, I didn't learn because that group used [the process] as a platform. And their platform was clear.
For some members of the public, their participation in Stevensville was not a successful learning experience:

I didn’t learn anything. What did I learn? That’s like asking a kid coming home from school, ‘What did you study?’ I don’t really know that I picked up anything.

One member of the public talked about what they thought the Forest Service learned:

I think they learned. Maybe when they go into it again, maybe they will have a better background and information on the area themselves.

Two members of the public did not feel that learning occurred because of their past experiences in Forest Service-sponsored public involvement processes:

I probably didn’t learn too much. Actually because I’ve been in too many of those kind of meetings. Given my depth of experience on this Forest and other Forests, I didn’t really feel that there was a whole lot new from that aspect. There might have been a little bit of different bells and whistles that were brought into the process, but that’s all.

I would say it [Stevensville West Central] reaffirmed what I’d already learned, that the process wasn’t working. Same damn thing.

IV. Summary of Learning-oriented Measures of Success

Working Proposition Two: “Researchers are more likely than managers or members of the public to view success in terms of learning.”

This proposition was partially supported by the data. All three types of interviewees described a learning-oriented measure of success from a personal perspective — what they learned as a result of their participation. Overall, learning was discussed more by researchers than by members of the public, but the distinction between researchers and managers is not as clear. Researchers’ and managers’ descriptions of learning were similar in that both types of interviewees discussed this measure of success in terms of learning.
more about the public involvement process and the costs associated with it. While managers talked about the need to evaluate a process in order to learn from it, researchers described at length how much they learning about public participants and the role they play in the process. Working proposition Four is not supported because substantive learning was a type of learning described by managers and members of the public, but not by researchers.

Political-oriented Measures of Success

I. Manager Discussion of a Political-oriented Measure of Success

Working Proposition Three: “Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of political acceptance.”

Managers perceived the public involvement process to be successful if key public participants were willing to accept or support the public involvement process or management plan. Managers felt that without public involvement and public acceptance, they would not be able to make progress:

And, the bottom line with all this is if the public doesn't want us to do it, we probably aren't going to do it. We're beyond the stage where we say, ‘This is good for the forest, it's gonna be good for you, we're moving ahead with it’. People still have to accept that...that this is good for not only them but the forest. If they don't want us to do something, we probably aren't going to get to do it. It's to our benefit and their benefit that we involve them appropriately and make decisions based on it.

The bottom line is we have to involve and need to involve people because if we don't then they won't accept what it is we're doing and we need not only public acceptance but they need to encourage us to do certain things that they want to see done.
One manager felt that effective communication between the Forest Service and members of the public was the key to achieving political acceptance:

I guess I view any amount of communication as a success. Even when I say I've had too many meetings, that's a success, because I view, if you're not hauled into court, you've done something right. And, if you're hauled into court, that's the ultimate lack of communication. And, if we aren't open and free with the public and keeping them involved, we will be hauled into court and it will be a loss...we'll be getting nowhere. So, I totally love the communications to flow.

Public acceptance may not require a large number of public participants. In fact, one manager suggests that a large number of people at a public meeting could be an indicator of political failure:

It was successful. I think if you talk to the people that were involved, most would agree. I think there is some that won't agree, but I think another thing we have to keep in mind is we don't have a ton of people at a public meeting. The meetings I've been [at other locations], when there's that many indicates there is something wrong. For the most part, particularly our constituents are satisfied. From that standpoint, I think we're successful.

While managers felt that political acceptance was a key measure, it did not necessarily mean there was unanimous acceptance:

I think it was a good strategy. The only problem was that it came down really to most people being relatively satisfied with the process and the outcome except for [a special interest group].

Its going to get appealed.

I used to measure [success] by word of mouth. I can't use that yard stick anymore, cuz it always gets appealed.

Some managers were not willing to say whether the public involvement effort was successful yet. They wanted to “wait and see” if it would be appealed:

To this point.. I'm waiting till we find out if it's appealed or if it sells.

See how the appeal goes and see how the comments go and if the project just breezes through with no appeals, that means people...that means it's really good - not just a little good. But if not, then no good.
Clearly, political or social acceptance was important to managers. As public servants, managers are required to serve the needs of the public, and at least one manager recognizes the difficulty of doing public involvement:

I see this whole field [of public involvement] as being one of the most challenging ones in natural resource management. Because you never have a full assurance that you crossed the finish line or that you're done. It's a moving target all the time. And, it makes it difficult. What you do is make the best decision for that time, with the best information. And, then five years from now, something significant may change socially that would cause you to make a different choice. It never ends.

II. Researcher Discussion of Political-oriented Measure of Success

Researchers who commented on a political-oriented measure of success did not talk about whether or not they accepted the process or plan. Political or social acceptance of the plan or process by members of the public seemed to be an important part of how researchers described successful public involvement processes. There were only five comments on political or social acceptance from researchers who were interviewed, and the perception of success in Stevensville seems to be divided. Two researchers felt that the plan or process would be accepted by key public participants, so these comments deal with factors that affect acceptability:

The Forest Service changed their alternative recommended decision a little bit to what the public wanted so it was successful in that fashion.

Another researcher felt that the Stevensville West Central effort was politically successful and would be accepted because the process and District Ranger had integrity:

Was it successful in terms of the District being able to get the public to get acceptance of a management decision? It probably will be because it was open, candid, forthright, a sharing discussion and [the District Ranger] worked hard to keep it that way. People respected that. That comes down to the sincerity of a National Forest System person responsible to the public. [The District Ranger] exemplified that in the way they/he/she dealt with the public at the meetings.
Other researchers did not feel that the process was politically successful:

I think the plan will get appealed. In terms of having everybody agree with the alternatives that will eventually be selected and implemented, I don't think that was successful. But, I don't know what you could do to avoid that.

One researcher felt that social or political acceptance was not achievable because public participants are set in their ways:

The other target of public involvement is to persuade everybody that the end product is something they don't want to appeal. And that won't work because there are some people you will never persuade. [They say], 'Don't confuse me with facts, my mind is made up'. And, I'm not sure they aren't just as right as anybody else.

III. Public Discussion of Political-oriented Measure of Success

The extent to which members of the public described a political-oriented measure of success was based on their personal experience or feeling. It is interesting to note that all three types of interviewees used members of the public as the instrument by which they gauged social or political acceptance.

I felt like if the process works well, those agreements or understandings happen and everybody's right there. So, when the decision is put out and published, then everybody say, 'Yeah, this is what I agreed to. I can live with it. It may not be a 100% [of what I want] but I can live with it'. So, in a sense, that's how I define success.

Most members of the public seemed to feel that political acceptance is an important measure of success, but, managing federal lands for a diverse public is a "moving target". Members of the public felt that it was difficult for the Forest Service to balance the issues and concerns of both local and national interests, and many felt that being all things to a variety of interests would only lead to failure in the political sense. For example:
This is a point where the Forest Service has really fallen on their face and they’re starting to understand this. They can’t be everything to everybody. No one can. You simply cannot do that.

The point is the direction of National Forests and national priorities, where does it all fit? How can a District Ranger stand over here and ask this local group of people who probably aren’t really representative of anything other than just a bunch of people willing to come over there and work on this, saying, “What do you want to do?”

One member of the public felt that balancing the diverse concerns and issues within the local community was quite a challenge as well:

If they made like they were practicing a kinder, more gentler forestry and living up to what I used to perceive as the Forest Service’s mandate, they would probably be litigated by the other side. Just like they be appealed and litigated by our side when they lean towards that other direction.

One member of the public felt that political acceptability was not possible because other members of the public lacked an understanding or ability to accept the “need” to actively manage federal lands:

For my money, the agency is just filling a role that they’re not very successful at. And, I don’t see it getting any better. I don’t give a damn who gets up there to try to perfect either the methodology or the process that they’re trying to conclude. [The Forest Service] is not going to be successful until they can show a need and the public can understand the need and they can cooperate with an open mind instead of this narrow, ‘I want this, I want that’.

Some members of the public emphasized the process over the content of the product. As a result, they were frustrated:

Everything that we do and the Forest Service does with each other is a dance around legalities. I’d say that’s the biggest disappointment of all these public processes, is when I was president of [a special interest group], our biggest frustration was that we’re supposed to be talking about the resources. We’re supposed to be concerned about the trees and about the water and about the wildlife and really all we’re concerned about in the end is whether this is legally sufficient. And, that’s what it comes down to is whether it’s legally sufficient.

Really, it wasn’t successful because the just did a legally sufficient document and went ahead and did the same thing. So, it was only temporarily successful. And, a lot of environmental work is basically a holding action and temporary.
The ultimate expression of political or social rejection in a public involvement process is a legal appeal. Some public participants found success, not in the public involvement process, but in the appeal process:

Well, we went through this whole process and we ended up with a timber sale that was unacceptable and illegal. And, we appealed it and won the appeal. And that was good.

The life of an environmentalist is a life of meetings. It's meeting after meeting, hour after hour, on the telephone. And, who's hobby is that? But, it's how we accomplish things. Most of our success, is not headline success. Most of our success is incremental and obviously we feel that Stevi Southwest came out better for our having gone through [the appeal] than had we not. That's why we keep doing it.

I was also told by a staff officer, 'We're tired of your input, we've allowed you to give your input. If you don't like this, appeal it'. And that was in. I found that to be the best advice I ever got from the Forest Service.

At the time these interviews were conducted, the decision notice for Stevensville West Central had not been signed, so appealing the decision notice or management plan was not part of the conversations I had with the interviewees. The draft environmental assessment was released in July, 1996 and made available for public comment for 30 days. An appeal was then filed by three environmental/preservation groups in the Bitterroot Valley.

One public participant did feel that a political-oriented measure of success did materialize in the Stevensville Southwest public involvement process:

[It was] successful in terms of getting people on both sides of the issue to understand and agree at least on some issues. They're not going to agree on everything anyway. So, I guess I felt positive that of the huge list of things that we dealt with, that there were really a lot of them that took only ten minutes for people to agree on. And, I think that's successful.

IV. Summary of Political-oriented Measures of Success

Working Proposition Three: “Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of political measures.”
This proposition was partially supported by the data. All three types of interviewees defined this measure of success by the extent to which members of the public supported the process and the management plan. Researchers had a brief, but mixed response to this measure of success, while managers referred to a political-oriented measure of success more and in greater depth. Managers' responses maybe related to the reality of political acceptance (or lack thereof) that managers face on a daily basis.

This proposition was only partially supported because the data suggests that a political-oriented measure of success may be more important to members of the public than it is to managers. Comments from members of the public show their motivation to participate and their underlying/unspoken desire to give their support and show their acceptance.

Multiple Dimensions of Success

To varying extents, managers, researchers and members of the public described education, responsibility, relationship, interest and implementation as important components of successful public involvement processes. In this section, I respond to Working Proposition Four by providing an extensive discussion of their assessment of these five measures of success.

I. Public Discussion of Multiple Measures of Success

Working Proposition Four: "Members of the public are more likely than researchers or managers to have broader measures of success."

1. Education

Education was viewed by public participants as a flow of information from the Forest Service to members of the public. A successful educational component of a public involvement process can be defined as a formal sharing by managers and researchers of their knowledge or expertise with public participants.

Members of the public talked about the conflicting educational expectations participants brought to the process. One interviewee commented that some participants had high expectations for the educational component of the process:

Some of the people wanted to come from knowing nothing about the forest to being an educated forester and giving an opinion that would be acceptable and accepted as something that [the Forest Service] would instill in their plan. And, it ain’t gonna happen that quick, but that is a typical American attitude.

Another interviewee with an obvious background in forestry, felt that educational effort in the Southwest process was an inefficient use of time and money:

A lot of time was spent educating those people [members of the public]. A lot of the Southwest program, three quarters of the time was spent educating, ‘This is a shelter cut, this is a select cut....this is what we do here, this is what we do there...etc’. Its more like you’re back in school. And we just can’t afford to do that. Its time consuming and tremendously expensive. With the Forest Service budgets getting shrunk, its caused the whole thing to slow down. Its getting so expensive, they’re not getting the bang for their buck.

2. Responsibility

A responsibility-oriented measure of success was described by members of the public one of two ways: (1) Seeing their input reflected in the document/decision and having a sense of ownership, or (2) Feeling like their issues and concerns were rejected or discounted.
A positive perception of responsibility-oriented measure of success by shared by two members of the public:

I felt like I probably had more of my ideas put into the process this way than in a typical; hold one or two meetings, then write letters, then wait for appeals or decisions and that kind of stuff.

[I feel] a little ownership. [My input] is reflected in some of their under burning and burning recommendations. So, it did tickle me to see those show up.

Committing oneself to participate in any type of public outreach effort can be difficult in today’s society. Taking the time to participate long enough for a sense of ownership to develop requires dedication. For two members of the public making the effort to participate represented a personal success:

It was successful for me because I stayed it out and didn't let my own personal things make me say, 'Bullshit and I’m out of here'. I have not been sufficiently participating in this Forest Service process in the past for various reasons and it was fulfilling for me to do that.

I earned a little self-satisfaction in that I did my part in making a well-balanced meeting instead of a one-sided meeting.

Other members of the public felt that a sense of responsibility did not develop because the Forest Service failed to use their input. A sense of ownership did not develop for some public participants:

I can’t say that there were decisions that I felt really so involved with that I said, ‘All-right!”.

Success from my perspective would have been to see that we had real influence. That those concerns that were given out were taken by the experts, the people in charge and were.....truly considered.

It would have been successful...if they listened to our point of view all along. They didn’t hear our side. And, in the long run it [a timber sale] turned out exactly like we told them it would. So, you throw up your hands. Why am I involved in this process if they don’t hear me? They don’t take our viewpoint of it. That’s probably the most frustrating thing.
One public participant felt that it was naive for people to think that they might have some responsibility for the document/decision:

I think it's naive for any person to come walking in and think that [with] this public participation process, there are going to be large differences made [in how the Forest Service develops a management plan].

3. Relationships

A relationship-oriented measure of success was the most discussed measure by public participants. It included the development of relationships with managers, researchers other members of the public. The importance of building relationships with other members of the public is clearly reflected in their dialogue:

If we’re going to be in a community, we better sit down together and find the place where we can work without getting in each other’s hair.

Some members of the public recognized that there is common ground - that they share values and desired ends with other public participants. They found themselves more open to other perspectives:

It was very successful for me to find out that I am much closer to those people. And, if they were open minded they would probably think a similar thought to me.

[I learned]...a couple of things. Actually a couple of good things. That many of the people that consider themselves very opposite of me, have very similar concerns, but our direction for obtaining a solution is different.

I go back to the idea that every time you sit down and share something, you've created a link with that person. Somewhere in this business of sharing values, there's got to be enough coming out, where we can live together as a society. So, I think that for a lot of the folks there, that's one of the measures of success.

Probably, we got to know each other. And, I think we recognized and accepted that everybody didn't think like we did. We didn't get in a shouting match very often. I think we came out with a respect for the other guy’s point of view. But, we also realized that we hadn't changed it. We meet some guys on the street that we were in those meetings with and we’d stop and visit. Our relationship with the people was good. We didn't wind up hating the other guy or anything. We did recognize that we did have a difference of opinion. And, it was related to our background, more or less.
Other public participants realized that establishing a relationship requires self-discipline and a willingness to see other points of view:

I think I learned that you really do have to listen to both sides and sometimes learn to keep your mouth shut if all you’re doing is continuing to argue the same point.

The one thing I learned as a lot of self-discipline. You sat there and listened to somebody give their opinions, and that’s fine, they gave their opinion without you jumping down their throat. Until somebody asked you what you thought, you didn’t say anything.

Members of the public also talked about casual relationships they developed with other members of the public:

The ones I didn’t know previously, I got to know pretty much on a first name basis.

Yes I did meet two or three people who live near me. I knew who they were but that was about it. And, after we started going to these meetings, we are more neighborly. We don't necessarily get together for dinner or anything. But, see each other on the road and talk about various issues.

Some of the [the meetings], I guess reaffirmed the friendships that I already have. It did help me get through some of those meetings. Just to be able to process [with friends] some of those emotions that you have.

Several members of the public said their participation in the Stevensville processes did not include relationship building. For one interviewee, negative relationships evolved with other members of the public:

People that I previously had some common respect for, I’ve learned to disrespect and have become very suspicious of. I’ve discovered that they have an agenda, which I don’t think is based on science or the events of civilization.

Several factors affected the development of relationships:

You need processes for people to mix and get to know each other and the processes used in the Stevensville programs have been inadequate.
There was the group, usually a very small minority, two or three people that said, 'Everything the Forest Service wants to do is hunky-dory with me'. Which didn't help. This was just one step away from saying, 'You braggarts, you people from the other side, [you] stand in strong opposition to everything we're doing. We want to do this, that or the other thing and you don't want to, so you are to be condemned'. And those are the nice words that I can use. So, it wasn't successful in terms of bringing people together. There was more decisiveness at the end of it.

Because what we're talking about in all these things is gut level values. And, that's what we have to share. And, I never thought that happened. I saw us all guarding instead of sharing.

One public participant felt that a relationship-oriented measure of success was not possible because of what they perceived as a Forest Service strategy to develop an antagonistic relationship between members of the public:

Given the fact that the Forest Service has worked so hard making sure that these different groups or perspectives - conservationists, commodity groups, recreational [groups], etc., considering how hard the Forest Service worked over a long period of time to make sure they're at each other's throats, hurling sides at each other, no [the process was not successful].

One public participant felt that the key to building relationships was a stable Forest Service work force:

We need to change the budgets so that the people that citizens deal with [have] authority to do something with what they were learning. So that the same people were working things out together. To me that would be the ideal.

Most members of the public had positive comments about relationships developed with Forest Service personnel at both the Forest and District levels. Most felt that getting to know the managers was generally a beneficial experience:

So I got to know the Forest Service people on a professional and personal level.

On the Forest, they got to know who I was a lot better. They didn't know who I was or how I felt about a lot of these things. So, now they do [and] its been a real benefit to me. Now when I go to talk to them, I know them personally. They didn't necessarily agree with everything I'm saying or anything, but at least I know them personally so, ...it was good. Now I can walk into the Forest Service office
and know a lot of people. Not that they're going to go my way or anything, but I know who they are and kinda what they do and stuff. So, I feel closer that way.

One member of the public felt that relationship-building with managers in the Stevensville West Central process was not possible because there was too much "baggage" or hard feelings left over from past processes:

From my point of view, was it successful? No. I don’t think so. I don’t mean to be harsh, but from my point of view, I walked into this process with my eyes open. I thought it was going to be a new form of their dog and pony show. I think I was proven wrong, at least from my perspective. The Forest Service responded during the process exactly the way I’d seen them respond in other processes before, [with] the same kind of underlying animosity or hostility.

4. Interest

An interest representation was identified by most public participants, although descriptions and definitions varied. Some participants described it as having fair and sufficient opportunities to share issues and concerns with the Forest Service and other members of the public:

And I think everybody was treated, from my perspective, I think everybody in the audience was given the same respect by the people that were running the thing. Some of the ideas, I can’t remember specifically, but some of the people, I’m sure were a little hare-brained or low octane. But nobody was ‘dissed’ or anything like that.

I’m sure they weighed all the ideas and threw out some right away and didn’t throw out some at all accepted some of the ideas. So, it probably really helped that way. They probably got a few ideas, maybe ten percent from the public. [Public input] probably swayed them a little one way or the other when they saw people really upset about something or not upset about something. They’d say, ‘Oh yeah, we’re really right on about this, on what we’re thinking about this, or we’re really wrong on this.

There was certainly enough time spent talking to achieve some communication [between the Forest Service and members of the public].

What I recall, and this is a test, they wanted to get together and discuss things and get to some common ground, some common understandings and get some input from the public. And, I would say they were successful doing that.
Soliciting input from a diversity of interests is an on-going challenge for the Forest Service.

One member of the public described the public involvement process as successful because there was a balance of interests at the meetings:

[We had] participants from all the societal segments - private landowners that were adjacent to the area, Forest Service research arm, Forest Service employees or specialists that were involved in different aspects, conservationists, what we call the representativeness of the extractive industries timber, off-road vehicles and recreationists and on....and that was good.

Two members of the public felt that some segments of the public were missing:

My experience is that the people who get involved with these processes are the ones that complain when something starts anyway. They already know about it. The question is how do you get to the guy who doesn't really care until the bulldozer shows up on the other side of his fence? You have to recognize that there are some people that you're never going to reach until that actually happens to them.

This type of approach wasn’t successful in educating the general public because the general public didn’t come. It was a wonderful opportunity that everybody missed. It wasn’t the general public that was involved, it was people who already had their mind made up. And the wouldn’t change their mind under any circumstance. And, of course, what’s obvious is their agenda they do have an agenda.

Balancing interests can be challenging as well. Another member of the public commented that the Forest Service was successful because they gave more consideration to local interests:

I felt like a 32 cent stamp from New Jersey could carry as much [weight] as five hours of my time at a public meeting, and I never felt like that was fair. So, in this case [West Central] I felt like the people who were there locally, were listened to, and that [their input] carried more weight. It was a success because the process allowed some flexibility in whether or not you were actually there at the meetings or, if you missed something you could call and get information and still get your ideas carried to the decision makers or the staff. It was recorded somewhere. I was comfortable with that. And, I think the reason was that I was confident that they were not only getting individual conversations with me but a whole variety of folks. So, it was balanced.
By providing more than sufficient opportunities to participate, the Forest Service has fulfilled its legal obligation for public involvement and, is therefore, “off the hook” according to some members of the public:

Overall, the benefit of [public involvement], I think it served the Forest Service’s purpose - they can go back now to the people they have to answer to, which is not only their superiors, but other people in the public, in Philadelphia or Tallahassee... as well as people locally here in the [Bitterroot] valley or Missoula or the state. They can go back and say, ‘Well, we had this number of people and this number of meetings and these people gave their opinions on how we should manage it’. So, they can say they had public involvement. They didn’t just make these decisions in a back room some place. It takes them off the hook a certain amount in that way.

What it did, I think, is kinda shut us up. We’re probably not going to come out and be very critical of what [the Forest Service is] doing because they’re going to say, ‘Wait, you had your input.’ So, probably, we’re not going to be as critical as if they would have cold turkey said, ‘This is what we’re going to do’.

Some public participants felt that the Forest Service failed because they were either too sensitive to some special interest groups or they were not sensitive enough to others. Balancing the needs and concerns special interest groups at the local level was not met with much success. The following evaluative quotes show that the Forest Service may go too far in an attempt to get diverse interest representation:

It failed. They didn’t listen to our side of the story. They only heard [a special interest group].

The Forest Service did not respond with a general public education program. They responded to the environmentalists. And, the environmentalists make up a fairly small percentage of the total general public. And, I felt that was ultimately the big weakness of the process.

People like me have been quite critical of the Forest Service. It’s not that I don’t like the folks. I’m not vindictive, I’ve got some good friends in the Forest Service. But, I see what they’re doing is not really working for me. I see them working for other interests.

One public participant believed that some interests did not need a forum forgiving their input because the Forest Service already knew their issues and concerns:
I noticed at times that people from the other political spectrums, for instance, the
timber industry, that they would make, most of the time a token appearance.
Because their concerns are usually more than adequately handled by the Forest
Service.

Some members of the public felt that the Forest Service went too far in trying to solicit
input from a diversity of interests:

So, they brought in a bunch of people that were [members of the] public, that had a
right to be there and should have been there, but who hadn’t been there all along,
and then they treated their request with as much [if not] more weight [than what]
everybody else was saying, [those of us] who had been there and listened to all the
spiels and gone through all the sessions.

[The Forest Service needs to] quit this foolishness of letting any yokel walk into the
office and dictate what they’re going to do out there. In essence....[the Forest
Service has] abdicated authority to any Joe Blow that walks in with a different
viewpoint. If this was any business in America, they’d be out of business in less
than 30 days.

5. Implementation

Lastly, members of the public talked about how implementation was an important measure
of success. In the case of Stevensville though, most public participants did not feel that
implementation of the management plan or decision would be successful:

At the end, if we would have gotten something tangible at the other end, you could
have seen [the purpose of the Stevensville Southwest process]. When this whole
thing went through and this got appealed and the sale was so uneconomical, its like
you wasted your whole time and everything that you put into it.

They are the professionals, they know how to manage resources. What they’ve got
to do is take public comment and understand the concerns. If it means calling those
people in [for] a face-to-face meeting to make sure what they’re concerns are, yes
do it! But by God, get out of the office and get out there and manage these
resources. They’ve been hired to do a job and they’re simply not getting it done.

One member of the public commented that the Forest Service needs to understand the
public’s concerns, but more importantly, it need to implement those concerns on the
ground. Several members of the public were frustrated with the lack of activity on the
ground and felt it was because the Forest Service is not results oriented:
In a sense of accomplishing much, they didn’t do it. [The] Forest Service has a process, but it has no means of concluding it because they have no authority. If the process is good, but you can’t conclude it, there is something the matter.

The Forest Service is not result oriented, they’re process oriented. And they get so fouled up in the process that they are not getting results. We’ve got to have results.

I think it was a complete failure. It did provide a little bit of education, but it goes back to results. [We] didn’t have any results.

One public participant said that while they did not feel the process was successful because there was no immediate action on the ground, other members of the public may perceive the process to be successful for that very same reason:

If you were to go to a number of those preservationist folks, they would feel that [it] was a hugely successful process. Because, basically lots of stuff [was] delayed or put off.

II. Managers Discussion of Multiple Measures of Success.

1. Education

When talking with managers, an education-oriented measure of success was defined as a flow of knowledge, primarily from managers to members of the public. Managers elaborated on education as a measure of success only in the context of the Stevensville West Central process. This is not to say that education was not part of the Southwest public involvement effort, but in the West Central process, education was emphasized throughout the process with numerous research and scientific presentations.

Providing educational forums is a critical part of what managers do with public involvement efforts:

They want to become involved in natural resource management, but they don’t have a great knowledge base. So, you’re continually having to provide education for these people.
Clearly, this measure of success was important to managers. They frequently commented on the importance of communicating to the public the nuts and bolts of forest management at a District level, including how the Forest Service wanted to manage the land and develop management proposals:

How I would measure success, is that we're able to communicate to the public what it is that we're going to do to a particular piece of the land. And, that they are a part of the process that determines what is desired for that piece of land...including what projects come out of an integrated. Success to me would be that they understand that and participated in the process in a collaborative manner.

A lot of people don’t have an educational background in resource management. It’s an important part of what we do to educate these people as to what the various alternatives are in managing resources.

For where we were at the time, it really increased understanding within the public of how we move from deciding that we are going to do a plan for a landscape and actually getting there.

They learned about what our role is with managing resources and saw the process [of how we] make choices to implement on the land.

I think it was [successful] for that segment of the public that came into it with an open mind and wanting more knowledge about what was going on out there and wanting to know what we are proposing to do. I think we did successfully reach quite a few people. I think we really did achieve our goals with a number of people.

Interestingly enough, a member of the public made a comment that supports this definition of education-oriented success:

Yeah, I learned what the Forest Service position was.

One manager felt that if they were able to reach people at the meetings, they would be able to reach other, non-participating members of the public indirectly:

I think we'll probably reap some benefits from [the education component in West Central] in future processes because, as people go home and talk to other folks, word of mouth starts filtering around. So from that standpoint, it will be successful.
Expanding or enhancing the public's knowledge base was an important part of how managers defined successful education, but they also expressed a concern for the sustainability of it:

What West Central did was buy off for the whole valley in many ways because [the District Ranger] provided some educational forums where scientists could come and speak, give out some information. So, [members of the public] came away with some basis of knowledge. [But] we couldn't reproduce it for every project that we were working on.

A lot of folks come from back east [where] fire is not a major component of the processes their ecosystems have experienced, [and] it is here. So, to get them to understand takes a little education, but after awhile, it becomes quite wearisome.

I think the information giving was successful. The only thing I wonder is how to do it better.

[Education] is probably a valuable part of public involvement but with the downsizing of the agency and not very many folks to do the work the has to be done, it's extremely time consuming.

One manager thought that the one-way nature of the education component in Stevensville West Central limited the opportunity for interaction:

In my view, sometimes [the Agency] seemed to take up a lot of time to give out information. So, there wasn't much time for interaction and I think that was frustrating for [members of the public].

Another manager questioned whether they were ready or in a position to be educating public participants on a subject that the agency as a whole, was struggling with:

Well, I think we were kinda wrestling with this ecosystem management thing and ecology, with landscape ecology and the course filter analysis and all those new concepts and ... I think at times we had difficulty explaining what we really felt....what we really envisioned doing with that vegetation.

Two managers commented that education was a two-way process that involved both managers and members of the public:
So we were successful. The whole involvement thing was successful from the standpoint that we went through an education for both them and us.

We informed the public and they informed us. And, I think it was successful and useful and painful as hell for everybody. It wasn’t easy. But, definitely useful.

2. Responsibility

A responsibility-oriented measure of success is defined as the extent to which people have a sense of ownership in the document or process and can see how their input was used. Managers’ perceptions of this measure of success relates to whether or not members of the public developed a sense of ownership as a result of their involvement.

Managers assumed that members of the public had a sense of ownership because they felt that the Forest Service had been responsive to public input:

As the public has changed over the years in the Bitterroot, their needs have changed and [that] has changed our plans.

I think our stakeholders knew that their input was being considered and their participation was valuable to the success of the project.

It gave folks a great opportunity to be involved in the choices that were made for management in those areas [Stevensville Southwest and West Central].

Two managers felt that when they took a proactive approach to public involvement, public participants responded by developing a greater sense of ownership:

We shared what we learned with the public and had them help us identify some of the key issues and concerns the public had at a point in the process where we could take those into consideration as we were actually developing the initial proposals, rather than after the proposals have been developed, which is how up to that point we had generally [done] things. So, it really expanded the opportunity for the public to see how we got from point A to point B and had their involvement before coming up with a set of projects, saying, ‘This is what we want to do - give us your comments’. I think it really increased the ownership [members of the public] had in what we were coming up with because they really understood where the proposals and the needs were coming from.

I would define success as having a sense of shared ownership for the decisions that were made...that the public could feel like they were listened to and there’s
someone in the Agency who understands where they’re coming from. That’s not to say that success is defined by responding positively to resolve every concern that is out there. But doing our best to show [to] what extent we responded to a concern. And if we can’t respond to it, why we can’t.

Two managers commented on the difficulty they have in showing how public input is reflected in the decision or management plan:

I know people were given a good chance for their views to be heard. Whether they attend any of those [meetings] in the future depends on how we use the information they give us and [if] they can see their input was used to make decisions. If we didn’t make the decision they thought we should make, they have to know that it may not come out that way, but the at least they need to know their input was considered and that we gave it a real look and consideration.

There’s a need to have a bridge that continues with the public. [We need to be able to show] how their input has affected us. How can we show the public that [their input] is coming out in the decisions that we’re making? That takes a different kind of communication than what we have with our participants right now.

One manager commented that public participants lack a sense of ownership because the Forest Service discounts the input:

They keep feeling that we’re not responding and listening to the issues and so I don’t know....I genuinely don’t know what we could do better.

Managers felt that perhaps some members of the public were mislead into thinking they would actually help make the final decision and would have more ownership:

But, I almost had a sense that we almost led the public astray. It was like we spent so many meetings [saying], ‘what do you want?’, listening, listening, listening. I almost feel like we led people to believe, ‘Wow, we’re going to do it your way!’.

I suppose there might be something in the process the misleads [members of the public] into thinking that [they will make the decision]. Although, [the District Ranger] repeatedly told them that [the Agency] was the decision maker. We let the public go too far telling us what to do on the land - trying to make decisions for us. And I think we’ll back off from that.
Encouraging members of the public to "buy into" the management proposals and develop a sense of ownership was a challenge for some managers:

I guess it seemed to me that the hardest thing was just to get people to buy into our concept of what's out there - what's happening ecologically. That may have had something to do with some of the folks that were there at the beginning and dropped out later. I think we managed to convince a lot of people right off the bat.

A fair number of the folks that were there were like, 'I don't think so’. They just didn't buy what we were telling them. And, I think a lot of the intermediate part of the [West Central] process was...well, we just went over the same things again and again. We kept, for some reason, thinking we could convince some of the folks. Some of them, we could have talked to for 50 years and never convinced them.

3. Relationships

Building common understanding and casual friendships was a significant property of how managers defined successful public involvement efforts. This relationship-oriented measure of success includes learning about people and developing or enhancing relationships:

There was some good relationships that were established, in both [Southwest and West Central], and that was successful.

The objective was to build credible relationships that would carry over into other land management projects. This was not just an exercise in gathering public input so it could sit a file somewhere as required project documentation.

[I] got to know quite a few of the folks through the process. And was able to interact with some of them outside the work environment.

There are many strategies on how to do public involvement, but basically it is relationship building. You can't set a hard and fast plan to do this. It is a constantly evolving process and will change with each project and the personalities that are involved.

By meeting with us over a long period, [members of the public] get to know us and I think they begin to recognize that these people are not just out to cut trees or whatever is opposite from their viewpoint...that these are people with high standards who care about the land. I think that's the purpose of public involvement. That's what I see as being a benefit of it. That they recognize that those people are competent. And, it helps the process move along and be effective in the long run because it's not stalled by litigation. And, it provides a basis support of belonging. People have a better feeling for what we're dealing with and what's going on out there.
They had a chance to build relationships not only with people within the agency, and other cooperators, but with each other.

The process enabled members of the public to get to know the managers by putting a “face” on the Agency. As a result, managers felt they gained more support from the public:

I noticed that during the sessions, there was a certain rapport that was built just by putting a face [on] the Agency. It’s pretty easy to dislike an Agency - [some think] the Forest Service is just out there screwing up the woods and everything is all screwed up, but once you start putting a face on the Agency and you start to interact with them at public meetings, it’s a lot more difficult [for members of the public] to have a lot of animosity. And, I noticed at the beginning of the meetings, some people were somewhat rude and even uncivil towards employees of the Forest Service. And, some of those people remained that way throughout the entire process. But, a lot of the other ones - they got to know us as individuals and saw that we too, had the good of the resource at heart, even though we were advocating doing something different than they wanted to do.

I’ve gotten to know some of the attendees a little better. [I] probably started reaching out toward [some public participants] for validation and my own self-esteem to kinda off-set all the negative stuff I feel from [a special interest group].

I think there were probably some people that would view me in a more positive light than they used to. Maybe they didn’t know me at all before or just thought that I was somebody that didn’t know anything. So, being able to deal with some of those folks on a one to one basis, I think was positive.

[Members of the public] were able to see we mirror a lot of the same concerns they have for the condition of the land. And, the work that we propose is being done to ensure that we have a long-term healthy ecosystem. So, there’s a lot of common ground and agreement. And, I felt a lot of concern drop away. I think we walked away with greater integrity and trust from [West Central] because of the people that were involved.

It has been good really. Overall, I’ve been able to meet a lot of interesting folks that I wouldn’t have otherwise that are important players [in] the resource game.

One manager felt that field trips were a good way to gain public support:

If you get out and kick dirt together and talk about what you want to do and show folks that what is planned is something that can be done, that there’s been some thought put into it, in many cases, they tend to mellow.

Through the process of becoming more acquainted with members of the public, managers also learned personal communication skills (how to deal with the public):
[I learned to] face or confront some emotional baggage, I guess. Some of the myths that we have about the public. And, how you deal with being a public servant. Just dealing with or confronting the problems with interpersonal communications - both internally and externally. [I learned] how you deal with that whole thing - egos, intimidation, lack of self-esteem, hurt feelings.

We hoped to gain -- maybe our expectations were high, but I think we had hoped to gain more support from [a special interest group] because they are so interested and they are so involved with all our projects. I think with Southwest and the other projects we worked through, we just continued to hope they would be more supportive or, maybe if not more supportive, more understanding. I do think we have gained some ground. It's better.

I've learned to listen better and control my temper. I don't get as upset as I did at first. I have more ... a better understanding that what they have to say is very important and they have very deep rooted feelings. They get very emotional and what they're telling us is from their heart. It was really hard for me at first to understand how emotional... how important some of these issues are to people. After seven years, I can understand it. It's like life and death to some people. So, I've gained respect for their feelings...their interests. I've come to maybe realize that the differences that we have are very deep rooted and emotional and they're not going to change.

Yeah, cuz you can learn a lot from those guys [members of the public]. And, most of those kinds of encounters, they don't come up and say, 'Well, you're just plain wrong because I've been here for all my life'. Most of those guys are pretty good about sharing their experiences and knowledge with you. As long as you don't present yourself as knowing everything. So, to me, it was pretty valuable interaction.

One manager felt that the opportunity to develop casual friendships was a motivation to participate in public involvement efforts, but that such an opportunity was missing from the Stevensville West Central effort:

I didn't really see [West Central] as a way that people could become friends and kinda understand each others' point of view. Some people may have come to the group with that idea. That's often expressed as an ideal that some of the public does feel - that they don't get enough understanding [of] other people's point of view. I'm not sure the process worked to really allow that.

The deterioration of existing relationship or the development of antagonistic relationships occurred as well. Opinions or values were conflicting or misunderstood, as a result, people became more aggressive and less trusting:
[Forest Service personnel] stand up there and have their professional judgment based on experience and education and then here these individuals who have a different background, questioning these peoples' professional judgment. I think its a good thing to question, but if you go to 38 or so meetings and half a dozen times at every meeting people are directly or indirectly questioning your professional judgment, it gets old after a while.

Sometimes I think about West Central as, 'Well, we'll just move on and go to something else and it'll be just like any other project. But, who knows. Maybe there was enough interaction with the researchers and [maybe] the public had enough immersion in some of this material to have some use that can carry over.

I think we've made the contacts with some of the key players that are either going to play or not going to play with us.

There's a lot of mistrust and when you can't have frank discussions about a mistrust...and you know that's not going away with even talking about. It's just a relationship that might change over time. So, that seemed to be the biggest issues, I'd say was a [lack of] trust in the relationship.

I think that more animosity came out of [the West Central process]. Not just on our side, but on some of the moderate public side, [and] some of the researchers side too.

On West Central, I remember [a special interest group] would take something we would say and turn it around and use it against us then or later in comments. So, that led me to wanting to be less candid, less open in the field and in the meetings. It's probably made me more guarded.

Stevensville West Central was a unique opportunity for managers and researchers to collaborate on a project. As a result, managers said they developed both working and casual relationships with researchers:

[Getting to know researchers] was definitely positive. Those folks that I now have relationships with, I don't have any qualms about calling [them] up. Some of those guys, I see on the street in Missoula now, and we start talking. So, from professional standpoint, it's been real positive. Without the [West Central] process, I would have eventually gotten to know some of those people, but probably not as many as I have in as much depth as I have. It's been really good.

I've got some real strong working relationships with researchers. I like research. I always have. And, they know it and so they come to me. They know I'm going to cooperate with them.

I think that the researchers have been pretty good in listening to the managers and trying to answer the questions that we have. They're not out there doing research on things that are not important to us.
I depend on [researchers] quite a bit. People never believe me, so I try to bring out as much research literature to back me up as possible. If that doesn’t work, bring out the researcher - [and say], ‘See! He says so too!’ so I’m not so far off.

Managers commented the relationships they have with other managers have improved as a result of the West Central public involvement process:

This has always been a good District to work on because the working relationships have been pretty good. Whenever you have human interaction there’s going to be tense times. You can see it in your family, your friends,...but for the most part, working relationships here have always been good. We have always functioned like a large family. We might squabble a little bit internally, but we don’t let anyone else come in and attack because we will pull together. And, I think with [the West Central] process, that happened...we pulled together as a family might. I don’t believe that [West Central] put any great strain on relationships here on the District. If anything, we probably sympathized - it might have brought us closer together even.

Misery loves company. We did a lot of commiserating. And, I suppose in some respect, we grew closer together.

4. Interest

The opportunity to voice concerns or issues and the diversity of the interests represented by those concerns is another way managers defined success in a public involvement effort. Some managers felt that a wide variety of people were involved and given a chance to voice their concerns:

Yes...I think that [Southwest] was a base to start from and a lot of people were involved. And, I think that it drew together a lot of interested folks.

I think in terms of involving people and interacting in a team manner, it was very successful.

I think [Southwest and West Central] were successful efforts in looking at an area of our public forest and interacting with a lot of different people and figuring out the existing conditions and the needs.

I applaud them because there was so much effort put into listening in West Central.

I think the people that attended those meetings were given a chance to be heard. None of us want to go to meetings where we feel we aren’t listened or don’t have a chance to get our two cents in. And, I think that happened there - I know people were given a chance for their views to be heard.
One manager felt that while there was a significant amount of input, it was not all positive:

I think what happened - we got overwhelming input from some of our more critical groups.

Other managers felt that maybe there was not enough opportunity for members of the public to express their concerns:

Whether the public really got enough chance to say what was on their mind and really work it over with other people, I think that might have been one dissatisfaction.

In a nutshell, the thing that I’ve learned is that there is great value in having and giving the people the opportunity to be involved. There’s a lot of complexities associated in asking people to be involved though.

Other managers felt that interests represented were not diverse and that a special interest group dominated the process at times:

I think [West Central] was unbalanced because I think the [participants] that were not part of [a special interest group] felt out numbered and felt like they were being dominated, so they would walk out. So, then the next meeting would be just [a special interest group] and us. Then, we would have to try and scare up some other people to come back.

And even currently there are times when people are there to promote their special interests, whichever side of the spectrum they are on and not particularly interested in what anybody else might have to say.

The balance of input in my opinion was not balanced. There were many members of a special interest group that represented one side and a few that represented the other side. I don’t think the representation was terribly balanced.

5. Implementation

Lastly, managers talked about success in terms of implementation. Success was contingent upon being able to do something on the ground and protect the resource:
So, I guess maybe a barrier would be that we didn’t allow enough time in the beginning to talk about what people want from [the resources] and for them to develop an understanding of whether that’s likely to be an outcome or not.

Then, when [the West Central process] is over, I like to say, ‘Yeah, we did what we intended to do’. If we do all that, then I’m happy.

Some managers felt that without implementation or physical management, there is no success:

The only reason I would say it was not successful is that we haven't been, the forest has not been successful in selling the timber, which makes proceeding with the rest of the project hard; We can't really do it until the harvest is taken care of. So, something didn't work in there.

But, until the project is done...until we know how it's going to progress past the planning stage. Planning is only part of it. And, it has to actually occur, I think to be successful.

If it goes through smoothly, through appeals and the timber actually gets sold and some of this stuff gets done, then it will be a success. Until then, I think you just got to wait to see what's going to come of it to tell. If the project gets appeal, drags on, finally goes through, sits on the block, nobody's interested then I don't think it's a success.

Because success means getting something done. And if we don’t get anything done, it wasn’t a success.

It not only builds some relationships with the research and the University [of Montana] and the [Bitterroot National] Forest, but also it’ll really help us with our public involvement and our scientific approach to ecosystem management so we can get things done on the ground.

But overall, from a success standpoint of being able to complete a project and treat an area in a way that’s with the desired condition - my view is probably [West Central] will be successful.

III. Researchers Discussion of Multiple Measures of Success.

As mentioned previously, researchers interviewed for this study participated only in the Stevensville West Central public involvement process.
1. Education

An education-oriented measure of success seemed to be a significant measure for researchers. Like managers, researchers talked about education as a flow of information from researchers to members of the public. Their description of successful education included sharing their research or scientific understanding with members of the public, who received it and benefitted:

We need to do a better job of providing educational opportunities to our public in that way and I don’t mean that we have a forester from our District go and give out some handouts. [Members of the public] need to go out with the people who are doing the science and let them see the science being done in action. Let [members of the public] talk to the graduate students or the scientists that are doing the work.

Communicating to the public what role the research branch of the Forest Service plays in projects like West Central was part of how researchers defined an education-oriented measure of success:

My perspective [is] at least those people have an idea that Forest Service is not just National Forest Service Management, but research too and that the two entities are definitely separate and the research doesn’t do the bidding [of] the land manager.

Was it successful in sharing with the public the process of an on-going research effort - working with the [Stevensville] District and sharing with the public at the same time? [Was it] an honest attempt at communication and getting people to have an open understanding of where we were? Yes.

2. Responsibility

Researchers described a responsibility-oriented measure of success in terms of how much ownership members of the public felt towards the process or the document. In this sense, researchers are not describing their own sense of ownership, but their perception of the extent to which members of the public had a sense of ownership.

Researchers recognized that ownership was important to members of the public by the way they talked about it - they wanted to see their input used:
Members of the public want to have an influence. Otherwise, I don’t think they would have taken the time to participate in this type of thing. I heard comments early on that their time was going to be valued and viewed or they didn’t want to participate.

One researcher felt that managers provided the opportunity for members of the public to develop a sense of ownership:

The ID team left themselves open for input. They didn’t figure out the solution ahead of time. A lot of public participants interacted enough to help shape what the proposal might be. They should feel good.

Several researchers expressed frustration and discouragement with members of the public for failing to take responsibility for the process or document in spite of the effort the managers put into the process:

I was flabbergasted! My chin hit the floor. I couldn’t believe what these members of the public were saying. It was like we bent over backwards to try to come up with something that they could live with and they said, ‘You didn’t hear a thing we said’.

My understanding is that for some of the groups, the District was really trying to reach them, [but] their bottom line was, ‘Well, we’ve come through all this and you folks still haven’t really responded to us and our concerns.

But if we were really trying to get the public more involved in shaping what happens in that landscape out there - if by the time that the Stevensville District makes their final decision, the public [participants] understand and feel like they were part of that decision, then, yes it would have been successful, but I’m not sure it succeeded there.

For the public participant involved in this whole process to say, ‘Yeah, we see how that [decision] reflects what we spent two years doing’ would success, but I’m not sure they’re going to say that.

On the other hand, one researcher felt that public participants were mislead into thinking that they would have ownership in the decision or final document:
I think the opportunity for [members of the public] to have involvement wasn't designed to the extent that maybe they thought it was going to be. I think they ended up getting to the point in the process where they saw alternatives displayed - [alternatives] in which they hadn't been able to say much about the specifics of those alternatives, and they were shocked.

3. Relationship

Researchers felt that relationship building is an important part of a successful public involvement process. Several comments were made on how relationships are evolving:

One of the goals is to bring people together and learn [about] one another's viewpoints and accept those viewpoints. So, from that point, it was successful.

I do think that some relationships got built that could serve as a foundation for further development. I see that as a successful thing.

So, you saw a relationship, fragile, but a relationship within this group which I thought was pretty visible. I think even though it was fragile, it sustained itself. I think it evolved in the right direction.

Some researchers commented that relationship building between researchers and managers was successful. The Stevensville West Central process brought them together on a project of mutual interest. Researchers felt that they developed valuable relationships with managers as a result of working together on Stevensville West Central:

I developed a much closer working relationship with management. I think the ties between... from me to [the Forest Supervisor] on the Bitterroot are pretty good. So, those ties are far stronger than anything I've experienced in my career. The ties to the District were especially strong with [the District Ranger]. I know a lot more about problems and day to day things that [the District Ranger] has to deal with, than I used to know.

They seemed to be interested in the scientists and the scientists seemed to be interested in management and the constraints the managers had and trying to help them. I think that relationship was pretty good.

They [managers] were trying to figure out how to manage it, and we [researchers] were trying to figure out what kinds of research is needed so they can manage it.

Yeah, I think we have a lot better relationship with the managers we worked with. Before, I hardly knew them.
I think we have developed a protocol for future interaction between National Forest Administration and research. Different parts of the company talk about that, and we have [set] an example.

One researcher commented that Stevensville West Central was a unique project for another reason - they were able to further enhance relationships with other researchers as well. It was a positive opportunity for them to get to know each other:

I think I have expanded some working relationships with some of the other scientists, but it was just because we were doing some of this work together. This type of research proposal does offer some opportunities that I think a lot of research people wouldn't normally have.

Part of a relationship-oriented measure of success for researcher was getting to know members of the public. Reaching common ground and understanding each other's point of view was important to researcher:

I learned where they were coming from in some cases.

I remember one of the trips, someone, some of the environmental people were talking about, 'We don't need any management here', but in the field we started talking about the way fires act and being in that situation where there was a lot of fuel on the ground and short trees and bigger trees...creating these ladder type fuel situations that can lead to really bad forest fires that never used to frequent that area. I think they could see that and agree with that. Then, we look at it and can explain to the people and see the landscape out there, and [say], 'Let's create a lot of diversity and variety in landscape', and they can see what I was talking about and they can accept it conceptually.

One researcher felt that field trips provided a good opportunity for getting to know members of the public:

To gain an understanding and a close relationship with the polarities that exist in a group, a field trip is a good way to overcome some barriers.

Researchers seemed interested or concerned about the type of interaction that takes place between managers and members of the public. One of the ways researchers defined a
relationship-oriented measure of success was the extent to which positive relationships developed between managers and members of the public:

I think [managers] have got relationships now that they didn’t have before those meetings.

[Managers] are making progress - getting toward a better relationship and process for bringing the public in. I don’t think they said, ‘OK, hey we’ve got this great relationship with the public and now we can just manage the land’. I’m just thinking there’s a long staircase and they’ve made a step or two.

I think [managers] made a good faith effort to build relationships, to instill a slightly higher level of mutual respect with key players, and to build some trust between themselves and some folks out there.

Two researchers expressed concerns about the success of relationship building between managers and members of the public. One felt that a relationship-oriented measure of success was inhibited when the District Ranger transferred out of the area:

I don’t think the potential that was there for a good relationship to be built was realized fully. Especially with [the District Ranger] leaving.

Another researcher felt that public animosity or hostility towards managers got in the way of building relationships:

I think National Forest people tend to get gun shy. They get tired of all the work they have to do to put up a sale. And, they get tired of getting shot down all the time...tired of getting ridiculed all the time.

4. Interest

An interest-oriented measure of success was briefly talked about by researchers in terms of the number of people that participated and the diversity of interests they represented:

Well, [West Central] certainly got a lot of people together. It was an eye opener for a lot of people. When they first started it, we had a good cross section of the community. We had ranchers, some towns people, some social club kind of people
and the environmental people too. It started off good, it brought those kinds of people together.

Maybe what worked is that they did get a fair number of people involved. But that was good....I'm not real sure how that happened.

5. Implementation

Implementing the management plan was a final context in which researchers talked about success. Some felt that success could not really be discussed until management activities on the ground have occurred.

For some researchers, a successful public involvement process is contingent upon implementation:

Until the actions are really done on the ground and the public has a chance to go out and see it “management wise”, we're not going to have a good idea whether we're successful or not. I would say that after the management's done in four years, we'll look at it and can say we did what we said we were gonna do and the public was involved and I think in that case, the public involvement process was successful. If we did what we said we were going to do and they like what we did on the ground, I would say yes.

Whether or not they live up to these management plans, [if] they're able to come back in a few years and see how the actions lived up to expectations that folks have. That'll be an important gauge.

The one thing is... [having] the projects happened on the ground. I would say that's a real key part to following through and showing people that there is a pay off for this level of involvement. Stuff's gotta happen.

IV. Summary of Multiple Dimensions of Success

Working Proposition Four: “Members of the public are more likely than managers or researchers to have broader measures of success.”

This proposition is supported by the data. While there is a similar amount of data from members of the public and managers, I believe that more members of the public had
multiple definitions of success. This was exemplified when one member of the public discussed five different measures of success. In contrast, one manager only described two different measures of success.
Chapter Five ....... Summary and Conclusion

Limitations

Public involvement is part of manager’s job on a daily basis. This is not true with researcher and members of the public, so inevitably, managers will have more to say about public involvement than the other two types of participants. This made analysis difficult. It was hard to “weigh” the relative importance each type of interviewee gave to each measure of success. A strict quantitative approach was not appropriate for this type of study.

An ethnographic research method cannot answer questions about “how much”, but it can answer questions like, “what kind or what type”. In this study, I was not investigating the amount of success interviewees felt there was in the Stevensville public involvement processes; I was investigating what types of success different participants perceive in a public involvement process. Likewise, this study intended only to seek out ways participants define successful public involvement processes — not to verify or validate particular measures of success. As discussed throughout Chapter 4, eight “types” or measures of success emerged. Although five measures (relationship, responsibility, political, product and interest) had been previously researched and discussed (Moore, 1994), they, along with three other measures of success (education, learning and implementation) evidence themselves throughout the data.

In conjunction with these “types” of success, it is important to recognize some assumptions made about the “types” of participants interviewed in this study. As stated before, managers, researchers and members of the public were the three main types of participants. The basic roles each played in the process along with their expectations were assumed to fit
into a common typology. While it may be acceptable to base a study on these "ideal types", it is critical to recognize that there may be a more appropriate way of classifying types of participants. One way of doing this would be to look beyond the common, everyday label (i.e., manager, researcher, or member of the public) and explore what the underlying characteristic is that places these types of participants into a more natural arrangement. Although I was not able to determine the natural arrangement of the three types of participants within the time frame of this study, I would surmise that the natural arrangement of manager, researcher and member of the public lies somewhere along the lines of their orientation towards public involvement processes (i.e., high, medium or low in terms of the importance they place on public involvement efforts).

While this study represents a qualitative approach to research, in many ways it does not represent a true ethnographic approach to research because the study was initiated with a pre-determined objective and set of working propositions -- I went looking for something versus letting what's there come to me. I searched for data to support my objective and working propositions versus objectively seeking the embedded meaning of interviewees' words. Although I would not choose to repeat this mixed methodology, nor would I recommend it to others, the results are nonetheless valid within the context of this study.

Interviews were inductive in the sense that topics were brought into the conversation; the interviews were only loosely based on a list of questions (Appendix A). The analysis was deductive in nature though. The search for quotes was focused on the working propositions. This combination of methods lead to an abundance of data being collected and only a small portion being used in this report. The ability to generalize the results of this study to other studies is limited to studies with these types of interviewees.
Implications for Management

In this section, I will present two things: (1) a brief review of the principal findings and a discussion of how they are linked to the conceptual framework (Transactive planning -- see Chapter 2), and (2) a hypothetical application of the finding to a public involvement program or series of meetings.

1. Summary of Findings

Success is not determined simply by the number of public meetings or the absence of an appeal. The results of this study show that participants (managers, researchers and members of the public) hold a variety of perspectives on what is or is not successful public involvement and what may be a measure of success to one participant is not necessarily a measure of success to another participant of the same process. While the extent to which each working proposition was supported varied, in general, the notions of success represented by these working propositions were supported. Table 2 provides a summary of my interpretations of the extent to which each working propositions was supported.

Increasingly, dialogue is becoming an essential part of natural resource management. "Face to face interaction in real time is the new model of planning" Friedmann, 1993:482). When critically analyzing the findings of this study, the importance of dialogue becomes clear. The notion of dialogue permeated to varying degrees all eight of the measures of success in this study. The underlying significance of this research, therefore, is recognizing the prominent role dialogue plays in achieving multiple measures of success in public involvement efforts. I conclude that the opportunity for participants to share perspectives and opinions in an open, safe environment is an underlying characteristic of all eight measures of success. Natural resource management agencies need to go beyond "educating" and "soliciting feedback" to providing forums for meaningful dialogue between all participants -- manager and researcher, manager and member of the public and
Overview of Support for Working Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Propositions</th>
<th>Summary of Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of the product.</td>
<td>This proposition was partially supported by the data. Managers described this measure more than researchers did (one quote), but when comparing managers to members of the public, it is difficult to determine which group placed more emphasis on the product. See Chapter 4, Section X for a complete analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers are more likely than managers or members of the public to view success in terms of learning.</td>
<td>This proposition was partially supported by the data. Researchers described learning more than members of the public did, but the distinction between researchers and managers is not as clear. In fact, there is some overlap in how these two types of interviewees defined success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers are more likely than researchers or members of the public to view success in terms of political acceptance.</td>
<td>This proposition was partially supported by the data. Researchers had a brief response to this measure while managers referred to this measure more frequently and in greater depth. The data suggests that this measure may be more important to members of the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the public are more likely than managers or researchers to have broader measures of success.</td>
<td>This proposition is supported by the data. More public participants had multiple definitions of success than managers or researchers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
researcher and member of the public. Referring back to my adaptation of Warfield's model (See pages 8-9 for initial discussion and Figure 1), the greatest potential for achieving multiple measures of success is when effective dialogue has been achieved. To achieve effective dialogue, positive movement along both axes is needed to reach a point where two-way communication can occur. A public involvement process in which relationships (Axis Y) are improve needs to be met with a level of public involvement (Axis X) that meets the needs of participants.

2. Hypothetical Application

Dialogue, as the reader may recall, is a basic component of transactive planning. As indicated in Chapter 2 (p. 17-18), Friedmann gives a number of characteristics that define dialogue. I will briefly revisit these six characteristics (authenticity, integration of person, conflict acceptance, total communication, reciprocity and time-binding relationships) and use them to provide a context for speculation on the principal findings of this study.

The characteristic of authenticity means that a public participant is willing to both share their viewpoints and accept other viewpoints. The second characteristic of dialogue is integration of person. It occurs when a public participant's behavior is neither self-righteous or destructive, but instead is based on the combination of their thinking, feelings, moral judgment and empathy. Conflict acceptance, the third characteristic, represents the initial step towards conflict resolution. Conflict is a common part of public involvement processes, but it can be overcome if all participants (managers, researchers and members of the public) mutually agree to continue talking and interacting. The fourth characteristic is total communication, including non-verbal communication. It is important that a person's body language or how they behave in a public meeting is not contradictory to what they say. For example, a public participant who claim they want to be involved in the decision-making process, but then fails to engage in conversations is not really working towards a
relationship of dialogue. Reciprocity or recognizing obligations to other participants is the fifth characteristic of dialogue. It can be viewed as a contractual agreement between participants to “give and take.” This means to engage in dialogue openly and freely -- to listen and to be heard. The final characteristic relates to the time-boundedness of dialogue. Because it unfolds in real time, dialogue is influenced by the current situation. The importance of factors outside the public involvement process need to be recognized. The fact that new legislation has been passed or that fire season has started can have a tremendous affect on a public involvement process.

Achieving Success

If people do indeed define success multidimensionally, what does this say about how public involvement processes are conducted? How might a public involvement process be changed as that broader measures of success are achieved? In an attempt to link the conceptual framework (the theory of transactive planning) with the principal findings, I will present a hypothetical discussion of how natural resource managers could enhance the probability of achieving multiple measures of success. I will briefly discuss what I think is needed in a public involvement process to achieve each measure of success.

As a caveat, it is important to recognize that some measures of success have a long-term or strategic orientation. For example, developing relationships with other participants or learning about and understanding the local landscape conditions can only be achieved through a lengthy process or a series of processes. If these measures of success are desired, they must be planned for. Other measures of success have a short-term or more tactical orientation. Getting work done on the ground or writing a management plan examples of two measures of success that can be accomplished in a short amount of time. This is not to say that they are any less important measures of success though. It is important to think about what orientation a measure of success might have and address the
specific needs of that orientation because public involvement should be seen as an investment.

While all eight measures of success were easily discussed to varying depths by the interviewees, some measures of success were discussed within the context of other factors. For example, many interviewees felt that open communication and trust were needed in order for relationships to develop. So, a relationship-oriented measure of success was based on the extent to which they felt these additional factors were present. Interviewees expressed that learning could only occur if people were open-minded and willing to listen to other points of view and this is another example of how dimensions of success can be conditional. Clearly, an implementation-oriented measure of success is conditional. The success of implementation depends entirely on another factor - getting something done on the ground. It is critical to recognize the interdependence of these measures of success.

In the following section, I speculate on how each measure of success can be achieved. When developing public involvement programs, the natural resource managers needs to recognize that a transactive planning approach can lead to success - it provides opportunities to meet everyone's expectations.

**Education**

Technical language or jargon should be avoided at all costs. Information should be presented in a language common to all participants. It is also important to recognize that different participants come to the process with different levels of knowledge and expectations for how their knowledge will be expanded. Some want to be completely educated while some just want a brief background. Gear the presentation towards the "lowest common denominator", but provide additional opportunities for those participants who want more education. The information being presented should be relevant to the role
members of the public are playing in the process -- avoid unnecessary information.

Educational success can have both a long-term orientation (communicating to the public what ecosystem management is and how it will be applied to the local landscape) and a short-term orientation (provide public participants with a basic level of knowledge on resource conditions so that their feedback on desired future condition statements is relevant).

**Learning**

Learning-oriented success can be achieved by incorporating a variety of opportunities for participants to interact. Include formal learning settings (facilitated meetings, small groups and roundtable discussions) and informal learning settings (field trips and coffee breaks) where both expert and experiential knowledge can be shared and discussed. It is also important that all types of participants get a chance to interact -- managers and researchers, researchers and members of the public and members of the public and managers. Learning should be viewed with a strategic orientation as it is not something that happens over night. Instead, successful learning is something that is built upon from past public involvement processes and will be carried over into future public involvement processes.

**Relationship**

Like learning, relationship-building requires a variety of opportunities for all participants to get to know each other, both formal and informal. Frequently, relationship-building takes place at the same time as learning. When people spend time sharing knowledge, they inevitably are also learning about each other. Relationships require a strategic approach or repeated opportunities to learn about other participants because building common understanding and casual friendships take time.
Responsibility
Responsibility-oriented success is elusive at times. Getting public participants to develop a sense of ownership or responsibility for the plan may be the most challenging measure of success. It is critical that before a public involvement process starts, members of the public understand why they are involved and how their input will be used. While this may seem straightforward, the real challenge begins when natural resource managers have to show how public input is reflected in the decision or management plan. While responsibility-oriented success can be achieved as quickly as a plan can be written, assuming that public participants can see how the input was used, more often a sense of ownership develops over time. A strategically developed sense of ownership may not be directed towards a single management plan. In this case, a sense of responsibility may be felt for a landscape (i.e., a specific Forest or District).

Implementation
Achieving success in the implementation phase of natural resource management means getting something done on the ground. Developing a realistic time-frame for implementation and adhering to it is one way natural resource managers can show their commitment. Another way to enhance the success of implementation is to solicit input from members of the public as sections of a management plan have been completed. Implementation-oriented success has both long-term and short-term orientations. Implementation can be successful if the long-term health of natural resources is protected. For example, watershed restoration enhances other resource areas, but it requires a large amount of time to achieve. Resource protection can also be achieved in the short-term (i.e., repairing a hiking trail or logging diseased trees).

Interest
In order to achieve interest-oriented success, many people representing diverse perspectives need to participate. Advertising the process through a variety of non-traditional avenues, is one way to achieve this type of success. Enabling members of the public to access information about the process over a local cable network or the internet go beyond the traditional news releases and radio announcements. Outreach should not be limited to telling people *where* and *when*, but a key component of successful interest representation is telling people *why* they would want to participate. A safe environment where no single individual or interest group dominates may also encourage members of the public to get involved. Achieving diverse interest representation in a public involvement process is a strategic success because the benefits of it are far-reaching. Not only is the feedback helpful in developing a management plan that represents individual and community interests, but bringing together a mixed group of people is the first step towards building relationships.

*Political*

Political success can be achieved by encouraging early involvement with members of the public or other political player who have the power to veto the process. It is important to keep them informed of any changes or new developments. This measure of success is linked very closely with other measures of success. For example, learning leads to enhanced understanding which may result in social and political acceptance. Political success clearly has a strategic orientation. While political acceptance is frequently viewed as a barrier to making progress in the area of natural resource management, if managers were able to overcome the barrier establishing and maintaining political acceptance over a series of public involvement processes, they could then shift their energies to other measures of success.
Developing a successful product is as easy as keeping it short and to the point. This applies to both the document and the public involvement process. Long, drawn-out processes tend to lose both their focus and participants. Likewise, lengthy management plans typically are not read by participants because they are intimidating. One recommendation for achieving product success is that members of the public should be able to read and understand the management plan in a matter of a couple hours of time. And, if during that time they realize how their input was used to develop the plan, a sense of ownership may develop.

**Research Suggestions**

The following section suggests future research directions based on questions raised by this study.

(1) A quantitative approach

An investigation of how different types of participants define success is recommended. Further quantitative research on this topic would not only provide a balance in methodologies, but it might also shed some light on additional measures of success. Conducting personal interviews with a formal or close-response format, for example, could be used to specifically test the eight measures of success presented in this study. In this study, with an open-response format was used which allowed participants to freely describe their experiences in Stevensville, but directly asking about participants about their perceptions of these measures of success might lead to more distinct definitions and more support for the presence of multiple measures of success.

(2) A qualitative approach at a different scale

Another suggestion would be to qualitatively examine other public involvement efforts at different scales to see if the results are similar. Citizens in the Bitterroot Valley have a
long, turbulent history of participation in Forest Service processes, so a similar study in different location where public participants might have less “baggage” could contribute significantly to the understanding of how people define success.

(3) Investigation of how researchers define success

I would recommend further research on how scientists and researchers define success in public involvement processes. Would other studies support the findings that researchers have limited views of success? As described earlier, researchers who were interviewed for this study, in general, did not elaborate on how they defined success -- the reasons behind this deficiency may shed some light on additional ways to integrate science and research with public involvement.

(4) Arranged elements of public meetings

Another area I would recommend further research would be on how the elements of a public involvement meeting, including the day of the week, the time, the location and the general atmosphere affect definitions of success. Part way through the Stevensville West Central process, some of these arranged elements were changed -- the meeting location was changed to a neutral location (a local church), an outside facilitator was brought in to help run the meetings, chairs were arranged in a circle and participants wore name tags. It would be valuable to explore the kind of impacts such simple changes have on people’s perception of success.
Literature Cited


Appendix A

Bitterroot Ecosystem Management Research Project - Investigating Measures of Success in Public Involvement Efforts
A schedule of interview questions

1. How did you get involved with the Stevensville public participation efforts? (SW or WC)

2. How many meetings did you attend? How many field trips? What other kinds of opportunities did you have for interaction with other stakeholders? (managers, researchers, other members of the public)

3. Did you understand how the planning process worked? Do you think other stakeholders did?

4. Do you think the public involvement strategy was the best to use? What did you like about this process? Why?

5. What did you dislike about the process? Why? Were there problems or barriers to making the public participation process better? If so, what were they?

6. What was the most difficult issue to deal with? How was it dealt with? Were you satisfied? Why? Were other stakeholders satisfied? Why?

7. What do you think motivated people to get involved and then stay involved throughout the processes (either or both)? What motivated you?

8. Was your involvement a learning experience? (Did learning occur?) If so, what did you learn? Do you think managers and researchers learned from your input?

9. How do you define consensus? Do you think consensus occurred? Do you think consensus is something that the Forest Service should strive for in its public involvement efforts?

10. Was the amount of public involvement sufficient? Do you think that managers, researchers and the public interacted on an equal level? Why or why not?

11. Is Stevensville RD special to you? Why? What sorts of values did other stakeholders hold for the area? Did a sharing of these values develop during the public involvement processes? Have your values for this area changed?

12. Has your relationship with managers, researchers and members of the public changed in this process? How?

13. At the start of this effort, did stakeholders have different views about how the District should be managed? Do you think participants changed their minds as the process evolved? Did you change yours? If there were changes, do you think these changes in views helped stakeholders work together? Why?

14. Do you think this process will make future public involvement efforts smoother or rougher?

15. Do you think the public involvement process was successful? Why? How would you define success?

16. For those who have been involved in both processes, which was more successful? Why?

17. Do you think the technology aspects of BEMRP helped the public involvement process? Why or why not?