

Moving from Scattered Projects to Strategic Community Development:

Where is the Forest Service and its Partners?

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Rocky Mountain Region



**North Central Regional Center for Rural Development
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Moving from Scattered Projects to Strategic Community Development: Where is the Forest Service and its Partners?

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The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development is one of four regional rural development centers. NCRCRD combines research and outreach to address five major rural development issues:

1. Economic vitality, creating appropriately diverse and healthy economies.
2. Social viability, identifying and using individual skills and capability in local communities.
3. Community capacity, through building diverse internal and external networks and community flexibility, innovation, and responsibility.
4. Ecosystem health, linking community, agriculture, and natural resources
5. Public policy, identifying policy alternatives at the local, state, and federal levels that can contribute to enhancing the four other issue areas.

NCRCRD is located on the campus of Iowa State University, with partners across the region and nation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community development is a critical piece of the work of USDA Forest Service. There is a general understanding that by dispersing money for community projects, goodwill toward USDA Forest Service increases. But like other project-based federal programs, Forest Service projects do not necessarily add up to create healthy, sustainable communities, and linking community initiatives to both community and regionally determined outcomes is critical in efforts to become more strategic.

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD), working cooperatively with Forest Service Region 2 from November 2003 – September 2004 identified key issues to moving from scattered projects to strategic community development. Three broad questions guided this research. Where is the Forest Service and its partners in terms of strategic community development; what can be done to increase strategic investments in forest communities instead of individual project funding; and what types of training and system building can help the Forest Service and its partners toward these ends?

A questionnaire related to these topics was constructed in consultation with Forest Service, and administered electronically to a sample of Region 2 Forest Service forest supervisors and forest staff with a fifty-three percent rate of return. Fieldwork in southwest Colorado provided additional insight to the guiding questions.

Key training and system issues for the Forest Service RCA Programs in Region 2 identified by NCRCRD include the following.

- Issue:** Forest supervisors do not feel highly knowledgeable about delivery of RCA programs. They unanimously indicate their familiarity with RCA programs is the same or less than with other Forest Service programs. Most are somewhat less or much less familiar with RCA programs and approaches as compared to more conventional Forest Service programs and natural resource responsibilities.
- Issue:** At the field level, grant management activities attached to individual programs remain the focus. This perpetuates the project-based approach and the idea that work with communities itself is project-based. Adding to this is the potential confusion caused when funding from RCA programs for community work with a holistic approach is diverted to fund specific projects.
- Action:** To effectively support communities, forest supervisors and staff need support and training to increase their understanding of how RCA work fits with, and is not superseded by other requirements and initiatives of the agency. Forest supervisors and forest staff need tools and training to integrate RCA work into other agency activities with communities.

Issue: In Region 2 we find many Forest Service employees doing the work of RCA programs and working with communities without these responsibilities included in their job description, or time allocated for these activities. When this is considered in addition to increasing demands on workload faced by all employees in our society, this limits what any given employee is able to do.

Issue: There is a perspective on the part of both forest supervisors and forest staff that the most important thing they can do for communities remains forest resource management. Community strategic planning is not identified as an important activity for communities with whom Forest Service personnel are working.

Action: In the same way that desired community outcomes are institutionalized as community goals, when work with forest communities is institutionalized in the agency it will become a larger portion of job responsibilities for forest supervisors and staff. Community work will become one component of a larger body of work taking place in forest communities in which Forest Service staff members are an integral part.

Issue: Planning that is currently taking place is often agency led and is primarily project or sectoral planning rather than holistic, community-led plans that lead to strategic action.

Action: Forest service staff working with communities can identify how project and sectoral planning efforts can move to community based strategic plans. Resources such as those identified in the bibliography of this report need to be available to both Forest Service staff and forest and grassland communities to support their increased understanding of elements of strategic planning, and the value this has in creating sustainable communities.

I. BACKGROUND

While natural resources are of value to all people, our national forests and grasslands are also home to thousands of rural place-based communities. Since 1905 the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service has been the federal agency responsible for managing natural resources within 191 million acres held as national forests and grasslands (USDA Forest Service 2004). USDA Forest Service work initially focused on efficient management of timber and water resources, ensuring these resources were available to both current and future generations (Cramer et al. 1993).

Over the past century the emphasis and policies of the Forest Service have gone through periods of change and transition (Hirt 1999, Sabatier et al. 1995, Cramer et al 1993). This includes a new emphasis on community and citizen participation and partnerships in forest planning and management (Carr and Halvorsen 2001). Addressing the economic health of these communities has been a Forest Service concern, but largely in terms of economic support through natural resources extraction. Recent Forest Service initiatives such as Rural Community Assistance (RCA) programs placed an emphasis on the well being of communities. Rural community assistance has a goal of fostering and facilitating sustainable community development through community based and community led efforts toward healthy communities, diverse economies, and sustainable ecosystems.

Community development has become a critical piece of the work of U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. While there is a general understanding that dispersing money for community projects increases goodwill toward USDAFS, the role of the Forest Service is greater than just a source of funding. The Forest Service is an integral part of forest communities, with staff members who not only represent the agency, but also live and participate as members of local communities. Like other project-based federal programs, individual Forest Service projects do not necessarily add up to create healthy local communities. Community projects are often only part of any given employee's responsibilities. This is why it is critical to link local projects to both community and regionally determined outcomes if Forest Service rural community assistance efforts are to become more strategic - moving from scattered projects to strategic planning.

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development was asked by the Cooperative Forestry unit of the Forest Service to identify key activities for their staff and others doing community development and implementing RCA programs in and near national forests and grasslands. Central to this work is a move from administering scattered projects to facilitating strategic community planning and development taking into account community capital (human, social, natural, financial, built, political, and cultural). Information was initially collected in the Southern Region (Region 8) of the Forest Service in 2000-01, and provided to the Forest Service in an earlier document. This report discusses the second phase of this research conducted in the Rocky Mountain Region (Region 2) in 2003-04. The Rocky Mountain Region encompasses the states of South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, and Colorado, and includes 11 national forests and seven grasslands.

This report identifies the current situation of strategic community development efforts of the Forest Service and its partners in Region 2. Three broad questions guide the research.

- I. Where are the Forest Service and its partners in terms of strategic community development?
- II. What can be done to increase strategic investments in forest communities instead of individual project funding?
- III. What types of training and system building can help the Forest Service and its partners toward these ends?

Within these broad themes, several specific areas are examined and reported here.

- a. Delivery and program management mechanisms in place.
- b. Partners in delivery of RCA programs
- c. Linkages to local action plans and planning.
- d. Line managers' knowledge, attitudes and practice related to Forest Service supported community development, including support given to local coordinators.
- e. Long-term outcomes of community development activities and projects.
- f. Mechanisms of accountability for project outputs and outcomes.
- g. Overall strategic planning and measurement.
- h. Key training and system issues to be addressed.

This report summarizes research activities undertaken by NCRCRD from November 2003 through September 2004. It is provided to the Forest Service as a tool for future action, both in Region 2 and other areas of the country. In addition to the direct application to Forest Service programs, it can inform other agencies, organizations, and the general public of a methodology for determining the level of strategic action, and considers strategies for moving people and organizations from administering scattered projects to accomplishing strategic rural community development.

II. NATURAL RESOURCES, FOREST COMMUNITIES, AND THE USDA FOREST SERVICE

Natural resource-based industries such as mining, agriculture, fishing, and forest products have been central to providing income for rural residents in the United States. The dependence on natural resources influences all sectors of community life, as they are dependent upon the production of a specific natural resource commodity (Krannich and Luloff 1991). Because resource-dependent communities find themselves vulnerable to the impacts of industry fluctuations, changes in technology, and changes in federal and state natural resource policies, they have a history of economic insecurity (Cramer et al. 1993, Krannich and Luloff 1991, Flora 1990).

A. Forest Communities and the USDA Forest Service

For the past century, the USDA Forest Service has managed millions of acres of national forest and grassland, home to thousands of communities that have historically been dependent on natural resource extraction. As resource-dependent forest communities have searched for ways to diversify their economies, there has been a concurrent shift in Forest Service priorities consistent with local development initiatives and changing natural resource laws and policies. In 1990 the Forest Service launched "Working Together for Rural America," a rural development strategic plan focused on "greater internal coordination, greater cooperation with other public and private entities, and greater emphasis on being part of community-based activities." It provided a focus through which a variety of programs, methodologies, and partnerships work together toward new ways of assisting rural communities, natural resource-based businesses, and community-based non-profits. Authorities in the 1990 Farm Bill directing the Forest Service to provide greater direct assistance to rural communities affected by changing natural resource policies enhanced the efforts under the plan. In October of 2000 a revised and updated national plan was released for a wide range of Forest Service Economic Action Programs, including Rural Community Assistance (RCA) programs. The new plan includes integration of rural economic, social, and ecological concerns and opportunities with Forest Service planning, decision making, and stewardship.

Since the introduction of the 1990 plan, the Forest Service approach to rural community assistance has been based on community needs, as opposed to more conventional approaches that deliver a "program" whether or not a community's needs match the program. The newer, holistic, Forest Service approach begins with the community and its needs, then uses funded programs, associated technical assistance, and other tools to help the community build its own community development efforts. One component of this approach is a focus on building relationships between the Forest Service and communities, using multiple community partners and local action teams. The role of the Forest Service becomes more than just a source of funding for local projects.

The Forest Service presence in rural communities is significantly different from many other federal and state agencies. The Forest Service is an integral part of forest communities, with 30,000 staff members (USDA Forest Service 2004) who not only

represent the agency but also live and participate as members of these local communities. And similar to public values and legislative shifts (Hirt 1999), a shift in priorities has also been noted among new Forest Service line officers over the past three decades from commodity uses (primarily timber) to environmental values and multiple-uses (Cramer et al. 1993). This can impact how programs and policies of the agency are implemented at the local level.

The Forest Service has been challenged with reaching its natural resource management objectives in a continually changing socio-political environment, with mixed success. Critics suggest the agency has not been effective in managing multiple uses, managing resources in a sustainable manner, and maintaining ecological integrity (Hirt 1999). This may reflect the hierarchical organization of the agency, or the focus on “expert-driven natural resource management (p. 122)” (Baker and Kusel 2003). It’s also been suggested that agency-community relationships have been largely based in formal comment periods that have alienated community participation and resulted in lawsuits between the Forest Service and stakeholder groups (Frentz et al. 1999).

Effective natural resource management in national forests and grasslands is dependent on forest communities. But as Baker and Kusel (2003) have pointed out, there is a breakdown between the RCA programs and resource management activities in the national forest system. One reason for this is the culture and organization of the Forest Service that results in a lack of coordination at the field level between State and Private Forestry-Cooperative Forestry and National Forest System programs. A potential solution is integrating Cooperative Forestry programs (particularly rural community assistance) into the mission of the National Forest System, rather than viewing this as a secondary set of concerns for public land managers.

Carr and Halvorsen (2001:108-9) explore the new emphasis on collaborative decision making with local communities as partners in public and forestland management. They point to four premises mutual to community development and public participation: the value of local decision making, the value of locally appropriate solutions, the practice of participatory democracy, and developing integrated and sustainable forest management alternatives.

According to Carr and Halvorsen, local decision making is valuable in several ways. Local citizen positions regarding resource management may not be as extreme as those of either interest groups or public agency personnel. When local residents participate in decision-making processes, they move from consumers to citizens, increasing community civic engagement. This empowers communities to be involved in future decision making (Carr and Halvorsen 2001). Locally appropriate solutions are best identified when there is strong local participation in decision making. Appropriate solutions are contextual – and it’s the local residents who best know and understand that context. It’s also suggested that solutions that take into account the local context are more innovative than generic solutions (Brandenburg et al. 1995).

Participatory democracy has been part of Forest Service policies since the 1970s and 80s, but with little evidence that public input has had an impact on decisions made by the agency (Carr and Halvorsen 2001). It is suggested, however, that those at the policy level of the Forest Service are slowly increasing their understanding of the value of public participation as a political, social, and economic process (Carr and Halvorsen 2001). While the previous three arguments for a community-based approach to public

forest management are process-based, the final argument made by Carr and Halvorsen is grounded in decision-making outcomes. Developing integrated and sustainable forest management alternatives is part of a new emphasis on the coherence of community well being, ecosystem sustainability, and citizen participation.

B. Community Capitals and Forest Communities

Moving to collaborative work with communities and strategic community planning includes a change in the way success is measured. Success has traditionally been measured on a project basis, with goals rooted in specific inputs, activities, and outputs. Inputs are resources allocated for a specific endeavor; for example, the amount of funding raised. Activities are what happens - who, what, where, and in what ways. Outputs are what result from inputs and activities. These are the reasons behind the activities - the future desired conditions and global measures that serve as long term institutionalized goals. Outcomes drive strategic planning, and while specific individuals, inputs, activities, and outputs may change, community outcomes remain the same. Long-term strategic community planning is based on outcomes that remain the same over time, driving the inputs and activities.

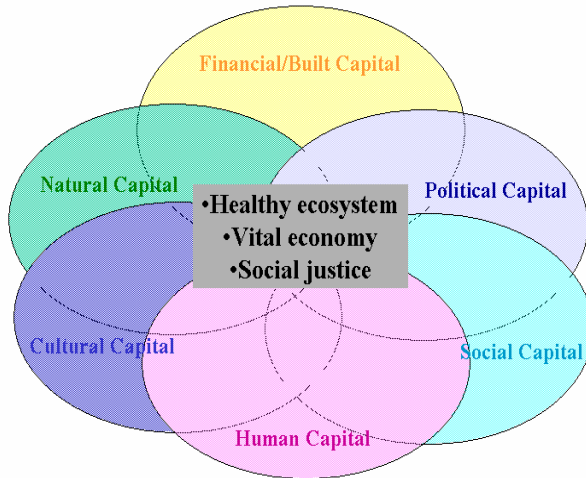
Moving from scattered projects to strategic planning is focused on initiatives that increase community capitals. All communities, whatever their level of poverty or isolation, have resources that can be consumed, stored, or invested. When these community resources are invested to create new resources, we call them "capital" (Flora, Flora, and Fey 2003). Folke and Berkes (1998) have defined capital as "a stock of resources with value embedded in its ability to produce a flow of benefits." In other words, when resources are consumed they lose their future value to the community. When they are stored they have value for future generations but not in the present. But when resources are invested, they create ongoing community benefit - now and in the future.

Sociologists have differentiated the forms of capital found within communities. Flora, Flora, and Fey (2004) define these capitals as human, social, natural, financial, built, political, and cultural.

- Human capital includes our formal education and education picked up through time; skills; health; values; and leadership. While human capital is mobile, it sometimes connects us to a particular place.
- Social capital is mutual trust, norms of reciprocity, collective identity, and a sense of working together toward a shared future. We see two types of social capital in communities - bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to multiple linkages that encourage trust and enforce norms with the community, and bridging social capital refers to single-purpose linkages outside the community. Where there is bonding social capital there are a few families and people who run everything in town. There are other families with strong ties, but without significant power. Those without power will continue to receive benefits if they don't rock the boat. Ties to the outside are limited, and controlled by a gatekeeper or boss. This is a patron-client relationship of tight, exclusive networks, high boundary maintenance, and a single answer focus. Where there is bridging social capital there are a lot of different groups who are connected or networked, and also connected to the outside with multiple ties. These are open, flexible, permeable boundaries,

where there is a legitimization of alternatives. In places where there is low bridging and low bonding social capital the rich solve problems through financial capital. The poor have few options. This often occurs in rural areas. Where there is low bonding social capital but high bridging social capital community change is driven by goals of outsiders, often mediated through local bosses. Where there is high bonding social capital but low bridging social capital the community resists change and groups within the community often don't cooperate or trust each other. And where there is high bridging and high bonding social capital, community change is driven by community-determined goals and linked to external resources.

Figure 1: Community Capitals



- Financial capital is the debt capital, investment capital, tax revenue, savings, tax abatement, grant funds, and all financial tools that can be used by communities to make things happen.
- Financial capital is also converted to built capital, such as housing, sewers, water systems, factories, day care centers, roads, etc.
- Natural capital includes the air, water, soil, bio-diversity, landscape, and products from the land. The best way to

conserve a community's natural capital is to convert it to other forms of capital in the community of place (Flora 1999).

- Cultural capital refers to the values and beliefs that have both economic and non-economic implications. Cultural capital is the filter through which people interpret their lives and the world. It is transmitted to subsequent generations and is part of socialization of new residents in the community.
- Political capital is the ability of one segment to influence the distribution of resources to the entire group or community. Power, organization, and connections are all components of political capital

These seven community capitals are not ends in themselves, but rather, lead to a healthy ecosystem, vital economy, and social equity (Figure 1). Forms of community capital can also be converted, or invested, into other forms of capital. For example, human capital can increase the social capital of a community, which in turn can increase financial or built capital. Social capital and financial capital can increase the natural capital of a community. Investing community resources impacts not just one form of capital, but potentially increases all forms of capital. Sustainability means that investing in any form of capital does not mean depleting any other form¹.

If USDA Forest Service is to effectively move from being perceived as an outside entity to become an integral part of forest communities, it is increasingly important to understand community capitals and outcomes that define a vital community in a healthy

¹ For additional literature on community capitals please see page 34.

ecosystem. To become more strategic, it is crucial to link community and regionally determined outcomes to local projects. At the same time, social justice and equity must be improved for historically resource dependent communities and individuals.

III. METHODOLOGY

The nine regions of the Forest Service are broad geographic areas that usually encompass several states. It is at the regional level where planning, coordination between forests, budgeting, and funding allocation activities in the forests occurs. This provides an appropriate context for inquiry and comparison. Examining the level of community involvement and strategic action by the Forest Service in forest and grassland communities began in 2000 with research efforts in Region 8 – the Southern Region².

The current examination of community involvement and strategic action moves to Region 2 of the Forest Service – the Rocky Mountain Region. This region includes five states with 11 national forests and 7 grasslands. This examination began in 2003, and was completed in August 2004. The previously completed work in Region 8 served as the model for Region 2, with some adaptation. In the Rocky Mountain Region forest supervisors and forest staff identified as working with RCA programs were surveyed. Forest staff includes a diverse group of employees with job titles ranging from public affairs officer to grants and agreement specialist. But in all cases, these staff members were identified as working with rural communities and the RCA programs. In Region 2 we also surveyed state foresters. With a response of only 3, this group is not included in the analysis included here, but will be retained for future analysis.

Themes in the questionnaires (modified for each group sampled) include personal involvement with RCA programs, work with forest communities, use of local partners to deliver programs, activities being completed at the local level, use of Forest Service tools in work with communities, and documentation of community work. To facilitate response, email reminders were sent to the sample and the initial due date was extended.

It is important to note that the Region 2 electronic survey was administered following rescission of RCA funds for the budget year. Both respondents and non-respondents pointed to this as an influence on response rates. Despite this factor, response rates from all three groups exceeded 50 percent. The questionnaires and distribution of responses are included in the appendix.

² The Southern Region includes 13 states and Puerto Rico – a large region including 35 national forests and 2 grasslands. Initial information in Region 8 was collected using an electronic survey of forest supervisors, RCA coordinators and staff identified by forest supervisors as working with RCA programs. The electronic survey had a 59 percent response rate. Preliminary information from the survey was shared with Forest Service staff participating in a two-day workshop, and served as the starting point for group discussion regarding delivery of RCA programs and involvement with forest communities. Discussion expanded and clarified responses from the survey, including ideas for moving toward more strategic planning focused on community capitals that became part of key training and system issues for the Forest Service RCA Programs. An unplanned component of the examination was a community case study. Through the research, Marianna Arkansas was identified as an example of strategic community planning with considerable involvement of the Forest Service. This case study became central to the research in Region 8 as it demonstrated key components of moving to strategic planning and investing natural capital to build other community capitals in sustainable community development.

Working with staff from the Rocky Mountain regional office, an area was identified in southwest Colorado for fieldwork and potential case study. At the outset the intent was to demonstrate key components of moving to strategic planning as part of sustainable community development. In the final analysis, however, the field work best identifies examples of what is happening in the region in terms of planning and work with communities. After identifying the five-county region for fieldwork, researchers familiarized themselves with the area using scholarly sources, government documents, community and county government web-sites, and review of the many research endeavors previously completed by government and university sources. Discussions were initiated with several individuals in the five-county area identified by Forest Service and university sources as key informants. Fieldwork was completed in March and September 2004. Two researchers completed interviews with 26 individuals identified through a snowball sample process. Interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to over an hour. Interviews were completed until themes became repetitive, and further contacts would not have substantially contributed to the findings. A copy of the interview questions is identified in Table 2. Participant-observation in the area and review of public documents related to on-going development activities in the forest and communities were also completed during the time in the field.

Due to funding limitations within Region 2, it was not possible to bring Forest Service staff together for a regional workshop to discuss preliminary survey responses. An alternative activity agreed to by all parties was presenting a conference paper summarizing findings from the research in southwest Colorado at the 2004 State of the San Juans Conference, a regional gathering of community members and scientists organized by the Mountain Studies Institute. In addition, as part of the agreement between NCRCRD and the Forest Service, a paper was prepared and presented at a Natural Resources Interest Group session of the 2004 Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society. Both papers are included in the appendix.

IV. MOVING FROM SCATTERED PROJECTS TO STRATEGIC PLANNING IN REGION 2

This section summarizes key findings of the research. It addresses each of the three guiding questions, and specific areas within each of these questions.

A. Where is the Forest Service and its partners in terms of strategic community development?

We began our examination with the first guiding question – where is the Forest Service and its partners in terms of strategic community development? To clarify this we looked at a set of questions exploring the work forest supervisors and other staff are doing with rural communities and RCA programs. Responses suggest forest supervisors and forest staff are clearly involved with rural forest and grassland communities. Eighty-five percent of forest supervisors indicate they personally work with communities; all forest supervisors have staff working with communities; and all responding forest staff are working with communities.

1. Delivery and program management mechanisms in place.

Work with Communities

Forest staff working with communities report active relationships with both individual communities and groups of communities. They regularly work with 1-5 (50%) or 6-10 (25%) individual communities or small groups of communities (four or fewer communities). Fifty percent report actively working with 1-5 large groups of communities (five or more communities).

While most forest supervisors and all responding forest staff are working with communities, when asked about the amount of time they specifically spend on RCA program work, most (86%) of the forest staff report spending less than 20 percent of their time on this work. And within their RCA work, the mean percent of time working with communities is 13 percent. What this means for forest staff doing this work is an average of eight hours or less each week devoted to RCA programs, with one hour or less each week devoted to RCA work with communities. In contrast, they report spending twice as much time each week documenting RCA projects and nearly three times as much time on RCA grant-related paperwork. Eighty percent of forest supervisors indicate that for those employees with RCA work in their position description, the portion of their job designated for those responsibilities is realistic for the level of work required to do the job effectively.

We also wanted to know if the provision of assistance to communities is changing. Forest staff were asked to indicate how the number of employees at the forest level doing this work compares to the situation five years ago. Responses suggest the number of forest employees providing technical assistance to communities in addition to the respondents has remained the same (67%) or increased (33%) compared with five years ago. The mean number of other forest employees involved with this work is seven, with a range of 0 to 20. While this means that in some forests only one or two

employees are providing technical assistance to rural communities, in other forests there are as many as 21 people doing this work. It is also important to note there were no reports that Forest Service staff providing assistance to communities had decreased over the previous five years.

Forest supervisors report that communities in their forests have been connected to a variety of Forest Service initiatives. Rural communities in Region 2 forests have been involved in the National Fire Plan (100%), reduction of invasive species (83%), collaborative stewardship (83%), Forest Plan revision (67%), and small diameter utilization (67%).

Forest supervisors were also asked about the impact RCA programs have had on the relationships between forest service and forest communities. All supervisors indicate that relationships with local communities have not changed over time with the advent of RCA programs.

Familiarity with Forest Service Publications

We asked forest supervisors about their familiarity with several Forest Service materials related to work with communities. There was little familiarity with the “Working Together” tabloids, “A Strategic Plan for the 1990’s: Working Together for Rural America”, or regional or national web sites. There was no familiarity with “Toolkit for Transitions.” But 50 percent of the supervisors were familiar with “Working Together for Rural America: 2000 and Beyond”.

Another opportunity to learn more about RCA programs is an RCA Partnership Conference. Yet none of the forest supervisors report having attended a conference, and most of the forest staff (80%) had not attended.

Program Management

Forest staff were asked about the tools they use in managing their work with communities. Most (60%) are using the web-based tool EAP-PMT to document work with communities and 67 percent have community partners who are using EAP-PMT. Of other types of program management tools, only paper files and documents (handwritten notes, forms, etc.) and Forest Service electronic files/documents (i.e. FS615 system) are currently used by more than half of the respondents. The majority of respondents do not currently use other spreadsheet and database files.

Forest Supervisors were asked about program management related to RCA programs. In questions specific to the types of activities completed by their RCA and field staff working with communities, 100 percent of forest supervisors responding indicate grants management, developing new partnerships, and other program management are important. Technical assistance to communities (83%), strategic planning assistance (50%), and documentation, assessment/evaluation, and reporting of program effectiveness (83%) were also identified as important by half or more of respondents.

We then asked forest supervisors to identify the two *most important* types of program management for those employees responsible for RCA programs. Grants management was identified most often (67%) followed by developing new partnerships (50%). All other types of program management activities received only one or two responses.

Forest supervisors were asked to identify their own role in supporting RCA programs. Their open-ended responses overwhelmingly identify a role for supervisors in working with communities to identify mutually beneficial projects and supporting and developing partnerships. Only one respondent indicated this was a responsibility of district line officers. In another question related to this, 50 percent of those responding indicate RCA programs have affected their management style or decision process.

Annual Appropriations Authority

One opportunity for forests is the annual appropriations authority. This allows all Forest Service appropriations to be used for technical assistance to communities, and interactions with communities. We asked forest supervisors if their forests take advantage of this authority, and 5 of 6 supervisors who responded to the question indicate they do take advantage of this opportunity.

2. Line supervisors' knowledge, attitudes and practice related to FS supported community development, including support given to local coordinators

Job Descriptions and the RCA Field Coordinator Assignment

In Region 2 there is one individual designated as the RCA regional program coordinator. In addition, there are individuals working on each of the forests with RCA field coordinator responsibilities, although for none of these individuals is this designation their actual job title. In addition, most forest supervisors (67%) suggest there are other forest employees, other than individuals designated as RCA field coordinator, who are familiar with RCA programs. All forest supervisors responding also note they have employees not designated as the RCA field coordinator who are actively involved in technical assistance or other interactions with rural communities. This is consistent with the various job titles found among the sample identified by the Forest Service as completing RCA work with communities.

Responses point out that only 37 percent of the responding forest staff members completing RCA work actually have the RCA field coordinator assignment for their forest in their job description. And when RCA work is part of an employee's job description, whether or not they are the RCA field coordinator it may not be the largest portion of their responsibilities. In the Rocky Mountain Region, all respondents with RCA work in their job description had less than 20 percent of their time designated for these responsibilities. When forest staff reports of actual percent of time spent on RCA work is compared to the job description percentages, we note that these percentages are accurate. Only one respondent indicated actually spending more than 20 percent of their time on RCA work. So when these responsibilities *are* included in job descriptions, the time allocated appears to be accurate. However, it's important to emphasize that for 63 percent of staff that are completing RCA work there is no time officially designated for these responsibilities. And fifty percent of forest supervisors indicate they don't know if RCA responsibilities are included in position descriptions for those individuals designated as forest RCA field coordinators.

We wanted to know if having RCA responsibilities included in the job description had a relationship with other variables being examined. While the sample size is not large enough to draw significance, there are some items of note. The one individual in the group of forest staff who reports spending more than 20% of their time on RCA work does not have the RCA field coordinator assignment. The individuals who spend the greatest amount of time documenting RCA projects do not have the field coordinator

assignment. And the two respondents who have attended an RCA Partnership Conference do not have the RCA field coordinator assignment in their job description.

In terms of percent of time working with communities, there is a negative relationship with having the RCA field coordinator assignment in the bottom two quartiles (0-15% and 20-30% of time spent working with communities). For employees spending more than 30% of their time working with communities, there were no differences between those with and those without the field coordinator responsibilities in their job description. When we look at the percent of time spent working with partners in delivery, we see the importance of assigned time. The bottom three quartiles provide a similar picture to that of work with communities, with those without the RCA field coordinator assignment in their job description spending the least amount of time working with community partners. However, in the top quartile a different picture emerges. Those spending the greatest amount of time working with partners do not have the RCA field coordinator assignment in their job description.

Familiarity with RCA Programs

Forest supervisors were asked about their own previous RCA program responsibilities. While 50 percent of forest supervisors in Region 2 have previous RCA responsibilities or interactions, there was no relationship identified between this variable and any of the other variables explored. Most notable is the level of familiarity forest supervisors have with RCA programs, where there was not a significant difference between those with an RCA background and those without an RCA background. In both categories, all respondents indicated their familiarity with RCA programs was about the same or less than with other forest service programs, and two-thirds of forest supervisors indicate they are somewhat less or much less familiar with RCA programs and approaches as compared to the more conventional Forest Service programs and natural resource responsibilities. One respondent seemed to recognize this, and noted “there is more I could do and I need to learn more about the various program opportunities myself. Things are changing rapidly and there is lots I don’t know that might be available.”

Interaction with RCA Field Coordinators

Forest supervisors in Region 2 suggest their level of interaction with RCA field coordinators is moderate (50%) to low (33%). They are split on giving direction to forest line or staff officers regarding use of or support to the RCA programs on the forest with 50 percent indicating they do this, and the other half indicating they do not.

When we asked forest supervisors what they perceived as the most important thing they could do to support RCA programs, their responses focused on their individual work with communities and organizations of communities. No forest supervisor’s response included reference to support or training of field coordinators or other forest staff.

Evaluation of RCA Field Coordinators

Forest supervisors were asked how the RCA field coordinators are evaluated on their performance in this area of work. It has already been noted that many employees are doing this work without official reference in their job description or a percentage of their time allocated to this work. No respondents indicated RCA field coordinators are evaluated on elements specific to community work. There was an almost even split between performance being evaluated similar to other duties, and “performance in RCA

programs is not a factor in performance evaluation due to the small percentage of time devoted to RCA work.”

Regional Office Role

The role of the regional office of the Forest Service was noted in open-ended responses of forest supervisors. Of those responding, only two included responses to this question. Both responses requested staffing at the regional level for RCA programs. One noted “The RCA program is not particularly visible at those levels with our Regional Leadership Team, except for encouragement to individual units in partnership development, stewardship contracting, and collaboration.”

3. Mechanisms of accountability for project outputs and outcomes.

Outcome Based Evaluation

We asked both forest supervisors and forest staff a series of questions regarding outcome-based evaluation. We first asked forest supervisors if their forest had become involved in outcome-based evaluation. Eighty-three percent indicated it had not, or they did not know if it had or not. Seventeen percent of supervisors were familiar with the Forest Service methodology for measuring outcomes in communities receiving assistance, and also knew how this methodology related to annual accomplishment reporting. Thirty-eight percent of forest staff members were familiar with the Forest Service community-based outcome measurement. In addition, 43 percent of forest staff members are familiar with community assessment techniques in general.

We then asked forest supervisors if there is a process or procedure in place in their forests for collecting information from communities that receive RCA assistance. This is information that is necessary to measure outputs and outcomes. While 50 percent indicated this process is in place, the other 50 percent indicated it was either not in place or they didn't know if they were collecting this information from their forest communities receiving RCA assistance.

Legislative Outreach and Public Participation

Forest supervisors were queried about inclusion of RCA information in legislative outreach and public participation efforts. It is noted that 83 percent of forests incorporate RCA information in public participation efforts and 50 percent include RCA information in legislative outreach.

Nomination for Awards

Another vehicle for recognizing RCA work in forest communities is a national RCA award, chief's award, or honor award. Most forest supervisors responding in Region 2 have not nominated a community, group, Forest Service unit, employee, or other individual for one of these awards. Responses identify one forest supervisor who has made a nomination for a national RCA award, and two supervisors who have made a nomination for a chief's or honor award.

B. What can be done to increase strategic investments in forest communities over individual responses?

There are really only two options for the Forest Service in terms of delivering programs - they can spread a little bit everywhere, or they can make connections with partners inside and outside forest communities. This is the case with RCA programs where there is an emphasis on using partners in delivery, and linking activities to local action teams and action plans.

1. Partners in delivery

By bringing together partners to share community work, additional resources are leveraged. The greater the number of partners, the greater the resources are leveraged. In Region 2, forest staff members are using between two and seven partners to deliver RCA programs, with a mean of 4.3 partners. The agency most often cited as a Forest Service partner is a Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council (88%). Other agencies used often are state forestry (72%), conservation districts (63%) and economic development councils (63%). In Region 2 all forest staff indicate they use partners in delivery.

2. Linkages to action plans and planning

Integrated planning between the Forest Service and communities receiving RCA help is called a local action plan. In the Rocky Mountain Region survey, 17 communities were identified where a local action plan is in place. Thirteen of these community plans are current (five years old or less). Of these plans, seven have a fire or fuels component. In seven communities a plan from another organization is being used in lieu of a local action plan developed by a local action team. Fifty percent of the respondents indicate the forest is working on integrated planning between the Forest Service and communities.

3. Overall strategic planning and measurement.

In both the surveys of forest supervisors and forest staff working with communities a set of questions were asked regarding the five most important activities for *communities* with whom the Forest Service is working. This was a new question not included in the previous region. What responses indicate (Table 1) is a perspective on the part of both forest supervisors and forest staff that the most important thing they can do for communities remains forest resource management. Community fire planning, community-wildland interface work, and fuels reduction were cited most often as important activities. Of note is community strategic planning, which was identified by only two respondents as an important activity for communities with whom Forest Service personnel are working, and both respondents were forest staff rather than forest supervisors. While community fire planning, community-wildland interface work, and fuels reduction can (and should from the researchers' perspectives) be components of community strategic planning, it appears by this set of responses that resource management is viewed as separate and of greater priority than community strategic planning. Fires and droughts in this region in recent years may be an influencing factor in this set of responses.

Table 1. Most important activities for communities with whom forest supervisors and field staff are working (total response = 10)

8	Community fire planning
7	Community-wildland interface work
6	Fuels reduction work
4	Business plans/start up
4	Watershed restoration work
4	Development of capacity for wood utilization
3	Biomass for energy needs
3	Establish/improve fire services
2	Community strategic planning
2	Marketing/merchandising
2	Use of non-merchantable species
1	Transfer of technical knowledge/information
1	Business expansion
1	Feasibility studies
1	Focused training/education
1	Market analysis/development
1	Technology development
0	Equipment for small businesses
0	Labor skill development
0	Ecosystem restoration work
0	Multi-party monitoring
0	Engineering design
0	Recycling/composting wood

In a final set of open-ended questions, forest supervisors were asked to describe what they see as the role for Forest Service in the area of community development. And specifically, in what ways can RCA programs make a difference for communities in Region 2. All of their responses included reference to developing or sustaining relationships with rural communities, and using relationships to identify community needs. Clearly forest supervisors feel community needs must be identified and when possible taken into account. The following two statements exemplify elements in their responses.

The Forest Service needs to include communities in collaborative planning so that local objectives can be incorporated into project planning where feasible.

and

Forest Service needs to consider the social and economic needs of communities and where possible, contribute toward community health through FS programs.

It is interesting to note that this set of responses points to a top-down, or technical assistance planning process, with local relationships and needs taken into account in larger plans and initiatives. What is not identified in the responses is support for holistic strategic planning that begins at the community level then endorsed or adopted by the Forest Service.

4. Long term outcomes of community development activities and projects.

In the examination of moving from scattered projects to strategic planning in Region 8, a community case study was used to demonstrate key components of moving to strategic planning as part of sustainable community development. Our intent was to replicate this in Region 2 by locating a similar community in Colorado. As a result of the fieldwork, the case we present is not a description of the future, desired, condition, but rather, an example of what is currently occurring in one area of Region 2 – an equally valuable examination.

Forest Service personnel directed us to five counties located in the southwest corner of Colorado where a preponderance of land is held by public (USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management) and tribal entities. This region has historically been dependent on natural resource extraction, but for different areas of the region this has meant a different history and a different current status. The timber, ranching, mining, oil & gas, and tourism industries have all had significant impact on the communities in the five-county area.

Researchers familiarized themselves with the area using government documents, community and county government sponsored web-sites, and review of the many research endeavors previously completed by government and university sources. Discussions were initiated with individuals identified by Forest Service and university sources as key informants. As the fieldwork in this area of Colorado proceeded, it became apparent that the five-county region was comprised of three connected areas with distinct histories and characteristics. Those we were interviewing confirmed this. As one individual explained, “Montezuma and Dolores Counties are a unit, La Plata and San Juan Counties are a unit . . . and then Archuleta County is it’s own entity.” The communities in two of these areas – Dolores and Montezuma Counties, and San Juan and La Plata Counties – became the focus of this examination.

Fieldwork was completed in March and September 2004. Two researchers completed semi-structured interviews with 26 individuals identified through a snowball sample process. Twenty-four of these interviews are used in this analysis. Interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to over an hour. Interviews were completed until themes became repetitive, and further contacts would not have substantially contributed to the findings. A copy of the interview format is included in Table 2. Participant-observation in the communities of these four counties and review of public documents related to on-going development activities in the forest and communities were also completed during the time in the field.

Three questions guided the fieldwork in southwest Colorado.

- I. What is the current level of community activity and community strategic planning?
- II. What is the current level of natural capital investment?
- III. What is the involvement of the Forest Service with local community initiatives?

Table 2. Southwest Colorado Interview Questions

1. First, why don't you tell me about the community work you do and your involvement with the forests in this region.
 1. Beyond your personal involvement, tell me about the relationship of communities in this region with the forests in the region, and specifically, the Forest Service.
 2. Has this changed over the years? If yes, how?
 3. What impact does the forest have on:
 - The skills, education, health, and values of the people of the region?
 - The financial resources and built infrastructure of the region?
 - The trust, collective identity and sense of working together toward a shared future in the region?
 4. Are you aware of, or have you been involved in project planning or strategic planning in your community or the region? Tell me about this experience.
 5. Is there anything else you want to tell me?
- As we continue to interview people in this area, can you think of other people who we should speak with while we are here?

Individuals who were interviewed represented the interest areas and communities of the area of study (Table 3). Nine individuals represented federal, state, and other government agencies (three from the Forest Service, six from other agencies), four were elected local officials, four were local business owners, three represented community-based organizations, and four were local residents who are currently or have been involved in research activities in the area in the past. Most of the individuals interviewed represented exclusively either the Dolores/Montezuma Counties area (8) or the San Jaun/La Plata Counties area (12), but four individuals worked for organizations that served the entire four county area and were particularly valuable for the comparative work. It is important to note the sample does not over-represent Forest Service staff or Forest Service interests.

Table 3. Individuals Interviewed by Interest Area and Community

Interest Area by Community				
	DM	SJLP	Both	TOTAL
Agency Staff (FS)	1	1	1	3
Agency Staff (non-FS)	2	2	2	6
Local Official	2	2	0	4
Business Owner	3	1	0	4
Community Org.	0	3	0	3
Researcher	0	3	1	4
TOTAL	8	12	4	24

Natural Capital Investment

We began our examination with the first guiding question - what is the current level of natural capital investment? Natural capital includes the air, water, soil, bio-diversity, landscape, and products from the land. For communities located in or adjacent to national forests and grasslands, natural capital has historically been central, and the best way to conserve a community's natural capital is to convert it to other forms of capital in the community of place (Flora 1999). The fieldwork in the communities of Montezuma, Dolores, San Juan, and La Plata Counties points to a high degree of natural capital and natural capital investment. Natural capital is invested in other community capitals to create recreation opportunities, business development, community values, housing, a shared identity and future, project planning, community action around issues of natural resources, population growth and amenity migration, timber, and ranching – it is clearly being invested for future value.

Financial capital is the debt capital, investment capital, tax revenue, savings, tax abatement, grant funds, and all financial tools that can be used by communities to make things happen. Financial capital is also converted to built capital. In the communities in this region, natural resources remain the central component of the local economy either through extraction, tourism, or amenity migration. Interviews suggest the forest is “providing jobs, processing raw materials, extracting raw materials, and they are creating businesses that are dependent on the tourism industry. The tax revenue from not only people spending their money to enjoy some of these things but the tax revenues that come from the employment of people processing raw materials and they in turn pay state taxes and in turn pay sales taxes and property taxes.” Examples of natural capital investment in financial and built capital provided by those interviewed include an expanding service industry that includes guide services, the Durango-Silverton train line, employment in extractive industries, and area ski resorts which are currently undergoing rapid expansion in terms of facilities and housing units.

Natural capital investment in financial and built capital is also a component of amenity migration to the area. One individual noted “it’s an attractive, desirable place to live. Recreationally, aesthetically, visually . . . it’s why people move here.” Amenity migration has resulted in new housing expansion, particularly in La Plata County and the city of Durango. One key informant speculated that more than 5,000 homes in the county were likely results of amenity migration over the years.

Human capital includes our formal and informal education, skills, health, values, and leadership. While human capital is mobile, it sometimes connects us to a particular place, and people interviewed pointed to natural capital investment as increasing local human capital in the communities of southwest Colorado. One individual stated “at an ever-increasing rate, people live in this community for lifestyle reasons”, and that lifestyle is connected to the forest and mountains. But this can also create problems, as was noted by one individual who stated “Another factor in amenity migration is as soon as they’re here, they don’t want anybody else” coming in to the area. Health values were also noted by individuals as part of the human capital. The fieldwork suggests the population utilizes the recreation opportunities of the forest and mountains, and report reduced stress facilitated by the peacefulness and rural setting. The programs of Fort Lewis College are enhanced by the natural capital that is central to many college programs and research endeavors. Natural capital investment in human capital is apparent in the indigenous knowledge held by long-term residents in regard to the forest, watersheds, and mountains, and the technical and professional skills of individuals who

move to the region because of the natural capital. Anecdotally, there appears to be a larger than normal number of retired natural scientists in this area, many holding advanced degrees, particularly in the communities of La Plata and San Juan Counties.

In the communities of Dolores and Montezuma Counties, natural capital investment combines timber and ranching, and also includes tourism and amenity migration. There are sometimes conflicts based in the specific interests of these uses – but both are a result of natural capital investment in financial and built capital.

Social capital is mutual trust, norms of reciprocity, collective identity, and a sense of working together toward a shared future. We see two types of social capital in communities - bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital refers to multiple linkages that encourage trust and enforce norms with the community, and bridging social capital refers to single-purpose linkages outside the community. Natural capital investment in social capital in southwest Colorado is seen in community identity linked to forest and mountain. Community members overwhelmingly point to a shared past and a shared future that is dependent on natural capital, although for different communities this future is different. This is largely a result of the history of the region, recent changes in mining, timber, ranching, and recreation, and a population influx that is based on regional amenities – primarily the natural capital. This creates disparate views of community culture and issues of multiple vs. single uses for forestland. For example, one person interviewed from the community of Dolores noted their community identity is “land based, more tuned in to agriculture and forestry, and it’s more real.” This comment reflects the difference in shared identity between the two eastern counties, where community identity is based in use of forest for recreation and concurrent amenity development, and the western counties where identity is more closely linked to forest and ranching industries.

Despite the different identities that come from the natural capital, it is important to note that the land – the forests, mountains, and rangelands – is central to community identity and the identified future of the communities in these four counties. All individuals interviewed suggested that the future of their communities is connected to the land.

Political capital is the ability of one segment to influence the distribution of resources to the entire group or community. Power, organization, and connections are all components of political capital. The investment of natural capital in local political capital was identified in the four counties of southwest Colorado in terms of individual participation in project and sectoral plans developed, and organizations and action groups that form in response to natural capital issues and needs. The research notes many citizen organizations that have been formed around natural capital issues.

Cultural capital refers to the values and beliefs that have both economic and non-economic implications. Cultural capital is the filter through which people interpret their lives and the world. It is transmitted to subsequent generations and is part of socialization of new residents in the community. Natural capital investment in cultural capital is evident in community belief structures in these four counties that place a high value on local natural resources and pass on those beliefs to subsequent generations. Preservation of natural capital for future economic and non-economic reasons is also a value within community cultures.

Community Activity and Community Strategic Planning

The second guiding question was what is the current level of community activity and community strategic planning? Throughout the four counties examined there is a high level of community activity taking place. Southwest Colorado citizens have come together to discuss and address identified community issues and concerns, to respond to perceived threats to community vitality, and to participate in development of plans for the region, counties, and other defined sectors.

Several individuals noted that a great deal of planning had taken place, but action was rarely taken based on those plans. Some individuals interviewed also noted that the planning process is repetitious, but doesn't reach the action phase. This was particularly noted in the San Juan/La Plata area where there has been both population growth and population turnover. Between 1990 and 2000 La Plata County was the fastest growing county in Colorado. But that doesn't mean the newcomers remain in the area. In both San Juan and La Plata Counties this was pointed to as a problem in terms of planning, trust, and identity. One San Juan County resident noted newcomers "usually last between 16 months and two years . . . there are very few people who come in and they actually stay." One individual who is a life-long La Plata County resident provided the following explanation in terms of the involvement of newcomers in planning processes.

There is a basic skepticism of people that have been around awhile for this newcomer who has been here for three weeks and is already on every committee in town, and is going to save us. . . because they're all sure that they're the first people who ever had this to think about, and so we do it over and over and over . . . it is usually different, there are only a few people who have enough endurance to be willing to do it over and over. . . I went to a meeting last night, and I knew before I went what the outcome was gonna be, and I knew that I probably wasn't going to change it. But those people were sure they were the only ones who had ever thought about those issues. And in fact, I made some comments in the public comment period. And some of the people were literally yelling at me, saying "well, you haven't been to any of our meetings, how can you think you know that?" What I thought, what I didn't say is "Sweetheart, I've been to this meeting 40 times already, you're the one who's new to these meetings."

But newcomers were also noted in Dolores and Montezuma Counties, generally defined as amenity seeking retired individuals, "people in their 60s that have made their fortune, if you will, in California or wherever and they're retiring, getting out of Dodge and coming out here to the wilderness."

Two examples that illustrate the type of community planning activities taking place in the study area are the community summits convened by Operation Healthy Communities, and the regional economic plan.

Operation Healthy Communities is a non-profit organization that serves the five counties of southwest Colorado. Operation Healthy Communities has coordinated three community summits for citizens of La Plata County, and two for the combined Dolores/Montezuma Counties. At these summits people break in to small groups to develop recommendations for action in areas determined to be of priority. In La Plata County the summits have increased focus on education, environment, economy, family,

health, and social issues. Indicators of change in these areas are tracked and included in periodic research reports made available by Operation Healthy Communities.

Regional Economic Development Plans have been maintained by the Region 9 Economic Development District for more than a decade. These are comprehensive economic development strategies for each of the five counties the agency serves. While this plan is officially approved by the Economic Development Administration every five years, Region 9 continually updates sections of the document. The comprehensive economic development strategy “describes the problems, needs, potentials and resources of the region presents the region’s values and visions; sets the strategic direction for an economic development action plan” and “establishes priority programs, projects and methodology for implementation” (http://www.scan.org/reg_9.html). When projects are completed they are removed from the plan, and new projects are added. There is a public meeting element to the plan, but it is largely developed using key informants and is approved by county commissioners. The Region 9 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is developed with the USDA Forest Service and the plan serves as the Regional Action Plan for Rural Community Assistance programs.

These examples illustrate the planning that has, or is currently taking place. When individuals were asked in the interviews if they were aware of, or had been involved in project planning or strategic planning in their community or the region, nearly all were able to list many examples. But it was clear from both the interviews and other fieldwork that they were identifying project and sectoral planning, some of which could clearly be considered strategic, but was not holistic, community-based strategic planning. The majority of these plans were initiated and led by federal, state, regional, or local agency staff members. One individual interviewed was not surprised that southwest Colorado was being examined in this research, because in his opinion, “this San Juan corner of Colorado within the five states may have the best example of the interagency efforts.” Indeed, fieldwork suggests the involvement of agency and organizational representatives in planning initiatives is quite high.

USDA Forest Service and Local Initiatives

The final guiding question we explored in these four counties is what is the involvement of the Forest Service with local community initiatives? Since the introduction of the RCA program, the Forest Service approach to rural community assistance has been based on community needs, as opposed to more conventional approaches that deliver a “program” whether or not a community’s needs match the program. The holistic Forest Service approach is intended to begin with the community and its needs, then uses funded programs, associated technical assistance, and other tools to help the community build its own community development efforts.

The Region 2 survey of forest supervisors and field staff indicates Forest Service staff members are clearly working with local communities. In fact, through the fieldwork an extensive list of projects that have received RCA program support was compiled.

When asked about local planning and the involvement of USDA Forest Service in southwest Colorado, two planning initiatives were often cited – the San Juan Forest Plan that has been in process for ten years, and the recently completed county fire plans. While community input has been collected in both of these planning processes, these remain largely plans developed by the Forest Service or their contractors, in collaboration with other agencies. One elected official noted “They keep us well

informed of their hearings, what their program is, but we have not been real involved with it.” Individuals in the two western counties noted as problematic the location of Forest Service hearings. When multi-county hearings are held it can mean travelling long distances to have input on public land hearings.

When individuals were asked about the relationship between the Forest Service and communities in southwest Colorado, there responses were largely dependent on the individual being interviewed, although nearly all persons interviewed pointed to some level of contentiousness. Only one person suggested “I think the relationships are all outstanding across the board right now.” We heard more comments like “Well, I think it’s kind of a love hate relationship,” and “it’s characterized as kind of like a love-suspicious relationship.”

There was a general sense in the interviews that people don’t understand the work of the Forest Service and the obstacles field staff confront in completing their work. Comments such as the one listed below exemplify what was heard in the interviews.

I think there’s a fair amount of skepticism and this is hard to say because I love them, but distrust is too strong a word, but whatever the softer word would be there in terms of what they are doing and why they are doing what they’re doing, and where they’re doing what they’re doing. Maybe a little bit of unknown as to their role and their ability to achieve those objectives and their charge of managing and administering the lands that are part of the San Juan National Forest.

There were also comments regarding the changes in forestlands, and inability of the Forest Service to respond to these changes.

If we go back in time a little bit, 50 years, the primary interaction the forest service had to have with the community was with extractive industry permittees . . . they dealt with cattle ranchers, or they dealt with loggers, or they dealt with miners. But they dealt with the same person over and over and over. So they had good relationships with individuals, but they had no particular need to develop the skill set where they could interact with the public. And as times have changed, the primary interaction now, the primary utilization of the forest, is no longer in the extraction industries, it’s in recreation. But the forest service has not changed quickly enough to become proficient at interacting with a changing public.

Summary of Implications for Southwest Colorado

Investment of natural capital in other community capitals is evident in the communities of southwest Colorado, including social capital and definition of community identity. But different groups of local citizens interpret changes in use of natural capital in this historically natural resource dependent area differently. Two frames emerged in the communities in terms of natural capital - natural resource management with a focus on extractive industries, and amenity-based development that limits extractive industries. These frames organize individual experiences and guide actions, both individual and collective, in the four-county area. The research points to natural resource management with a focus on extractive industries as the dominant frame in the communities of Dolores and Montezuma Counties, and amenity-based development that limits extractive industries as the dominant frame in San Juan and La Plata Counties.

It is important to note the centrality of natural capital as part of both frames. Individuals with both frames feel strongly that the forest lands must be preserved, that they are the source of community identity, and the forest lands are a source of future value for the community that is currently being invested in other community capitals. Individual communities can take action to bridge frames that are in dispute. In other words, finding commonalities in interpretation, and initiating strategic planning with a holistic and inclusive approach. This means recognizing that there is a point of agreement that can serve as a bridge between different frames. The fieldwork suggests that in southwest Colorado natural capital is invested in social capital, and the community identity and shared future - elements of social capital - are critical to strategic community planning. While the different frames could be a stopping point, we were encouraged to see several examples in the region of individuals moving from interest group action to collaborative action. This suggests an environment exists for frame bridging to occur.

Another challenge for the communities in these four counties appears to be transferring the project and sectoral planning that has been completed or is underway to holistic community-based strategic planning. These four counties are not unique in this respect. Clearly this region is extremely active in terms of project planning and inter-agency coordination and activity. Agencies have also engaged community members in their planning processes to assure citizen input. While these activities are extremely positive steps, it will be strategic plans that define the future desired conditions and institutionalized long term goals for southwest Colorado, and because they are institutionalized, they will remain the same even when individuals, inputs, activities, and outputs change. An inclusive community strategic planning process will support both civic engagement as citizenship, and sustainable development in the communities of southwest Colorado.

C. What types of training and system building can help the Forest Service and its partners toward these ends?

This report has summarized the current level of strategic action by USDA Forest Service forest supervisors and forest staff providing rural community assistance in Region 2. As Luther and Emery note, “community building is NOT rocket science. Rocket science is easier (2003:p. 4).” What they mean is that rocket science is fairly static and unchanging. Once the elements are mastered, they can be repeated successfully. Community building, however, takes place in a constantly changing context. What may work in one community may be ineffective in a different community due to the social context. This requires approaches that are adaptable – approaches that can be changed in different contexts. This was also the intent of the Forest Service RCA programs and the 1990 Farm Bill – a set of programs that are holistic and community-based, that can be adapted to fit different communities if the Forest Service is to move from scattered projects to strategic development.

The historical basis of community economies in the rural United States has been natural resource extraction (e.g. farming, mining, and timber). While most rural economies are no longer dependent on natural resource extraction (Flora, Flora, and Fey 2004), in many locations it is still a component of the local economy and a source of

employment. More significantly, it is part of community identity and inherent in community belief structures (Salamon 1995).

There are three important remedies for challenges confronting rural societies (Swanson and Brown 2003). First, communities matter. Most social interaction occurs in local communities – making them very important. And it’s at the local level where U.S. citizens feel they have the greatest influence in terms of participation and change (Marston and Towers 1993). Second, decentralization or devolution of authority from federal to state and local governments must be recognized as an opportunity. Devolution of programs by federal government agencies has clearly placed greater emphasis on decision-making at the most local level - often the neighborhood or community (Swanson 2001). Approaches with the greatest promise will embrace increased local jurisdiction over issues (Swanson and Brown 2003), and third, include the involvement of local citizens. We know the most effective rural development is based in civic engagement, inclusiveness, civility, and democracy. Also required are social interactions that enhance local social capital (Swanson and Brown 2003). A democratic and inclusive public planning process will support both civic engagement as citizenship, and sustainable development.

Communities increasingly recognize that cumulative activities are a key component of community development. But only with planning can projects be coordinated so they add up to something sustainable. Communities and organizations have traditionally measured success on a project basis, with goals rooted in specific inputs, activities, and outputs. Inputs are resources allocated for a specific endeavor; for example, the amount of funding that is raised. Activities are what happens - who, what, where, and in what ways. Outputs are what result from inputs and activities. But it is the outcomes - the future desired conditions and global measures that serve as long term institutionalized goals – that drive strategic planning. While specific individuals, inputs, activities, and outputs may change, community outcomes remain the same. Long-term strategic community planning is based on outcomes that remain the same over time, driving the inputs and activities.

In a model of long-term, strategic planning we see a series of steps that originate within the social capital of a community that includes broad-based participation of community members. The process begins by identifying long-term goals and the desired future condition of the community, and an analysis of the community’s current assets (its community capital). The process then moves to identification of projects that move the community toward the desired future condition and that have community-wide commitment. The process does not end at this point, but moves on to implementation and evaluation of the plan.

What appears to be the case in most planning efforts taking place with Forest Service participation is more consistent with a technical assistance approach, where the final outcome is “the plan, which can then be used as a map that displays the explicit tasks that must be performed (Flora et al. 2004:341)” This approach does not preclude community input, and in fact, it usually includes input from key informants and community leaders, conducting community surveys, and providing opportunities for community input through open meetings. The planning is not, however, driven by groups of community members, but rather, by local or outside experts and planners.

But there are two significant differences in these approaches to community planning. First, community-based planning is holistic, with a long-term vision of a desired future condition for the community. The technical-assistance model is focused on a specific area to be addressed – what we've identified in this examination as sectoral planning. The second difference is where the plan originates. Community-based strategic planning comes from the grassroots as a process of social action. Sectoral planning tends to be driven by community leaders and partner agencies who identify a need to be addressed or respond to a government requirement for a plan. At a time when community decisions are increasingly complex and technical, relying on those inside and outside the community with expertise certainly has its advantages. And the downside of a community-driven planning process is the amount of time the process can consume. But the participatory process that is part of community-led strategic planning results in a collective vision and broad-based agreement on the path to a shared future.

The following key training and system issues for the Rocky Mountain region are intended as tools for action – tools that will assist the region to be effective in different community contexts as they seek to develop community-based strategic action. These tools should be considered for the rest of the Agency, where appropriate, as well.

1. Key training and system issues to be addressed in Region 2

a. Leadership in effectively implementing rural community assistance

The USDA Forest Service has done a good job with knowing and disseminating the “what” to their forest and grassland staff regarding rural community assistance, but not as good of a job in knowing and disseminating the “how”. The “what” as described here is a State and Private Forestry Program; the “how” is rural community assistance that represents a community-based approach to identifying and working toward community outcomes and an opportunity for Forest Service to support their community partners. This approach is consistent with what the social science and natural resources literature suggests is the most effective means for moving toward sustainable communities.

But at the forest level, Forest Supervisors (whether or not they have had previous experience with Rural Community Assistance Programs) did not feel highly knowledgeable about delivering rural community assistance. All respondents indicate their familiarity with RCA programs was about the same or less than with other forest service programs, and most are somewhat less or much less familiar with RCA programs and approaches as compared to more conventional Forest Service programs and natural resource responsibilities. Forest supervisors also indicate that while encouragement for community work and collaboration is evident, rural community assistance training such as collaborative planning, community based forestry, or collaborative leadership, is not currently visible in the region.

The holistic approach of the Forest Service identified in the 1990 Farm Bill encourages a move from scattered projects to strategic planning and work with communities. However, at the field level, grant management activities attached to individual programs remain the focus. This perpetuates the project-based approach and the idea that work with communities itself is project-based. Adding to this is the potential confusion caused when funding from RCA programs for community work with a holistic approach is diverted to fund specific projects.

For USDA Forest Service, effectively implementing rural community assistance means more than taking into account community's needs in broader assessments and providing financial support for projects when able. Rather, community needs determine investment in communities. To effectively support communities, forest staff needs support and training to increase their understanding of how rural community assistance work fits with, and is not superseded, by other requirements and initiatives of the agency. Forest supervisors and forest staff need tools and training to integrate rural community assistance work into other agency activities with communities.

b. Allocation of time for work with communities

Research in the Rocky Mountain Region confirms what was learned in the survey - Forest Service employees are clearly working with forest communities. The number of Forest Service employees providing assistance to communities in the forests of Region 2 has either remained the same or increased over the past five years, and we find many Forest Service employees working with communities without these responsibilities included in their job description or time allocated for these activities. This may limit what any given employee will do considering increasing demands on their workload.

While issues of job descriptions and time allocated for responsibilities can and should be addressed within existing Forest Service policies, this really reflects a broader belief about community work. In the same way that desired community outcomes are institutionalized as community goals, when work with forest communities is institutionalized in the agency, it will become a larger portion of job responsibilities and not viewed as projects to be completed by Forest Service staff as time is available. Rather, community work will become one component of a larger body of work taking place in forest communities in which Forest Service staff members are already an integral part.

c. Understanding that community planning and community sustainability goes beyond resource management

What we see in both the survey responses and the fieldwork completed in southwest Colorado are the two faces of the Forest Service – community assistance and resource management. In the surveys of forest supervisors and forest staff working with communities a set of questions were asked regarding the five most important activities for *communities* with whom the Forest Service is working. This was a new question not included in the previous region. What responses indicate is a perspective on the part of both forest supervisors and forest staff that the most important thing they can do for communities remains forest resource management. Community strategic planning was identified by only two respondents as an important activity for communities with whom Forest Service personnel are working. While community fire planning, community-wildland interface, and fuels reduction are components of work with communities, it appears by this set of responses that resource management remains a separate and more important function than work with communities. Fires and drought in the region in recent years may be an influencing factor here. At the same time, at the policy and planning level the agency is clearly placing an emphasis on community work that goes beyond traditional natural resource management functions.

d. Forest Service and community understanding of community-based strategic planning

Both the Forest Service and community members benefit from increased community-based strategic planning. This begins with increasing understanding of the difference

between project and sectoral plans, and a strategic, community-based planning process. For Forest Service this means not just taking communities into account in broader assessments – but using community needs to invest in communities and take a district or forest approach that is based on needs identified by communities.

If the fieldwork in southwest Colorado is an indicator of regional activity, planning that is currently taking place is often led by agencies and is largely project or sectoral planning, and in the case of plans led by Forest Service and their partners, natural resource plans. This is consistent with the findings of Frenzt et al. (1999) who identified agency-community relationships as largely based in formal comment periods that have alienated community participation.

The next step for the Forest Service and forest communities is identifying how project and sectoral planning efforts can move to community based strategic plans. Resources such as those identified in the bibliography of this report need to be available to both Forest Service staff and forest and grassland communities to support their increased understanding of elements of strategic planning, and the value this has in creating sustainable communities. At the policy and planning level, the Forest Service is clearly placing an emphasis on work that encourages community-based planning that extends beyond traditional natural resource management. Forest Service is at its best as a community partner when they support holistic, community led strategic planning efforts, and incorporates those efforts into Forest Service initiatives. To do this effectively, it seems Forest Service staff members need support and training so they understand how this fits with, and is not superseded by other requirements and initiatives of their agency.

Working together with a shared vision of the desired future condition, individuals as members of communities can certainly influence the future. This includes the involvement of the Forest Service as supporters of community-based planning and decision-making processes. Rural residents should never be perceived as "passive consumers of broader national change (p. 17)" (Flora, Flora, and Fey 2004). Rather, they should be looked to as directing the future of their communities.

2. Key training and system issues across regions

As a means of regional comparison, Table 4 summarizes the four key training and system issues identified in the earlier research in Region 8. Of interest are the similarities found in Region 2 and Region 8 that are reflected in these sets of training and system issues. Specifically, the need to institutionalize community work in the agency and increased understanding of holistic, strategic, community-based planning. These similarities in findings across the two regions may indicate a larger, national challenge for the Forest Service that warrants additional exploration.

Table 4. Key Training and System Issues for Region 8 – Southern Region (2001)

Institutionalization of Rural Community Assistance Programs within Forest Service

Forest Service Supervisors, RCA Coordinators, and local field staff are clearly working on a regular basis with forest communities. But at the local level this time is not always documented due to confusion with position descriptions, conflicts with primary position responsibilities, or viewing this work as part of their 'civic duty' as residents of forest communities. There is confusion regarding what constitutes RCA work, and how that may or may not be different than external relations contacts. And there is some apprehension regarding changing priorities within the agency - will work with communities remain a Forest Service priority?

While most of these areas can be addressed within Forest Service policies, there is a broader change to be considered. In the same way that desired community outcomes are institutionalized as community goals, becoming an integral part of community rather than an outside source of funding can become an institutionalized outcome for the Forest Service as an agency. When work with forest communities is institutionalized in the agency, confusion that is presently noted at the local level will reduce. RCA programs will not be viewed as projects to be completed by Forest Service staff, but rather as one component of a larger body of work taking place in forest communities in which Forest Service staff members are an integral part.

Partners in Delivery

Over the last five years Forest Service staff have seen no increase in the number of agency employees involved with technical assistance to communities. Staff members, particularly those at the local level, express concern that communities are happy to let the Forest Service take responsibility for community work, and there are few or no Forest Service partners in many areas. The principles of leveraging and stacking are central as community partners with shared goals are identified in forest communities. This is how Forest Service staff can move from their role as the lead or only leader in community efforts. Allocating adequate Forest Service time to participate in something that is successful motivates others to take action and become partners. In this way partners in delivering RCA programs are developed.

Documentation of Outcomes

There is confusion regarding the difference between documenting community outputs and outcomes, and reporting evidence of community inputs and activities. As Forest Service in some areas was 'downsized', emphasis on documentation reduced within the agency but was not transferred to community partners. As a result, community outcomes are not documented, reducing opportunities for increased partnerships and institutionalization of knowledge and outcomes. Paperwork related to grants, based on inputs and activities, has remained with Forest Service staff (primarily RCA Coordinators).

Forest Service staff at all levels desire training on documentation. Specifically, linking projects to outcomes rather than focusing on inputs and activities. At this time there is no website or electronic format available for training in this area. With this training, Forest Service staff and their partners will be able to make greater use of the new RCA documentation program being piloted in Region 8. This is a tool for both Forest Service and its partners to institutionalize knowledge in the community. It is not a Forest Service reporting tool, but a vehicle for all partners to document community outcomes.

Strategic Planning

Training opportunities and knowledge of RCA programs are not located at the most local levels of the Forest Service. A gap exists between those doing community work at the local level, and those who have the training - RCA Coordinators and Forest Supervisors. Some of this is related to the cost of sending staff to training opportunities, and the staffing shortages that arise when field staff leave the forest for training.

Strategic planning training that encompasses skills beyond the fundamental of RCA programs is necessary at the district and forest level. Materials made available via a website or other electronic means are most desirable as they can be accessed by field staff at their convenience, and don't require travel outside the forest. Strategic planning is an acute need, evidenced by the absence of local action plans or an understanding of outcome-based measurement.

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VI. APPENDIX

Rural Community Assistance Programs Survey -

RCA Coordinators and Forest Service Staff working with RCA Programs Distribution of Responses

1a.) Does your official job description include the RCA Field Coordinator assignment?

- 3 Yes
- 5 No

1b.) If yes, what percentage of your time is officially designated for this work?

- 100% Less than 20%
- 0 20% to 39%
- 0 40% to 59%
- 0 60% to 79%
- 0 80% to 100%
- 0 No percent given in job description

2.) Whether or not your official job description includes RCA work, what percentage of your time do you actually spend on these duties?

- 86% Less than 20%
- 14% 20% to 39%
- 0 40% to 59%
- 0 60% to 79%
- 0 80% to 100%

3.) *Of the total amount of time you spend on RCA work, what percentage is used for each of the following types of activities?*

Working directly with communities	Mean = 13% of time Median = 12.5% of time Range = 30 (0-30)
Working with other partners	Mean = 14% of time Median = 9% of time Range = 70 (0-70)
Documentation of projects	Mean = 26% of time Median = 16% of time Range = 70 (0-70)
Grant-related paperwork	Mean = 36% of time Median = 35% of time Range = 75 (0-75)

Other Activities

Mean = 10.5%
Median = 3%
Range = 50 (0-50)

4.) During the normal course of your work how many individual communities, or groups of four or fewer communities, do you work with or maintain an active relationship with at any given time (not how many grants are active)?

- 1 No communities or small groups of communities
- 4 1-5 communities or small groups of communities
- 2 6-10 communities or small groups of communities
- 1 More than 10 communities or small groups of communities

5.) During the normal course of your work how many large groups of communities (5 or more) or counties do you work with or maintain an active relationship with at any given time (not how many grants are active)?

- 4 No large groups of communities
- 4 1-5 large group of communities
- 0 6-10 large groups of communities
- 0 more than 10 large groups of communities

6.) How many of these communities or groups of communities are on your list primarily because they require grant administration?

0

7.) How many of the communities that you work with have an active Local Action Team?

Mean = 4.25% of the communities
Median = 4.5% of the communities
Range = 4 (2-6)

8a.) How many of the communities that you work with have a Local Action Plan that is current (5 years old or less)?

Mean = 3.75% of the communities
Median = 3.5% of the communities
Range = 4 (2-6)

8b.) How many of these plans have a fire or fuels component?

Mean = 3 plans
Median = 2 plans
Range = 3 (2-5)

9a.) How many plans by other organizations are being used in lieu of a Local Action Plan developed by a Local Action Team?

Mean = 3.5 plans

Median = 3.5 plans

Range = 7 (0-7)

9b.) If a plan for a larger area (RC&D Area Plan, EDC District Plan, etc.) is being used in lieu of a Local Action Plan, in most cases is the larger plan evaluated and/or certified by the Local Action Team?

1 Yes

0 No

7 Don't know

9c.) In most cases, is the plan for the larger area tiered down to the level of the individual community with which the Forest Service is working?

2 Yes

0 No

6 Don't know

9d.) In most cases, does the Local Action Team develop a plan of work from the larger plan?

3 Yes

1 No

4 Don't know

9e.) In most cases, does the Local Action Team evaluate their progress against the larger plan?

1 Yes

1 No

5 Don't know

10.) Does the Local Action Team, in most cases, evaluate their progress based on the amount of funding raised?

0 Yes

0 No

8 Don't know

11a.) Is your Forest working toward integrated planning between the Agency and the communities receiving RCA help via Local Action Plans?

4 Yes

2 No

2 Don't know

12a.) How many "partners in delivery" are you using to deliver assistance to communities?

Mean = 4.33 partners

Median = 4.5 partners

Sum = 26 partners

Range = 5 (2-7)

12b.) Which of the following partners are you using?

87.5% Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)

37.5% Cooperative Extension

62.5% Economic Development Councils (EDC)

12.5% Watershed-based groups

62.5% Conservation Districts (RCD)

71.4% State Forestry

37.5% Other groups/organizations

13a.) If you are a *Ranger District* employee, how many other employees on your district are involved with technical assistance to communities now or within the past two years?

No other employees = 1

1 other employee = 1

13b.) How does this compare with the number who were doing so five years ago?

0 More

2 About the same

0 Less

14a.) Regardless of which office you work in, how many other employees on your forest are involved with technical assistance to communities now or within the past two years?

Mean = 7 other employees

Median = 6 other employees

Range = 20 (0-20)

14b.) How does this compare with the number who were doing so five years ago?

2 More

5 About the same

0 Less

15.) Are you familiar with the Forest Service community-based outcome measurement process?

3 Yes

5 No

16.) Are you familiar with community assessment process techniques?

- 3 Yes
- 4 No

17.) Have you ever attended a national RCA Partnership Conference?

- 2 Yes
- 6 No

18.) Have you ever used specialized or focused training for Local Action Teams or community leaders, such as entrepreneurial training, BLM Partnership Series, Extension Service leadership training, grant writing, etc.?

- 3 Yes
- 5 No

19.) Do you keep records with information on communities in your area?

- 3 Yes
- 5 No

20a.) Do you keep records with information on communities in your area that are receiving, or have received, assistance from RCA programs?

- 5 Yes
- 3 No

20b.) If yes, do you use the web-based tool (EAP-PMT) to document your work with these communities?

- 3 Yes
- 2 No

21a.) If you don't do the actual community assistance work, does your delivery partner keep community records?

- 2 Yes
- 1 No
- 4 Don't know

21b.) If yes, do your community partners use the web-based tool (EAP-PMT) to document your work with communities?

- 2 Yes
- 0 No

22.) Do you get information from your delivery partners for your annual accomplishment reports?

- 5 Yes
- 2 No

23.) Which of the following other program management tools are you currently using?

- 2 Spreadsheets for grant administration
- 1 Spreadsheets for community accomplishments
- 2 Spreadsheets for other purposes
- 4 Databases for grant administration
- 4 Databases for community accomplishments
- 3 Databases for other purposes
- 6 Forest Service electronic files/documents (i.e. FS 615 system, etc.)
- 8 Paper files/documents (handwritten notes, forms, etc.)

24.) In helping strengthen forest communities through the National Fire Plan and Healthy Forest Restoration, which five of the following activities are most important to the communities you work with?

- 4 Business plans/business start-up
- 1 Business expansion
- 1 Feasibility studies
- 2 Community strategic planning
- 5 Community fire planning
- 1 Focused training/education
- 0 Engineering design
- 2 Establish/improve community fire services
- 1 Technology development
- 0 Purchase of equipment for small businesses
- 0 Labor skill development
- 3 Community-wildland interface work
- 0 Ecosystem restoration work
- 0 Multi-party monitoring
- 4 Fuels reduction work
- 1 Market analysis/development
- 2 Marketing/merchandising
- 2 Biomass for community energy needs
- 2 Development of capacity for wood utilization
- 2 Use of formerly non-merchantable species
- 0 Transfer of technical knowledge/information
- 0 Recycling &/or composting – involving wood
- 2 Watershed restoration work

Forest Supervisors – Distribution of Responses

1.) Are you personally working with rural communities at this time?

- 6 Yes
- 0 No

2.) How would you rate your level of familiarity with the RCA programs and approaches as compared to the more conventional NFS programs and natural resource responsibilities?

- 0 Much more familiar with RCA programs
- 0 Somewhat more familiar with RCA programs
- 2 About the same level of familiarity with RCA programs
- 2 Somewhat less familiar with RCA programs
- 2 Much less familiar with RCA programs

3.) Is your understanding of RCA programs based on:

- 2 Local information or exposure
- 4 Regional information or exposure
- 3 National information or exposure

4.) Have you had other responsibilities or interactions with RCA efforts prior to being a Forest Supervisor?

- 3 Yes
- 3 No

5.) Are you familiar with any of the following materials?

- 2 "Working Together" tabloids
- 0 "Toolkit for Transitions"
- 2 "A Strategic Plan for the 1990's: Working Together for Rural America"
- 3 "Working Together for Rural America: 2000 and Beyond"
- 1 Regional or national web sites

6.) Have you ever attended a national RCA Partnership Conference?

- 0 Yes
- 6 No

7.) What level of interaction do you maintain with the RCA Field Coordinator(s) on your forest?

- 1 Very high level of contact with RCA Field Coordinator(s)
- 0 High level of contact with RCA Field Coordinator(s)
- 3 Moderate level of contact with RCA Field Coordinator(s)
- 2 Low level of contact with RCA Field Coordinator(s)
- 0 Never have contact with RCA Field Coordinator(s)

8.) Are employees, other than the designated RCA Field Coordinator(s), familiar with RCA programs?

- 4 Yes
- 1 No
- 1 Don't know

9.) Are employees who are not designated as the RCA Field Coordinator(s) actively involved in technical assistance or other interactions with rural communities?

- 6 Yes
- 0 No
- 0 Don't know

10.) Does your forest take advantage of the annual appropriations authority, which allows all Forest Service appropriations to be used for technical assistance to, and interactions with, rural communities?

- 5 Yes
- 1 No
- 0 Don't know

11.) Are RCA responsibilities included in position descriptions for those individuals designated as RCA Field Coordinators?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Don't know

12.) How are RCA Field Coordinators evaluated on their performance in this area of work?

- 3 Performance evaluated similar to other duties through the performance evaluation process.
- 0 Performance evaluated on elements specific to community work
- 2 Not a factor in performance evaluation due to the small percentage of time devoted to RCA work.
- 0 Other (please describe)

13.) For those employees with RCA work in their position description, is the portion of their job that is designated for those responsibilities realistic for the level of work required to do the job effectively?

- 3 Yes
- 1 No
- 1 Don't know

14.) What kind of program management do you see as important for those employees responsible for RCA programs?

- 6 Grants management
- 5 Technical assistance to communities
- 3 Strategic planning assistance to local action teams
- 6 Developing new partnerships
- 5 Documentation, assessment/evaluation, and reporting of program effectiveness within assisted communities
- 0 Other

15.) Of these types of program management, please identify the two that are most important.

- 4 Grants management
- 2 Technical assistance to communities
- 2 Strategic planning assistance to local action teams
- 3 Developing new partnerships
- 1 Documentation, assessment/evaluation, and reporting of program effectiveness within assisted communities
- 0 Other

16.) What do you see as the most important thing you currently do to support the RCA programs in your unit?

17.) Are you familiar with the Forest Service's methodology for measuring outcomes in communities that are receiving Agency assistance?

- Yes
- No

18.) Do you know how this methodology relates to the annual accomplishment reporting, or to GPRA?

- 1 Yes
- 5 No

19.) Has your forest become involved in any "outcome-based" evaluation or measurement processes for any programs?

- 1 Yes
- 3 No
- 2 Don't know

20.) Does your forest incorporate RCA information into your legislative outreach?

3 Yes
3 No
0 Don't know

21.) Does your forest incorporate RCA information into your public participation efforts?

5 Yes
0 No
1 Don't know

22.) Have the Forest Service's RCA programs affected your management style or the decision processes used by your Management Team?

3 Yes
3 No

23.) Do you give direction to your line or staff officers regarding use of or support to the RCA programs on your forest?

3 Yes
3 No

24.) Have planning or administrative processes changed in order to more effectively develop opportunities to work with rural communities that are developing their capacity to help care for the land?

4 Yes
1 No
1 Don't know

25.) Have relationships with local rural communities changed over time with the advent of RCA programs?

2 Yes
1 No
3 Don't know

26.) Do you have a process or procedure in place for collecting information from communities that receive RCA assistance?

3 Yes
2 No
1 Don't know

27.) Have you involved rural communities in any of the following Forest Service initiatives?

- 5 Collaborative stewardship
- 3 Recreation and tourism strategies
- 3 Watershed restoration
- 6 National Fire Plan
- 4 Small diameter utilization
- 6 Reduction of invasive species
- 2 Forest Plan Revision

28.) In helping strengthen forest communities through the National Fire Plan and Healthy Forest Restoration, which five of the following activities are most important to the communities you work with?

- Business plans/business start-up
- Business expansion
- Feasibility studies
- Community strategic planning
- Community fire planning
- Focused training/education
- Engineering design
- Establish/improve community fire services
- Technology development
- Purchase of equipment for small businesses
- Labor skill development
- Community-wildland interface work
- Ecosystem restoration work
- Multi-party monitoring
- Fuels reduction work
- Market analysis/development
- Marketing/merchandising
- Biomass for community energy needs
- Development of capacity for wood utilization
- Use of formerly non-merchantable species
- Transfer of technical knowledge/information
- Recycling &/or composting – involving wood
- Watershed restoration work

29.) Has your forest ever nominated a community, group, Forest Service employee, or other individual for a National RCA Award?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

30.) Has your forest ever nominated a Forest Service unit or employee for a Chief's Award or Honor Award based on RCA accomplishments?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

31.) Please describe for us what you see as the role for the Forest Service in the area of community development. In what ways can RCA programs make a difference in your region?

32.) What do you see as your role in supporting RCA programs on your forest, within your state, and in your region?

33.) What do you see as the Regional Office role in supporting RCA programs on your forest, within your state, and in your region?

Rural Community Assistance Programs Survey -

State Foresters

1.) Are you personally working with rural communities in your state at this time?

- Yes
 No

2.) How would you rate your level of familiarity with the RCA programs and approaches as compared to the more conventional state and private forestry programs and your natural resource responsibilities?

- Much more familiar with RCA programs
 Somewhat more familiar with RCA programs
 About the same level of familiarity with RCA programs
 Somewhat less familiar with RCA programs
 Much less familiar with RCA programs

3.) Is your understanding of RCA programs based on: *(Please check all that apply)*

- Local Forest Service information or exposure
 Regional Forest Service information or exposure
 National Forest Service information or exposure
 State forestry programs

4.) Have you had other responsibilities or interactions with RCA efforts prior to being a State Forester?

- Yes
 No

5.) Are you familiar with any of the following materials? *(Please check all that apply)*

- "Working Together" tabloids
 "Toolkit for Transitions"
 "A Strategic Plan for the 1990's: Working Together for Rural America"
 "Working Together for Rural America: 2000 and Beyond"
 Forest Service Regional or national web sites

6.) Have you ever attended a national RCA Partnership Conference?

- Yes
 No

7.) What level of interaction do you maintain with your RCA staff?

- Very high level of contact with your RCA staff
- High level of contact with your RCA staff
- Moderate level of contact with your RCA staff
- Low level of contact with your RCA staff
- Never have contact with your RCA staff

8.) Are employees, other than the designated RCA staff, familiar with RCA programs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

9.) Are employees who are not designated as the RCA staff actively involved in technical assistance or other interactions with rural communities?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

11.) Are RCA responsibilities included in position descriptions for those individuals designated as RCA staff?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

12.) How are RCA staff evaluated on their performance in this area of work?

- Performance evaluated similar to other duties through the performance evaluation process.
- Performance evaluated on elements specific to community work
- Not a factor in performance evaluation due to the small percentage of time devoted to RCA work.
- Other (please describe)

13.) For those employees with RCA work in their position description, *is the portion of their job that is designated for those responsibilities realistic* for the level of work required to do the job effectively?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

14.) What kind of program management do you see as important for those employees responsible for RCA programs? *(Please check all that apply)*

- Grants management
- Technical assistance to communities
- Strategic planning assistance to local action teams
- Developing new partnerships
- Documentation, assessment/evaluation, and reporting of program effectiveness within assisted communities
- Other (please describe)

15.) Of these types of program management, please identify the two that are most important. *(Please check only two of the following)*

- Grants management
- Technical assistance to communities
- Strategic planning assistance to local action teams
- Developing new partnerships
- Documentation, assessment/evaluation, and reporting of program effectiveness within assisted communities
- Other (please describe)

16.) What do you see as the most important thing you currently do to support the RCA programs in your state?

17.) Are you familiar with the Forest Service's methodology for measuring outcomes in communities that are receiving RCA assistance?

- Yes
- No

18.) Do you know how this methodology relates to the annual accomplishment reporting, or to GPRA?

- Yes
- No

19.) Has your state become involved in any "outcome-based" evaluation or measurement processes for any programs?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

20.) Does your staff incorporate RCA information into your legislative outreach?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

21.) Does your staff incorporate RCA information into your public participation efforts?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

22.) Have RCA programs affected your management style or the decision processes used by your Management Team?

- Yes
- No

23.) Do you give direction to your line or staff officers regarding use of or support to the RCA programs?

- Yes
- No

24.) Have planning or administrative processes changed in order to more effectively develop opportunities to work with rural communities that are developing their capacity to help care for the land?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

25.) Do you have a process or procedure in place for collecting information from communities that receive RCA assistance?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

26.) Have you been involved in any of the following Forest Service initiatives? *(Please check all that apply)*

- Collaborative stewardship
- Recreation and tourism strategies
- Watershed restoration
- National Fire Plan
- Small diameter utilization
- Reduction of invasive species
- Forest Plan Revision

27.) In helping strengthen forest communities through the National Fire Plan and Healthy Forest Restoration, which five of the following activities are most important to the communities you work with? (*Select five*)

- Business plans/business start-up
- Business expansion
- Feasibility studies
- Community strategic planning
- Community fire planning
- Focused training/education
- Engineering design
- Establish/improve community fire services
- Technology development
- Purchase of equipment for small businesses
- Labor skill development
- Community-wildland interface work
- Ecosystem restoration work
- Multi-party monitoring
- Fuels reduction work
- Market analysis/development
- Marketing/merchandising
- Biomass for community energy needs
- Development of capacity for wood utilization
- Use of formerly non-merchantable species
- Transfer of technical knowledge/information
- Recycling &/or composting – involving wood
- Watershed restoration work

28.) Has your staff ever nominated a community, group, Forest Service employee, state employee, or other individual for a National RCA Award?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

29.) Please describe for us what you see as the role for the Forest Service in the area of community development. In what ways can RCA programs make a difference in your state?

30.) What do you see as your role in supporting RCA programs in your state?

31.) What do you see as the Regional Office role in supporting RCA programs in your state?