Conflict and communicatively rational public discourse: Exploring an approach to social assessment to facilitate collaboration

Robert S. Potts
The University of Montana

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Conflict and Communicatively Rational Public Discourse:
Exploring an Approach to Social Assessment to Facilitate Collaboration

by
Robert S. Potts, Jr.
B.S. Northern Michigan University, 1992
M.S. Montana State University, 1995

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by:

Chairperson

Dean, Graduate School

Date
Conflict and Communicatively Rational Public Discourse: Exploring an Approach to Social Assessment to Facilitate Collaboration

Director: Michael E. Patterson

The history of natural resources management in the United States can be viewed as being comprised of 6 Eras: Acquisition, Disposal, Reservation, Scientific Management, Conflict, and Collaboration and Ecosystem-based Management. The eras represent distinct periods in terms of how natural resources were viewed and managed. This investigation was an exploration of why natural resources management remains in the Era of Conflict in spite of the fact that resource management agencies have committed significant resources to the development and implementation of Collaborative and Ecosystem-based Management strategies.

The proposed problem was that in spite of their bureaucratic commitment to collaboration and ecosystem-based management, resource professionals are still adhering to the management principles of the Era of Scientific Management. Consequently, they lack a complete understanding of the fundamental nature of resource-related conflict. Further, they lack the tools necessary to manage and resolve conflict, in particular a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a collaborative management paradigm.

The goals of the investigation were to characterize the fundamental nature of resource-related conflict in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests, and to contribute to the development of a “collaborative” social assessment.

The investigation followed an interpretive mode of inquiry, utilizing in-depth, informant directed interviews of community opinion leaders who were identified as being both supportive of collaborative management and representative of the principle Ideal Types in their communities.

Three principle themes emerged. First, informants perceived that much of the “conflict” in their communities is better described as an “unnecessary and fabricated acrimony” than “real” conflict. Secondly, they perceived that there are three primary groups of people in their communities, each of which share a core set of values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests. Third, they identified three primary sources of resource-related conflict.

Collectively, the themes suggest that resource-related conflict in these communities is primarily “social” in nature, and that current methods of social assessment have failed, in part, because they do not acknowledge the validity of “local wisdom.” Finally, they suggest that rather than following a formal “model,” collaborative social assessments should be viewed as an opportunity to build relationships with the public as co-stewards.
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Introduction

The American experience in land and natural resources management has been both unique and complicated, and is seemingly more complicated now than ever before. This is due in large part to the ever increasing number of stakeholders and “special” interests demanding greater access to and influence over planning processes, and the myriad of policies, mandates, and laws now present – which often seem to be in conflict with one another. As a result, the process has become increasingly political, litigious, and adversarial. In fact the present day process of natural resources management seems to be dominated and driven by conflict.

Consequently, it often goes unnoticed that we have always struggled mightily in our efforts to manage land and other natural resources throughout our history as a nation. Indeed, the journey from Acquisition to Disposal, and from the Progressive Era of Scientific Management to the Era of Conflict was not without conflict (Figure 1). We have always struggled to balance the wants and needs of a society dependent on land and natural resources and our responsibility to preserve them for future generations. Historically, however, we worked through these struggles and were able to enjoy a season of relative peace, however short-lived example, during the Era of Acquisition. Let it may have been.

For example, during the Era of Acquisition legislators were faced with the enviable problem of deciding how to manage a vast and seemingly unlimited resource base. After much debate they arrived at a solution based on the philosophy of Disposal. The essence of this federal policy, which was championed by Thomas Jefferson, was to insure economic stability and individual liberty by means of transferring federal lands to
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Disposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Reservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Progressive Era of Scientific Management*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Era of Conflict and Environmental Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Era of Collaboration and Ecosystem-Based Mgmt</td>
</tr>
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Figure 1. Eras of federal land management in the United States. (*) Alternately known as the Golden Era of Conservation/Era of Custodial Management (1897 – 1950) and the Era of Intensive Management (1950 – 1990).
private ownership. The focus of this policy was on the individual; indeed, there was no government agency to oversee the use of natural resources or to orchestrate management activities. The transfer of ownership was achieved through a variety of informal and formal processes, such as the Homestead Act of 1862. Unfortunately, while Disposal certainly aided in the settlement of the West, and may have been economically beneficial (particularly to wealthy private landowners) an unforeseen consequence was that it often led to severe environmental deterioration.

In essence the journey from Acquisition through the Disposal Era can be described as a process beginning with a problem: What do we do with all this land? This problem was accompanied by a season of conflict, during which time legislators decided what we would do with all that land. The solution was to get the land into the hands of private landowners. Disposal was generally viewed favorably by the public, although it eventually led to another problem. Conceptually we have continued on this cycle from problem-to-conflict-to-solution-to-problem in our efforts to manage our land and natural resources.

For example, in response to the problems created by Disposal, which were described to include, "denuded landscapes and polluted rivers that affected whole communities and sometimes whole regions," (Hirt, 1994) a land-use reform movement based on the political philosophy of Progressivism was established in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Ultimately, in spite of the inertia of more than a 100-year commitment to the ideals of the disposal philosophy, the movement prevailed and Congress was persuaded to act. In doing so, Congress ushered in the Era of Scientific management, effectively switching the emphasis of our land management policy from
“economic stability” and “individual liberty,” to the well being of the land. In 1891 Congress authorized the president to set aside portions of the federal land holdings in the West as forest reserves. Later, Congress established the U.S. Forest Service to manage the forest reserves - what we know today as National Forests. So began the traditions of “public land” and management based on “public interest.”

While the movement away from Disposal was initially met with strong opposition, public sentiment quickly changed and the “scientific management” of lands through government programs came to be viewed by the public as a good way to serve the needs of the people (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992). In fact, most of the state and federal land and natural resource management agencies in the United States were established during this period between 1900 and 1950. The dominant approach used by these agencies in “serving the needs of the people” was based on “science.” Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, introduced this concept of resource management at the turn of the century (Hays, 1959). At the heart of this science based approach was the belief that through efficient, systematic, technical analysis, the “right” decision could be made, and that through the application of appropriate technologies and the increasingly sophisticated use of science that any human problem could be overcome (Grumbine, 1996; Wondolleck, 1996). And with the assistance of federal funding, such as the Pittman-Robertson Act, agencies grew and matured with an expanding body of scientific information and techniques. Not surprisingly, the agencies enjoyed widespread public trust and support. The USDA Forest Service, for example, “enjoyed a high degree of public accolade...and scholars cited the agency as a model of public-spirited
bureaucratic efficiency” (Kaufman, 1960). So, once again, we had cycled from problem-to-conflict-to-solution.

However, with the beginning of the Environmental Movement in the 1960's, natural resources management agencies began to lose the overwhelming support of the public. In fact, public scrutiny of the government and government agencies increased rapidly during this time period, and people began to demand a greater voice in the management of their natural resources.

In response to the public’s outcry for reform Congress intervened, just as they had in the late 1800's. In doing so they produced the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976. The National Environmental Policy Act requires the government to consider and disclose the environmental, social and economic implications of its proposed actions. This process includes opportunities for public participation through both written comments and oral testimony at public hearings. Similarly, the National Forest Management Act, the law that directs national forest planning efforts, created opportunities for public participation in the development of Forest Plans. However, while both these federal regulations - particularly NFMA which “deploy the most rigorous analytical and information requirements for planning by a natural resource agency,” (Larsen et al., 1990) - and their attendant regulations and policies institutionalized public participation in resource planning and decision-making processes conflict continued throughout the 1980's. For example, a 1989 survey revealed that 811 appeals had been filed on 96 National Forests which had completed land management plans (Gericke et al., 1992). In fact, O’Loughlin (1990) reported that since the enactment of the National Forest Management Act in 1976 not one Forest Plan has
been approved without appeal. Additionally, in an assessment of National Forests within Region 1, Eiselein (1992) reported that the public was not satisfied with the level of opportunity available to participate in forest planning.

Finally, with the apparent failure of NEPA and NFMA to satisfy the public's desire for opportunities to influence resource planning and management, and in recognition of the limitations of Progressive Era approaches to resolving resource related conflict, resource management agencies began experimenting with alternative dispute resolution and collaborative management in the 1980's (Manning, 1993). Alternative Dispute Resolution, or collaborative management, as defined by Chavez (1995) entails "joint decision-making approaches to problem resolution where power is shared, and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions." Additionally, collaborative management is characterized as being voluntary, face-to-face, and consensus building in nature. While it is probably still too early to pass judgement on collaborative approaches - even after almost 20 years of development - it is clear that academicians and resource managers are optimistic about their potential for contributing to the resolution of resource related conflicts. This is in spite of the fact that successful collaboratives generally remain the exception rather than the rule, that "success" does not always equate with the resolution of conflict, and that even when "success" is achieved it is difficult to sustain over time (Wondolleck and Yaffee, 1997). As Selin and Chavez (1995) stated, "collaboration is not a panacea, [but] environmental managers are discovering that collaborative designs can be a powerful tool for resolving conflict and advancing a shared vision of how a resource should be managed."
Hence, what can be said with certainty is that while there is optimism about the potential of collaborative approaches to contribute to the resolution of conflict, resource related conflicts currently remain at an all time high. So, the cycle has not been completed this time around. We are faced with a new version of an age-old problem: How do we manage finite quantities of land and other natural resources that are being asked to provide for an increasing number of needs and wants - many of which are perceived to be incompatible - and still preserve them for future generations? Resource managers and legislators have proposed many solutions, however, conflict remains. In other words, resource management remains stuck in the Era of Conflict. So, returning to the opening argument, while it is clear that land and natural resources management has always been a complicated business, resource managers have never before faced so many conflicts of such great intensity.

**Problem Statement and Propositions**

The obvious question is, “Why?” Why are we are stuck in the Era of Conflict? It is clear that land and natural resource management agencies are committed to making the transition from the Progressive Era model of Scientific Management to what some have called “truly” Scientific Management approaches, such as Ecosystem-Based Management which integrates the biological, physical, and social sciences (See Figure 1). Further, resource management agencies have embraced collaboration, and have demonstrated a strong commitment to figuring out what collaboration is and how it is done. For example, the National Forest System Land Resource Management Planning Final Rule (November 2000) identifies collaboration with the public as an “overriding theme” and raises several important question, including:
1. How can we more effectively engage the public?

2. How can the public interest be more effectively assessed?

3. Why have we been unsuccessful in managing conflict, in spite of our commitment to Ecosystem-Based Management, and collaboration, which the literature suggests are two keys to overcoming conflict? And how can we work with the public to cooperatively resolve conflict?

4. How can we develop long-term, collaborative working relationships with the various publics we serve?

5. Are there mechanisms that would enhance our capacity for collaborative stewardship?

While these questions provide encouraging evidence of the Forest Service's commitment to Ecosystem-based management and collaboration, they may also be partially indicative of why they and other resource management agencies have failed to lead us out of the Era of Conflict.

Simply stated, the problem underlying this investigation is that for as much as conflict and collaboration have been studied, many resource professionals lack a complete understanding of the fundamental nature of resource related conflict and they do not know how to do collaboration. In other words, the problem is that while agencies are committed to moving towards collaborative planning and management, many of the resource professionals who are on the ground and are actually responsible for implementing the change remain stuck within the framework of the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm. This is problematic because the Progressive Era model has a different set of assumptions about the fundamental nature of natural resources management and the resolution of resource-related conflict than
Collaborative Management paradigms. Consequently, while resource management agencies are attempting to do collaboration, what they are doing is not true collaboration.

The fundamental proposition of this investigation is that the transition to a Collaborative Management paradigm requires a deliberate transition in the thought processes of resource professionals. While there are many facets of this transition, perhaps the most fundamental – and problematic – is how resource professionals must think of the public. Collaborative management calls for resource professionals to think of the public as equal partners - as co-stewards. Unfortunately, most classically trained resource professionals have no idea where to start when dealing with the public, which obviously makes collaborating with them difficult if not impossible. Specifically, they have not received appropriate training with respect to addressing the public as co-stewards, and they do not have the tools necessary to understand the “public” – in terms of how they want their resources managed, or what they have to offer as co-stewards.

Importantly, because resource professionals serve many “publics” rather than a single, unified “public” it is not possible to address each of them in-depth in a single investigation. Therefore, this investigation focused on “understanding” members of the public who are committed to the concept of collaboration; specifically, those individuals who are acknowledged as being “community opinion leaders” in that they are widely recognized for their communicatively rational contributions to resource planning and management activities and to the on going public discourse in their communities related to the use and management of National Forests. The rationale for this decision is based on the assumption that if resource professionals are to have lasting, long-term success at
building constructive relationships with the public as a whole, they must first learn to do so with members of the public who are committed to collaborative management.

Therefore, this investigation was an effort to contribute to an improved understanding of the fundamental nature of resource-related conflict, and to facilitate the development and implementation of the collaborative tools that resource professionals are lacking. Specifically, an effort was made to:

1. Characterize the fundamental nature of resource related conflict from the perspective of “communicatively rational community opinion leaders” who are supportive of the concept of collaborative management; and

2. Contribute to the development of a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm.
The purpose of this review, which focussed on the human dimensions and social theory literature related to conflict, was three-fold. The first goal was to assess the validity of this investigations’ underlying assumptions about the nature, sources of, and solutions to resource-related conflict. The second goal was to assess the validity of the problem statement and proposition of this investigation. In other words, “Is resource management stuck in the Era of Conflict, in part, because resource management agencies are still operating under a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm?” And would the development and implementation of an approach to social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm contribute to the resolution and management of resource-related conflict? Lastly, the literature review was instrumental in the process of developing specific research objectives for this investigation, and to the process of identifying the methodological approach that was best suited to meeting the goals and objectives of this investigation.

1. The Nature of Resource-Related Conflict

The first goal of the literature review was to assess the validity of this investigations’ underlying assumptions about the nature, sources of, and solutions to resource-related conflict. Specifically, it was assumed that irresolvable resource-related conflict is not inevitable. Secondly, social factors - including distorted or otherwise ineffective communication and dysfunctional relationships - were assumed to be the primary sources of resource-related conflict. And lastly, the investigation assumed that collaborative approaches could make a positive contribution to the resolution and
management resource-related conflict in many instances. Each of these assumptions was supported – directly or indirectly - by the literature.

**A. Is Conflict Inevitable?**

The assumption that irresolvable conflict is not inevitable, while rarely explicitly stated, was nonetheless a recurring theme throughout the literature that was reviewed. In fact, this largely undocumented assumption was part of the underlying foundation of each of the works about resource-related conflict that was reviewed. The overwhelming consensus was that while resource managers will always have to deal with conflict, some conflicts can be avoided altogether, and of those that come to pass many can be effectively managed or resolved. Hence, while it is inevitable that resource professionals will struggle with conflict periodically on a project-by-project basis throughout their careers, it is not appropriate to view conflict as inevitable (Wondolleck, 1995). Further, as a related aside, conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. As Yarbrough (1995) noted, sometimes conflict forces people to explicitly identify and deal with underlying issues that have actually kept them at loggerheads for years, thereby releasing an outpouring of creative and productive energy.

**B. What is the Basis for Conflict?**

The assumption that resource-related conflict is primarily social in nature - as opposed to cognitive - was also well supported by both the human dimensions and social theory literature. Representative of the human dimension literature, Duane (1997) identified four sources or types of resource-related conflict, three of which are “social” in nature, including:

- **Cognitive Conflict:** which occurs when people have different understandings or judgements as to the facts of a case;
Values Conflict: which are disputes over goals - for example, whether an action or an outcome is desirable (or undesirable) or should (or should not) occur;

Interest Conflict: which is related to the costs and benefits resulting from an action. Specifically, since costs and benefits are rarely distributed equally, some people will have greater interest in an action than others. As a result, it is possible to have agreements on facts and values, and still have conflict based on interest; and

Relational Conflict: which is psychologically based and related to communication. For example, every time people communicate they communicate both content (information and facts) and relationship (how much someone is valued, accepted etc.). Decision-making processes can also communicate relationships. They may, for example, favor groups that are well enough financed and organized to present scientific supporting data over those that primarily argue from a values base. The result is that there are a number of emotional motivations that may lead to conflict on grounds other than facts, values, or interests.

The large body of sociological literature dedicated to theories of conflict also emphasizes the “social” nature conflict. Within this body of theoretical literature the social nature of conflict is generally characterized in one of two ways. Marx, the father of Conflict Theory, characterized conflict as the struggle for control of limited resources, including money, land and power (Ritzer, 1996). Habermas (1984), on the other hand, theorized that conflict is the result of “distorted communication” and ineffective relationships. Of these two schools of thought, this investigation was guided by the latter, particularly Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action.

The essence of the Theory of Communicative Action is that communication is more than an exchange of information. Rather, communication is a process through which the “speech acts, or non-verbal equivalents, of the agents involved are coordinated...through acts of reaching understanding. In communicative action

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participants are not primarily oriented to their own successes; rather, they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions" (Habermas, 1984). To clarify, communicative action is a form of communication. It is a process by which two or more participants consciously or unconsciously choose to create a shared understanding of their given situation, thereby creating an outcome that is mutually beneficial. If the participants are to be successful two things must happen. First, they must come to a common understanding – they must figure out the true meaning of what the other participant in saying. Secondly, they must develop a shared meaning. If they are successful then their actions will be in “harmony” and conflict will be avoided. Habermas argued that communicative action - not purposive-rational action (the calculated pursuit of self-interest) as Marx proposed - is the “most distinctive and most pervasive human phenomenon...” (Ritzer, 1996). In other words, communicative action is an everyday occurrence. Finally, Habermas concluded that “distorted communication” - the inability of participants to understand one another and create a shared meaning - not the struggle for control of limited resources as Marx postulated - is the main source of human conflict. This perspective provided the guiding theoretical framework for this investigation. In other words, while cognitive differences and the “calculated pursuit of self-interest” were acknowledged as sources of conflict, this investigation assumed that conflict persists largely because resource professionals and the public, and stakeholder groups within the public, do not understand one another and are therefore unable to develop shared meaning(s).
C. Is Collaboration the Solution?

The third assumption of this investigation was that collaborative approaches could be used to resolve and manage resource-related conflict in many instances. Once again, the literature generally supported this assumption. Selin and Chavez (1995) defined collaboration in the realm of resource management as "a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared, and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those actions." They effectively summarized scores of works dedicated to assessing the effectiveness of collaborative approaches to the resolution of resource-related conflict, stating, "although collaboration is not a panacea, environmental managers are discovering that collaborative designs can be powerful tools for resolving conflict and advancing a shared vision of how a resource should be managed." Similarly, Yaffee et al. (1997) observed that "overall, collaboration and bridge-building represent useful strategies for managing natural resources in an era in which many management decisions are becoming increasingly complex, interrelated, and controversial.

II. Are Resource Management Agencies Stuck in the Progressive Era?

The second goal of the literature review was to assess the appropriateness of the suggestion that resource management is stuck in the Era of Conflict, in part, because resource management agencies are still operating under a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm? And to determine whether or not the literature supports the suggestion that the development and implementation of a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm would contribute to the resolution and management of resource-related conflict? Specifically,
the human dimensions literature outlines what a paradigm is, which paradigms are currently relevant to the management of natural resources, what distinguishes one paradigm from another, and what a social assessment is.

A. What is a Paradigm?

Although the term paradigm has become a popular buzzword in recent years, it was first introduced into the scientific lexicon by Kuhn (1962) to describe how research is guided and directed by an agreed upon set of concepts, theories, and methods. However, Behan (1990) observed that the idea of a paradigm could also be readily applied to the management of land and natural resources by public agencies. For example, beliefs about the fundamental nature of resource planning and management, the respective roles of managers and the public in planning and management, and the types of knowledge that are considered to be valid (i.e. “science” versus indigenous forms of knowledge) are fundamental components of a management paradigm.

B. Which Paradigms are Relevant?

While it would be possible to identify many resource management paradigms, the Progressive Era model of Scientific Management has been the dominant paradigm for many years. In fact, Hays (1997) observed that the Scientific Management paradigm is a product of the Progressive Era, a political philosophy that prevailed when many land and natural resource management agencies were founded. The other management paradigm that is currently relevant, a relative newcomer by comparison, is the Collaborative Management paradigm.
C. How are the Management Paradigms Distinct?

While the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm and Collaborative Management paradigms are both “science-based,” the literature suggests that they are distinct with respect to two primary factors (Table 1). First, they are distinct with respect to how they view natural resources and resource-related conflict. Secondly, they are distinct in terms of how they approach the management of natural resources and the resolution of resource-related conflict.

In the following sections the paradigms are contrasted in each of these areas. In each instance it is evident that resource management agencies are making efforts to move towards a Collaborative Management paradigm, but that resource professionals remain firmly grounded in a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm.

1. Views of Resources and Resource-Related Conflict

The first distinction between the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm and Collaborative Management paradigms is related to their respective views of natural resources and resource-related conflict. In summary, the literature characterizes the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm as having a singular, reductionistic view, whereas Collaborative Management paradigms are noted for being integrated and holistic. For example, Larsen et al. (1990) observed that under the traditional Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm used by the Forest Service that land management focused on commodity production and utilitarian values to the near exclusion of intrinsic values or uses. Specifically, they noted that the emotional, symbolic, and spiritual values that the public commonly attributes to natural resources are largely disregarded as insignificant or irrelevant to the process of

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1. Nature of paradigm:  
   a. View of natural resources:  
      Commodity and special interests  
   b. View of resource-related conflict:  
      Cognitive: factual disputes

2. Nature of resource management and conflict resolution:  
   a. Role of resource professionals:  
      Technical experts who manage on behalf of the public.  
   b. Role of the public:  
      Token participants. Provide post-decision criticism as resource professionals utilize a "decide, announce, defend strategy."
managing land and natural resources under the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm. Conversely, Collaborative Management paradigms explicitly acknowledge the necessity of planning and managing for commodity and utilitarian values and uses as well as the intrinsic, emotional, symbolic, spiritual, or otherwise "hard to define" values and uses of natural resources (Wondolleck et al., 1994; Duane, 1997; Driver et al., 1996).

Similarly, the literature suggests that the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm promotes a singular, reductionistic view of resource-related conflict, whereas Collaborative Management paradigms have an integrated, holistic view. For example, as previously noted, Duane (1997) identified four different types or sources of resource-related conflict, including cognitive, values, interest, and relational conflict. Of these four sources of conflict, the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm is noted for primarily addressing cognitive sources of conflict, whereas Collaborative Management paradigms address each of these sources (Larsen et al., 1991, Duane, 1997). Specifically, Duane (1997) comments that resource management agencies were tremendously successful in resolving conflict through the application of a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm for many years, and that it is of little surprise that resource professionals would resort to this approach to address the conflict they face today. However, he concludes that the application of the type of factual, physical, biologically based solutions advocated by this approach alone are not sufficient to resolve the types of conflict that resource professionals face today. Whereas resource-related conflict was once driven more by disagreements over facts, modern conflict is predominantly socially based. In spite of
this Duane (1997) observed that resource management agencies are still primarily guided by a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm in terms of their thinking about sources of resource-related conflict. In other words, resource professionals often ignore "social" sources of conflict, even though they often explain why reasonable people, in real places, within real communities can agree on the "facts" and disagree about the desirability of implementing specific policy, planning, or management actions.

Once again, the conclusion is that while resource management agencies aspire to a Collaborative Management paradigm, resource professionals generally operate under a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm.

2. Approaches to Resource Management and Conflict Resolution

The literature also suggests that the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm and Collaborative Management paradigms are distinct in terms of their approach to resource planning and management and the resolution of resource-related conflict. Specifically, these distinctions are related to their respective views on the role of resource professionals and the public in resource planning and management. Under the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm resource professionals, who possess specialized scientific training and technical knowledge, act as trustees and stewards on behalf of the public and dominate planning and management processes. Conversely, the public is viewed as the beneficiary and user of natural resources (Duane, 1997).

In contrast, Collaborative Management paradigms view resource professionals and the public as equal partners in managing land and natural resources. Under the
collaborative philosophy there is an emphasis on building trust-based working relationships between resource professionals and the public. Ideally, resource professionals would strive to serve as "process" experts, working jointly with the public to make decisions that fit local situations, rather than solely working as "content" experts who manage on behalf of the public through the generic application of scientific principles, regulations, and laws (Patterson, Guynn, and Guynn, 1998).

This paradigm shift does not suggest that resource professionals should abdicate their responsibilities. Nor do Collaborative Management paradigms call for the abandonment of science in favor of political considerations or the interests of narrowly focused advocacy groups in planning and management. On the contrary, Collaborative Management paradigms maintain that science provides the best approach for structuring debates regarding natural resource disputes. However, rather than simply emphasizing the answers science provides the collaborative philosophy underscores the importance of understanding science as a social process. In other words, rather than seeing the role of science solely as one of providing facts or answers which can be applied to resolve conflict, this approach emphasizes understanding the way science operates and incorporating key features of the scientific process into the collaborative process (Williams and Matheny, 1995).

The literature suggests that resource management agencies recognize the promise that collaboration holds for resolving conflict, and that they are making an effort to manage "collaboratively," however, their efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Williams and Matheny (1995) attribute this, in part, to the inability of most resource professionals to break out of old ways of thinking about their role and the role of the
public in resource planning and management. They observed that while extraordinary
efforts to incorporate the public into resource planning processes have been made, the
public is still not treated as an \textit{equal} partner. Rather, the emphasis of agency public
involvement efforts remains on providing \textit{public education} as a means to the end of
letting experts make the decisions - a clear indication that they are still operating within
the framework of a Progressive Era model of Scientific Management paradigm (Williams
and Matheny, 1995). Unfortunately, in this period of heightened public scrutiny and
diversity in values and attitudes toward natural resources, this pseudo-collaborative
approach is problematic because it often: 1) fails to provide a thorough understanding of
the full range of issues and concerns necessary to develop an acceptable solution; 2) fails
to build sufficient public support for a preferred alternative; and 3) leads to judicial
processes that are adversarial and restrict agency options and creative, consensus-
building resolutions to conflicts (Wondolleck, Yaffee, and Crowfoot, 1994).

In summary, the literature is supportive of the problem statement of this
investigation: "we" remain stuck in the Era of Conflict, in part, because resource
management agencies are still operating under the Progressive Era model of the Scientific
Management paradigm.

\textbf{III. Is A Collaborative Social Assessment the Answer?}

The literature is also supportive of the proposition of this investigation: a social
assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management
paradigm would assist resource professionals in their effort to resolve and manage
resource-related conflict. In particular, the literature defines what a social assessment is
and provides a description of the role social assessment has played in the field of natural resources management over the years.

A. **What is a Social Assessment?**

A social assessment is a tool used by resource professionals to assess the social capital, infrastructure, and values of a community. In other words, a social assessment provides resource professionals with insights into how a community thinks and feels, why they think and feel that way, how they communicate about how they think and feel, and what factors could influence the way they think and feel in the future. In one of the first “public relations” texts written specifically for those in the field of natural resources management Gilbert (1971) described social assessment as a “two-way system of contact and understanding between organizations and individual publics.” Over the years this definition has changed very little. For example, Bright et al. (2000) define social assessment as “a method of data collection and analysis used to generate information about (1) social structure, (2) social processes, and (3) social changes being wrought in given social structure(s) and process(es).”

B. **The Purpose of Social Assessment**

Just as the definition of social assessment has changed very little over the years, their purpose and use have remained relatively constant. Gilbert (1971) indicated that the purpose of social assessment is to ensure the “success and acceptance, or support of any program.” Further, while he defined social assessment as a “two-way system of contact and understanding” he also noted “a certain amount of manipulation of thought or ‘engineering of consent’ is involved.” Gilbert concluded that this form of social “engineering” is “neither illegal nor dishonest,” and that “techniques of selling ideas are
now known and accepted.” Similarly, Bright et al. (2000) suggest, “The primary purpose of conducting an assessment of the social environment is to provide the basis for forecasting the consequences of any number of potential projects or policies for a given region.” In other words, while Bright et al. (2000) make no reference to “manipulation” or “engineering of consent,” they believe the purpose of social assessment is to determine the “consequences” of pre-determined “projects or policies.” This is significant to the current investigation because the form of social assessment advocated by Gilbert and Bright are not “collaborative.” They are information gathering tools that involve the public, but according to most definitions of collaboration (Selin and Chavez, 1995), they cannot be considered “collaborative” social assessments. Which begs the question, “What is a collaborative social assessment?”

C. **What is a “Collaborative” Social Assessment?**

The term “collaborative social assessment” is not present in the literature. In fact, this investigation was an effort to contribute to the development of a collaborative social assessment – one that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm. Hence, while we lack an accepted definition, what can be said with certainty is that a collaborative social assessment does not involve “manipulation” or “engineering of consent.” Further, the purpose of a collaborative social assessment is not to educate an uninformed public. A collaborative social assessment is, as Gilbert (1971) suggests, a form of “two-way communication and understanding.” However, the goal of said two-way communication between resource professionals and the public is to jointly develop goals, programs and projects, not to figure out a way to sell goals, programs, and projects that have been independently developed by resource professionals. Or as Habermas

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might have put it, a collaborative social assessment is a tool used by resource professionals to facilitate the identification of relevant information and to assist resource professionals and the public in the process of understanding one another and developing shared meaning(s).

In summary, the literature suggests that resource professionals do not currently have a collaborative social assessment at their disposal, and that such a tool would contribute to their efforts to resolve and manage resource-related conflict.

**IV. Developing a Collaborative Social Assessment**

Given the “social” nature of resource-related conflict (Habermas, 1984; Palmer, 1991), the fact that resource management agencies are in fact still largely guided by a Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm (Larsen et al., 1991; Duane, 1997), and that resource professionals do not have the benefit of a collaborative social assessment (Gilbert, 1971; Bright et al., 2000), the final goal of the literature review was to assess how such a social assessment could best be developed. Specifically, the literature was instrumental to the process of identifying the methodological approach and specific research objectives that would most likely contribute to the successful development of a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm. The “human dimensions” and social theory literature were instrumental in this effort. The sections below define what Human Dimensions research is, justify its role in resource management, and suggest specific research objectives that would contribute to the development of a collaborative social assessment.
A. Human Dimensions Defined

It is clear that as resource management has continued to emerge from the Progressive Era model of Scientific Management that the social sciences have played an increasingly important role in addressing resource-related conflict. Human Dimensions research, as we know it today, began to develop in the 1970's (Witter and Jahn, 1998). It has been defined in a variety of ways. Many members of the wildlife profession, for example, equate human dimensions research simply with public polls and surveys (Manfredo et al., 1996). However, Manfredo et al. (1996) argue for a broader definition that describes the field as “an area of investigation which attempts to describe, predict, understand, and affect human thought and action toward natural environments.” Decker et al. (1996) provide an even broader definition, characterizing human dimensions research as an effort to provide natural resource managers with information regarding political, economic, and socio-cultural factors, which, when combined with biological and ecological information, comprise the body of knowledge necessary to direct the management of land and natural resources.

B. Human Dimension Research Approaches

Although human dimensions research is a highly integrated discipline within the social sciences, social psychology has dominated the field (Patterson et al., 1998). Within social psychology, attitude-based and meaning-based approaches have been most prevalent.

1. Attitude-Based Approaches

Of these two approaches, attitude-based research was the first to be developed, and has been far more common in human dimensions research. An attitude is broadly
defined as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (Lutz, 1990). This general definition indicates why human dimensions researchers have been so interested in the concept. Attitudes are related to the way humans behave, and, just as importantly, they are learned and therefore may be influenced or changed to help promote desirable behavior (Patterson et al., 1998). While there are several methods within the attitude-based approach, the core concept of each method is information. “Information” can be contrasted with “meaning.” For example, the results of an attitude-based investigation might indicate that the majority of people in a community support “multiple use,” or management that promotes “forest health.” This information would undoubtedly prove useful to resource managers, however, it does not provide detailed insights into what people mean by “multiple use,” “management” or “forest health.”

Within the suite of attitudes-based approaches, two distinct approaches are apparent. The first method is exemplified by Kellert’s (1980) typology of attitudes, and the second by Bright and Manfredo’s (1996) research. The insights generated by Kellert (1980) are generally classified as descriptive. This approach provides an understanding of how the public perceives natural resources, and, in particular, differences in perceptions among various stakeholders. Additionally Kellert (1980b) distinguishes between attitudes and behavior, emphasizing that attitudes are not necessarily consistent with an individual’s behavior.

In contrast, Bright and Manfredo’s (1996) approach provides a basis for empirically demonstrating the link between attitudes and behavior, and identifying factors that shape attitudes. The practical application of this method is that if the factors...
that determine attitudes can be identified, particularly the relevant underlying beliefs, then behavior can be changed or influenced through persuasive communication.

Attitude-based approaches have made significant contributions to the field of natural resources management; however, they have three primary limitations in their application to the resolution of resource-related conflict. First, while they provide a broad scale perspective, they fail to provide the depth of insight that is necessary to resolve conflict. Specifically, whereas they may provide information about the deeply held beliefs and values that are very often the source of natural resource conflicts, they do not suggest, for example, what it really means when someone indicates that they value “multiple use,” “Wilderness,” or the “spiritual” aspects of National Forests. Secondly, beliefs and values are highly resistant to change (Bright and Manfredo, 1996) and the Progressive Era style public education efforts that typically emerge from this approach are not likely to be effective at resolving conflict. Finally, because attitude-based approaches generate information rather than meaning, they do not facilitate the identification of common ground, which Kahn (1993) suggests is critical to the process of negotiating conflict between conflicting parties.

2. Meaning-Based Approaches

While attitude-based approaches have been most common in human dimensions research, meaning-based, or social constructivist approaches, are becoming increasingly prevalent (Dizard, 1993; Felt, 1994; Hyman and Wernstedt, 1995; Sutherland and Nash, 1994). Whereas information is the core concept of attitude-based approaches, meaning is the core concept of meaning-based approaches. The distinction, once again, is that “information” consists of discrete variables that can be readily measured, whereas
“meaning” consists of latent, socially constructed variables that can be more challenging to measure. On the other hand, the extra effort to measure these latent variables is often worth the effort. For example, an attitude survey might reveal that an individual values National Forests because they provide for multiple-use opportunities. While such information is useful, it doesn’t necessarily explain what that individual really means by multiple-use. Further, the assumption is that all survey respondents who indicate that they value National Forest in terms of multiple-use are expressing the same value. This could be a very dangerous assumption. In fact, it is likely that the term multiple-use holds significantly different meanings for any number of survey respondents, and attitude-based approaches are not capable of distinguishing between these differences.

The significance of the distinction between information and meaning is that most of the time people relate to and think of resources in terms of the socially constructed meanings they assign to them – not in terms of the relevant bio-physical information about the resource (Palmer, 1991). For example, very often people view resources through an anthropocentric lens and endow them with complex, emotionally charged meanings that extend far beyond their discrete, physical attributes and utilitarian value. In fact, Palmer (1991) observed that natural resource controversies are generally the result of differences in the socially constructed meanings that people assign to natural resources – not over the “relevant” facts or information. Similarly, Cantrill (1992) and Peyton and Langenau (1985) observed that conflict between the public and resource professionals often results because of the public’s highly individualized “environmental realities” may have little resemblance to the factual, biologically-based world as seen by natural resource professionals.
Therefore, given that attitude-based approaches emphasize information and meaning-based approaches emphasize meaning, this investigation relied upon the latter to guide the effort to contribute to the development of a collaborative social assessment.

V. Developing Research Objectives

In addition to pointing to the relevance of meaning-based approaches the literature was also instrumental to the process of developing specific research objectives. In particular, the concepts of communicative rationality and ideal speech were instructive. The concepts of communicative rationality and ideal speech suggest that analyzing public discourse and discourse communities is an effective way of understanding what the public is really saying, thinking, or feeling about a given subject.

Public discourse is defined to include speech acts that are communicatively rational (Forester, 1989; Sager, 1994; Innes, 1995) and those that meet the conditions of ideal speech (Innes, 1996). Communicatively rational speech acts are statements that are made for some “good” reason, as opposed to those that are made to support a narrow political agenda. There are three conditions of ideal speech. Statements must be scientifically true. They must be offered sincerely. And, finally, they must reflect “emancipatory knowledge – knowledge of the deeper realities hidden behind popular myths, scientific theories, and the arguments and rationalizations in common use” (Innes, 1996). In summary, public discourse is the body of honest, heart-felt communication that is on-going within any given community. It is the type of plain talk that usually occurs after a public hearing (and outside the reach of current social assessment processes) when family and friend get together and say, “What I really wanted to say in there was…”

Discourse communities describe literal or hypothetical groups of people that are
"related" through similarities in their discourse (Fukuyama, 1995; Swales, 1990). The concept acknowledges that there are discrete subdivisions of discourse within the larger body of on-going, communicatively rational public discourse. In other words, people can be committed to fulfilling the conditions of ideal speech and still come to different conclusions about the reality of the world around them. It follows that people who use similar discourse are said to belong to the same discourse community. Methodologically, the concept of discourse communities is similar to Weber's notion of Ideal Types. Weber argued that in order understand the symbolic action (Habermas used the term communicative action) whereby people create intersubjective meaning (Habermas used the term shared meaning) the investigator had to freeze the social action within a community. In the case of discourse communities, the social action is "frozen" by organizing people into groups based on observed speech acts for the purpose of comparison.

A. Statement of Research Goals and Objectives

Therefore, in keeping with the specific problem statement of this investigation, the Goals of this investigation were, once again, too:

1. Characterize the fundamental nature of resource-related conflict; and

2. Contribute to the development of a social assessment process that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management Paradigm.

In order to accomplish these goals the follow objective was identified:

To understand the on-going public discourse related to the use and management of National Forests by identifying and mapping the relevant discourse communities in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests.

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Methods

National Forests are enjoyed by real people in real places, and conflict occurs between real people in and over real places, therefore, this investigation was place based. The "places" under investigation were communities. Consistent with Duane's (1997) description of the various types of communities, this investigation sought to incorporate multiple communities of place, communities of interest and communities of identity. The communities of place under investigation were associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests. The Flathead and Helena National Forests were selected by the investigator and Forest Service for two primary reasons. First, they belong to different planning zones within the Northern Region of the USDA Forest Service. The Flathead National Forest is part of the Bitterroot-Blackfoot-Clark Fork Planning Zone, whereas the Helena National Forest belongs to the Eastside Planning Zone. Secondly, they are distinct in terms of their physical and social landscapes. For example, Forest Service literature describes the physical landscape of the Flathead National Forest in extreme terms, emphasizing that visitors will be "surrounded by Wilderness" and opportunities for "primitive recreation." Conversely, the Helena National Forest is described in "gentler" terms; the literature suggests that visitors can expect to be "greeted by wide open canyons and meadows and blue, blue skies." Forest Service literature describes similar distinctions between the two Forests in terms of their social landscapes. The social landscape of the Flathead National Forest is indicative of a long history of economic dependence on logging, whereas the Helena National Forest is described as having a "rich mining and ranching history."
The communities of interest and identity that were investigated are also place based, but they are more-so “people” based. The communities of interest and identity that were investigated are reflected in the selection of Ideal Types.

I. Sampling Principle

The sampling principle of this investigation was based on Weber’s concept of Ideal Types. An Ideal Type is an “analytical construct that serves as a measuring rod for social observers to determine the extent to which concrete social institutions are similar and how they differ from some defined measure” (Aron, 1970; Coser, 1977). Specific Ideal Types were developed by identifying “social institutions” (i.e. subject groups) of interest and populating them with informants who presumably share some pre-determined set of traits. For example, informants may be employed in the same profession, share similar extracurricular interests, or belong to organizations that share common political or religious beliefs. The subject groups are referred to as Ideal Types because the subjects within are assumed to exhibit similar types of behavior under ideal conditions based on previous observation.

The decision to use Ideal Types as a sampling principle was based on both the concept of Social Nominalism and the Theory of Social Action. Social Nominalism states that communities are no more than the sum of their parts, and that the whole can only be understood when the parts are understood (Nisbet, 1996). Therefore, since Ideal Types represent the elemental “parts” or “social institutions” of a community, they provide an appropriate analytical tool for understanding communities (Coser, 1977). More specifically, the Theory of Social Action states that in order to understand a community the “intersubjective meaning” of the ongoing “social action and symbolic
interaction must be penetrated" (Parsons, 1937). Weber argued that the use of Ideal Types facilitates the penetration of intersubjective meaning because it "freezes the social action" within a community. Hence, given the nature of the specific goals and objectives of this investigation – to understand and "map" the public discourse related to the use and management of National Forests - it follows that that the use of Ideal Types as a sampling principle is appropriate.

II. Sampling Logic

The selection of specific Ideal Types, and the informants who comprised them, was guided by the principles of maximum variation sampling (Cowan, 2000), and non-probability purposive sampling (Peterson and Horton, 1995). The logic or purpose of this approach is to produce a study sample that is "representative" of both a wide range of the relevant Ideal Types that exist within the communities of place under investigation, and the diversity within those Ideal Types. Although the sample is purposefully rather than randomly selected, it is "representative" in the sense that it accurately reflects what the Ideal Types of interest really look like, thereby facilitating their description in rich detail (Cowan, 2000). In other words, the sample is intended to provide a detailed understanding of actual individuals within a community rather than an aggregate characterization of some non-existent, "average" individual (Shafer, 1969; Patterson et al., 2001). This is significant because conflict occurs between "real people in real places" (Duane, 1997).

The selection of representative Ideal Types and the informants who comprised them was a two-step process. First, a content analysis of relevant literature was conducted. The emphasis of this effort was placed on analyzing the mailing lists of local
resource management agencies and attendance rosters from public hearings in order to determine who is participating in resource planning processes and what interest(s) they represent. Secondly, Forest Service personnel (n=14), Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks personnel (n=2), and representatives of resource related private non-profit organizations (n=4) that work in the communities of place under investigation were interviewed. In order to facilitate the identification of relevant Ideal Types they were asked to “paint a picture” of their community with “boxes” that represent “the various ways that people relate to National Forests.” They were instructed to think beyond traditional stereotypes such as “loggers” and “environmentalists” and popular organizations such as the Montana Logging Association and Montana Wilderness Association, and encouraged to think more broadly. They were then asked to identify “5-10 community opinion leaders that best represent each of the boxes” (Ideal Types) that they identified. The term “community opinion leader” was defined to include “people that they feel can really be trusted to give a straight answer – not necessarily the ‘right’ answer or the ‘party line’ – but an honest, sincere answer that is motivated by an interest in doing what’s best for the land.” Further, community opinion leaders were defined as people who have a “deep experiential knowledge of the people and natural resources of their communities.” Specifically, they were asked to “put people in the boxes.”

Eight Ideal Types were identified including people who (1) “work” and (2) “play” in National Forests; those who (3) “advocate” for certain issues related to the use and management of National Forests; resource professionals, including those who work for (4) “public agencies” and those who work in the (5) “private sector;” (6) the “Tribes and
Tribal Governments;" (7) local governments; and (8) public school children and educators.

The Ideal Types that were selected to be the focus of this investigation are referred to as the Economic/Livelihood, Recreation, and Advocacy Ideal Types. The Economic/Livelihood Ideal Type is comprised of individuals whose relationship with National Forests is primarily related to their occupation, including those who work in traditional resource extraction based industries, as well as those in non-traditional forest products and recreation based industries. The Recreation Ideal Type is comprised of individuals whose relationship with National Forests is primarily related to their recreational interests, including a range of “consumptive” and “non-consumptive” activities. The Advocacy Ideal Type is comprised of individuals whose relationship with National Forests is primarily related to a specific issue, including issues ranging from “multiple use” to Wilderness.

III. Study Sample

The process described above generated a list of names from which study informants were selected. The final sample was determined by applying two additional criteria. First, they were acknowledged as having intimate experiential knowledge of both the ecological and social landscapes of their respective communities of place. Secondly, they were known for their commitment to civil, collaborative and communicatively rational participation in resource planning activities and the ongoing public discourse in their respective communities related to the use and management of National Forests. The second criterion excluded from consideration those who were perceived to be “extremists” or “radicals.” As noted in the Introduction, the decision to
interview only those with a “known commitment to collaborative participation” and to exclude “radicals” and “extremists” was based on the assumption that if resource professionals are to realize lasting, long-term success in their endeavor to build constructive relationships with the public, they must first learn to do so with those members of the public who are committed to collaborative management.

Ultimately, the study sample was comprised of 28 community opinion leaders, including 4-6 informants from each Forest for each Ideal Type. Although this represents a relatively “small” sample, it is consistent with the previously identified goal of characterizing a “representative” and “relevant” sample of “real” people, as opposed to a sample of “non-existent, statistically average” people.

IV. Data Collection

Data were collected using systematic, in-depth informant directed interviews (Peterson and Horton, 1995). Interviews followed an interview guide (Charmaz, 1991, Kvale, 1983) consisting of a series of open-ended questions that were developed in consultation with the Forest Service (See Appendix A). The interview guide outlined the issues to be covered and provided a series of lead in questions so as to maintain consistency between interviews, but also allowed the interviewer the “discretion to adapt the wording and sequencing of questions to each particular interview” (Tesch, 1990)).

Using an interview guide allows the investigator to guide the interview toward certain themes without guiding informants towards certain responses (Kvale, 1983), and the flexibility to probe unexpected responses as they arise. This approach to qualitative research reflects a constructivist ontology, which views knowledge of phenomena and reality as emergent, contextually produced constructions of the interviewer and
interviewee (Howard, 1991; Nespor and Baryslke, 1991). Finally, after gaining informed consent, informant responses were tape recorded, transcribed verbatim (Peterson et al, 1994), and coded to preserve anonymity.

V. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to a hermeneutic approach to textual interpretation consisting of the development of an organizing system (Tesch, 1990). The development of an organizing system is a systematic process consisting of three steps. First, meaning units are identified. Meaning units are segments of the interview text that are comprehensible on their own. They might be as short as a sentence fragment, or several sentences or paragraphs long. For example, the following three hypothetical statements would be considered independent meaning units: 1) “I enjoy hunting on National Forests; 2) I support logging on National Forests because it’s part of our communities heritage, and it’s good for the economy, and it’s a good way to reduce fuel loads; 3) On the other hand, I really think it’s important that we set aside portions of the National Forest as roadless areas.”

The second step in the process involves organizing the meaning units and identifying emergent themes, which represent the investigator’s interpretation of what a collection of related meaning units reveals. For example, the theme that emerges from the three hypothetical statements in the preceding example has to do with the individual’s value orientation. This hypothetical individual might be said to have a multiple use value orientation.

The final step in the process of developing an organizing system is to assess the interrelationships among the emergent themes.
Following this three-step process the analysis begins at the ideographic level, where individual interviews are considered. The ideographic analysis is followed by an Ideal Type analysis, where each of the individual interviews comprising an Ideal Type are considered simultaneously. Finally, a nomothetic analysis is conducted, whereby the entire study sample is considered.

VI. Presentation of Results

The results are presented as a narrative account of the emergent themes that were identified by the investigator. In order to provide reviewers with the opportunity to independently assess the validity of the interpretation presented in the results – whether or not the investigator achieved a “valid and common understanding of the meaning” of the text – excerpts from the interviews are provided as empirical justification. Given that this investigation generated over 75 hours of recorded data from interviews with 28 informants, reviewers are provided with direct access to portions of the data that were selected as being representative of the larger data set.

Textual excerpts were selected according the following 4 criteria. First, excerpts were selected for their “completeness” and “contextual integrity” Qualitative data are inherently different from quantitative data in that they do not have a standard framework through which they can be interpreted. For example, reviewers “trust” the reporting of scores from a Likert-type attitude scale because they know how they are calculated and what they mean, both individually and in relation to one another. Conversely, reviewers are frequently skeptical – and rightly so in many instances – of qualitative data because no such frame of reference exists. To address this threat to validity, excerpts were selected for their completeness and contextual integrity. Excerpts are complete when
they contain both relevant information and meaning. Contextual integrity means that excerpts are comprised of statements that were made sequentially, or statements that recurred throughout the interview in relation to a given subject. In other words, the excerpt provides sufficient context for the reviewer to assess the validity of the investigator’s interpretation, and they are comprised of continuous statements, or a string of continuous statements, rather than a hodge-podge of randomly selected statements that were crammed together. For example, if an excerpt is offered as evidence that an individual supports forest management in the interest of forest health, the excerpt should contain a direct statement to that affect as well as contextual statements that describe what that individual means by “support,” “forest management,” and “forest health.”

Secondly, excerpts were selected in order to demonstrate that the emergent themes were common across each of the Ideal Types. Specifically, each emergent theme is documented with at least one excerpt from each Ideal Type. In some instances emergent themes were documented with more than one excerpt from each of the Ideal Types. Multiple excerpts from within an Ideal Type were presented when warranted by “variance within.” For example, even though each of the informants within the Recreation Ideal Type shared a common understanding of and value for “multiple use,” not all uses of National Forests were valued equally by each informant. The use of multiple excerpts within an Ideal Type allowed for the characterization of such internal variation.

Third, excerpts were selected in order to provide reviewers with “access” to each of the informants, and to demonstrate the diversity within each of the Ideal Types. For
example, even though “Steve” and “Mary” were the most articulate informants, at least one excerpt from each of the informants is provided.

Finally, excerpts were selected for their conciseness. As noted some informants were simply more articulate than others were. Therefore, given the voluminous nature of qualitative reporting, when the aforementioned criteria were satisfied, the most concise, articulate, and persuasive excerpts were selected.

As previously noted, informants were guaranteed anonymity; therefore, each informant was assigned a pseudonym. Each excerpt that is presented as empirical justification of the investigator’s interpretation is assigned an “address” that includes three pieces of information. First, the informant’s pseudonym in quotation marks. Secondly, a two letter code that identifies the Ideal Type to which they belong (E = Economic Livelihood, R = Recreation, and A = Advocacy) and the National Forest they are associated with (F = Flathead and H = Helena). And finally, an integer that corresponds to the exact location of the excerpt in the data.


Results

Each interview began with the following question: “Please describe your community for me.” In instances where informants asked for clarification they were prompted with the following series of questions, “How did you come to live in this community? What is it like to live here? And what do you like best about living here?” Although many questions followed this initial series, it was typically sufficient to initiate a rich and detailed description of their respective communities of place and how National Forests fit into the picture. While informants within and across the Ideal Types had vastly different life experiences and had lived in their respective communities for varying lengths of time a common story about the nature of resource-related conflict and the role of collaboration in conflict resolution consistently emerged from the interviews. This “story” represents the “results” of this investigation. The story is comprised of three parts or chapters, each of which is based on a theme or pair of themes that was interpreted to have consistently emerged during and throughout the interviews. Although the themes emerged and re-emerged throughout the course of the interviews they typically emerged sequentially. The following section provides an initial overview of the themes while subsequent sections provide a detailed explanation and empirical justification for the interpretation.

The message that typically emerged first during an interview was actually a pair of themes that informants invariably linked: the nature of conflict and the prevalence of common ground. When discussing their communities and National Forests informants consistently wanted to share their perceptions about resource-related conflict and common ground. They consistently observed that the frequency and intensity of
resource-related “conflicts” have increased over the years. However, time after time, informants indicated that most of the “conflict” in their communities amounts to nothing more than an “unnecessary” and “fabricated acrimony.” This, in turn, led to discussions about the prevalence of common ground. Informants perceived that there is more common ground amongst “so-called” polar opposite stakeholder groups than most people realize.

The second theme that typically emerged during an interview was related to what the social landscape of the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests look like. In other words, informants shared their perceptions of how the majority of people who live, work and play in their respective communities of place can be meaningful organized into groups based on their interests in National Forests. Informants consistently indicated that the social landscape should be mapped based on what people are “really” saying about the use and management of National Forests, rather than stakeholder group affiliation or, for example, whether or not and how many snowmobiles an individual owns. Further, they suggested that the best way to figure out what people are really saying is to tune out the shrill rhetorical exchanges and posturing of “extremists” and focus on what this investigation refers to as the larger body of ongoing, communicatively rational public discourse. Having done so, the informants indicated that the social landscape is comprised of three primary groups, each of which can be mapped in terms of the core set of values, the views, and the beliefs about the use and management of National Forests held by its members. This investigation refers to these groups as discourse communities.
Finally, the third theme addresses the paradox of why there is so much "conflict" in their communities of place if there is as much common ground as the informants perceive. Informants' comments suggest that there are three primary sources of conflict. First, while informants acknowledged that some people will just never see things "eye-to-eye" they suggested that perceived differences in values, views, and beliefs of "so-called" polar opposite stakeholder groups is a primary source of conflict. Secondly, they observed that dysfunctional relationships between the members of these stakeholder groups and between the public and resource professionals is a primary source of conflict. Lastly, informants concluded that many resource related conflicts are attributable to poor leadership from resource professionals in terms of resource planning and management.

In the following sections each of the three emergent themes are empirically documented through the presentation of illustrative textual excerpts. As discussed in the Methods section, the textual excerpts represent the raw data of this investigation and are presented to assist reviewers in the process of assessing whether or not the investigator has achieved a "reasonable and valid" interpretation of the data.

I. Theme 1: Conflict and Common Ground

As noted above, the first emergent theme of this story is related to the nature of resource-related conflict and the prevalence of common ground in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests. Informants consistently acknowledged that the frequency and intensity of resource-related conflicts are increasing in their communities. For example, "Sue," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type stated, "There is a lot of conflict in this community, and you'd be wrong to think otherwise." Similarly, "George," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type,
indicated that "There is so much conflict these days that you can't hardly turn around without getting sued." And "Sarah," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, noted that although "It didn’t use to be this way, people are always [verbally] beating each other over the head these days." Simply stated, each of the informants acknowledged that resource related conflict is more common and more intense than it has ever been.

However, the story did not end there. Informants also discussed the nature of conflict. They consistently suggested that most of the resource-related conflict in their communities amounts to nothing more than an "unnecessary" and "fabricated acrimony." As "George" put it, most of the conflict is nothing more than a "great shrieking and hollering from a point of ignorance." Similarly, "Jack," an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, suggested that a lot of the "conflict" in his community is "created by extremists" in an effort to keep people interested in their crusade, or to "keep the Forest Service off balance." Informants also observed that while many people view their communities as being comprised of antagonistic, polar opposite stakeholder groups whose members share nothing in common, that the members of these "so-called" polar opposite groups generally share a great deal of common ground regarding the use and management of National Forests.

The following three excerpts – one from an informant from each Ideal Type - are representative of what the larger pool of informants who comprised the study sample had to say about the nature of resource-related conflict and the prevalence of common ground in their respective communities of place. In the first excerpt, "John," an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, is describing the people in his community and what it is like to
live there. He begins by describing the various "sides" that exist in his community, including conservation groups, loggers and multiple use groups, and Wilderness and environmental groups. As he began describing these "sides" he paused in mid-sentence to clarify that he didn't really believe that his community was comprised of these "sides," at least not in the sense that they are typically portrayed by the media. Rather, he indicated that while he sometimes uses the expression, the notion that his community is comprised of people who fit into one of two antagonistic, polar opposite sides is "bogus."

In fact, he observed that it has been his experience that even members of the Montana Logging Association and Montana Wilderness Association share a great deal of common ground concerning "what is best for the land." Further, he concluded that much of the "conflict" between these "so-called sides" is nothing more than an "unnecessary" and "fabricated acrimony;" he stated,

Actually, this idea of sides is not accurate...It's a totally bogus argument put forward by simple-minded people that can't see the gray between the black and white. In fact, they want to see the world in black and white - you're either pro-logging or you're anti-logging - you're either pro-Wilderness or you're anti-Wilderness - and it's bogus...Most people in this valley are just fed up with the acrimony, and it's an unnecessary acrimony. It's mostly a fabricated acrimony that's fed - I don't understand the whole dynamics of it - but I think it's coming from extremists who are clinging to the old paradigm. Those people are ideologues. [On the other hand] if you want to know what our community looks like, look at the people involved in [name of collaborative group deleted]. We definitely come from different perspectives, but when we all went out in the woods [that first time] we asked the question, "What is best for the land? What should we be doing?" We all reached agreement - everyone was in agreement. And when you've got the Montana Logging Association and the Montana Wilderness Association saying the same thing - why can't we get this [so-called] 'conflict' resolved? I mean, a lot of us consider it just sort of common sense. We agree on it out there. [And I think our experience is typical,] when people get out on the ground they tend to agree - 95% - on what's best for the land (AF4, 1-3, 20-25).
“Mary,” an informant from the RecreationIdeal Type, also suggested that the “so-called” sides that everyone talks about are not what they appear to be. She did acknowledge that there are “real” differences between some of the “loggers” and some of the “environmentalists” in her community. However, she concluded that most of the “loggers” and “environmentalists” in her community are “reasonable” and “flexible” people, and that they are not all that different. Further, she indicated that it has been her experience that once you get people from these “so-called” sides together that whatever conflict there might have been tends to disappear – to the point that it can be “kind of hard to tell which group everybody belongs to.” In the following excerpt, “Mary” is describing her experience at a series of meetings that were attended by both “loggers” and “environmentalists;” she stated,

One of the things that works is when the Forest Service is actually working with the public, like on that [name deleted] forestry project. Those meetings with Forest Service people, loggers and environmentalists were never unpleasant. That seems to be a perfect situation. That kind of thing, I think, really promotes public support. Listening, trying to understand, educating each other. And I think the most startling thing about [those meetings] is [that] by and large the loggers that came were flexible, reasonable people, and so were the environmentalists. It turned out that...a lot of times our differences weren’t that great. [As a result of those meetings] each ‘side’ understood the other better and it wasn’t very long before it was kind of hard to tell which group anybody belonged to (RF4, 451-460).

In the last of the three excerpts, “Mark,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, also indicates that there isn’t as much actual conflict over the use and management of National Forests as everyone thinks. Further, he concludes that loggers and environmentalists generally “don’t have that much to argue about.” “Mark” speculates that one of the reasons it appears that “loggers” and “environmentalists” are constantly in conflict is because the Forest Service essentially pits them against each
other by “counting heads” at public hearings; he stated,

How I kind of got mixed up in [the collaborative movement] is I had run
into [name of prominent ‘environmentalist’ deleted] at a few meetings. I
didn’t know him [at the time] but I could see that we were on the same
page. People think that all these fights [between loggers and
environmentalists] happen because we are really different, but that’s
generally not the case. I mean, most of the ‘environmentalists’ I know
aren’t so different than a lot of the loggers I work with. They aren’t
anti-logging. They just want to pursue a course of sustainable
logging, which is what I want to do. And I’m not anti-wilderness. In
fact, I’ve been an officer in MWA in the past and I still support them – for
the most part – because they support the kind of community based forestry
that I do – where the value is left on the land. So [back to the meeting], I
could see that when the Forest Service ran these meetings, it was like
they counted heads, ‘Okay, you’ve got so many environmentalists and
so many loggers,’ and it was like they just went with the numbers. It
was like they intentionally tried to start a fight sometimes. Anyway, I
just called [name of prominent ‘environmentalist’ deleted] one time and I
said, ‘You know, I don’t think that we have that much to argue
about.’ So, what we did is he got some of his folks in MWA together and
I got some guys I was working with and we went out actually in the woods
without the Forest Service and just started to talk to each other. And it
turns out that we were thinking the same things. The [name of
collaborative group deleted] is the offshoot of that... Then [as part of
the collaborative effort] I did a [stewardship forestry] project for [the Forest
Service]... and we had a public tour there and there was like 30 or 40
people. And there was no argument [with] what I was doing, and
there was even some zero-cut guys there, and they just said, ‘Well,
gee, we just don’t see a problem with this.’ So, all this ‘conflict’ that
you hear about isn’t really necessary (EF3, 40-53).

In summary, the preceding excerpts were selected because they are representative
of the perceptions that informants consistently shared about conflict and common ground
in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests.
First, informants perceived that while the frequency and intensity of resource related
conflict may well be at an all time high, many of these “conflicts” amount to nothing
more than an “unnecessary” and “fabricated acrimony” that is “created by extremists.”
Secondly, informants concluded that in many instances the members of the “so-called”
polar opposite stakeholder groups in their respective communities “don’t really have that much to argue about” regarding the use and management of National Forests.

II. Theme II: Mapping Discourse Communities

The second theme that consistently emerged from the informants’ individual accounts relates to the social landscape of their respective communities and how it can be mapped. In this second theme it was as if informants were collectively saying, “Now that we’ve distinguished between real conflict and “fabricated acrimony” and we’ve set the record straight about the prevalence of common ground, let’s discuss what our communities really look like.”

A. Overview of Theme II

In so doing, each of the informants characterized their respective communities as being comprised of three primary groups. This investigation refers to these groups as “discourse communities. Discourse communities are real or metaphorical groups of people that are literally or figuratively bonded through similarities in their speech. The boundaries and character of these groups are determined by the communicative practices as well as the social sentiments, shared norms, and cultural values of the members (Swales, 1990). In other words, informants suggested that there are three primary groups of people in their communities that are making unique contributions to the ongoing public discourse related to National Forests. The data further suggest that these discourse communities can be mapped, which is to say that the nature of the discourse of their members can be understood, in terms of three primary characteristics. First, informants perceived that the members of these discourse communities can be distinguished based upon what they value or appreciate about National Forests. These values are primarily
reflected in the different ways that people use National Forests, inclusive of "consumptive" and "non-consumptive" uses. Secondly, the members of the discourse communities were perceived to have different views regarding the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests. For example, while some individuals view people as a natural part of forested landscapes and as having stewardship responsibilities for National Forests, others view people as distinct from forested landscapes and stewardship as unnecessary intervention. Finally, informants perceived that the members of the discourse communities have different beliefs or convictions about the fundamental nature of resource planning, decision-making, and management, particularly with respect to the respective roles of the public and resource professionals.

The investigator identified the three primary discourse communities that were described by the informants as the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities. The following three sections provide an overview of the discourse communities, they are followed by sections that provide empirical justification of the investigators interpretation.

1. **Overview of the Conservation Discourse Community**

The Conservation Discourse Community was so named because the discourse of its members, including each of the informants, reflect values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forest that are consistent with the Conservation Ethic. In other words, the discourse of the informants suggested that they believe in the necessity of balancing the present and future wants and needs of people with the present and future health of the forested ecosystems on which they depend. For example, in describing themselves and people whom they perceived to be like-minded, informants
described conservationists as people who value National Forests from a multiple use perspective, which is to suggest that they recognize that Forests hold value for many different types of uses, including both “consumptive” and “non-consumptive” uses. Further, they value forest health. They view people as a natural part of forested landscapes, and acknowledge that people have stewardship responsibilities for National Forests that sometimes require the use of active forms of management. Finally, members of the Conservation Discourse Community believe that resource planning and management should fundamentally be participatory processes, where resource professionals and the public are co-stewards.

2. Overview of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community

The Exemptionalist Discourse Community was so named because its members were described as people whose values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests effectively exempt all or large groups of people from National Forests in one way or another. For example, informants indicated that Exemptionalists have a single use value orientation. The data indicate that informants perceive the Exemptionalist Discourse Community to be comprised of two sides, including members with extreme “Use” and “Wilderness” orientations. They described “Use” oriented Exemptionalists as valuing National Forest exclusively in terms of resource intensive activities. Conversely, “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists were said to value National Forests because, or when they are natural or pristine, and to advocate for exclusively non-consumptive uses of National Forests.

The informants characterize the views of Exemptionalists as effectively exempting people from any stewardship responsibilities for National Forests. Informants described
“Use” oriented Exemptionalists as being willing to “savage” and “liquidate” forest resources without restraint because, in their minds, science and technology will mitigate any damages that the resource might have otherwise sustained. Or, more simply, they argue that stewardship responsibilities place unnecessary restraints of human use because “Trees grow back, don’t they?” On the other hand, “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists view stewardship of forest resources as unnecessary, “arbitrary and capricious.” In their view, stewardship forestry, restoration forestry and other forms of active management that involve disturbing or manipulating the landscape are just a guise that facilitates further exploitation of forest resources. The form of forest “management” they prefer is natural regulation.

Finally, members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community believe that resource planning and management are fundamentally legal processes. As a result they are freed from any obligation to engage the “other side” in a civil manner, and from any responsibility to participate in community-based collaborative efforts. Rather, they prefer to “participate” in resource planning and management through appeals and litigation.

3. Overview of the Agency Discourse Community

The Agency Discourse Community was so named because it is exclusively comprised of resource professionals who work for land and resource management agencies. The data are applicable to all of the agencies with personnel within the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests, however, they are especially relevant for the Forest Service. Informants perceived that while resource management agencies are no longer a monoculture, they are still driven by a dominant culture. The informant’s characterization of the Agency Discourse Community
is based on what they perceive to be the dominant culture of the various agencies within their respective communities of place. The value orientation of the Agency Discourse Community was loosely described as single use. For example, informants perceive the value orientation of the Forest Service as being biased towards resources of commercial value, and other resources of “special interest.” The views of the Agency Discourse Community regarding the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests are based on the principles of dependence and stewardship. Informants perceive that resource professionals generally acknowledge that the public is dependent on Forest resources, but they view resource stewardship as their responsibility. Related to the view that resource stewardship is the responsibility of resource professionals, the Agency Discourse Community is perceived to believe that resource planning and management are fundamentally technical processes, as opposed to being participatory or legal in nature.

B. Mapping Discourse Communities Values

The remainder of this chapter is comprised of sections that are devoted to “mapping” the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities in terms of the values, views, and beliefs that informants perceived to be characteristic of their respective members. As previously noted the informants identified themselves as conservationists, consequently, the maps of the Conservation Discourse Community should be viewed as an autobiographical sketch. The maps of the Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities are based on the informants’ perceptions of the values, views, and beliefs of people they consider to be extremists and those of the resource professionals who work in their communities, respectively.
1. **The Conservation Discourse Community**

The data indicate that the informants associate three primary characteristics with the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community (Table 2, page 14). First, National Forests are valued because they provide for multiple types of use opportunities. Each informant specifically mentioned that National Forests have value for aesthetic, economic, environmental, recreational, spiritual, and wilderness uses. Secondly, while informants acknowledged that they personally value “some uses more than others,” they concluded that all uses are of equal intrinsic value, and that management decisions about which uses should occur where should be made according to a “decision matrix.” They suggested that the decision matrix should “make sense” for local conditions, and be based on the wants and needs of people and, ultimately, “what’s best for the land.” The final and defining characteristic of the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community is that its members value forest health and recognize that “some limiting of use is necessary” in order to preserve forest health.

The following four excerpts are representative of the comments that informants from each of the Ideal Types made regarding the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community. In the first three excerpts the informants are describing their own value orientation, which is to say, once again, that they are members of the Conservation Discourse Community. In the final excerpt, “John” is describing the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community by telling a story about a fictitious character he refers to as “Aunt Betty.” According to “John,” “Aunt Betty’s” values are typical of most of the residents of his community.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Discourse Community</th>
<th>How National Forests Are Valued</th>
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| Conservation        | **Multiple Use**: value National Forests because they provide for multiple use opportunities, including: aesthetic, economic, environmental, recreational, social, spiritual, and wilderness uses.  
|                     | **Equality**: Although all uses are not necessarily valued equally, all uses are seen as being of equal intrinsic value.  
|                     | **Forest Health**: value forest health and are willing to limit use in order to preserve it. |
| Exemptionalist      | **Single Use**: perceived to value National Forests for “selfish” reasons, advocating for their preferred use without regard for other values or uses.  
|                     | **“Use” Oriented**: value consumptive uses of National Forests without regard for "what is best for the land."  
|                     | **“Wilderness” Oriented**: value “naturalness” and advocate for non-consumptive uses of National Forests without regard for personal, community, or societal needs. |
| Agency              | **Resource Extraction**: value orientation of many resource professionals is perceived to be biased towards resources of commercial value (i.e. “timber bias”); OR  
|                     | **Special Interests**: a growing number of resource professionals are perceived to value “their” resource of “special interest” to the exclusion of others; OR  
|                     | **Self Preservation**: both individually and as an organization, the Forest Service is often perceived to value the power and job security associated with managing National Forests more so than forest health. |

Table 2. Comparison of how the Conservation, Exemptionalist, and Agency Discourse Communities value National Forests.
In the first excerpt “Chris” a member of the Recreation Ideal Type, is discussing what stewardship means to him, and what he values about National Forests. His comments reflect each of the three primary characteristics of the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community. First, he makes repeated references to how he uses National Forests. Secondly, he acknowledges that while “some uses are more important” to him than others, they are all valuable. For example, as a Wilderness enthusiast he mentions a number of non-consumptive, recreational uses that he values, however, he also identifies a number of consumptive uses that he values and recognizes as legitimate multiple uses, including logging and grazing. Further it is evident that he values forest health, and that he recognizes that some limiting of use is necessary in order to preserve forest health. This excerpt also provides insight into where he draws the line about when a particular use is no longer acceptable, and why he draws the line where he does. Specifically, he considers an otherwise acceptable use unacceptable if it infringes upon the ability of a majority of people to enjoy the resource or when it compromises forest health. He draws the line at that point because he perceives forest health to be of intrinsic value. In the following excerpt “Chris” begins by defining the responsibilities of a steward; he stated,

A steward is one that cares for, in this case, the land. It’s the land that belongs to us. It belongs to future generations. A steward is responsible for using that land in a wise way so that it’s available to the future generations to use. Some of those [uses] are more important to me than others, but I recognize that [the Forest Service is] mandated to manage all those uses. So as a steward, their job, both from the mandate and as the definition of a steward, is to balance all of that stuff. Okay, you have to take some timber, have some recreation, make sure that our water’s clean, provide habitat for wildlife, run a few cows...I recognize that. However, I also have an interest in limiting use. [For example, I support limiting] off-road vehicles because of their intrusion into the quiet space which is one of the reasons that myself and a majority of the people go to our
National Forests. [We go] for recreation purposes [and] for solitude. And I'm also concerned about the physical damage that they cause and that is an issue that is current...[But I can point a finger at myself, too, because I'm also] concerned about cross-country skiers. Do [we] have an impact on wildlife [as has been suggested]? I think that that needs to be looked at. And in some areas it is. I've skied in the Tetons from the West side...and in order to go in there...you have to go in with a guide so that you follow whatever rules that the Forest Service has laid out. And I think that's appropriate...I won't object to being managed (RH1, 18-27).

Similarly, "Nathan," a second informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, indicated that he values National Forests from a multiple use perspective and that he values forest health. This second excerpt from an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type was included because it demonstrates that so-called "Wilderness junkies" and "motor heads," such as "Chris" and "Nathan" respectively, can value National Forests for similar reasons. For example, while "Nathan" admits in the following excerpt that he is frustrated by the current level of use restrictions on motorized recreation on National Forests, he understands – just as "Chris" did - that "some limiting of use has to be done" in order to preserve forest health. This excerpt also points out, however, that even though "Chris" and "Nathan" both value forest health, they appear to value it for different reasons. Specifically, whereas "Chris" perceives forest health to be of intrinsic value, "Nathan" seems to value forest health because it enhances his recreational experience. In the following excerpt, which begins with a description of why he moved to Montana, it is evident that "Nathan" has a multiple use value orientation, and that he values forest health; he stated,

Well, I moved to Montana in the fall of '64...because of the hunting and the fishing. [We did a lot of that over the years,] and we use to snowmobile a lot, too. We'd ride ATV's and motorcycles a lot. I've had a motorcycle or an ATV all my life. At one time I had seven snowmobiles and three ATV's. I have one ATV now and one motorcycle. I have one horse, but he's too old to ride. I'm real concerned with places like the
North Fork where there are quite a number of roads, but most all of them are off-limits to ATV’s or anything but foot traffic or bicycle or horses. For people that ride motorcycles or ATV’s or snowmobiles and stuff there’s a lot of stuff that’s closed. I think that this is kind of a bad situation for a lot of people...[But] I have to speak out of both sides of my mouth I guess [because] I believe in the Wilderness. The Great Bear and the Bob Marshall are great. I don’t want anybody in there with even a model airplane because that’s the law. And if I had a chance next summer to go in the Bob Marshall, if a friend asked me, I’d be tickled to death. I love to go back in the Wilderness. But I like to ride my four-wheeler and snowmobile and all that stuff, too. So, we’ve got the Wilderness, that’s Wilderness, but these other places that I could have enjoyed riding my motorcycle and my snowmobile or my ATV was off-limits to me. I think they still should consider [what the National Forests are for] - I think [what] it was probably pretty much originally designed for was that everybody could have a place to do what they needed to do...that’s what it was designed for. The Forest Service was a place for everybody to be able to go and recreate, whether you wanted to camp out, or float the river. I realize the population is booming and stuff, but it’s almost to the point now where there’s a lot of areas that you have to apply to be able to float the river. If you want to float the river in July you probably better have made your application in November - this November right now - or you’re not going to be able to do it. And that’s a bad problem. It’s a limitation. But I can’t say that I’m against it because sometimes we’re going to have to start limiting – whether it’s snowmobiles, OHV’s or the number of people floating the river. There’s too many people, and in some instances it has caused problem. [For example,] fishing in the South Fork use to be fantastic. We’d go in as a family and go in and fish for eight or nine days. You could catch 100 fish a day. Eat one or two a day and have fun catching them. But the last few years we went in we were catching 25 little guys a day instead of 100 14-inchers. So some limiting has to be done (RF1, 20-37).

Informants from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type also characterized the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community in this manner. For example, “Paul,” who has spent most of his life working as an independent logger, discussed the economic value of National Forests, but he also went into great detail about the intrinsic values of National Forests. He suggested that many loggers are especially sensitive to the tremendous value of a “standing” tree because they have a unique understanding of “how hard they are to stand back up [once they have been cut down].” Similarly, “Mark”
spoke eloquently of the “need to reserve some places within the National Forest System for spiritual reasons” and how unfortunate it is that “culturally we are not mature enough to keep our hands off” and reserve more of these spiritually significant places. In the following excerpt, “Matt,” an “old timer” who has worked as a logger most of his life, is describing what he values about National Forests. It is evident that he values National Forests in terms of many different types of uses, and that he values forest health. His comments provide an excellent summary of the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community from the perspective of the informants of the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type; he stated,

Well, the value to me of the National Forest is that **they have value for multiple use.** They can be used for timber products, renewable resources, can be used for recreation and be used to supply wildlife, fisheries, watershed, and all the environmental values that folks are talking about...**And [I think] we have to manage for all the uses out there.** Unfortunately, there are some people that don’t see it that way. They aren’t interested in making the **system** work. Some folks are just not willing to give up their ‘special interests.’ It’s all theirs, all theirs, all theirs. They don’t recognize that we’re going to have to give up some things [in some areas] to have some other things [in other areas]. Now that doesn’t mean, for example, that we’re going to go out and ‘degrade’ water quality - I totally agree we don’t want to do that. But if we’re going to manage an area - say to reduce the fuel load - we might change some flow readings on a hillside [which could increase sediment loads in the short term]. But we sure as hell are going to change those flow readings if it burns or all of those trees die [from insect related diseases] and the water pumps no longer work. So, [even though the type of management I’m talking about in this example involves cutting trees] we’re not really talking about the economic interests of loggers – although there’s nothing wrong with that either - what we’re talking about is **what’s the best thing for the land?** The best is, in my experience, to go out and mange it in a sane and sensible way with the least amount of cycle (EF1, 128-132).

Finally, the informants of the Advocacy Ideal Type also identified the Conservation Discourse Community as having a multiple use value orientation. They repeatedly referenced the value of National Forest for multiple use, including aesthetic,
economic, environmental, recreational, and spiritual uses. Further, they acknowledged that these uses are of equal intrinsic value. Lastly, they identified the value of forest health. “Matt,” “Kathy,” a “Wilderness” advocate, and “Al” a “Multiple Use” advocate, for example, agreed that decisions about the use and management of National Forests should be based on “what’s best for the land.” The following excerpt provides an excellent summary of the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community from the perspective of the informants of the Advocacy Ideal Type. In this excerpt “John” is describing the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community by telling a story about what a hypothetical “Aunt Betty” who lives in his community values about National Forests. In particular she “values all the resources...[she] wants a real balance [of uses]...and [she] is interested in what’s best for her forest. In other words, she has a multiple use value orientation, values all uses equally, and values forest health. In his story “Aunt Betty” is being approached by loggers who are interested in her land because the forested lands of the two largest private timber corporations have been “liquidated” and the Forest Service isn’t “delivering.” The loggers approach “Aunt Betty” and say...

‘You’ve got 40 acres. This has been logged here in the past, but you’ve got trees coming back and we can go in and log it again for you and make some good money.’ And Aunt Betty goes, ‘By God, I’ve got elk that calve out there in the back and I’ve got a little creek running through here and I’ve seen what you guys do out there! I don’t want you anywhere near this land!’ And then some of the more enlightened [loggers] said, ‘But, you know, you’ve got a little bit of a fire hazard here, and, yeah, it did get screwed up in the past - back in the ‘60’s it got high-graded - all the big Larch, White Pine, and Ponderosa got taken out - but we could do some good here.’ Well, she starts listening and finally she says, ‘Okay, I trust you. Let’s talk about this.’ Well, it’s a big education for these loggers because all of a sudden they’re dealing with a landowner who actually cares about the land, who cares about stewardship of the resources and doesn’t want to just sacrifice the so-called timber base and

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She wants a living forest. She wants an intact forest. She wants the wildlife. She wants the fish. She wants the little birdies. So she’s not saying, ‘Whoever is willing to pay me the most amount of money for these logs - you get the job.’ She says, ‘No! I want a good logger who cares about the land and who’s working for me the landowner, who’s doing what’s best for the land. I want a real balance there, and if the job can pay for itself - the logs - or if I can even make a little money, that’s fine, but I’m interested in what’s best for my forest’. And the light went on in their head and they said, ‘Huh, maybe one reasons [the timber industry] has such a problem on the public lands is that the public is made of people like ‘Aunty Betty’ who care about all these resources and here we’ve been going out and just savaging the forest’ (AF4, 52-72, 75-82).

In summary, the preceding excerpts were selected to demonstrate that the informants from each of the Ideal Types identified three primary characteristics of the value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community. First, National Forests are valued because they provide for multiple use opportunities, including both consumptive and non-consumptive activities. Secondly, conservationists recognize that consumptive and non-consumptive uses are of equal intrinsic value. Finally, the excerpts suggest that conservationists value forest health, and understand that limiting use of National Forests is often necessary in order to preserve forest health. These excerpts clearly indicate the existence of common ground. However, without negating the significance of this finding, it would be inappropriate not to qualify this statement. For example, while all of the informants from each of the Ideal Types perceived members of the Conservation Discourse Community as having a multiple use value orientation, and that they believed all uses are of equal intrinsic value, they also indicated that they valued “some uses more than others.” Similarly, as previously noted, while all of the informants from each of the Ideal Types perceived members of the Conservation Discourse Community to value
forest health, and they each had similar definitions of forest health, they value forest health for differing reasons.

2. The Exemptionalist Discourse Community

In contrast to the multiple use value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community, the data indicate that members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community are perceived to have a single use value orientation (Table 2, page 14). In the following three excerpts, including one from an informant from each of the Ideal Types, informants are describing their perceptions of the value orientation of “Use” and “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists. The excerpts, which are relatively short and to the point, also reflect the informants’ opinions of the “extremists” whom they perceive to be members of Exemptionalist Discourse Community. Informants do not share the values of the members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community, whom “Karole,” for example, characterized as “selfish and shortsighted…narrow minded…and uninformed.”

In the first of the three excerpts, “Matt,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, is describing the value orientation of “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists. He concludes that the only thing they value about National Forests is that they are “natural;” he stated,

Today there is a lot of resistance [to the traditional values of this community]...and it makes me feel damn sad when I know that the resources are out there and we should be managing them. And the sad part of it is that [Wilderness oriented Exemptionalists] don’t care if those [trees] burn up, or a bug epidemic wipes them all out and it lays there on the ground. They don’t care. That’s fine with them. All their concerned is that it’s left natural (EF1, 215-216, 329-334).

Similarly, “Karole,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, described “Use” oriented Exemptionalists as having a single use value orientation. She observed
that the only reason “Use” oriented Exemptionalists value National Forests is because they can use them to meet some personal want or need. She concludes that they have no appreciation for the value of non-consumptive uses, and that they never take time to stop and “think about the land itself.” In the following excerpt “Karole” is describing the “selfishness” of Exemptionalists; she stated,

A lot of people that have grown up [living near and enjoying public lands] have this mentality that, ‘Well, I’m a fifth generation Montanan. My great, great grandfather hunted there, my great grandfather hunted there, and damnit, I’m going to hunt there! You’re not going to keep me out of there! We’ve done it for years and years, and hundreds of years!’ And they are just [so selfish]. I don’t think they are thinking of the land itself. I think there’s a lot of selfishness - you know - [it’s the] ‘This is my land and I’ll do with it what I want!’ [attitude] and that type of thing. And they are only thinking of themselves and whether they can take their snowmobiles in a certain area…or graze their cattle on public rangelands. But they don’t think of the long-term affect that might have on the land (RH3, 31, 268-270).

Finally, “John,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, described both “Use” and “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists as having a single use value orientation. He observed that members from both sides of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community are “simple minded people that can’t see the gray between the black and the white;” he stated,

[Exemptionalists are] simple-minded people that can’t see the gray between the black and white. In fact, they want to see the world in black and white. You’re either pro-logging or anti-logging. You’re either pro-wilderness or you’re anti-wilderness. [“Use” oriented Exemptionalists] are interested in timber. They are interested in logs. And they have just savaged the forest...Meanwhile, the [“Wilderness oriented Exemptionalists]...their solution is zero-cut. Just shut the whole thing down. No more logging what so ever in public forests. And that’s the growing thing within the so called ‘environmental’ community, most of whom don’t know what they are talking about - most of whom couldn’t distinguish between a Douglas Fir and an Engelmann Spruce if they had to (AF4, 21-24).
3. The Agency Discourse Community

In contrast to the frustration they expressed about the value orientation of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community, informants indicated that they are cautiously optimistic about what they perceive as recent changes in the value orientation of the Agency Discourse Community. For example, “Steve,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, noted that after...

...beating our heads [referring to himself and other “conservationists”] against the Forest Service wall for years - and continually getting the same “head-in-the-sand, that’s not the way we do it around here’ response year after year – that it is refreshing to see that some [Forest Service employees] are starting to get it – that we should be managing [National Forests] based on what’s best for the land, rather than some pre-determined target cut” (AF5, 163-171).

Similarly, “Bob,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, observed that while...

...the guys in the field – the foresters and silviculturists – are [still] really defensive – kind of like, ‘Who the hell are you to try and tell me how to do my job,’ that some of the line officers are pretty good. They are smart and savvy enough to realize that collaboration is a good thing. And that stewardship and logging are good things too – as long we are using them as tools to enhance the value of the land – instead of an excuse to strip the land of its value. We need to leave the value on the land (EF3, 210-215).

And “Gary,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, observed that...

We have seen quite a change in the Forest Service – in the people we know on the districts that we have had anything to do with - quite a change in the last 5-6 years. In fact, there was a time when we and the Forest Service were on opposite sides on almost everything they wanted to do. That’s changed 180 degrees within the last 5-6 years. I think we’ve learned, but they’ve changed, too. We both grew up in western Montana and logging was a part of both of the little communities we came from [so we understand the importance of logging], but because we’ve grown up there, and because we’re outdoor people, by the time we were in Whitefish as adults and getting out, what was happening on the landscape was just too much to ignore any longer. The large amount of clear cutting. All of the roads that had been put in and were continuing to be put in.

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Everything just seemed to be going downhill – it just seemed awful. But that’s really changed...[For example] I am really interested in what is going on in Wisdom because the last time I was in there I wandered into a timber sale that was partly done and abandoned for the winter. And they had left the best trees, the spacing was good, they’d left clumps of heavy cover for elk security. They’d been in an area where the downfall was just horrible. They had done something with most of it, most of it was gone, but the down woody material they left was probably just about right for future soil nutrition. It looked like an ideal job. [So] we have seen quite a change in the Forest Service [at the local level...](RF5, 781-796).

However, while “Gary” and the other informants generally reported feeling optimistic about the trends they are seeing locally, they acknowledged that they have “lingering” concerns about the value orientation of the dominant culture within the Agency Discourse Community. For example, in continuing with his remarks from above, “Gary” stated,

So, we have seen quite a change in the Forest Service [at the local level], **but the agency as a whole, I think, is almost dysfunctional.** They’re so tied up now in rules and regulations and procedures that people like us – the environmentalists – forced on them at one time that it’s almost like they are frozen. They can’t do much...[So on the one hand I think] some of the laws have got to be changed...[on the other hand] I kind of hate to see that because some of those laws are hard fought on the environmental side. **And I’m not so sure I trust [the Forest Service] everywhere.** There is such a large distrust of the Forest Service (RF5, 781-796).

Specifically, informants identified two “lingering” concerns regarding the value orientation of the Agency Discourse Community (Table 2, page 14). First, informants are concerned that the value orientation of resource professionals is still dominated by an emphasis on “single uses.” For example, the “old guard” is perceived as being biased towards resources that have commercial value, the most obvious being timber. Conversely, the “new guard” or “ologists,” whom informants perceive to be gaining stature within the agency, are perceived to value non-commodity resources of “special
interest," most notably "T&E species." Secondly, informants observed that some resource professionals are motivated more by job security and self-preservation than interests related to forest health.

**3(a) Timber and Resources of Special Interest**

In the following excerpt, "Karole," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, is commenting on the perceived bias of the Forest Service towards resources of commercial value, particularly timber; she stated,

> I think they are probably more looking at resources – extractive resources - and how much they need it within a 10-20 year span. I don’t think they look much past that. I mean they seem to be so resource [focused]. And of course, they are [a] resource focused [agency]. But it just takes - it takes so much effort to get the Forest Service to look past the resources that somebody wants to extract, or take out, to how much is that - how is that going to affect that area for a long period of time, and the animals and everything else within that area over the years. And what kind of doors would it open up - even if they allow something on the short term - what kind of doors would that open up in the long range? (RH3, 370-372).

"Kathy," an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, echoed these concerns. She observed that while the "Chief" is talking about forest health and the restoration of watersheds, those things aren’t actually happening on the ground. Rather, the "timber beasts of the old guard" are still trying to do "what they do best;" she stated,

> I know that Chief Dombeck has said that the number one priority of the Forest Service should be to protect watersheds, but I don’t see that happening at the local level. And as a specific [example] within [this area], [we] have [proposed] travel management and road closures that [Forest Service data] project would limit sediment production. But at the same time they are proposing activities that increase sediment. Their analysis says the [outcome of the] overall mix [of the road closures and new projects] is that there [will] not be further impairment. You know, [they are saying], ‘When you get done cutting all your trees and stuff, and if you close this road, and blah, blah, blah,’ [there will be no net increase in sediment]. You know, our position has been that they should be actively seeking to improve those impaired streams before doing activities.
that may further degrade them. So I see kind of a confusion within the agency on how some of the goals and ideals that are espoused at the national level - what that really means in terms of management on the ground. And I don't know how they are going to sort it out. I think it is changing, but I think a lot of the old guard is still there and still has power. And I think a lot of the people coming in, a lot of the resource specialists, the wildlife biologists, the hydrologists, people like that, the fish biologists, they have concerns about the resources that they are supposed to be taking care of, and they'd like to do some good things for them. I think in the past a lot of those people have been squashed, and hopefully that is going to change. But I don't know. There is still some of the old 'timber beasts' there that are still trying to do what they do best (AH3, 414-422).

In addition to concerns about the perceived "timber bias," informants indicated that resource professionals have become so specialized in their respective fields that they tend to value "their" individual resource of "special interest" to the exclusion of other resources. For example, "Matt," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, observed that while the timber bias still exists, it is being replaced by an emphasis on other resources of "special interest." In describing this transition he stated,

My initial opinion of the [Forest Service] was it was an agency that 'can do.' [As a result] There were undoubtedly things done in not the proper way in years gone by...[for example] they [were involved] with the clear cut rage in the '60's and '70's. [But now] the Forest Service is only interested in special interests. [For example,] They've got a fisheries biologist - he's just interested in fish, and, sorry, that's the way it is. There certainly are those exceptions, and there are some of them that are trying now, but still, when it comes to the bottom line - [the Forest Service is] not interested in making the system work. That's the problem. Also in recent years you've got these ID teams and all these people get thrown together and they're not willing [to compromise]. Each one of them has a specialty. I call them 'ologists. And they're not willing to give up any part of their 'ologist - 'their' resource - for the other resources. It's all theirs, all theirs, all theirs (EF1, 538-545, 557-558).
"Mark," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, also expressed concern about the emphasis that the Forest Service places on resources of "special interest;" he stated,

[The Forest Service] use to tend to just be so driven by commodities and it seemed like they'd create science to back up their commodity-driven focus. They weren't conservative and careful enough. And now, because of that, they seem to be too careful sometimes. I mean, they get hung up in process. And, [another problem is that] they've got all these specialists that know every [little detail] - that have their own little realms - but there doesn't seem to be anyone at any level that's able to synthesize everything the specialists have to say...I mean, everyone is talking about ecosystem management, but I haven't seen it, and I won't believe it until I do (EF3, 202-204).

3(b) Self Preservation and Job Security

In addition to concerns related to the perceived bias towards resources of commercial value and other resources of "special interest," informants perceived that interests in "self-preservation" often overly influence the Agency Discourse Communities value orientation. Specifically, informants indicated that resource professionals are often motivated more by job security than interests related to forest health.

For example, "Mary," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, observed that while it appears that agencies are "finally" making an effort to actually "do" ecosystem management, that in the end they are still more interested in preserving themselves than they are in preserving forest health. She concluded that the current priority within the Agency Discourse Community is to "continue working on the forest - whether it needs working on or not;" she stated,

The idea of managing a large area and looking at it as a whole really is progress. And I think - finally - they are starting to do it on the ground. But you know, you've got a real problem if you do that then – because
sometimes the right thing to do is nothing. Let’s say you work at [X] Ranger District and you don’t have any areas that need restoration forestry. What are those people going to do? Well, you know what they are going to do. They are going to continue working on the forest...whether it needs working on or not (RF4, 786-791).

Similarly, “Bob,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, suggested that “quite often” resource professionals value job security more so than forest health. However, unlike “Mary,” who in the previous excerpt attributed this tendency to a basic human instinct for self-preservation, “Bob” perceives that resource professionals have come to value their job more than forest health out of frustration. In the following excerpt “Bob” is commenting on how decision-making in resource management has changed over the years. In particular, he suggests that the process of resource management has become so convoluted that resource professionals essentially give up on the idea that they can make a difference and adopt the attitude that they are just “sticking out their term.” It is clear that “Bob” is sympathetic towards resource professionals, however, he concludes that their attitude is “unprofessional” and that it does nothing to “enhance forest health;” he stated,

In my experience the people who are supposed to make decisions - in my opinion that is the people in the district office and the supervisor’s office - are overrun with regulations and policies that don’t seem to allow them to make a decision. It goes on and on and on. There’s never a reasonable amount of time in the closure of an issue. It just keeps going on and on and on. [As a result] I’ve seen some people who, in my opinion, were very considerate, very good forest stewards - in the Forest Service particularly - who, when they reached what I would call the good years of their career - after they have been around for a while and get into a position of a district ranger or something like that - they get frustrated and they either say - they’re in their 40’s or something like that - ‘Only 10 or 15 more years until retirement, I’ll just stick it out.’ And the will of managing forests seems to me to take second seat to the idea that ‘I’ll stick out my term.’ The people who don’t go that way and who say, ‘I’ve been trained to be a good forester, a good manager of lands, I know I have good talents, I can’t put up with this crap anymore, I’m getting out.’
So, I think what we’re ending up with is people, I shouldn’t say this as a generality, but quite often I believe you have people whose careers have become the road to retirement rather than forest stewardship. I think it’s an awful waste of human resources and the education and experience that those people have developed over the years - that’s a shame. I think the Forest Service has lost its professionalism largely because of that. [And] I don’t think it’s done anything to enhance forest health (EH3, 38-46).

4. Summary of Discourse Community Values

In summary, informants indicated that members of the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities value National Forest for different reasons. The value orientation of the Conservation Discourse Community has three primary characteristics. First, National Forests are valued because they provide for multiple use opportunities, including consumptive and non-consumptive uses. Secondly, while some uses of National Forests are valued more than others, all uses are seen as having equal intrinsic value. Finally, forest health is valued, and members of the Conservation Discourse Community are willing to limit their use of National Forests in order to preserve forest health.

Conversely, the Exemptionalist Discourse Community was described as having a single use value orientation. “Use” oriented Exemptionalist are perceived to value National Forests in terms of resource intensive uses, and “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists are perceived to value National Forest because they are natural.

Finally, the Agency Discourse Community was also described as having a single use value orientation. Specifically, resource professionals are perceived to value National Forest in terms of three kinds of single uses. First, many resource professionals are perceived to have a strong “timber bias.” Secondly, informants perceived that a growing number of resource professionals value selected resources of “special interest”
to the exclusion of other resources. Lastly, some resource professionals are perceived to value their job more so than forest health.

C. Mapping Discourse Community Views

In addition to characterizing Discourse Communities based on the values of their members, the data suggest that they can be differentiated based on their members’ views about National Forests. Specifically, informants perceived that members of the Conservation, Exemptionalist, and Agency Discourse Communities are distinct with respect to their views regarding the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests (Table 3, page 31). Briefly, the Conservation Discourse Community views people as a natural part of forested landscapes and as having stewardship responsibilities for National Forests that often require the use of active forms of management. Conversely, informants perceived members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community to view people as separate from forested landscapes, and stewardship as unnecessary or inappropriate. The Agency Discourse Community was perceived to view people as dependent on forested landscapes and stewardship of National Forests as the exclusive responsibility of resource professionals.

1. The Conservation Discourse Community

The data indicate that there are two primary dimensions underlying the views of the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests that are characteristic of the Conservation Discourse Community. First, people are viewed as a natural part of forested landscapes. In other words, people are perceived to be an innate part of the landscape, rather than intruders. This also implies that people are an integral part of the “system” and that they perform an essential role or function, that role, according to
Discourse Community | Views on the Nature of the Relationship Between People and National Forests
---|---
**Conservation** | Natural: view people as a *natural* part of forested landscapes and recognize that they are dependent on National Forests for a variety of individual, community and societal needs.

**Stewardship:** view people as having stewardship responsibilities for National Forests that often require the use of active forms of forest management.

**Active Management:** a necessary form of resource stewardship in terms of:
1. Providing for individual, community and societal needs, and
2. Maintaining Forest health in terms of: managing fire, preserving old growth, controlling noxious weeds, protecting water quality, maintaining wildlife populations, and managing outbreaks of insects and disease.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemptionalist</th>
<th>“Use” Oriented</th>
<th>“Wilderness” Oriented</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>Yes. View people as <em>dependent</em> on National Forests, yet <em>exempt</em> from biophysical laws of ecological systems.</td>
<td>No. View people as <em>distinct</em> from National Forests because of exploitive behavior that defies biophysical laws of ecological systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>YES or NO</em></td>
<td>Places <em>unnecessary restrictions</em> on use: “Trees grow back, don’t they?”</td>
<td>Arbitrary and capricious - a guise for extracting resources. Natural regulation is the preferred alternative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Agency**

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<th>Dependence: view people as <em>dependent</em> on National Forests for a variety of individual, community and societal needs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stewardship:</strong> view <em>resource professionals</em> are being uniquely qualified to serve as stewards of National Forests. Public is not viewed as being a co-steward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Management:</strong> a necessary form of resource stewardship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Comparison of the Conservation, Exemptionalist, and Agency Discourse Communities with respect to their views on the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests.*

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informants, being “stewardship.” Secondly, as just noted, people are viewed as having stewardship responsibilities for National Forests that often require the use of active forms of management.

1(a) People as a Natural Part of National Forests

While informants indicated that they understand arguments to the contrary, they clearly identified people as being a natural part of forested landscapes. For example, “Mark,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, observed that from a philosophical point of view you could argue forever about what constitutes a “natural” or “completely natural” environment. However, he concluded that as a practical issue it is hard to deny that people are a natural part of what goes on in a forested landscape. In the following excerpt “Mark” is simultaneously responding to and critiquing the suggestion that people are not a natural part of forested landscapes. His response provides two significant insights. First, in response to what he perceives as the extremist view that people are unnatural because we are so dominant, he concludes that people are “no different than other species” in that we need to “take something” in order to survive. Secondly, he notes that the debate over whether or not people are natural is not actually that important. Specifically, he points out that “like it our not I’ve got to eat. I’ve got a family to feed, and so do a lot of other people.” So instead of arguing about whether or not we are natural, “what’s important,” and what we should be concentrating on is “the attitude you have in your head” when you use forest resources. Because regardless of whether you view people as natural or not all people use forest resources; he stated,

I mean, like it or not, I’ve got to eat. I’ve got a family to feed and so do a lot of other people. And it’s like when I hunt these deer and stuff, there’s a certain point where you are committed to pull the trigger and once you pull the trigger you can’t take that back. But that’s the crux, to
me, of our lives is that moment where you decide you've got to take something. And we all have to take something to live – we're no different than other species in that respect. So the important issue is not whether people are natural or unnatural - what's important is the attitude you have in your head [when you decide it is time to take something]. You can't pretend that 'Well, I'm going to live on soybeans and I won’t have an impact,' because you do (EF3, 187-190).

Similarly, "Paul," another informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, suggested that people are a natural part of forested landscapes. He too acknowledged that the issue of "naturalness" is subject to interpretation, however, he concluded that most of the people in his community who have thought about it recognize that people are a natural part of National Forests. In fact, he indicated that there is a collaborative group in his community comprised of a diverse group of people, including "hard-core environmentalists," that formed to remind everyone that people, just like other species, are "in the forest." Importantly, he also notes that "noxious weeds" are in the forest. This is significant because he is contrasting people as natural and noxious weeds as unnatural. Specifically, when referring to noxious weeds he indicates that we have a "responsibility" to "do something [to get rid of them]." Conversely, he indicates that we need to "include people in what happens in the forest." In describing the impetus for forming the collaborative group, he stated,

The whole reason for forming [the collaborative group] was to remind everybody that people are in the forest. And we didn’t form as loggers - I’m the only logger there. We formed for a community-based group. And our sole purpose there – it isn’t to [advocate for more logging] - it’s just to remind everybody that people are in the forest and let’s include people in what happens in the forest ...because people are not the problem. We cause problems sometimes, like noxious weeds. Noxious weeds are a big problem and somebody, somewhere along the line had better realize that and do something about it. We have a responsibility to do something about it (EF4, 308-311, 315-317).
“Kathy,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type with strong “environmental” and “Wilderness” interests, also spoke at length about the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests. Although she is very aware that some people disagree with her assessment, and that even some of her “environmental” and “Wilderness” friends don’t completely understand it, she views people as a natural part of forested landscapes. “Kathy” repeatedly indicated that the human species is unique in many ways, and that we have responsibilities that other species do not, but that in the end, we are no less natural than any other species. In the following excerpt, in which she is describing what a “natural ecosystem” looks like, her view of humans as a natural part of forested landscapes is evident; she stated,

[A natural ecosystem] is an area where natural processes are allowed to function as they should...and that means that [when we are managing ecosystems] the health of the land and what it can support in terms of species, including humans, but not just humans, has to come first. How we do that is a very difficult question. I think what’s hard is that it’s hard for us people to separate what’s healthy for the land as opposed to what we need. The human species needs to evaluate our impact on the land and on those resources. I mean, we tend to take so freely from what’s there in terms of resources, and we very seldom put anything back, and we very seldom limit what we think we have the right to take. And that really disturbs me. On the other hand, I heard [name deleted] speak the other night. She was absolutely fabulous. And one of the things she said is that ‘Conservationists need to always take into account the human perspective. We need to remember that people – even loggers – whom people like us sometimes think of as horrible people – are part of the landscape. And they are just trying to figure out how to support their families.’ I think that’s right (AH3, 90-97).

1(b) People as Stewards of National Forests

The second view that informants perceived to be characteristic of the Conservation Discourse Community is that people have stewardship responsibilities for National Forests, and that these responsibilities often require the use of active forms of
forest management. While the concept of humans having stewardship responsibilities for National Forests is embraced by a large majority of people, informants acknowledged that not everyone accepts the idea. They further acknowledged that not everyone who claims to practice “stewardship” forestry or “restoration” forestry does so sincerely. For example, “Mark,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, indicated that “stewardship forestry” has become a “buzzword” in some circles. On the other hand, he - and all of the other informants - rejected the suggestion that stewardship is “arbitrary” and that National Forests would be better off without human intervention. In the following excerpt “Mark” is recalling his response to an “extremists” claim that “stewardship” is “arbitrary” and that it has “nothing to do with forest health;” he stated,

Well that might be true if this was a completely natural world that we’re living in and we hadn’t, for example, put out fires for the past hundred years. But that’s what we’re faced with. So what do we do? Do we just pretend that everything’s okay or do we try to do something? There are some hard choices to make, and I can see that in some cases no action is the best choice, but not in all cases. In some places you should do something, and you can, and you can help things (EF3, 181-192).

Beyond observing that people have a stewardship responsibility and that active management is necessary in “some places,” informants described in great detail why active management is necessary. Informants repeatedly stressed that active management of forested landscapes is necessary in order to: 1) provide for community stability and individual sustenance, 2) maintain the amenity value of National Forests and the quality of recreational opportunities, and 3) preserve forest health. The following three excerpts, each of which are from informants from the Recreation or Advocacy Ideal Type who have strong “environmental” and “Wilderness” interests, reflect the view held by
members of the Conservation Discourse Community that active management of forested landscapes is necessary in order to maintain forest health.

In the first of the three excerpts “Gary” clearly indicates that active forest management, including such “tools” as categorical exclusions and the salvage rider, are essential to the maintenance of forest health. Further, he suggested that the absence of active forms of management – what he referred to as the “zero-cut solution” - could result in an “ecological disaster,” even though at an emotional level he understands how some people might come to support a zero-cut policy; he stated,

My father’s parents came and homesteaded up around Troy in 1910. My mother came to Troy sometime in the 20’s. Primarily we were a logging family, so that’s what I grew up doing. I even was a jippo logger for a couple of years after I got out of the service after the Korean War. And then I went to college and got a degree and started teaching...[So], we both grew up in western Montana and logging was a part of both of the little communities we came from. But because we’ve grown up there, and because we’re outdoors people, by the time we’re in Whitefish as adults and getting out. what was happening on the landscape was just too much to ignore any longer. The great amount of clear cutting. All of the roads that had been put in and were continuing to be put in. Everything just seemed to be going downhill and it just - it just seemed awful...A lot of the clear cut logging disturbed a great amount of soil. The profile of the land surface - it was just very upsetting. So I can see how someone might come to the conclusion that ‘zero-cut’ is the way to go. [On the other hand] I realize what the last almost century of fire suppression has done. We’ve got in lands even that’ve never been logged, and those that have been, too, [and] the fuel buildup is so bad now [that] it’s difficult to say, ‘Well, how should that be managed?’ And it seems to me that a lot of the ‘environmental’ community is backing a no-cut policy, and I think that’s the potential for a real ecological disaster. Part of [the reason the environmental community supports a no-cut policy] is there is such a large distrust of the Forest Service. Part of that distrust is related to the way the Forest Service has misused things like the categorical exclusion. Yet, categorical exclusions, that’s a really useful tool if it is not abused. And the same thing I thought was true of the salvage rider. The salvage rider was a very necessary tool...So, sometimes the right thing to do, I think, is probably nothing. Some places, sometimes - not all the time - and not every place, but sometimes (RF5, 58-76).
Similarly, "Karole," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type who described herself as being “addicted to Wilderness,” indicated that the correct management of National Forests is a “very strong issue” for her. She concluded, “There’s no doubt” that active forms of management are necessary to preserve forest health in certain situations; she stated,

Just knowing that [the Forest] is there, and it’s preserved, and it’s managed correctly [is important]. A very important issue in my heart, so to speak, is the correct management of the forest - for forest health. It is a very strong issue with me. For example, I do think the forest needs thinning in certain areas - there’s no doubt. I’ve been in areas that are just - it’s almost creepy to be back in there - there’s so much dead fall and standing dead, and trees just all over the place. And you can see that if a fire got started it would just shoot right up into the crown all around you. So those areas I do think need to be thinned. There is no doubt they could go in there and, plus, it would make wonderful habitat (RH3, 59-66).

In the last of the three excerpts “Kathy,” a Wilderness advocate, is discussing how resource professionals should go about managing National Forests. She acknowledges that it is a “very difficult question,” but concludes that forest health should be the “number one priority” and that active forms of management such as restoration forestry are a win-win situation because they “provide jobs and benefit the land at the same time;” she stated,

I feel that it's each of our responsibilities, and certainly mine since this is sort of the path I espouse, to leave a light foot print as much as possible. And to do what we can in consciousness and in awareness of how we affect everything else that is dependent on those same resources...[How we do that] is a very difficult question. Of course, it is one that land managers are wrestling with right now, and it’s very specific, too. It depends on what habitat type you are in, so it’s not an easy answer where you can have one answer that ‘This is health.’ Even so, to me, the number one priority as public managers should be to maintain the health of the lands that are under their protection. And that varies, how they do that, and what that involves varies site by site. In one site they need to do prescribed burning, they need to do under-thinning - our group
recommended that for lower elevation Ponderosa Pine...In [other] areas there are probably opportunities to do some restoration type logging. You know, if it is in areas where they feel they can’t introduce fire then you pretty much have to go to thinning...I think there is a lot of restoration work that can be done - that provides jobs and benefits the land at the same time (AH3, 50-56).

2. **The Exemptionalist Discourse Community**

Informants identified two views about National Forests that they perceive to be characteristic of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community (Table 3, page 31). Similar to the Conservation Discourse Community, these views are related to the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests. First, “Use” and “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists are perceived to view people as distinct from forested landscapes. Secondly, for differing reasons, “Use” and “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists are perceived to view human stewardship of National Forests as unnecessary.

Informants repeatedly noted that while “Use” oriented Exemptionalists recognize that people are “dependent” on forest resources, they view themselves as “distinct” or separate from forested landscapes. Specifically, they view themselves as being exempt from the biophysical laws that apply to forested landscapes. For example, informants indicated that “Use” oriented Exemptionalists believe they can take from the forest without restraint because science and technology will mitigate any damages that they might cause. Or, as “Steve,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type observed, they view stewardship as an unnecessary restraint because “Trees grow back, don’t they?” “Mark,” an informant of the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, concurred with “Steve’s” assessment, and characterized this view as “shallow” and “unconscionable.” In the
following excerpt “Karole,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, is describing the views of “Use” oriented Exemptionalists; she stated,

There is so much use by so many users within this area. And they all want it for themselves. Well, it’s not what I want, it’s what the land can take. What can the forest take? How much abuse from different users – I mean, even from hikers or snow-shoers, or whatever? You know, there is a lot of use, but people have to start thinking more of the land, too. What is going to be good for this land? What is good for it, and what is not good for it? And we live in a pretty fragile landscape in this area, and I don’t think the land recovers like it does in the Pacific Northwest. But [“Use” oriented Exemptionalists] don’t see it that way. They don’t want to hear about stewardship responsibilities. I mean, we see that [view] here. In fact, I’ve seen it in meetings where people talk about the pioneer trails that have been there for hundreds of years [like it’s a good thing]. Well [I just want to say to them], “Hello! Doesn’t that tell you something?” They’ve been here for hundreds of years – that means this land is fragile – I mean, look how slow it is to recover. I think we all have to recognize that, “Yes, it is public land. Yes, everybody has a right to use it.” [But that use has to occur] within certain [limits] – in an ethical manner – whatever the land is capable of maintaining...But they don’t want to hear about [limits]. They just want it their way and no other way. They are not willing to even consider other peoples needs – or the lands’ needs. It’s just their short-sighted, selfish needs. And they come to the table – immediately – with a chip on their shoulder. And they are absolutely not going to bend. They are not going to see anybody else’s views to anything (RH3, 248-257, 412-415).

Similarly, informants indicated that “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists view people as distinct from forested landscapes and stewardship as unnecessary, although their rationale was completely different than that of “Use” oriented Exemptionalists. For example, while “Use” oriented Exemptionalists view people as distinct from forested landscapes because they feel humans are exempt from the biophysical laws that govern ecological system, “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists view people as distinct from forested landscapes because humans are the only species that consistently violate these biophysical laws. “Bob,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type,
acknowledged that certain groups of people do consistently violate the biophysical laws that govern forested landscapes. However, he also noted that “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists “don’t seem to realize that [people] have got to take something in order to live,” which he suggested is an equally unreasonable view. “Steve,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, agreed with “Bob’s” assessment, noting that “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists view people as a “nuisance.” Further, he observed that they oppose active management of forested landscapes, viewing it as “arbitrary” and “capricious.”

In the following excerpt “Neal,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, is comparing his views related to the necessity of forest management to those of a prominent “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalist who lives in his community. “Neal’s” view is that humans have a stewardship responsibility for National Forests and that responsibility often requires the use of active forms of forest management. Specifically, he is suggesting that we “need” to take [some] of the lodgepole pine out from underneath the Ponderosa Pine old growth in order to preserve the old growth. To “Neal” it is very clear that “the Forest needs management.” Conversely, his experience indicates that “Wilderness” oriented Exemptionalists prefer a hands off, “let it burn” approach to forest “management” where “natural processes” are allowed to take their course, irrespective of the ecological or social consequences; he stated,

We’re so far behind on the management that should take place that the unnatural conditions in the forest [are really bad]. We [referring to a collaborative group he is involved in that is comprised of loggers and environmentalists] were worried about taking some of the shade tolerant species and the non-natural, non-historic conditions out of the old growth. We were entering the old growth but we weren’t cutting any old growth trees. And that comes back to the old growth thing, especially Ponderosa Pine, which is my [favorite]. We just don’t have a lot of that - and I say
let's hang on to what we've got, and let's take out from underneath what we got, so that we make what we do have last longer. It really hurts me to go out on the National Forest and see what's going on. We'll go out, and when I say we I mean the [name of group deleted], and all we wanted to do was take the lodgepole [out from underneath the old growth]. It's right at 130 years old, so it's standing there dead and just don't know it - it's standing there under Ponderosa Pine, Tamarack, and Larch old growth. We weren't even going to look at [cutting] a larch or a [Ponderosa] pine. The road's right there a couple of hundred yards away, and all the Forest Service wanted to do was take this understory out from underneath [the old growth]. The forest needs management. But ["Wilderness oriented Exemptionalists"] don't see it that way. And sure enough, one of our favorite dissenters - he wouldn't stand for it - wouldn't stand for that! He says, 'I'll compromise. I'll let you cut some of the lodgepole, and leave them lay, but you can't take them.' And that would be his management. Remember, we are in 130 year old lodgepole. You go in 130 year old lodgepole and you've got lodgepole laying all over on the ground - we don't need any more down woody, and you certainly don't need all that forest falling down. Then we get a fire - a lethal fire - and you lose the [Ponderosa] pine and the lodgepole... But that's not the way he sees it. [He says,] 'Well, they fall over and the little critters live in it.' And I suppose the more the better as far as they're concerned. And then [he'll tell you that] 'If it burns why then that's alright too because that's a part of the [natural] process.' And we say, 'Well, one of these days it will burn - we're going to have a lethal fire a stand replacement fire. [And he] says, 'If you're worried about fire then you better move out of the Swan Valley.' To me that's 'let it burn,' you know. That's his management. So that's too bad. (EF4, 30-34, 102-104, 139-153, 208-210, 239-243, 364-365).

3. The Agency Discourse Community

Finally, in discussing their own views about National Forests informants also identified views they perceive to be characteristic of the Agency Discourse Community (Table 3, page 31). Similar to their own views, informants indicated that resource professionals acknowledge that people are dependent upon forest resources, and view resource stewardship as an important component of the relationship between people and National Forests. However, informants observed that resource professionals often view themselves as the sole stewards of National Forests, and the public as incapable of, or
uninterested in resource stewardship, or worse still, that they need to protect forest resources from an abusive public. For example, “Al,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, indicated that resource professionals view themselves as stewards, but they have “alienated” the public from the idea that they can be stewards. In the following excerpt “Al” is describing the experiences that shaped his perceptions:

My granddad used this same ground. In fact, it’s been used to some extent by the family since the Forest Service was started, or even maybe before. It’s always been considered - for years, and years, and years - all the time I was growing up - just part of our place. [And] we take care of it like the rest of the place. [And] to my way of thinking we’ve been good stewards, and it’s a lot better piece of ground now than it was to start with. We’ve done a lot of work on it. [Well,] they’ve alienated you from that thought real fast. The people that are here now have no idea what we did 50 years ago, or 30 years ago, and if you try to show them, they could care less about that. It’s been a long time since I’ve heard any of them give any inclination that you might know what you’re talking about. I think a lot of them have a feeling that farmers and ranchers aren’t educated. They kind of give you the feeling like, ‘If we weren’t over there in that office to take care of you, you people just couldn’t survive.’ And pretty soon that gets to bother you a little bit. You very seldom get agency people to say you are doing a good job. You are always doing something that isn’t right. [But] you know you have to take care of it. I mean, that’s our bread and butter. But they don’t see it that way. They kind of go in with the idea that you are beating the place to death, and all of a sudden, ‘If we’re not here to take care of you, that thing is just going to disintegrate…On the other hand, they’re always having these public meetings. So you wonder sometimes if all this involvement the public does - and is asked to do - and all the comments you send in are ever used much. You get the feeling sometimes the decision has already been made, and the only reason they ask is because ‘We have to go out and appease the peasants.’ So they give us a few meetings and [then] go do what they were going to do anyway’ (EH1, 325-326, 396-400, 493-499, 559-560, 769-770).

Similarly, “Steve” and “Kathy,” informants from the Advocacy Ideal Type, indicated that the Agency Discourse Community is resistant to accepting the public as co-stewards of National Forests. For example, in the following excerpt “Steve” is discussing the concept of stewardship contracts. He suggests that while many people see them as a
step in the right direction, resource professionals don’t see it that way. Rather, they view
the idea of the public serving as co-stewards of National Forests as “heresy;” he stated,

[Stewardship contracts] sort of takes the Forest Service out of the loop. And there’s some resistance [to that] within the agency. I think the stewardship contract actually fits quite well with the downsizing that’s happening in the Forest Service because in some ways you’re privatizing the management of the forest. [The idea is that] rather than seeing loggers as tools for getting logs to the mill, you’re actually seeing them as stewards of the land. You are giving them ownership in it and you want to give them accountability [in] that they only get the next stewardship contract if they’ve truly done well on the previous job. So the Forest Service is more in the position of saying, ‘Okay, are they doing what they said they would do?’ It’s a very different model than what we’ve had in the past. It’s a new paradigm where we’re managing based on what’s best for the land rather than getting logs to the mill. It’ll take the Forest Service more out of the loop. At least it is changing their role. And there’s some people in the agency that don’t like that. Some of the foresters, some of those guys who have been trained as foresters, the idea of a logger deciding which trees to cut, where you’re going in and doing a commercial thin or something like that, is heresy to them - ‘By God, I went through forestry school! I know! I know! You’re just a logger!’ (AF4, 444-447, 449-450, 457-463).

“Kathy” also indicated that resource professionals are reluctant to acknowledge
the public as co-stewards. In the following excerpt she concludes that the failure of the
Forest Service to work with the public in a meaningful way is “not an oversight;” she stated.

I think the Forest Service is very careful to publish calendar items about public meetings or field trips. I think they do make an honest effort to let people know what’s going on, but they need to [do a better job] of incorporating the public’s vision for the future. I think they should continue to make every effort to inform people, [but they also need] to encourage their involvement – not set up barriers to involvement. They’ve got things going on in the community all over the place, which is good, although I think a lot of it is done merely for image, and maybe not so much for the content. In a way [most of what they do] is a way of saying they met their obligations without really pulling in the people that need to be pulled in. They are not getting the public input that they need. I think that’s a major oversight on their part. Actually, I have to assume that it’s not an oversight (AH3, 235-241).
4. **Summary of Discourse Community Views**

In summary, the data indicate that members of the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities have distinct views of the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests. The Conservation Discourse Community views people as a natural part of forested landscapes, and as having stewardship responsibilities that sometimes require the use of active management. The Exemptionalist Discourse Community views people as distinct from forested landscapes, and stewardship as unnecessary. Lastly, the Agency Discourse Community acknowledges that people are dependent on forested landscapes, and they view stewardship of forest resources as an important part of the relationship between people and National Forests. However, they view stewardship as the exclusive responsibility of resource professionals.

D. **Mapping Discourse Community Beliefs**

Finally, the data indicate that the members of the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities can be differentiated with respect to their beliefs about how National Forests should be managed (Table 4, page 54). Specifically, these differences are related to beliefs about the fundamental nature of resource planning and decision-making, particularly the respective roles of the public and resource professionals in these aspects of the overall management process. Briefly, the Conservation Discourse Community believes resource planning, decision-making, and management should be conducted as *participatory* processes, where resource professionals and the public have a *responsibility* to serve as co-stewards of National Forests. Conversely, the Exemptionalist Discourse Community is perceived to believe that resource planning,
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<th>Discourse Community</th>
<th>Beliefs About the Nature of Resource Planning and Management</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation</td>
<td><strong>Nature</strong>: believe resource planning and management should be <strong>participatory</strong> processes, where Agencies and the public are co-stewards. <strong>Agency Role</strong>: the Forest Service should provide <strong>leadership</strong> with respect to:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Developing and clearly articulating a science based vision for the future of National Forests;</td>
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<td>2. Informing and educating the public regarding technical and legal restrictions related to Forest management;</td>
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<td>3. Facilitating opportunities for constructive public participation, and</td>
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<td>4. Promoting positive relationships through collaborative initiatives. <strong>Public Role</strong>: the public should provide <strong>native wisdom</strong>. Public participation is a <strong>responsibility</strong> that requires:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Active, consistent and informed participation, and</td>
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<td>2. A good faith effort to work collaboratively in the interest of forest health.</td>
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<td>Exemptionalist</td>
<td><strong>Nature</strong>: believe resource planning, and management are <strong>legal</strong> processes. <strong>Public Role</strong>: public participation is a <strong>right</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td><strong>Nature</strong>: believe resource planning and management are <strong>technical</strong> processes. <strong>Agency Role</strong>: uniquely qualified to serve as stewards of National Forests. <strong>Public Role</strong>: participation is a right, however it is a burdensome formality.</td>
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**Table 4. Beliefs of the Conservation, Exemptionalist, and Agency Discourse Communities about the nature of resource planning and management.**
decision-making, and management are fundamentally legal processes. Further, they are perceived to behave as if public participation is a right as opposed to a responsibility. The Agency Discourse Community is perceived to believe that resource planning, decision-making, and management are technical processes, and to behave as if public participation is a burdensome formality.

1. The Conservation Discourse Community

The data indicate that the members of the Conservation Discourse Community believe resource planning and management should be participatory processes where resource professionals and the public serve as co-stewards (Table 4, page 45). Further, while resource professionals and the public are believed to be co-stewards, informants suggested that they play very different roles in these processes. Informants indicated that as technical and scientific experts it is the responsibility of resource professionals to provide visionary leadership. On the other hand, informants indicated that members of the public possess local wisdom, or intimate, experiential knowledge of the ecological and social landscapes of their communities. Informants suggested that while local wisdom is not a substitute for "scientific" knowledge, it is every bit as necessary. In fact, they believe that resource planning and management can not succeed without local wisdom, therefore, they characterized public participation as a responsibility that people should take seriously. The following three excerpts are representative of the comments that informants from each of the Ideal Types made about the beliefs of the Conservation Discourse Community.

In the first excerpt, "Steve," an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, is describing how Forest Planning should be conducted. He clearly indicates that if Forest
Planning is to be successful it must be a participatory process. He indicated that the
Forest Service is responsible for providing leadership in terms of "articulating a clear
vision" and providing a framework that will promote constructive public participation.
The public is responsible for providing "local wisdom;" he stated,

My experience is that if you come up with positive solutions based on a
proper stewardship vision in this whole, what I call new paradigm, people
pretty much follow in line with it once they understand it. I say even the
zero-cutters. I think that you can lead by example, but there needs to
be leadership. You can't allow management by mob rule. And in the
absence of clear vision and a clear strategy for achieving that vision,
you’re going to get paralysis which is where we are now. The public has
really been involved. I mean, there’s all kinds of public input
opportunities, but it’s not structured in a way that adds up to anything,
so people become even more frustrated and even more angry and their
input is even more destructive and unhelpful. That’s where we are right
now. [But there are signs of hope.] I like what [FS employee] is saying,
because he’s putting out this vision, and he’s got a strategy for how to
get there, and I think if people start seeing solutions, most people fall
in line. [So] The Forest Service needs to articulate a clear vision. If
you just sort of throw the doors open and say, ‘Okay, you tell us what you
think,’ without providing any [structure] it doesn’t do any good. So
that’s the key thing. Just putting out good proposals and working with a
few people to build some support for it - people that possess what I like
to call ‘local wisdom.’ Science is really important, but science by itself is
inadequate. [And] science by people that don’t actually know the land and
don’t really know the community – it’s sort of abstract knowledge – and it
doesn’t cut it. I mean, it’s fine as far as it goes, but it has to be mixed
with local wisdom. So [the Forest Service] needs to get their involvement
and help in developing [a vision for the future.] And then if you take that
out to the public and you can get a few people from the so called other
sides - different sides - to endorse it, then [it will succeed.] In fact, the
public - and we have seen this on a few projects - then the public doesn’t
participate. And maybe that’s the best public participation is no public
participation, because [then you know] you are doing a good job. People
only jump on board when they think you’re not doing a good job. That’s
when they start rattling your cage. So, [in summary,] ‘science’ shouldn’t
drive it, and the public process should not drive [the Planning process].
Everything should still be driven by what’s best for the land - and you
need science and local wisdom to figure that out (AF4, 95-117).
Similarly, "Mary," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, concluded that resource planning and management work best when resource professionals and the public are working collaboratively; she stated,

One of the things that works is when the Forest Service is actually working with the public - like on that [collaborative] forestry project. Those meetings with Forest Service people, loggers and environmentalists were never unpleasant. That seems to be a perfect situation. That kind of thing - [where people are] listening, trying to understand, educating each other - really promotes public support [for whatever the Forest Service decides]. And it goes both ways - the Forest Service educates the public, but the public educates the Forest Service. I don't know how they get their jobs, and how they move around so much, but I think everyone down in the [District] office will admit that we know more about the Forest and this community than they do. We've lived here all our lives, and we've actually been to all these places. They rarely get out of their offices. Anyway, how do you get people to the table? [Well,] the Forest Service would have to make the effort. The Forest Service needs to make an effort to bring people - maybe a small number at a time from a specific organization - to some sort of a table (RF4. 93-107).

In the last of the three excerpts, "Bob," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, indicates that resource planning and management should be participatory processes. In describing what successful planning looks like he concludes that science and local wisdom need to be integrated. Further, in order for that to happen the Forest Service would have to demonstrate strong leadership; he stated,

That's what it boils down to for me - the Forest Service has to have a track record to point to. They've got to have something tangible to say, 'This is ours. This is what we do, and this is what we're going to do.' It doesn't have to be logging - it could be winter range improvement with burning or whatever, but [they've got to do something] and if they do, and it turns out, they've got to call attention to it. But they just don't seem to demonstrate any leadership what so ever. I told the supervisor, 'Your Public Relations is being handled by [extremists]. That's who's taking care of your public relations for you. You've chosen to remove yourself from the picture - that's why you're getting beat up.' I mean, it's just like one of those rock 'em sock 'em dolls. Everyone gets a free shot. Everyone hates the Forest Service - don't they? [On the other hand] if
they could just say, ‘Okay, this is what we are going to do for these reasons’ and then do it and have a good product and then use that product for public relations, it would go way farther than all this yakking. Especially when they don’t back up the rhetoric with honest actions. So, what they need, I feel, is more demonstration projects that turn out right, that turn out good. They need to stand up and say, ‘This is what we can do.’ And they’ve got to put some time in to getting the community involved... I told [Forest Service employee], ‘You know, I’m not the expert - you guys are. You have all the tools, you’ve got all the skills. I mean as far as the science of forestry - the silviculturists’ - those guys know the science of forestry as far as the measurements and stuff way better than I do or way better than I care to understand. But they don’t seem to have a deeper appreciation that it takes to make that - to translate that work to get a good result on the ground. That’s what’s missing. And that’s what I’ve got and that’s what some other loggers I know have. They don’t have formal educations, but they can look at something and say, ‘Well, yeah, this is what I can do.’ They know how to read the forest. [After we had that talk] he called me a couple days later and he came out to the job I was working on, with, I think there was three rangers and him. They came out to see what I was doing. I thought that was pretty good because they said, ‘Well, how can you do all this and synthesize all this information and come up with a product like this - you don’t mark trees, you don’t lay out skid trails - how can you do it?’ And I said, ‘Well, just hands-on experience, and if you guys are willing, I think you’ve got to give people like me a chance to show what we can do. We can use the science, but also you can use us... Somehow they have to synthesize [science and native wisdom]. The Forest Service has continued to develop and they’ve got these specialists and stuff, but they’ve got to be smart enough to realize that, ‘Okay, we’ve got some science here, we’ll use that, but also it’s got to be tempered with common sense.’ And that’s the bottom line – [if Planning and management are to be successful] the science has to be tempered with that native-type wisdom. (EF3, 205-208, 241-251, 273-277, 294-296, 408-419).

2. The Exemptionalist Discourse Community

The data indicate that informants perceive the Exemptionalist Discourse Community to believe that resource planning, decision-making, and management are legal processes (Table 4, page 45). In fact, informants concluded that these processes have been largely “lost to litigation” because Exemptionalists “will appeal anything,” and their “well armed legal staffs” are prepared to “sue at the drop of the hat.” In the
following three excerpts informants are describing experiences that convinced them that Exemptionalists believe Forest Planning, decision-making, and management are fundamentally legal processes.

In the first of these excerpts, "Paul," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, suggests that Exemptionalists behave irresponsibly when it comes to participating in resource planning and management activities. Specifically, he indicated that they don’t participate in collaborative efforts, and if things don’t turn out in their favor, they resort to litigation. In describing his experiences, he stated,

[In] this country - the individual amounts to a lot, you know, **but the individual has to be responsible**, I think. And, so, how do you determine if he’s responsible? I don’t know. It’s just like [name of prominent member of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community deleted] saying ‘If you’re afraid of fire, why, you had better move out [of the valley].’ Is that responsible? And he never participates in the collaborative efforts that are on going in the community. Is that responsible? We’ve invited all of [the Exemptionalists in our community] to our meetings – several times – but they never come. Oh, I suppose maybe you can get some of them out there once, but when you [really] get into the planning process why [they] just drop out. **And at the end of the plan - we'll sue you.** (EF4, 462-469).

Similarly, "Chris," an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, observed that the behavior of the members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community strongly indicates that they believe resource planning and management are fundamentally legal processes. Interestingly, he admits that he has used the legal process in the past – as a last resort – but he does not consider it to be true public participation. He concludes that Exemptionalist resort to litigation too often; he stated,

[Exemptionalist] primarily ‘participate’ [in resource planning and management] through appeals and litigation. And I have to admit that I have appealed timber sales [in the past]. I got in their face and I used the legal process. It’s not friendly. It’s adversarial. There’s a little bit of a

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effort to make it friendly, but it’s not. We’re here to fight and get what we can. Very, very different process than the open house process. It’s not public involvement—it’s let’s go to court. Yes, it’s [their right]—it’s a public citizen appealing the decisions that have been made by Forest Service officials—but it’s not [public participation]. There’s too much of that (RH1, 128-134).

Finally, “Jack,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, “blamed both sides” of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community for resorting to appeals and litigation. He concluded that neither group ever seems to be satisfied with the outcome of resource planning and management efforts, and that one side or the other will usually appeal anything the Forest Service tries to do; he stated,

I blame both sides [of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community]. They seem to come in and take a look at a collaborative process and then back out when they think there’s really no chance of them getting their way. And I blame ‘environmentalists’ on those issues as much as the ‘multiple use’ people. [For example,] I’ve been involved in two collaborative groups recently, and there were several small environmental groups that refused to participate because they didn’t feel there was any real chance of them getting their way, having decisions arrived at that would favor their position. The same was true of the multiple use people, too. Actually, the multiple use people did participate all the way through with both collaborative processes, but then refused to sign the final document. In fact, they actually challenged it. But I don’t blame them any more than I do some of the environmental groups. I’m afraid neither group will ever be satisfied. [They] just appeal anything [the Forest Services tries to do] (AF2, 195-199).

3. The Agency Discourse Community

In the process of discussing their own beliefs about resource planning and management and those of the Agency Discourse Community, informants concluded that the major difference is related to their respective perceptions about the fundamental nature of these processes. Informants indicated that the behavior of resource professionals, particularly those employed by the Forest Service, clearly indicates that...
they believe Forest Planning, decision-making, and management are technical processes (Table 4, page 45). In the following excerpts informants are describing three patterns of behavior that are characteristic of the Forest Service that suggest that they believe Forest Planning and management are technical processes.

3(a) They Just “Fall Over Backwards”

The most common observation about the behavior of the Forest Service with respect to Forest Planning and management is that they are not providing the kind of “visionary leadership” that is so desperately needed. Rather, they are perceived to take a predictable, systematic, “scientific” approach. While informants acknowledged that there is nothing wrong with a scientific approach, they noted that there seems to be a total lack of creativity and conviction. Resource professionals are perceived to behave as if the decisions they are making about the use and management of National Forest are mere technicalities, where one decision is no better than another. Informants concluded that it is as if resource professionals are throwing up their hands and saying, “The courts will end up making the decision anyway, so why bother trying.” For example, “George,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, observed that the Forest Service has provided “very poor leadership” in Forest Planning and management. He indicated that rather than managing National Forests with “dignity, thoroughness and conviction,” they are “trying to please” everyone; he stated,

My perception right now is that [the Forest Service] is very weak. They are vacillating. They tippy-toe around every issue – ‘Oh, we don’t want to do anything to make these people over here mad, and we don’t want to make these people over there mad.’ [The Forest Service] is getting it from every side now – but they have done some dumb things. Their effectiveness has been terribly damaged. And their believability comes under fire. They are about the worst I have seen since I went to work for them in 1943. And it hurts me because there are good people
working there. But they have been battered by the exploiters on the far right and the super fem feelers – the environmentalists – on the left. And they are trying to please them all. [Consequently,] they aren’t pleasing a damn soul! The Forest Service has shown very poor leadership – very poor thinking. The Forest should be managed with dignity and thoroughness. The Forest Service knows the rules! You are supposed to do an environmental impact statement. It’s been clearly defined by too many court cases what is necessary nowadays. So, do it! [But they don’t,] so every third sale in the Forest is cancelled because they don’t do an EA or and EIS correctly. And see, one of the other things there is not enough of – they need to [be more direct]. They need to say, ‘Well, we need this timber and it’s a legitimate timber sale. And if we don’t get it we’ve got bugs in here,’ or ‘it’s a fire hazard, so we’re going to do it!’ And then they need to do it! You see, there is not enough of that (RF2, 261-273, 277-310, 429-434, 441-444, 447).

Similarly, “Luke” observed that the Forest Service has shown no conviction in their decision-making about the use and management of National Forests: he stated,

There has been a hesitancy within the Forest Service to be willing to stand up and say, ‘That is the right decision.’ And take it to court if necessary. I mean I’ve had Forest Service people say, ‘Luke, we don’t want to fight that battle, so don’t make that decision.’ Well, that sort of negates - you know – the idea of doing the right thing. If it was the right decision in the field, you ought to have the guts to fight it and say, ‘Hey, we think our guy, or our staff, or our team made the right decision, and we are willing to stand up for it’ (EF2, 347-354).

3(b) On the Ground Management

A second behavioral characteristic that suggested to informants that the Forest Service believes Forest Planning and management are technical processes is that resource professionals don’t get out on the ground enough. Further, informants indicated that while they understand that rangers can’t get out in the field like they did “in the good old days,” it troubles them that they spend “the majority of their time in meetings” or “staring into their computers.” Informants are not opposed to meetings or the use of computers, however, they are concerned that the number of internal meetings and the ever-increasing
reliance on computer simulated models is alienating the Forest Service from the public.

Even more troubling is that many resource professionals feel that they don’t have to get out on the ground to do their jobs. In describing his recent experiences with the Forest Service “Al” stated,

I think there is 30 people working over there now and out of those 30 some people I bet there isn’t 5 that know the springs and the roads and stuff in our permit. And even the ranger - which he’s leaving now - he has no idea. It’s awful hard for me to think that people that have hardly been on the ground and never seen it can make policy without looking at it. But they’ll tell you that they don’t have to look, ‘We can do everything we want to do right off the map’ (EH1, 46-47, 418-425, 406-40).

Similarly, “John,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, indicated that it is as if the Forest Service believes that managers can manage without knowing the land and without knowing the community. He concluded that they use a “cookie cutter” approach, stating that...

Part of the problem within the Forest Service is that you get turnover in District Rangers and Forest Supervisors at an appalling rate. I can’t count all the different Supervisors and District Rangers I’ve dealt with on this Forest. A bunch. And this Forest probably hasn’t had as much turnover as some other Forests. [Promotions] are still based on loyalty to the agency, so if you want to move up the ladder you have to be a good team player and you go where they ask you to go. It’s just cookie cutter approach. It’s as if they are saying, ‘You are just a manager, so you don’t have to know the land, you don’t have to be part of the community. We’ll just fly you in and if you do a good job in three or four years then we’ll move you to the next job.’ That’s the whole bureaucratic culture of the Forest Service. They shift these guys around so that their loyalty is to the bureaucratic imperative rather than to do what’s best for the land. They don’t even know the land. [I was] talking to [a line officer] yesterday, she was talking about a couple Forest Service projects and she got them in the wrong districts. She doesn’t even know this stuff. Well, how could she? She’s only been here a year. She’ll probably only be here another year, and then she’ll move on to someplace else (AF4, 880-892).
3(c) Reductionistic Approach

The final behavioral characteristic that informants pointed to as evidence that the Forest Service believes Forest Planning and management are technical processes has to do with the reductionistic approach that they use. Informants perceive that resource professionals are always looking for a “model” that will explain what is happening on the Forest, or predict what will happen in the future. And while informants are convinced that science should provide the foundation for everything that happens on National Forests - and that the science that is being used is good – they have two specific concerns. First, they are distressed by the lack of integration across scientific disciplines, and secondly that the Forest Service refuses to accept the validity of “native wisdom.” For example, regarding the lack of integration, “Ann,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, stated that too many resource professionals “just get stuck in their own little realm a lot of times and don’t put all the pieces together” (EF5, 131-147, 154).

In reflecting on the interactions he has had with the Forest Service over the past 50 years, particularly how the working relationship has changed, “Al” concluded that the biggest difference is that resource professionals no longer appreciate the experiential knowledge of people who work the land; he stated,

The biggest thing I have against the personnel we have - might not be all of them but the biggest share of them - is the arrogance of how they are going about there work. It use to be ‘How can we help you?’ Or ‘Can you help us? We’ve got a project and [we need to figure out] how [we] are we going to do it?’ And we’d talk it over and we’d get it done. Now, it’s ‘We’ve got a project. We want to do this. This is how we’re going to do it. And if you don’t like it you can comment about it.’ And that’s the end of it. You might as well go out the door as comment on it. It use to be that they worked with you, or we worked with them, too. It isn’t that way anymore. That just doesn’t happen anymore...I think that’s sad. I think they could learn a lot. They could learn to get along with people a lot better if they would just listen to what we’ve learned a little bit over the years. But it isn’t going to happen that way, I don’t think. I think a lot of them have a feeling that farmers and ranchers aren’t
educated, you know, they don't even realize they've gone to college. They kind of give you the feeling like, 'If we weren't over there in that office to take care of you, you people just couldn't survive. And pretty soon that gets to bother you a little bit (EH1, 576-578, 605-609, 769-771).

Similarly, “Mark” observed that the Forest Service, while technically competent in the science of forestry, has “made some big mistakes” because they have failed accept the validity of local wisdom; he stated,

They know the science of forestry as far as the measurements and stuff way better than I do or way better than I care to understand. But they don’t seem to have a deeper appreciation that it takes to make that - to translate that work to get a good result on the ground. That’s what’s missing. And that’s what I’ve got and that’s what some other loggers I know have. They can look at something and say, ‘Well, yeah, this is what I can do.’ They know how to read the forest. A friend of mine worked with the Cree Indians in northern Quebec and he told me an interesting story about how they have managed their land traditionally. What they have is what he called masters - old guys - elders. I know a friend that would qualify for that that lives up the North Fork. And before anything happens out on that land someone would go to this old guy and say, ‘Well, can we do such and such? Do you think that’s okay?’ So, the first thing they do is consult that person because he’s got a personal history and experience with that land that might go 50 or 60 years and he’s respected. And that’s where the Forest Service has failed in the past is they have failed to accept that kind of knowledge as [valid] - they don’t see any validity in it - and they’ve made some big mistakes because of that (EF3, 195-204, 246-251).

4. Summary of Discourse Community Beliefs

In summary, informants indicated that members of the Conservation, Exemptionalist and Agency Discourse Communities have different beliefs about how National Forests should be managed. These differences are primarily related to their beliefs about the fundamental nature of resource planning, decision-making, and management, particularly the role of resource professionals and the public in these processes. Briefly, the Conservation Discourse Community believes that resource planning and management should be participatory process, where the public and resource
professionals work collaboratively as co-stewards. Specifically, they believe that resource professionals should provide visionary leadership and that the public has a responsibility to contribute local wisdom to these processes. Conversely, informants perceive that members of the Exemptionalist Discourse Community believe that resource planning and management are fundamentally legal in nature, and that they behave as if public participation is a right. Informants indicated that Exemptionalists file appeals and litigate at the drop of the hat, and while they acknowledge that they have the right to do so, they don't believe that such behavior qualifies as responsible public participation. Finally, the Agency Discourse Community is perceived to believe that resource planning and management are technical processes. Informants indicated that there are three behavioral characteristics of resource professionals that justify this interpretation. First, resource professionals rarely show any creativity or conviction in the planning process – acting as if one decision is as good as another. Further, they behave as though the process is a mere technicality because regardless of what they decide it will likely be challenged. Secondly, they are perceived to take a cookie cutter approach to planning that does not require experiential knowledge of ecological or social landscapes. Lastly, resource professionals are perceived to believe that resource planning and management are technical processes because they don't accept the validity of local wisdom.

III. Theme III: Sources of Resource Related Conflict

Finally, the third theme that emerged from the data addressed informants views as to why there is so much conflict in their communities if there is as much common ground as they perceive, and given that they describe most resource related conflict as "unnecessary." This final theme describes the informants perceptions of the primary sources of resource related conflicts in the communities of place associated with the
Flathead and Helena National Forests. Consistent with the theoretical framework of this investigation, they perceive that most conflict is social in nature. In particular, it is related to distorted communication and dysfunctional relationships. Specifically, the data suggest that informants perceive that there are three primary sources of resource-related conflict in these communities. First, informants indicated that conflict is often the result of *perceived* rather than actual differences in the values, views, and beliefs of the members of the "so-called" sides or stakeholder groups. In other words, while informants acknowledge that there are *actual* differences between the people that we like to think of as "fern feelers" and "tree butchers," "motor heads and Wilderness junkies," and "multiple users and environmentalists," very often their differences are not that great.

Secondly, informants identified dysfunctional relationships as a common source of conflict. For example, while informants repeatedly indicated that resource professionals are generally "good, hardworking, honest, and decent people," they observed that there is a great deal of hostility amongst the public towards resource management agencies and resource professionals. Informants attribute this hostility to the "arrogance" of many resource professionals and the "total lack of consideration" they show to the public.

Lastly, the data suggest that the failure of resource professionals to provide visionary leadership with respect to the use and management of National Forests has contributed to a chaotic environment in their communities in which conflict flourishes.

A. **Perceived Differences As a Source of Conflict**

Informants clearly indicated that there are people in the community whose values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests are so disparate that they will never see eye-to-eye, for example members of the Conservation and
Exemptionalist Discourse Communities. However, the data just as clearly indicate that informants believe resource related conflict is very often the result of perceived differences – rather than actual differences – between the various stakeholder groups in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests. Informants repeatedly noted how easy it is for “reasonable, well educated” people to misunderstand one another – and how easily a series of misunderstandings can distract a community from thinking about the big picture. They concluded that since there is no neutral public forum for people to openly discuss their values, views, and beliefs that these misunderstandings are rarely identified as misunderstandings, much less resolved. Consequently, simple misunderstandings end up “polarizing” communities, and people end up doing “stupid things” because they get caught up in “defending their position” rather than discussing the big picture or looking for common ground. The following three excerpts illustrate that members of these “so-called” polar opposite stakeholder groups actually share many of the same values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests, and that much of the current resource related conflict is the result of perceived differences.

In the first excerpt “Kathy,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, is discussing the nature of the relationship between people and National Forests, and the necessity of active forest management. She concludes that people are a natural part of forested landscapes and that active forest management is often necessary in order to restore and preserve forest health. Further, she identifies logging and grazing as legitimate, “sustainable” uses of National Forests, and argues that loggers and ranchers are not “horrible people” who are “exploiting” the land. With respect to grazing she
observes that, “Given appropriate monitoring data you could easily make a case” that an area could sustain “X” amount of grazing “and more if other things can be done that would mitigate damages;” she stated,

[A natural ecosystem] is an area where natural processes are allowed to function as they should...and that means that [when we are managing ecosystems] the health of the land and what it can support in terms of species, including humans, but not just humans, has to come first. I think the first thing we should plan for are ways to maintain or re-establish healthy environments. How we do that is a very difficult question. In one site they might need to do prescribed burning, and in another maybe they need to do under-thinning - our group recommended that for lower elevation Ponderosa Pine. I think what’s hard [about using active management to restore forest health] is that it’s hard for us people to separate what’s healthy for the land as opposed to what we need, [so some people might be tempted to use forest health as a guise to get the cut out]. So, the human species needs to evaluate our motives and our impact on the land and on those resources. I mean, we tend to take so freely from what’s there in terms of resources, and we very seldom put anything back, and we very seldom limit what we think we have the right to take. And that really disturbs me. On the other hand, I heard [name] speak the other night. She was absolutely fabulous. And one of the things she said is that ‘Conservationists need to always take into account the human perspective. We need to remember that people – even loggers – whom people like us sometimes think of as horrible people – are part of the landscape. And they are just trying to figure out how to support their families.’ I think that’s right. [And] I think that there is such a thing as sustainable timber and ranching. Grazing is a good example. I mean, a grassland...may be able to support 200 head, but not 600 head. I think that if they have monitoring data...they could easily make a case, and they could easily show that, ‘Yes, this area can support this amount [of grazing] - and more - if other things can be done that would mitigate damages. The same with forestry...I think there is a lot of restoration work that can be done - that provides jobs and benefits the land at the same time’ (AH3, 90-95, 97, 553, 556-562).

The reason “Kathy’s” views are significant is because she is a strong “environmentalist” and “Wilderness advocate,” and people like her are not supposed to think that way. Rather, people like “Kathy” are typically perceived to be unwavering in their commitment to exclusively non-consumptive uses of National Forests. The point,
once again, is that conflict between the members of these “so-called” antagonistic sides is often over perceived, rather than actual differences.

Similarly, “Karole,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, indicated that perceived differences between the members of the “so-called” sides in her community are a primary source of conflict. Specifically, she indicated that some of the more extreme members of the various stakeholder groups in her community demonstrate no “objectivity” in assessing other people’s values. Rather, they assume that if a person has different interests in National Forests than they do, they must be “bad” people. In the following excerpt she is describing how she reached this conclusion; she stated,

From the time when I first moved into this community I’ve tried to work closely with the Forest Service and with some of the [environmental and Wilderness oriented organizations]. And to be quite candid, I respect what [those groups] are trying to do – somewhat – although I don’t feel they are willing to compromise as much as I’d like to see. I’d like to see – not necessarily more consensus – but a willingness to be able to reach across the table more. A willingness to understand that these are our federal lands, and that they are for everybody to enjoy, regardless of what they use it for. Of course, our enjoyment can’t be at the expense of the land – we need to be careful about how we use it...And that’s what I got upset with [Wilderness Group X] on. They had blinders on. They were narrow sighted. I mean, [I agree with them to a certain extent,] there are certain areas, I firmly believe, [that] should stay Wilderness with no trails, nothing, no one. I mean if you want to go on a trail, you pick a game trail to go on. And I just think there are places that should always - forever - forever - be that way...[but] we are dealing with all sorts of people. We are dealing with outfitters and loggers - people who make their living off this federal land. We need to think of them, too. But [those groups] didn’t see it that way. For them it was either our way or no way. And you can’t do that. [Some of the people in those groups automatically think] the snowmobilers and ‘motorheads’ are just bad people. But they are not bad people. You can’t group them and say all these people [are bad]. They are just people who enjoy something different than I do - than other people do. But it doesn’t mean that [they are bad] - it just means that we all have to think of what’s best for the land. Of course, it’s not just the [environmental and Wilderness organization who tend to treat people from the ‘other side’ that way.] A lot of people that have grown up out here enjoying public lands, they have this mentality that, ‘Well, I’m a fifth
generation Montanan. My great, great grandfather hunted there, my great grandfather hunted there, and damnit, I'm going to hunt there! You're not going to keep me out of there!' And they just want it their way and no other way. They are not willing to even consider other people's needs. And they come to the table – immediately - with a chip on their shoulder, and they are absolutely not going to bend. So, all of a sudden I'm the bad guy because I enjoy something different than they do. So, I think the source of these conflicts is just the people themselves...some people will not have even the semblance of being objective towards anything. It's like, 'Oh, you belong to [Organization X] so you must be bad' (RH3, 14-29).

In the last of these excerpts, "Neal," an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type," also identifies perceived rather than actual differences in the values, views, and beliefs of the various stakeholder groups in his community as a common source of conflict. He observes that "a lot of the dissention" in these communities is "really unnecessary," concluding that much of the current conflict is the result of our inability to get past preconceived notions about people who are supposedly on the other side of the fence. Further, he observed that if we could just find the "determination to talk [to each other]" that even "loggers and hard-line environmentalists," could work out many of their disagreements; he stated,

A lot of the dissention and conflict that takes place between people – to me – a lot of that's really unnecessary. If you were to walk down through the valley and talk to people – really go out of your way to talk to some people – I bet you could count on the fingers of one hand the people that disagree with what I've been saying [about the use and management of National Forests]. So all this dissention - that's our own fault. We don't have the time or determination to talk to people. If we did I think we'd see a lot of change. I know we would. [But for the longest time we haven't talked to each other,] consequently we can't get past the mentality of these so-called environmentalists that [loggers] are robbing the public lands. And I'll tell you, [my mentality needed to change, too.] And I have changed. I guess my natural resource views haven't changed too much, but my view on the [environmentalists] that we deal with has changed some. So my attitude changes, and theirs does too, quite a little. [For example, Jane Doe] is a member of a collaborative group I'm involved with, and she's always been a hard-line environmental lady, but it turns
out that she’s pretty open-minded really. Same way with [John Smith]. He’s changed, and I’ve changed. And [John or Jane] either one, I’d be real comfortable not going to a meeting if they were going, because I know that they’d be representing themselves, but they’d also be representing me. [So the problem isn’t that environmentalists and loggers are all that different,] the problem is that nobody talks, and nobody tries to get along, and nobody tries to work together. And it just got to the point where everybody was scowling at each other and the natural resources started going to heck. We knew we had to do something, so we formed [this collaborative group to try to turn things around]. And as you hear a lot of other people’s concerns, and you start looking around you realize that they’re all legitimate and you realize that we’re not all that different – we just thought we were (EF4, 327-344).

B. Dysfunctional Relationships as a Source of Conflict

The data also suggest that dysfunctional relationships are a common source of resource-related conflicts in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests. In other words, conflicts aren’t always about disagreements over facts, or differences – actual or perceived - in values, views, or beliefs. Sometimes resource-related conflict occurs because people don’t like, trust, or respect one another. Informants indicated that this is especially true of the resource-related conflict that occurs between the public and resource professionals. In the following three excerpts informants are describing two primary reasons that the Forest Service has difficulties establishing positive relationships with the public, and how their inability to do so contributes to conflict.

In the first excerpt “Steve,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, identifies the inability of the Forest Service to develop positive relationships with the public as a major source of conflict. He concludes that their relationships with the public are so poor because there is an “alarmingly high rate of turnover amongst rangers and supervisors.” Consequently, the Forest Service and the public don’t know one another
and there is no stable foundation for developing trust-based relationships. Further, he observes that many resource professionals suffer from a total lack of "humility," which really rubs the public the wrong way; he stated,

I think that [Forest Planning] needs to be done through relationships as much as anything. That’s the problem with the Forest Service managers moving around every 3 or 4 years. They don’t build those relationships. Or once they do build those relationships they’re gone, and then you’ve got to do it with somebody new. And relationships are not [built through] a public participation thing like they think of in terms of, ‘Well, okay, are we going to have a hearing here or are we going to have an open house where we have flip charts?’ The type of public participation I’m talking about is much more fundamental than that - it’s [about] building relationships and building credibility and trusting people. Trusting people like the [Jones’] that know what they are talking about and not saying, ‘Well, hey, I’m the professional - you’re just a retired school teacher - you don’t know what you’re talking about.’ Having the humility to say, ‘By God, I value every word that [Judy and John Jones] have to say because they know what the heck they are talking about,’ and having the humility to accept that... But the Forest Service doesn’t do that. To many [resource professionals] the idea of working with the public is heresy. And they try to build relationships through these formal processes. But people like the [Jones’] don’t go to those public hearings. They didn’t go to the roadless hearing. They don’t do that game. For them it’s a charade. It’s a gladiator match. That’s not public process. That’s not public participation that’s anything meaningful, but that’s the way the Forest Service has come to define it. And that’s not the answer (AF5, 972-991).

Similarly, “Gary,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, identified dysfunctional relationships between the public and the Forest Service as a major source of conflict in his community. He, too, concluded that the high turnover rate of Forest Service employees is part of the problem. Further, he observed that the Forest Service generally isn’t sincerely interested in reaching out to the public. Instead, they do public participation just to “get the numbers down,” rather than “trying to work with the public or actually get something useful out of the public.” Of course, he noted that such
insincerity is not lost on the public. However, he also noted that the lack of civility that the Forest Service puts up with from the public also contributes to conflict; he stated,

There was a time when we and the Forest Service were on opposite sides on almost everything they wanted to do. Part of the problem was the large amount of clearcutting, and all the roads that had been put in and were continuing to be put in. Everything just seemed to be going downhill. It just seemed awful. So that was a big part of why we are experiencing so much conflict, but also it was their attitude towards the public. I think it's changing somewhat now, but there is still an imperative within these agencies to be able to show on paper how much public involvement they have. And they are more interested in getting numbers down that show they are doing it than they are in actually working with the public or even getting anything useful out of the public. I mean, historically they have been totally unresponsive to public input. And the public is not unaware of this. Hopefully that's changing. I mean, they have started to listen to us, and we actually have many close, personal friends within the Forest Service now. But that's really unusual because Forest Service personnel – I'm not sure I understand exactly how they get their positions and move around – but it seems like they move too much. They don't get a chance to really learn an area well enough to understand what's going on. [But I don't want to make it sound like all the relational problems are their fault.] Something they've told us, which we found a little hard to believe until we thought about it and thought about some of the kinds of criticism that has been thrown at the Forest Service – and the way it has been thrown at them over the years - the manner in which it's done – what they said to us was that they didn't mind listening to us initially because we were courteous. We were civil. That was the word they used – we were 'civil.' And we thought, 'My Goodness! How could that be unusual?' But if you think about some of what you read or hear people say, maybe it's true. So it's not surprising that they are apprehensive about working with the public (RF5, 734-751).

In the last of these excerpts “Al,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, also identifies dysfunctional relationships as a common source of conflict between resource professionals and the public. In describing his personal relationship with the Forest Service and how it has changed over the past 50 years of his adult life he stated,

My granddad used this same ground. In fact, it's been used to some extent by the family since the Forest Service was started, or even maybe before.
It's always been considered for years, and years, and years, all the time I was growing up, just part of our place. [And] we take care of it like our [deeded land]. [And] to my way of thinking it's a lot better piece of ground now than it was to start with. We've done a lot of work on it...[but] they've alienated you from that thought real fast. The people that are here now have no idea what we did 50 years ago, or 30 years ago. The longest any of them stay anymore is 5 maybe 6 years. And if you try to show them [how you've improved the land over the years], they could care less about that. It's been a long time since I've heard any of them give any inclination that you might know what you're talking about. You very seldom get agency people to say you are doing a good job. You are always doing something that isn't right. No explanation [given - it's just not right]. They don't feel they have to give you an explanation. And I think [that's] the biggest thing I have against the personnel we have - might not be all of them, but the biggest share of them - is the arrogance of how they are going about their work. It used to be 'How can we help you?' or 'How can you help us? We've got a project and how are we going to do it?' And we'd talk it over and we'd get it done. Now, it's, 'We've got a project. We want to do this. This is how we're going to do it.' And if you don't like it you can comment about it and that's the end of it. Well, you might as well go out the door as comment on it. Like I said, it used to be that they worked with you, or we worked with them, too. It just isn't that way anymore. That just doesn't happen anymore...I think that's sad. I think they could learn a lot. They could learn to get along with people a lot better. It would be a good start if they would just listen to what we've learned a little bit over the years. But it isn't going to happen that way, I don't think...I think a lot of them have a feeling that farmers and ranchers aren't educated, you know, they don't even realize they've gone to college. They kind of give you the feeling like, 'If we weren't over there in that office to take care of you, you people just couldn't survive.' They kind of go in with the idea that you are beating the place to death, and all of a sudden, 'If we're not here to take care of you, that thing is just going to disintegrate.' And pretty soon that gets to bother you a little bit (EH1, 576-578, 605-609, 769-771).

C. Poor Leadership and Conflict

Finally, in addition to perceived differences and dysfunctional relationships, the data indicate that informants perceive that the lack of visionary leadership from resource professionals in resource planning and management has contributed to a chaotic environment where conflict abounds. However, informants from each Ideal Type
consistently and repeatedly observed that it is not too late to turn the ship around. They concluded that if the Forest Service would step up to the plate and provide the type of leadership that is so desperately needed that “people would fall in line” and their communities could get past the “unnecessary and fabricated acrimony” that they are struggling through. In the following three excerpts informants are describing the types of experiences that lead them to these conclusions.

In the first excerpt “Bob,” an informant from the Economic Livelihood Ideal Type, is discussing his experience with a local collaborative effort that actually conducted a stewardship forestry pilot project that involved active management. He observed that the group had the blessing of the Forest Service to undertake this project, and that they produced a product that “even the zero cut guys from Missoula couldn’t find anything wrong with.” However, the project eventually fell apart because the Forest Service didn’t provide the necessary leadership to keep it going. More generally, he concludes that the failure of the Forest Service to provide strong, “visionary leadership” is one of the primary reasons that they are constantly being beaten up by the public; he stated,

Some of the rangers and supervisors are savvy enough and smart enough to figure out that [collaboration] is a good thing, [but] the rest of them...the hydrologists’, the biologists’, the silviculturists’...they just don’t know how to handle it. Not at all. They don’t want anything to do with it, and they are really defensive. A lot of these Forest Service people are extremely defensive...It’s like, ‘Who the hell are you to tell us?’...[Consequently,] the whole collaborative thing - it works to a point, but I have been involved with [a collaborative] for five years, and it’s just gotten hung up on process. Then, finally, I thought we had something tangible at the end with [Project X]. I mean, even the zero-cut guys from Missoula couldn’t find anything wrong with it. So I really thought we had something, but then I realized that the Forest Service isn’t going to take ownership or show any interest in it. They aren’t providing any leadership, so it’s futile. I have a feeling almost that we were set up in a
sense. I mean, we had been beating our head against the Forest Service wall for years trying to get them to try something like [Project X]. So when they finally consented we really thought we had something. But it looks like they were just playing along until we got what we wanted and then their reaction at the end was kind of passive-resistant - ‘Okay, that’s nice, but now we are just going to do what we have been doing’ - that’s my sense. That’s what it boils down to for me – they are so passive. There’s no leadership. There’s no vision. And that’s part of the reason we have so much conflict. And it’s a big part of why they get beat up all the time. I told the supervisor this in a letter - I said ‘Your public relations is being handled by [extremists]. That’s who’s taking care of your public relations for you. You’ve chosen to remove yourself from the picture - that’s why you’re getting beat up.’ I mean, it’s just like one of those rock ‘em sock ‘em dolls. Everyone gets a free shot. Everyone hates the Forest Service - don’t they? [On the other hand] if they could just say, ‘Okay! This is what we are going to do for these reasons’ and then do it and have a good product and then use that product for public relations, it would go way farther [towards resolving conflict] than all this yakking. (EF3, 195-204, 246-251).

Similarly, “George,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, observed that the tendency of the Forest Service to “tippy-toe around every issue” actually contributes to the atmosphere of conflict in his community. In the following excerpt he is describing an incident that typifies their failure to provide leadership, concluding that their failure to do so has “split this valley” into sides that are “talking about shooting each other;” he stated,

My perception right now is that [the Forest Service] is very weak. They are vacillating. They tippy-toe around every issue – ‘Oh, we don’t want to do anything to make these people over here mad, and we don’t want to make these people over there mad.’ [The Forest Service] is getting it from every side now – but they have done some dumb things. Their effectiveness has been terribly damaged. And their believability comes under fire. They are about the worst I have seen since I went to work for them in 1943. And it hurts me because there are good people working there. They have been battered by the exploiters on the far right and the super fem feelers – the environmentalists – on the left. And they are trying to please them all. [Consequently,] they aren’t pleasing a damn soul! I’ll give you an example so that you’ll understand what I’m talking about. Up here on Peter’s Ridge is a piece of land we call the Jewel Basin Wild Area...It does not qualify [as Wilderness] under the
regulations the way they set up the Wilderness Bill because it doesn’t contain enough acres, so it’s run as a de facto wilderness. Well, it’s close to an expanding area where people are coming in to enjoy this wonderful area. And you know the rest of the story. The snowmobilers had a way to get up there to go snowmobiling. There were a few trees so they kept working until they had kind of a little road there. So then a bunch of ‘em get caught in an avalanche and they get killed – including a little boy. In response, the [name of an environmental group] came in there – and they lost a lot of credibility with me over this – and they got direct permission from the Forest Service to go up and block the snowmobilers’ trail into the area. Well, it looks like the Battle of the Argon Forest. They went in there with front-end loaders and stuff and dug big ditches, cut big trees, and threw them in. It looks like hell! The Forest Service – a responsible person in the Forest Service wouldn’t even – shouldn’t even – consider turning the blocking of a trail over to some – to some environmental outfit – I don’t care [who they are]. Very poor leadership. Well, that has just split this valley. And people have gotten all emotional about it. And, jeez, they are talking about shooting each other, and it’s just stupid. But anyway, that’s the type of thing I’m talking about - the Forest Service showed very poor leadership – very poor thinking. (RF2, 261-273, 277-310, 429-434, 441-444, 447).

Finally, in the last of the three excerpts “John,” an informant from the Advocacy Ideal Type, also indicates that the failure of the Forest Service to provide “visionary leadership” has “paralyzed” his community; he stated,

My experience is that if you come up with positive solutions based on a proper stewardship vision in this whole, what I call new paradigm, people pretty much follow in line with it once they understand it. I say even the zero-cutters. But their needs to be leadership. You can’t allow management by mob rule because you got a lot of mobs out there. You got a lot of people that are pulling in different directions and in the absence of clear vision and a clear strategy for achieving that vision, you’re going to get paralysis which is where we are now. The public has really been involved. I mean, there’s all kinds of public input opportunities, but it’s not structured in a way that adds up to anything, so people become even more frustrated and even more angry and their input is even more destructive and unhelpful. That’s where we are right now...So the Forest Service needs to articulate a clear vision. If you just sort of throw the doors open and say, ‘Okay, you tell us what you think,’ without providing any [structure] it doesn’t do any good...But they don’t. And another problem is that they’re full of excuses. You know, rather than having a ‘can do’ attitude, and putting forward a vision and saying, ‘This is where we need to go - we’re going to
take the ball and run with it,’ [they] say, ‘We’ve got so many laws and there’s so much red tape we have to go through, and our budget is only this big.’ It’s sort of like whining - it’s poor me. And they whine about what victims they are of all these regulations that they have to comply with and how unfair it is that their budget has been dropped. And that’s not a very constructive solution to it as far as I’m concerned. There is a way out of all this conflict, but it’s going to require leadership. Whining is not going to get you there, ‘Poor me’ is not going to get you there. Visionary leadership is what’s going to get you there. And it’s possible. We’ve been on the ground, and when you have the Montana Wilderness Association and Montana Logging Association basically saying the same thing, why can’t you get there? (AF4, 229-251, 256-266).

D. Sources of Resource Related Conflict: A Summary

In summary, the data support the underlying assumption of this investigation, which states that resource related conflict in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests is primarily the result of distorted communication and dysfunctional relationships. Specifically, the third common ground theme to emerge from the data indicates that there are three primary sources of conflict in these communities. First, informants indicated that distorted communication - or in many instance a total lack of communication - between members of the various stakeholder groups in these communities has inhibited the discovery of common ground. Consequently, conflicts are very often the result of perceived, rather than actual differences in their values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests. Secondly, informants indicated that dysfunctional relationships are a common source of resource related conflicts, particularly between the public and resource professionals. Finally, informants concluded that the failure of resource professionals to provide visionary leadership has contributed to a chaotic environment in these communities in which conflict flourishes.
Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this final section is four-fold. First, to discuss the nature of the relationship between the results and the underlying assumptions, theoretical framework, and problem statement of this investigation. Secondly, to discuss how the results contribute to the body of knowledge related to conflict and collaboration, particularly how they contribute to the development of a collaborative social assessment. Third, to discuss the boundaries or limitations of this investigation. And finally, to provide resource professionals with specific recommendations regarding the application of the results.

I. The Nature of Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Consistent with the underlying assumptions of this investigation, the results suggest that informants perceive the conflict in these communities to be primarily social in nature. Further, they perceive that irresolvable conflict is not inevitable, and that collaborative approaches to conflict resolution can be used successfully in many instances.

A. Is Conflict Inevitable?

As Wondolleck (1995) suggested, the results (Theme I) indicate that irreconcilable resource-related conflict is not inevitable. In fact, while informants acknowledged that “some people will never be happy – no matter what,” they repeatedly characterized most of the conflict in their communities as either a “great shrieking and hollering from a point of ignorance,” or as an “unnecessary” and “fabricated acrimony” that is “created by the conflict industry.” The point informants seemed to be making is that, “Yes, there will always be some level of conflict – “real” or otherwise - over the use
and management of National Forests, but it is not appropriate to view irreconcilable conflict as a foregone conclusion.”

B. Is Conflict “Socially” Based?

Consistent with much of the Human Dimensions and social theory literature related to conflict, the results (Theme III) indicate that informants perceive resource-related conflict in these communities as being primarily “social” in nature. By “social” they were suggesting that conflict is generally related to “values,” “ineffective communication,” and “dysfunctional relationships”, rather than cognitive differences or disputes over “the facts.” Specifically, they identified three primary sources of conflict. First, informants perceived differences in values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests to be a primary source of conflict; this is what Duane (1997) referred to as “values” conflict. Secondly, informants perceived dysfunctional relationships, particularly between the public and resource professionals as being a primary source of conflict; this is what Duane (1997) referred to as “relational” conflict. Finally, poor leadership from resource professionals with respect to resource planning, decision-making, and management was identified as a third primary source of conflict; this would also be classified as “relational” conflict within Duane’s (1997) scheme.

More specifically, the results indicate that informants perceive both the “fabricated acrimony” and “real” conflict in their communities as being “socially” based. Informants perceived that “fabricated acrimony” is “created” and “used” by “extremists” to gain control of resource planning and management by simultaneously swaying public opinion in their favor and “keeping the Forest Service off-balance.” In other words, “extremists” are continuously stirring the pot in order to make their “side” look good and
the "other side" bad, and to keep the Forest Service and other resource management agencies on the defensive. This is precisely how Marx described conflict. Marx concluded that conflict is the result of "purposive rational action," or the "calculated pursuit of self interest" in the struggle for control of limited resources, including money, land, and power (Ritzer, 1996).

Similarly, the results suggest that what the informants perceive as "real" conflict is primarily socially based. As noted above, informants indicated that actual or perceived differences in values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests, dysfunctional relationships, and poor leadership from resource management agencies are the three primary sources of resource-related conflict in their communities. This is precisely how Habermas described conflict. Habermas (1984) indicated that "ineffective communication and dysfunctional relationships are the primary sources of human conflict.

C. Is Collaboration the Solution?

Lastly, the results (Theme III) indicate that informants perceive collaborative approaches to be a viable option for the resolution of many resource-related conflicts. Specifically, informants indicated that while no approach is going to "satisfy everyone" or every problem, that having a collaborative philosophy and concentrating on "being sincere" and "building relationships" would go a long ways towards "taking the wind out of the sails of extremists" and resolving many conflicts. In other words, just as Selin and Chavez (1995) stated, informants understand that collaboration is not a "panacea," but that "collaborative approaches are powerful tools that can be used to resolve many resource-related conflicts."
D. Are Resource Professionals Stuck in the Progressive Era?

In addition to supporting the underlying assumptions of this investigation, the results (Theme II – III) suggest that resource management agencies are in fact still generally operating within the framework of the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm. First, the data indicate that informants perceive resource professionals (i.e. the Agency Discourse Community) to value National Forests from a single use perspective (Theme II, Table 2). For example, “timber beasts” are perceived to value “timber,” and “ologists” are perceived to value “their resource of ‘special interest’ to the exclusion of all others.” As “Matt” noted, “ologists” look at National Forests and all they value is “their resource of special interest.” They are single-minded, “it’s all theirs, all theirs, all theirs - they don’t care about the system” or the emotional, spiritual, symbolic, or other “hard to define” values and uses that the public assigns to the Forest. Secondly, while informants perceive that resource professionals view humans as being “dependent” on Forest resources, they perceive that resource professionals do not acknowledge the public as co-stewards of National Forests (Theme II, Table 3). Third, informants perceive that resource professionals believe that resource planning and management are fundamentally “technical” in nature rather than “participatory” (Theme II, Table 4). Finally, informants perceive that resource professionals appropriately, in their opinion, rely on “science” when conducting resource planning and management, but that they do not acknowledge the validity of “native wisdom” (Theme II, Table 4). In summary, informants suggested that the values, views, and beliefs of many of the resource professionals in their communities clearly indicate that resource management
agencies are still operating under the Progressive Era model of the Scientific Management paradigm.

II. Contributions of This Investigation

This investigation makes two primary contributions to the body of knowledge related to conflict and collaboration. First, the results have the potential to influence the way resource professionals, academicians, and the public think about collaboration. In particular, they shed new light on what the public thinks about public involvement in resource planning and management and what they expect from resource professionals. Secondly, the results make at least four significant contributions to the development of a collaborative social assessment.

A. What is Collaboration?

First, the results are significant because they present a challenge to resource professionals, academicians and the public to re-evaluate their understanding of the fundamental nature of collaboration. This statement may seem odd - given the fact that collaboration and Ecosystem Management are seemingly side-by-side becoming as synonymous with resource management as Pinchot’s classic definition of conservation and Leopold’s famous Land Ethic – yet it is clear from even a cursory review of the literature that most people are thinking more about collaboration as a technical public process than they are about the fundamental nature of collaboration. In fact, in many circles collaboration has become just another buzzword in a long series of buzzwords that includes common ground, forest health, stewardship forestry, restoration forestry, and sustainability. This assessment may seem rather cynical, yet the results of this investigation suggest that our collective understanding of what collaboration is has not
been fully developed. The problem is that resource professionals almost universally think of collaboration as a method or process. For example, as noted in the Problem Statement, the National Forest System Land Resource Management Planning Final Rule identifies collaborating with the public as an “overriding theme and asks the following questions, “How can we more effectively engage the public? How can the public interest be more effectively assessed? How can we develop long-term collaborative relationships with the public.” And “Are there mechanisms that would enhance our capacity for collaborative stewardship.” These are excellent questions, but they suggest that there is a danger that collaboration may become seen as nothing more than a technical process to be followed in order to meet the legal requirements for public involvement. Many academicians are also guilty of thinking of collaboration almost exclusively as a process. For example, recent studies of collaboration are most often investigations of how to do collaboration – look no further than this investigation – rather than explorations of the fundamental nature of collaboration. This is significant because the results (Theme II, Table 4; Theme III) suggest that collaboration is more than a process. In fact, they suggest that our near obsessive pursuit of “mechanisms” and “models” that tell us how to do collaboration is actually inhibiting our ability to do it. As “Bob” put it, “I’ve been involved in collaborative efforts for 5 years and while we’ve done some good things most of the time we just get stuck in process.” I believe the results suggest that collaboration is fundamentally a type of relationship. As “Steve” observed, there is no “formal process” that will improve our efforts at collaborative management. Rather, he continued, effective collaboration is accomplished by building relationships, and that requires “trusting” people and being “honest” and “sincere.” And for resource
professionals in particular it also means having the "humility" to accept the validity of "local wisdom," and to acknowledge that successful resource planning and management will only happen when they accept the public as fully equal co-stewards. Unfortunately, he concludes that "that's not how the Forest Service has come to define it... We have been beating our heads against the Forest Service wall for years trying to get them to understand this very simple concept (i.e. collaboration is about building relationships). But we continue to get the same bureaucratic, head-in-the-sand, that's not the way we do things around here response."

B. The Public and Public Involvement

Related to these insights about the relational nature of collaboration, the results also shed light on what people are thinking about public involvement in resource planning and management. In particular, the results (Theme III) suggest that the public may not be as adamant about being as intimately and formally involved in resource planning and management as we think they are. Further, for the most part, informants perceive that the public trusts resource management agencies to a much greater extent than would appear at first glance. These conclusions may initially seem preposterous, given the scores of surveys that claim the public is clamoring for more and more access to and control over resource planning and management processes and that they do not trust resource management agencies. Nevertheless, the informants clearly indicated that the public is generally not as interested in actually participating in resource planning and management processes as they are in feeling welcome to participate and feeling valued and appreciated when they do. In fact, informants repeatedly indicated that the number of public hearings and requests for comments is already overwhelming. Specifically, the
results (Theme III) indicate that what the public really wants is better relationships with resource professionals. They do not want another formal process, they want informal, trust-based relationships with the resource professionals in their communities. Further, they want and expect resource professionals to provide strong, visionary leadership in these processes. Informants indicated that while they have their misgivings about the bureaucracy of resource management agencies, by and large, they trust and respect the professionalism and expertise of resource professionals.

C. Developing a Collaborative Social Assessment

In addition to challenging academicians and managers to think more about developing collaborative relationships and less about doing collaborative management, the results also provide a foundation for developing a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm. Specifically, the results suggest who should be involved in a collaborative social assessment, what should be assessed, where the assessment should take place, and, finally, how the assessment should be conducted.

1. Who Should Be Involved In A Social Assessment?

The results provide three primary insights into who should be involved in a collaborative social assessment. First, they suggest that people should be involved in collaborative social assessments. This is not a statement of the obvious, but rather an expression of the informants' deeply felt conviction that collaborative social assessments are relational in nature – that they are about gaining an understanding of the public's true interest in National Forests through honest, heart-felt, unconstrained, intimate discussions. It is also a statement about "who" resource professionals are and "who" the
public is. It is a statement that acknowledges that in addition to being technical and scientific experts, resource professionals are human beings. It requires that they are treated as such – rather than as human “Rock ‘em Sock ‘em dolls.” And it requires that they behave as such – rather than as distant and “arrogant” spectators who simply do their job and then “go home at the end of the day” unaware of and unconcerned that how they do their job affects real people in profound ways. With respect to the public, it is a statement that serves to remind resource managers, scholars, and the public, that communities are comprised of *individuals* – not stakeholder groups. Consequently, resource professionals should carefully consider the specific individuals they would like to have serving as participants in a collaborative social assessment, rather than randomly selecting “X” loggers and “X” environmentalists, or “X” members from any of the other “so-called” polar opposite stakeholder groups that exist in any given community.

Secondly, the results suggest that a collaborative social assessment should *generally* be as inclusive as possible by incorporating input from informants who represent various communities of place, communities of identity and communities of interest at both the local and National level. As “Nathan,” an informant from the Recreation Ideal Type, put it, “*everybody* needs to be included – even somebody from the Safari Club International in New York – because we don’t all drive Fords, and we probably don’t all walk around in the Wilderness.”

The third insight that the results suggest regarding whom should be involved in a collaborative social assessment is actually an exception to the general rule of inclusiveness that was just identified. Specifically, the result suggest that resource professionals should not endlessly beat their heads against the wall begging unresponsive
extremist stakeholder groups to come to the table. Further, they suggest that resource professionals should be prepared to exclude from participation the “black and white” extremists who are “always shrieking and hollering from a point of ignorance.” Finally, the results suggest that resource professionals should actively seek the participation of community leaders who are committed to what this investigation refers to as “communicatively rational” participation and those who are widely respected and recognized as possessing “local wisdom.”

In addition to describing who should be involved in a collaborative social assessment, this investigation provides an exemplar of how they should be selected. As described in the Methods section, the concept of Ideal Types provides a tool for segmenting a community into its relevant parts and ensuring that each part is adequately represented. There are two primary characteristics that distinguish Ideal Types from other approaches. First, it is people based, meaning that it requires resource professionals to think of specific individuals in their communities. In contrast, other approaches generally look no further than the primary stakeholder groups in a community. This is significant because conflict occurs between real people in real places (Duane, 1997) not between the non-existent “average” persons that are generated from random sampling protocols (Shafer, 1969).

The second characteristic that distinguishes Ideal Types as a sampling principle is that it is meaning based. Specifically, in addition to forcing resource professionals to think of specific individuals, it requires them to consider what these real people are saying and what it means. In other words, even though resource professionals might “know” that the “loggers” in their community characterize themselves as “multiple use”
proponents and the “environmentalists” consider themselves to be “conservationists,” it requires that they consider what these terms mean and whether or not there is any overlap or common ground. This is significant because the results of this investigation indicate that there is much common ground to be found even amongst so-called polar opposite stakeholder groups such as the “motorheads” and “Wilderness junkies.” Further, the results and the preponderance of Human Dimensions and Social Theory literature related to conflict indicate that ineffective communication and dysfunctional relationships are the primary sources of resource-related conflict. Therefore, having put forth the effort to understand what real people within a community are thinking and feeling before the social assessment process has even started will provide resource professionals with a foundation of information and meaning that they can build upon to facilitate the effective use and management of National Forests and the resolution of resource-related conflict.

2. What Should Social Assessments Assess?

The results (Theme III) also provide insights into what resource professionals should be looking for when they conduct a social assessment. In one respect, they suggest that resource professionals should not be looking for anything, rather they should be listening. The point is that collaboration and collaborative social assessments should be more than just formal, mechanistic, NEPA-like processes that are governed by a long list of rules. Rather, they should be interactive and dynamic processes of discovery, where resource professionals and the public are learning from one another. The goals of such a process should be to identify the public’s true interest(s) in National Forests and to build positive relationships between the various stakeholder groups within a community and between resource professionals and the public. The results (Theme III) also suggest
that "really listening" to what the public has to say and "being responsive" to that input is a good way for resource professionals to overcome the public's perception that they are only conducting social assessments to "please the higher ups" or to "appease the peasants." This is significant because the informants perceive this type of insincerity to be a primary source of conflict between resource professionals and the public.

On another level the results do suggest two specific content areas that collaborative social assessments should probe. First, as Kahn (1993) suggested, resource professionals should look for common ground (Theme I). This can be accomplished by initially focusing discussions on broad-based interests, such as forest health, and avoiding potentially contentious issues, such as specific timber sales, until a foundation of common ground has been established. Secondly, consistent with the view that most resource related conflicts are the result of distorted communication and dysfunctional relationships (Theme III), resource professionals should probe individuals values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests (as defined in Theme II).

In addition to suggesting that a collaborative social assessment should be viewed more as a "listening" tool than a "looking" tool, the results suggest who resource professionals should be listening to, how they should be listening, and how they can map or otherwise make sense of what they hear. First, informants indicated that resource professionals should be primarily listening to members of the public who are committed to what this investigation refers to as communicatively rational public discourse. In particular, they noted that resource professionals would do well to seek out community opinion leaders who are known and respected as "founts of local wisdom" with respect to both the ecological and social landscape of their respective communities. And that they

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would do equally well to tune out or at the very least turn down the volume on the endless soundtrack of extremist rhetoric. Public discourse is the ongoing process of logical argumentation within a community through which participants reveal their reasoned thoughts, feelings, and ideas. *Communicatively rational* public discourse is said to meet the conditions of “ideal speech,” which requires that speech acts be: 1) comprehensible, 2) “scientifically” true, 3) offered by those who can legitimately speak, and 4) offered sincerely (Duane, 1997).

Secondly, the results suggest *how* resource professionals should be listening or how they can hear the “ongoing, communicatively rational public discourse.” Informants indicated that open houses and public hearings, while necessary, do not count as listening to the public, nor does asking a series of pre-determined canned questions. Rather, listening requires resource professionals to actively engage members of the public in personal, one-on-one, in-depth, unstructured discussions. This investigation used in-depth informant directed interviews (Peterson and Horton, 1995) that were facilitated by an interview guide (Charmaz, 1991; Kvale, 1983) to engage community opinion leaders in these types of discussions. Informants consistently responded favorably to this approach, favoring it by far over public hearings and open houses, which were consistently and repeatedly described as “gladiator matches.” There are two primary benefits of this approach. First they reveal both information and meaning, whereas traditional approaches, including the open house, public hearing, and Likert style attitude surveys, only provide information. Secondly, this approach is simultaneously scientifically rigorous and personal in nature. These benefits are significant because they
address two primary sources of resource-related conflict: ineffective communication and dysfunctional relationships.

Finally, the results suggest how resource professionals can make sense of what they learn from listening to the public. Informants indicated that resource professionals could use what they learn as a basis for “mapping” out what communities “really” look like – a process this investigation referred to as mapping discourse communities. Discourse communities are “real” or “metaphorical” groups of people that are literally or figuratively bonded through similarities in their speech; the boundaries and character of such groups are determined by their communicative practices as well as the social sentiments, shared norms, and cultural values of their members (Swales, 1990).

3. Where Should A Social Assessment Occur?

In addition to providing insights into who should be involved and what should be assessed, the results also suggest that where a social assessment is conducted is a critical detail that should not be overlooked. Specifically, they indicate that a collaborative social assessment should occur “on the ground,” which actually has two meanings and serves two purposes. First, “getting out on the ground,” means that resource professionals should actively engage the public, rather than waiting for the public to come to them. The purpose of actively recruiting participants who will serve as informants in a collaborative social assessment is to demonstrate a sincere interest in working with the public as co-stewards. Secondly, “getting out on the ground” literally means conducting the social assessment in the field, which the results (Theme I) suggest encourages people to “drop their positions” and look at the big picture.
4. **How A Social Assessment Should be Conducted**

Finally, the results provide a number of insights into how resource professionals should actually conduct a collaborative social assessment – each of which are relational in nature. First, the results (Theme III) suggest that resource professionals must demonstrate strong leadership when conducting a social assessment. In other words, they must conduct themselves with “dignity.” They must provide a foundational, science-based vision that can serve as a guiding framework for the assessment – not a predetermined end point. And they must assert themselves in a manner that simultaneously communicates that they sincerely desire to work with the public as co-stewards, and that they will not allow extremists from the conflict industry to dictate the outcome of the assessment or subsequent planning and management decisions. Secondly, the results suggest that when conducting collaborative social assessments resource professionals need to demonstrate a large dose of “humility.” They need to acknowledge that while they are technical and scientific experts that the public is comprised of individuals who possess “local wisdom” that is every bit as essential to the successful management of National Forests as “scientific” knowledge. Lastly, the results (Theme II) suggest that resource professionals need to make a concerted effort to seek the participation of – and forge lasting relationships with - community leaders, whom the data suggest have generally withdrawn from resource planning processes because too often they amount to nothing more than “gladiator matches.” And more broadly they need to use collaborative social assessments as a tool to reach out to the people of the communities in which they work. Resource professionals need to demonstrate that even though they may only be in
their current position for a few years, they care about the resources of the community and they care about the people of the community.

III. Boundaries of Investigation

Having identified the significant contributions of this investigation, and with specific recommendations as to how resource management agencies can apply them yet to come, it seems appropriate to identify the boundaries of this investigation. In particular, there are three issues that bear discussion.

A. What is Common Ground?

First, the issue of emergent themes based on common ground must be addressed. The goal of analysis in this type of investigation is to produce a "valid and common understanding of the data." In other words, the results are offered as a faithful or valid compilation and summarization of the emergent themes that provide both information and meaning (i.e. understanding). In summary, this investigation identified three emergent themes. Theme I indicates that informants perceive that there is less "real" conflict and more common ground in their respective communities than most people think. Theme II suggests that the social landscape of the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests can be mapped based on people's values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests. And in so-doing that there are three primary groups of people or discourse communities in terms of how people relate to National Forests. Theme III indicates that there are three primary sources of resource-related conflict in these communities, including: 1) actual and perceived differences in values, views, and beliefs about the use and management of National Forests; 2) dysfunctional relationships between stakeholder groups and between the
public and resource professionals; and 3) poor leadership from resource professionals in resource planning and management. In addition to this information, the results provide meaning. For example, with respect to Theme I, the results go beyond simply stating that there is less conflict than most people think, to distinguishing between "real" conflict and "fabricated acrimony." Therefore, the investigator is satisfied that he has in fact produced a "valid and common understanding" that provides both information and meaning.

However, the data lend themselves to additional analyses that were not pursued. In particular, there is much more that could be said about the common ground upon which the emergent themes were based. For example, informants within and across each of the Ideal Types indicated that they value forest health. Further, they offered rich and detailed explanations that indicate that they share a common definition of "forest health." However, informants had different reasons for valuing forest health. As noted in the Results, "Nathan" believed that managing for forest health is important because it enhances the human experience, whether that experience involves consumptive or non-consumptive uses. On the other hand, some informant, such as "Chris" believed that there is intrinsic value in a healthy forest, and that National Forests should be managed for forest health irregardless of whether or not people will derive any additional benefit from said action. This investigation did not offer an analysis of these types of distinctions. As a consequence the results at times may seem to present an overly optimistic characterization of these communities. However, in the end, the decision to truncate the analysis and emphasize common ground was deemed appropriate, given that

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previous approaches to social assessment have entirely failed to "court" the "ethical
community" or common ground (Kahn, 1993).

B. Scale Related Boundaries

The second boundary of this investigation that bears discussion is related to scale.
There are two primary scale related boundaries in this investigation. First, the
investigation was limited to local as opposed to national communities of place, identity
and interest. Secondly, the investigation emphasizes a "neo-Marxist" rather than a
"Marxist" view of conflict (See Literature Review Section I, Part B). In other words,
conflict is largely attributed to "ineffective communication and dysfunctional
relationships (i.e. the inability to practice communicative action), as opposed to cognitive
differences and purposive-rational action (i.e. the "calculated pursuit of self interest).
The results empirically validate this decision. In other words, informants clearly
indicated that the inability of people to practice communicative action is the primary
source of "real" conflict in each of their respective communities. However, the results
also clearly indicate that "Marxist" conflict – what this investigation refers to as "an
unnecessary and fabricated acrimony" is the most visible and prevalent type of conflict.
Specifically, the "shrieking and hollering" of "extremists" in their "calculated pursuit of
self interest" is what gets all the press in these communities. Hence, an argument could
be made that this investigation should have given greater attention to "Marxist" conflict.
In the end, however, the decision was made to focus on "neo-Marxist" conflict or what
the informants referred to as "real" conflict, because it is likely the only type of conflict
that is reconcilable. Or, to paraphrase "John," extremists will never see eye-to-eye -- but
the rest of us, including loggers, conservationists, environmentalists, motorheads and
Wilderness junkies – we could work out most of our differences if we would just talk to one another.

C. Sampling Boundaries

Finally, the ramifications of limiting the study sample to a relatively select group of “pro-collaboration community opinion leaders” that was essentially hand picked by resource management agencies must be addressed.

As previously noted, community opinion leaders were defined as individuals that are committed to making sincere, positive, communicatively rational contributions to resource planning activities and the ongoing public discourse related to the use and management of National Forests. While this is an accepted and theoretically valid definition, equally valid alternative definitions exist. For example, a persuasive argument could be made that many of the potential informants who were disqualified from serious consideration because the Forest Service perceived them to be “radicals” and “extremists” could, in fact, be effective “community opinion leaders” in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests. Specifically, they command the preponderance of media coverage dedicated to resource related issues in these communities, generate large sums of money from fundraisers, enjoy strong support of their mail campaigns, and have an excellent track record of advancing their positions through appeals and litigation.

In the end, however, the study sample was comprised of what the Forest Service perceived to be “pro-collaborative, communicatively rational” community opinion leaders, rather than these potentially “radical” and “extremist” community opinion leaders. As noted in the Introduction and Methods sections this decision was based on
the assumption that if resource professionals are to realize lasting, long-term success in their endeavor to build constructive relationships with the public, they must first learn to do so with those members of the public who are committed to collaborative management.

However, while it is critically important that resource professionals understand the segment of the population that these informants represent, it is also important that reviewers bear in mind whose "story" they are considering when they judge the applicability and utility of the results. In particular, there are three important ramifications of limiting the study sample to community opinion leaders who are essentially "pro-collaboration" that bear discussion. First, because the study sample is comprised of community opinion leaders who are "pro-collaboration" it is not entirely surprising that the results characterize conflict as being primarily social in nature, or that they point to the necessity of developing a collaborative social assessment that is primarily relational in nature. Conversely, had the potential informants who were characterized as "radicals" and "extremists" been incorporated into the study sample it is highly unlikely that they would have characterized the conflict in their community as "an unnecessary acrimony," much less accept responsibility for it, or that they would have endorsed the development of a collaborative social assessment. This does not invalidate the results. For example, it is an important insight for the Forest Service that the informants they identified as "collaborative" do not hold a reciprocal view of the agency.

A second ramification of limiting the study sample to "pro-collaboration community opinion leaders" is that it excludes a critically important segment of the population. Specifically, while the "pro-collaboration" community opinion leaders may represent the segment of the public that resource professionals are most likely to be
successful at understanding and building collaborative relationships with, “radical” and “extremist” community opinion leaders hold a great deal of power in that they could derail any collaborative successes through appeals and litigation. In fact, it is widely accepted as a foregone conclusion that if resource professionals do not find a way to build more constructive relationships with the people they or others perceive as “radicals” and “extremists” that resource planning and management, collaborative or not, will continue to be mired in conflict. Further, it is a pre-requisite of collaborative management that all relevant stakeholders should be welcome to participate.

A final ramification of limiting the study sample in this way is that it may lead to the perception that the values, views, and beliefs of “pro-collaboration, communicatively rational” community opinion leaders are more relevant or important than those of “radical” and “extremist” community opinion leaders. Therefore, this investigation must be viewed as a first step in the process of understanding the “public.”

IV. Recommendations

Bearing these limitations in mind, the results lend themselves to specific recommendations that resource professionals may find useful in managing resource-related conflict in their areas of responsibility. In fact, at the conclusion of a discussion informants were given the opportunity to share any take home messages or suggestions they would like to have passed along to the Forest Service. Informants were encouraged to share their thoughts about how conflict can be resolved, how public involvement can be improved, and what they think can be done to improve relationships within their communities between the various stakeholder groups and the Forest Service. Without exception informants had suggestions, and most often they responded as if they had been
waiting for someone to ask them that question for years. They were quick to respond. Some informants were frustrated, but none of them were angry. All of them, I believe, were sincere. I believe they were sincere in part because they care about their National Forests and they want things to get better - but more than that, they care about the Forest Service and Forest Service employees – most of whom they described as “hard working, caring, smart, dedicated, and good people.” Their suggestions were nearly identical for each of the three questions, so there is a great deal overlap in their responses.

A. Resolving Conflict

Informants repeatedly asked me to remind the Forest Service that, “Yes, there is a lot of conflict,” but recognize that much of it is fabricated. Extremists within the “conflict industry” are responsible for fabricating most of this “unnecessary acrimony”. With respect to “real” conflict, informants wanted me to be sure to remind the Forest Service that there are different sources of conflict, and that conflict can be the result of actual or perceived differences. With respect to each type of conflict – fabricated or real, actual or perceived – their recommendations for resolving conflict are the same:

1. The Forest Service Must Provide Leadership

Informants were very clear about whom they were referring to when they spoke of the Forest Service, and the type of leadership they expect from the Forest Service. When informants spoke of the Forest Service it was almost always in reference to the local staff – those on the District or the Forest. Informants rarely spoke of the Regional Office or the Washington Office, although they realize that the local offices will receive direction from “upstream.” Informants expect the Forest Service to demonstrate leadership by:

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A. Developing an internal vision for the future of their National Forest based upon the best available science.

B. Developing strategies that will make that vision a reality.

C. Consciously seeking out and partnering with community leaders who can assist with the refinement of the vision and strategy by contributing "native wisdom."

D. Taking this refined vision and strategy to the public for comment and further revision.

E. Clearly and consistently articulating the resultant vision and strategy.

2. The Forest Service Must Communicate More Effectively

Informants shared several observations about how the Forest Service communicates. First, they observed that the Forest Service rarely communicates. The Forest Service is a "silent giant." Most of what the public knows about the Forest Service comes from "extremist" rhetoric or negative media coverage. Informants likened the Forest Service to a Rock 'em Sock 'em Doll – not only because the Forest Service is taking a beating from every side, but because they silently take the beating.

Secondly, when the Forest Service does communicate what is said and what the public hears is not the same. There are two reasons for this. First, the Forest Service has its own language. Informants observed that the Forest Service communicates in a vague almost philosophical manner, using words like "forest health" and "restoration forestry." Nobody really knows what those words mean. Or worse, they use what the public generally perceives as code words, such as "vegetation manipulation" and "habitat alteration." These code words cause the public to be distrustful of the Forest Service. The second reason that the public isn't hearing what the Forest Service is saying is because there is a lack of follow through. For example, informants observed that there is...
a lot of "yakking" about Ecosystem Management — another term that has no apparent meaning — but they aren’t seeing it happen on the ground. To make matters worse the lack of follow through is justified by a lot of "poor me" excuses, and complaining and whining about shrinking budgets, increased demands, and a conflicting morass of rules and regulations. Informants didn’t pull any punches in their observations about how poorly they feel the Forest Service communicates - which is not to say that they were unsympathetic to the plight of the Forest Service - and they were just as direct in making recommendations. Informants recommend that the Forest Service should:

A. Speak for itself. Don’t allow extremists to paint your portrait or set your agenda.

B. Communicate that you are human (but no "whining") — What do you appreciate about National Forests?

C. Communicate in-person, one-on-one, and on the ground.

D. Communicate through various media, especially television (i.e. Wildlife Minutes by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks).

E. Communicate with and through community leaders — not just those who are "official" leaders, but folks behind the scene who have "native wisdom."

F. Communicate your successes — especially collaborative initiatives.

G. Communicate that people, relationships, and communities are important. This is best accomplished through reflective listening.

H. Communicate using plain language.

I. Communicate through your actions — did you do what you said you would?

J. Communicate often.

B. Improving Public Involvement

Informants shared several reasons why they feel current public involvement
strategies are ineffective. First, most people are angry, confused or afraid when they show up to a public hearing or an open house. Informants concluded that in large part this is due to the fact that the Forest Service has either failed to provide visionary leadership, or they have been ineffective in communicating with the public.

Another reason current strategies are ineffective is related to format. Informants observed that issues related to Forest management are extremely complicated and require a lot of discussion. Unfortunately, public hearings don’t provide an opportunity for discussion.

Finally, informants concluded that the primary reason current public involvement strategies are ineffective is related to the attitude of the Forest Service. One concern is that the Forest Service is perceived not to value what the public thinks. Further, the Forest Service is seen as treating public involvement as a “burdensome formality that must be endured,” because more often than not the decision has already been made.

Informants concluded that in order to improve public involvement the Forest Service must:

A. Develop alternative formats to supplement current public involvement strategies. It would be especially useful to develop formal or informal Resource Advisory Councils comprised of community leaders – especially those who are recognized as possessing “native wisdom.”

B. Demonstrate a commitment to collaborative planning. Collaborative planning doesn’t mean that the Forest Service must relinquish their responsibility or ultimate control over Forest Planning. It does not necessarily mean that every aspect of planning becomes a joint venture between the Forest Service and the public. It doesn’t necessarily mean that the Forest Service and the public should “compromise” when they are in disagreement. Collaborative planning is all about attitude. Collaborative planning means that you value what the public has to contribute. It means having the humility to accept that there are things you don’t know, and that you need public input. It means embracing “native wisdom.” Collaborative planning is accomplished
by building relationships.

C. **Building Collaborative Relationships**

Informants concluded that the Forest Service could contribute to improved relationships by:

A. Making relationships a priority: schedule time to visit with the public. Make time for one phone call each week and/or lunch once each month.

B. Focussing on people instead of process: relationships are not built in public hearings or through formal mechanisms or models. Building relationships is all about attitude. It is especially important that you demonstrate your sincerity – that you care about and value people and what they think and feel.

C. Facilitating collaborative initiatives that bring the “so-called” sides to the table.

D. Getting people out on the ground. When people are on the ground it focuses their attention on what is “best for the land,” facilitates the identification of common ground, and breaks down stereotypes.

E. Focussing discussions on common “interests” (such as what is best for the land) – instead of “issues” (such as a specific timber sale).

V. **Concluding Remarks**

In conclusion, I believe that this dissertation has the potential to make significant contributions to our collective understanding of the fundamental nature of conflict, “Why we remain stuck in the Era of Conflict,” and how resource professionals can better manage conflict. The essence of this investigation is that in all likelihood we remain stuck in the Era of Conflict because we misunderstand the fundamental nature of resource related conflict, and because we have been looking for the “right,” most technically correct solution. Ironically, while we may have the “right” answer in collaboration, we have also failed to understand the fundamental nature of collaboration. We have assumed that collaboration is mere process. The results suggest that collaboration is
fundamentally relational, and that there is no "right" way to do collaboration. Above all, the results suggest that in "doing" collaboration and in developing a social assessment that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm that resource professionals, academicians, and the public must focus on developing collaborative relationships.
Appendix A: Interview Guide

Goal 1: To characterize the fundamental nature of resource-related conflict

Goal 2: To contribute to the development of a social assessment process that is consistent with the principles of a Collaborative Management paradigm

Objective: To understand the ongoing, communicatively rational public discourse related to the use and management of National Forests by identifying and mapping the relevant discourse communities in the communities of place associated with the Flathead and Helena National Forests

To understand the ongoing, communicatively rational public discourse related to the use and management of National Forests:

1. How long have you lived in this community and what brought you here? (Or for life long residents: What keeps you here?
2. How does the National Forest and the abundance of natural resources factor into your decision to live in this community?
3. How do you use the National Forest?
4. What is it that you most value about the National Forest?
5. How did you come to value the National Forest in that way? Can you recall an experience that shaped your values?
6. Have your values changed over time – in what they look like or how strongly you feel? In what ways? What caused them to change?
7. What about the community – do you think the community as a whole values National Forests in a particular way? How would you describe the community?
8. How do you think the community values were formed? How are they passed along over time?
9. Has the community always valued the National Forest in this way? In no, how has it changed, and what caused it to change?

To identify and understand sources of conflict related to the use and management of National Forests:

1. It is difficult to read the paper these days without seeing something about conflict over the use and management of National Forests. How would you describe the situation?
2. How are you affected by the conflict personally? In what ways do you see or feel the conflict?
3. How does the conflict affect the community? Has it always been that way?
4. What do you think causes the conflict? Can you think of a specific example?
• To identify and describe the discourse communities within a community:

1. What efforts have you made to “pass along” your values related to National Forests?
2. Do you try to influence others, perhaps those who are new in the community or those who have different values? In what ways?
3. Do you identify with any particular group – formal or informal – that advocates for your values and the way you use National Forests? What is the group like? How does it work? Do you have any particularly memorable experiences from being involved in this group – perhaps something you learned or something that made a lasting impression on you?
4. What do you get out of being involved in the group? Do you think it has made a difference in the community? In what ways?
5. Do you feel that distinct groups exist within the community – how are the groups distinct?

• To describe and understand how the groups within the community get along with each other and the Forest Service:

1. Which management agencies within the community are you familiar with? What role do you think they play in managing National Forests. What role do you think they should play?
2. How would you describe your relationship with them? With other groups? How was your initial opinion of the Forest Service/these groups formed?
3. How has it changed? What caused it to change?
4. How would you describe the relationship between the Forest Service and the community/these groups? How are they perceived?
5. Why do you think that is?
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<td>AF4</td>
<td>Wilderness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>AF5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>AF6</td>
<td>Timber, OHV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>AH1</td>
<td>Recreation, snowmobiling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Al</td>
<td>AH2</td>
<td>Timber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>AH3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B: Informant pseudonyms, corresponding three-digit code, and brief statement of their interest in National Forests.
Literature Cited


Bright, A.D., H.K. Cordell, A.P. Hoover and M.A. Tarrant. 2000. Guidelines for Conducting Social Assessments within a Human Dimensions Framework. USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station FS-


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