THE OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS: AN EXAMINATION OF TRUST BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Case Study III

FINAL REPORT

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USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station

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Project background
In June 2003, the University of Minnesota (UMN), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) North Central Research Station, initiated a research project to better understand the relationships between natural resource management agencies and local communities. The fundamental assumptions of this project are: 1) trust is important to effective natural resource management, 2) by exploring agency-community associations in a variety of contexts, researchers can better understand dimensions of trust as well as identify factors and mechanisms that enhance and diminish trust, and in turn 3) researchers can develop a set of guidelines to help managers build trust between the agency and the local community. With these assumptions in mind, UMN and USFS researchers embarked on case studies of six federally protected natural areas in the Midwest and their local communities.

This report describes the research conducted at Ozark National Scenic Riverways (Ozark Riverways). The project's prime objectives are to:

1. Explore agency personnel and local community members' perceptions of trust between natural resource management agencies and communities.

2. Examine the expectations intrinsic to community members' trust in agencies.

3. Identify factors that promote or hinder the production and maintenance of trust.

4. Establish ways in which agencies can build and sustain trust between local community members and agencies.

We chose an interpretive research approach using in-depth interviewing and qualitative data analysis as the project's driving methodological framework for two reasons. First, trust is a highly complex, subjective, and dynamic phenomenon. Past research in social psychology suggests that while trust is fundamentally individual—granted and monitored through the culmination of a host of internal psychological processes, it is also deeply imbedded in a social context—expressed in social interactions and influenced by social processes. Second, relatively little empirical work has been done investigating trust in the context of natural resource management, making this project highly exploratory in nature.

Need for research
American citizens' overall trust in government has dramatically declined since the mid 1960s according to several public opinion polls. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) recognize that natural resource management agencies are facing similar challenges in garnering public trust and fostering citizen involvement. According to Frenz, Voth, Burns, & Sperry (2000) forging strong community relationships has a multitude of agency benefits, including increasing support for planning and management, generating a friendly work environment, improving access to local knowledge, and promoting collaboration.

The concept of trust
According to Barber (1983) trust is essential to every social relationship or social system and is integral to the exercise of power. Barber's definition of trust reflects two sets of expectations fundamental to a trusting relationship. The first is the expectation that an individual (or organization) is technically competent and able to perform well. In other words, for person A to trust person B, person A must perceive that person B has the expertise (i.e. combination of knowledge and skills) to act appropriately or make the right decisions. The second definition is tied to the expectation that an individual (or organization) is morally competent and will show particular concern for others' values ahead of his or her own. Trust is granted if person A perceives that person B will not be self-serving in decision making.

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
The Ozark Riverways was established in 1964 and encompasses 134 miles of water across approximately 80,000 acres. The Current and Jack's Fork Rivers wind their way through the Missouri Ozark Mountains and are linked to some of the world's most significant springs. The rivers are popular destinations for recreationists seeking exceptional canoeing, kayaking, inner tubing, and boating experiences. The NPS estimates annual visitation of over one million people. The Ozark Riverways is surrounded by several small communities. The primary industry in the area is timber harvesting.

Study methods
A sample of residents living in nearby communities and NPS personnel working at Ozark Riverways were interviewed. Community participants were identified through a network sampling scheme, in which key informants were contacted and asked to provide names of other community members who have a stake in the management of the Ozark Riverways. The sampling plan was designed to capture a range of perspectives on the agency-community relationship. In total, seven community members and 10 agency personnel were interviewed during spring and summer 2004. A UMN researcher conducted all interviews.

Participation in the interviews was voluntary and all attempts were made to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Two community members contacted refused to participate in the study and one withdrew from the study. On average, agency participants were 50 years old had been NPS employees for 21 years, and had worked at Ozark Riverways for 11 years (Table 1). Thirty-three percent of agency participants held positions in upper management. Community participants' average age was 59. They had lived an average of 45 years in the community. The UMN field researcher used an interview guide (Appendix A) to keep participants on track, while still allowing participants the freedom to express their own perspectives. UMN researchers analyzed the interview text for insights and underlying themes related to the study objectives. Data analysis followed qualitative analysis procedures as described by Strauss & Corbin (1997).

Study findings
Analysis of the 17 interviews uncovered several themes associated with participants' perceptions of trust, expectations and evaluations of management, and the factors that inhibit and promote trust. The study findings are organized into three major sections: 1) participants' perceptions of trust, 2) participants' perceptions of management outcomes and processes, and 3) key constraints and opportunities related to building trust.

To most agency participants the local community's trust was viewed as integral. Participants associated trust with successful management, positive relationships, valuable public input and review, community support and cooperation, agency credibility, and a watershed level community understanding and commitment. Participants' narratives reveal that two sources of trust are present in the agency-community relationship: outcomes-based trust and process-based trust.

Within outcomes-based trust, three key themes emerged:

- Values
- Knowledge
- Capacity

Within the process-based trust, three distinct phases of the relationship emerged:

- Communication

- Collaboration
- Cooperation

The first three themes represent expectations that community members have for the outcomes of management decisions and actions. Community participants expect that management decisions and actions will reflect or demonstrate certain values, knowledge, and capacity. Overall, participants expressed a range of values for the Ozark Riverways that they believe should be integrated into management. A mix of "common sense" and local knowledge also was emphasized as imperative to effective management. The third theme, capacity, encompasses expectations for the NPS to accomplish what it sets out to do. The process-based themes were derived from participants' expectations and evaluations of the process of decision making and action taking on the Ozark Riverways.

In participants' discussions several factors and mechanisms that constrain the process of building trust emerged which were categorized as cultural and institutional constraints. Cultural constraints identified include:

- Historical resentment
- Sociocultural boundaries
- Competing values
- Limited community awareness

Institutional constraints include:

- Agency structure
- Inadequate leadership
- Staff turnover
- Staff shortages
- Limited community engagement

Opportunities for overcoming these constraints also were identified in the interviews. They include:

- Inspiring leadership
- Local hires
- Shared values and support in the community
- Cooperation

Discussion and recommendations
The study findings support the notion that no single perspective captures the complexities and subjectivity of trust. The community's trust in the agency is multidimensional and is influenced by several different factors. Although the purpose of this study was not to measure trust, the findings suggest that many community members have trust in the NPS to manage Ozark Riverways. At the same time, the findings also indicate that trust is not absolute or eternal. Three overriding recommendations were developed:

- Prioritize relationship building
- Develop a new image within the community
- Engage and empower the community

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In June 2003, the University of Minnesota (UMN) Department of Forest Resources, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station, initiated a research project to better understand the relationships between natural resource management agencies and local communities. Since the 1960s, public disenchantment with the traditional top-down style of government decision making has spurred new initiatives giving citizens a voice in government programs. One such initiative is outlined in the National Environmental Protection Act of 1970, which mandates public involvement in natural resource planning and provides a framework for the public involvement process. As individual citizens and interest groups take on a more formidable role in natural resource decision making, issues of trust once again have taken center stage. Nowhere are natural resource decisions more contentious or issues of trust more relevant than in the communities adjacent to or encompassed by protected natural areas. For agencies, building trust in local communities can be daunting. These "gateway communities" are frequently the first to feel the effects of a protected area's establishment and its administering agency's programs and policies. Local community members, especially those with emotional attachments to or economic reliance on the area, regularly weigh the costs and benefits of management decisions. A community's trust in the agency plays a critical role in the effectiveness and durability of management decisions. Similarly, as agencies face budget cutbacks and pressures to provide more opportunities for higher quality recreation experiences to a growing and diversifying population, the need for partnerships and trust in management becomes dire.

The fundamental assumptions of this project are: 1) trust is important to effective natural resource management, 2) by exploring agency-community associations in a variety of contexts, researchers can better understand the multiple dimensions of trust and identify factors and mechanisms that enhance and diminish trust, and in turn 3) researchers can develop a set of guidelines to help managers build trust between the agency and the local community. With these assumptions in mind, USDA Forest Service and UMN researchers embarked on six case studies of the following federally protected natural areas in the Midwest and their local communities:

- Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie (USDA Forest Service),
- Kaskaskia Watershed Projects (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers),
- Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (National Park Service),
- Hiawatha National Forest (USDA Forest Service),
- Ozark National Scenic Riverways (National Park Service), and
- Mark Twain National Forest (USDA Forest Service).

This report describes the research conducted at the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (Ozark Riverways).

Objectives and Driving Methodological Framework
The project's prime objectives are to:

1. Explore agency personnel and local community members' perceptions of trust between natural resource management agencies and communities.

2. Examine the expectations intrinsic to trust between agencies and communities.

3. Identify factors that promote or hinder the production and maintenance of trust.

4. Establish ways in which agencies can build and sustain trust between local community members and agencies.

We chose an interpretive research approach using in-depth interviewing and qualitative data analysis as the project's driving methodological framework for two reasons. First, trust is a highly complex, subjective, and dynamic phenomenon. Past research in social psychology suggests that while trust is fundamentally individual, granted and monitored through the culmination of a host of internal psychological processes, it is also deeply imbedded in a social context and expressed in social interactions and influenced by social processes. Second, relatively little empirical work has investigated trust in the context of natural resource management, making this project highly exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is quite distinct from the traditional hypothesis driven research paradigm and demands an alternative method. Interpretive research thrives under these conditions. Interpretive research acknowledges multiple perspectives and embraces the complexities and context of real-world phenomena. In-depth interviewing and qualitative analysis allow for creativity and flexibility in data collection and interpretation; so that as new information is revealed the research process can adapt. It should be emphasized here that the purpose of this project is not to measure trust, but rather to gain insight into the multiple meanings of trust as well as ways to build trust between agencies and local communities.

Need for Research
American citizens' overall trust in government has dramatically declined since the mid 1960s according to several public opinion polls. Hart and Teeter (1999) noted this trend in their national public opinion study conducted for the Council for Excellence in Government, which focused on attitudes toward government. They found that only 29 percent of Americans trusted the government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, whereas in 1964 over 75 percent trusted the government just about always or most of the time. Furthermore, they revealed that over 60 percent of Americans feel disconnected from government, over 50 percent feel that government policies do not reflect their values, and over 45 percent feel that government is generally not effective in solving problems. Putnam (1995) points to the steady decline in civic engagement or participation in organized groups as tantamount to a decline in individual and organizational trust. He further argues that social capital or "the connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" is deteriorating in the United States.

Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) recognize that natural resource management agencies are facing similar challenges in garnering public trust and fostering citizen involvement. They call the decline of trust in natural resource management agencies' authority an outgrowth of national sentiment towards federal government. In a study of media portrayal of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bengston and Fan (1999) found that of the attitudes expressed in media coverage related to the agency's stewardship and ethics, 40 percent were negative. Hammond (1994) found that only 57 percent of respondents to a national survey of attitudes toward the USFS expressed confidence in the agency to contribute to good forest management. The implications of public trust in natural resource planning and decision making is far-reaching. For example, a study of place-based and interest-based communities revealed social trust in the agency as a strong predictor of perceptions and attitudes toward a proposed recreation fee program (Winter, Palucki, & Burkhardt, 1999).

According to Frenz, Voth, Burns, & Sperry (2000) forging strong community relationships has a multitude of agency benefits, including increasing support for planning and management, generating a friendly work environment, improving access to local knowledge, and promoting collaboration.

The Concept of Trust

According to Barber (1983) trust is essential to every social relationship or social system and is integral to the exercise of power. He points out that the exercise of power or "the specification of goals for the relationship or system, the creation of means to achieve these goals, and the creation and maintenance of sufficient common values to provide consensus about the means and goals" (pg. 20) is fundamental to all stable social relationships and systems. Trust maintains stable relationships and systems by reducing chaos and facilitating goal attainment. Distrust, on the other hand, breeds skepticism, fear, and in some cases opposition, which can result in a complete breakdown of the relationship.

Barber (1983) offers a two-part definition of trust reflecting distinct sets of expectations fundamental to a trusting relationship. The first is the expectation that an individual (or organization) is technically competent and able to perform well. In other words, for person A to trust person B, person A must perceive that person B has the expertise (i.e. combination of knowledge and skills) to act appropriately or make the right decisions. The second definition is tied to the expectation that an individual (or organization) is morally competent and will show particular concern for others' values ahead of his or her own. Trust is granted if person A perceives that person B will not be self-serving in decision making. Applying this two-part trust definition in the context of natural resource management means that for local community members to trust a public land management agency, they must perceive that the agency is knowledgeable, skillful, and will incorporate values beyond its own agency values into decision-making. The granting and fulfillment of trust can be a complex, dynamic, and long-lasting process. In fact, Barber (1983) argues that trust is never entirely realized, and, once granted, trust must be actively maintained.

Shannon (1990) likens the process of building trust to the creation of a "social contract" or a binding agreement that addresses the values and objectives of both the resource managers and community. Trust also has received considerable attention in business management and organizational science. In their review of the treatments of trust across different disciplines, Rosseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998) found many similarities including a basic agreement on the meaning of trust. They note that across fields of study trust is viewed as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another" (pg. 395). These authors also identified two basic types of trust in the literature, calculative trust and relational trust. Calculative trust is based on what is exchanged in a trust transaction, or put differently on the outcomes of the relationship. Calculative trust implies that information is present (e.g., reputation or certification) to support perceptions of benevolent actions. On the other hand, relational trust is developed through "repeated interactions over time" (pg. 399) in which positive expectations are built, or the process of the relationship. Oftentimes emotions enter into the relationship as attachments are formed. Calculative trust is limited to expectations for the exchange and is often terminated once the exchange is completed. Relational trust includes a wider spectrum of expectations based on the exchange, emotional connections, and shared identity. Relational trust is more likely to endure situations in which calculative expectations are not met. As Borrie, Christensen, Watson, Miller, and McCollum (2002) assert, relationship building enables citizens to monitor how managers meet varying short-term and long-term public interests. Thus, in a relationship developed through repeated interactions, each party has more opportunity to get to know one another, including the challenges each party faces.

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

The Ozark Riverways was established in 1964 by congress with the primary goals of conserving and interpreting unique scenic and other natural values and objects of historic interest, including

preservation of portions of the Current River and the Jacks Fork River in Missouri as free-flowing streams, preservation of springs and caves, management of wildlife, and provisions for use and enjoyment of the outdoor recreation resources… (16 USC Section 1)

The Ozark Riverways administrative boundaries stretch across approximately 80,000 acres and 134 miles of water. The Current and Jack's Fork Rivers wind their way through the Missouri Ozark Mountains and are linked to some of the world's most significant springs. The rivers are popular destinations for recreationists seeking canoeing, kayaking, and inner tubing experiences, as well as visitors interested in learning about the cultural and natural history of the region. The NPS estimates annual visitation of approximately 1,300,000 people. The Ozark Riverways is surrounded by several small communities including the cities of Van Buren, Eminence, Winona, Birch Tree, Mountain View, and Ellington within Shannon, (pop. 8,324), Carter (pop. 5,941), and Dent (pop. 14,927) counties (U.S. Census 2000). The primary industry in the area is timber harvesting.

To provide a context for the interviews and to inform the analysis, participants were asked to define "community." Specifically, community members were asked to define "your community" and agency participants were asked to define the "Ozark Riverways community."

A community participant noted that his community is larger than its city limits:

> *Well, really our community is larger than our town. There's lots of population outside of city limits, a small town like [Van Buren]. I think we only have about 800 or something in population, but I'd say there's probably 2500 outside of the city boundaries, so the community is larger.*

An agency participant native to the area recognized several towns as part of the Ozark Riverways community: "residents of Van Buren, Eminence, Winona, people who normally would travel to work for us and stay at their home, those would be the communities that I'm talking about." Another agency participant who grew up in the area defined the Ozark Riverways community historically as unified until the advent of bridges:

> *Well, it's not like the traditional communities that were here say prior to the 1960's, before the Park Service. One thing that I've noted over the years and my family has been here for 150 years is that the river in the past did not divide communities. In the 19th century and on up after World War II, it unified communities. So the sense of community at that time was usually a focus on both sides of the river as families that lived on both sides of the river and the river was really a unifying force. Because everyone had boats and the river was a main part of commerce. After the coming of bridges, then the river tended to separate communities, and people didn't talk to their neighbors across the river very much. And so that was after World War II.*

A third agency participant acknowledged two types of Ozark Riverways communities: the local community and the national community. He explained,

> *Well, actually you've got two different types of communities. You've got the local communities and then you've got everything else in the country, this being a national resource. We've got folks from all over the country that comes here for the floating in this river or some of the cultural resources of this area. But to define it so tightly that you just talk about the general vicinity of the riverways is,*

I think, a little narrow-minded. But we really got to look at some of our bigger communities that come down here like St. Louis in particular, but a lot of communities in Illinois…folks coming over here. We've got a lot of user groups that come over here for different reasons, but I think I'd split it in two. You've got your local communities and then you've got the rest of the country that come here to use this riverways because it's a national resource.

Participants were also asked to describe what makes the community unique from other communities. A community participant described the community as having "unique natural beauty." He said,

We are tourist oriented, we have a lot of natural beauty, beautiful rivers and Big Spring, the world's largest spring here at Van Buren, that's the main attraction for years, and it's part of the National Ozark Riverways and then we have another park and springs in the riverways, it's a really outstanding attractions – tourist attractions. But it's unique and all the natural beauty and scenic beauty up and down the river. If you ever get a chance to go on the river, you should, because it's beautiful, cliffs, rocks, trees, different landscapes that are really high, breathtaking, really.

An agency participant from the local area described the economics of the area and the community members' unique attachment to the land:

I believe that the local situations that we deal with are different than in other parts of this state and even in other states. Economic depression isn't all that unusual to lots of communities, but I believe that the depression here has gone on for a long time. The employment is almost nil. The federal government offers the best employment of the area. Logging used to be high income – that's drying up of course the resources are becoming depleted year after year. I think you see a lot more family tradition of remaining in the area. People don't go to high school and leave for college and then come home to visit; they pretty much go to high school, maybe go away to college, but almost always end up remaining here to live forever. The people seemed very tied to the land.

STUDY METHODS

In the spring and summer of 2004 a UMN researcher contacted and interviewed 10 agency personnel and seven community members. One challenge was recruiting local community members to participate in the study. However, six of the 10 NPS employees grew up in the area and consider themselves to be "locals." These study participants provided unique insights into the community perspective. The sampling plan was designed to capture a range of perspectives on the agency-community relationship. With this objective in mind, we identified agency participants who represent different:

- Tenures with agency and site
- Grades or positions within the agency
- Sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., sex & age)

Community participants were identified through a network sampling scheme, in which key informants were contacted and asked to provide names of other community members who have a

stake in the management of Ozark Riverways. Community members were contacted who represent different:

- Lengths of residence
- Levels of involvement in management
- Interests in management (i.e., occupation & participation in recreation activities)
- Sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., sex & age)

Participation in the interviews was voluntary and all attempts were made to maintain participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Two community members contacted refused to participate in the study and one withdrew from the study. On average, agency participants were 50 years old had been NPS employees for 21 years, and had worked at Ozark Riverways for 11 years (Table 1). Thirty-three percent of agency participants held positions in upper management. Community participants' average age was 59. They had lived an average of 45 years in the community. Seventy percent of agency participants and 57 percent of community participants reported being involved in local organizations. One hundred percent of agency participants and 86 percent of community participants recreate on the Ozark Riverways.

The UMN field researcher used an interview guide (Appendix A) to keep participants on track during the interview, while allowing participants the freedom to express their own perspectives. This style of interviewing is known as semi-structured, because it is more like a "guided conversation" than a rigid question and answer session. Interviews were tape recorded (or recorded by hand at participants' request) and transcribed verbatim. The interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. The researcher took detailed field notes following interviews.

UMN researchers analyzed the interview text for insights and underlying themes related to the study objectives. Data analysis followed qualitative analysis procedures as described by Strauss & Corbin (1997). First, individual lines of text were numbered to simplify the basic practice of referencing and retrieving text. Next, concepts within the text were systematically coded using representative labels, such as "staff turnover" or "budget constraints." These concepts were organized into appropriate categories using concept maps and tables. Throughout analysis, categories were created, collapsed, or consolidated until an appropriate framework for understanding the data emerged. This process of data interpretation is highly iterative and creative. Several strategies were used to enhance theoretical sensitivity and ensure the trustworthiness of findings, including constant comparison of cases, questioning (i.e., asking who, what, when, and why), negative case analysis (i.e., attempts to challenge or contest interpretations), and multiple researcher corroboration (Marshall & Rossman, 1998). In addition, individual transcripts were sent back to study participants for review and verification. The goal of the data analysis process was to establish themes and uncover relationships and patterns among those themes grounded in the interview text thereby providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Ozark Riverways community and the NPS.

Table 1. Ozark Riverways study participant profile

| | Sex | | Age (mean) | Years in community (mean) | Involved in community orgs. (%) | Engaged in onsite rec. activities (%) | Years at ONSR (mean) | Years with NPS (mean) |
	Female	Male						
Community (n=7)	1	6	59	45	57	86	-	-
Agency (n=10)	2	8	50	36	70	100	11	21

STUDY FINDINGS

The study findings are organized into three major sections: 1) participants' perceptions of trust, 2) participants' perceptions of management outcomes and processes, and 3) key constraints and opportunities related to building trust.

Perceptions of Trust

This section focuses on participants' perceptions of the importance of trust, community members' trust in the NPS, signs of distrust, and sources of trust.

The Importance of Trust

To most agency participants the local community's trust was viewed as integral. Participants associated trust with successful management, positive relationships, valuable community input and review, community support and cooperation, agency credibility, and a watershed level community understanding and commitment. According to an agency participant, without trust, community members "could bombshell just about any process."

> *I think it's critical. Because we will be asking the local communities their point of view with many of the planning things that we put together that go out for public review. So I think it's imperative that they do have some level of trust that we're trying to manage this resource responsibly.*

> *Oh, I think that's one of the most important things that there could be. I think that's very important; that the local people trust the Park Service, and also the park trusts the local community. …That way they can support each other and they can work together.*

> *I think as an agency, for the agency to succeed in management of this park, that somehow, someway, we must at least attain a certain level of trust with the community, or you must have that because that's also, if you're going to be a professional in your field, then to me, that's a requirement. Credibility. Credibility will go a long way.*

> *Well, obviously, we can't do it all ourselves, you've got to work with everybody who's on the watershed. The river starts at the watershed. And this is somewhat a larger area than I've drawn there, but we can't do it on our own, so you've got to work with those folks and get them to believe that it's important to do things right so that you don't damage the watershed and therefore the river.*

Community Members' Trust in the NPS
Community participants were asked if they trust the NPS to manage the Ozark Riverways. Overall the community participants expressed trust in the NPS, in particular the Ozark Riverways personnel, and especially in those employees who grew up in the area. Participant responses, included, "Yeah, they do as good a job as anybody else could do, or better," "Here, we can't trust the government a whole lot…We don't know what the government's doing, but as far as this bunch up here, yeah I trust them," "I do. It may not be the exact way I would do things, but I don't have time to worry about a lot of that stuff. So, yeah, I trust them," and "Yeah, I do. …It's got some good people and some bad people in it, but basically, I do."

While community participants generally stated that they as individuals trust the NPS, when asked if they think the community trusts the agency, perceptions diverged. One community participant suggested that trust is associated with education. He said, "Your business people and your better educated people do [trust], some of the others don't."

Several participants described a deep-seated distrust in government and a historical resentment for the NPS based on its land acquisition practices:

> *There is mistrust that's been there since 1961. Of course, when you take land by eminent domain, you really distress a lot of people. We had to give up land over here by the highway and it still bothers me. I didn't want to sell any of mine…And then I thought they didn't pay me enough for the land.*
>
> *Yet, this participant continued to say that since that time, much of the resentment has turned into ambivalence: "I don't know that there's really mistrust anymore. A lot of people are just ambivalent toward them, toward the Park Service. Unless they get involved in some sort of a problem with them, they don't think much about them.*

Agency participants were a bit more skeptical about the local community's trust in the NPS. Several participants estimated that local communities are divided in their trust in the agency: "I think that probably there would be an even split among the communities about whether they think that the park has done a good job or not. And the reason why I say this is on account of all these controversies that they're having."

> *I think that most people who live in this area are very distrustful of any kind of government, and so I think that if you ask them, at least 50% of the population probably would say no, that they didn't. They either thought that we had ulterior motives, or an agenda that they didn't like or ideas about managing the park that were just different from theirs.*

Evidence of Distrust
Agency participants were aware of evidence of discontent and in many cases distrust in the community—from rumors about the NPS buying out the local communities and letters to the editor of local newspapers in opposition to fees, to protests over the removal of feral horses and retribution through vandalism:

> *There's been a handful of letters coming in, may be a couple of letters to the editor of local newspapers, and most of the people that we have contact with are opposed to the camping fees…to being charged camping fees. …Like all humans, when you support something, you, most of the time, you don't stand up and say*

you support it, you just support it and you go on about your business. It's the people that are opposed to changes that are usually the ones that raise the hell and or are quick to criticize and complain and contact their congressional delegation.

One of the rumors I got when I got back here was when a friend of mine in Winona asked me he said is it true that the Park Service is going to buy out all of these little towns and move us all out of here? … I said that I can't believe you guys, we can't afford to even do what we got to do within the valley. What do you think they're going to try to do something and buy these towns, and they went on, they just can't connect the dots in reality.

There was a band of horses found roaming in the riverways that the Superintendent at the time – this was the late 1980s – early 1990s. The park had only been in existence for about 20 years or so. The Superintendent is charged with removing feral animals. If they are not native to the park, his job is to eradicate them. The Superintendent was doing his job by, in his opinion, trying to remove those horses. The local people banded together and fought strenuously that the park should not be allowed to remove these poor horses. It was a very emotional situation. And I think, in my opinion, the people used this issue as a sounding board to be angry and to get attention and it worked. The horses were not removed. As a matter of fact, the horses are still here. It was like a turning point where the local people beat the National Park Service. There was a rally where all the park employees had to go home because they didn't know what might happen. It was around 300 people on horseback who rode through Van Buren and that may not sound like a lot, unless you consider how small our communities are. Three hundred people is huge. And they came down our main street riding horses, carrying picket signs and came to the headquarters to meet the Superintendent and to confront him as a group. They were angry and they were yelling. They were holding their picket signs and jerking them up and down and chanting. Some of the signs said "Kill [superintendent's name], not the horses!" It was just a mob almost. Now nothing happened beyond that point, but there were some people who had guns, so the feral horses was a biggie.

When we talk to people who've lived here for a long time, they can give you site after site of buildings that had been destroyed or burned or signs tore up out of vandalism, out of people who get angry for one reason or another. Angry because a law enforcement officer stopped and gave them a ticket. Angry because their son didn't get a job. Angry for lots of reasons they tend to get together and talk about those things and become more angry. So they are more resentful of the Park Service than supportive.

Sources of Trust

When talking about trust in the NPS, community participants were asked to describe what has led them to trust or not trust the agency and why they believe the community trusts or does not trust the agency. Similarly, agency participants were asked to explain their perspectives on the community's trust.

Some participants, especially from the agency, cited particular management outcomes as sources of discord and distrust, such as restricted motorized boat use on the rivers, limiting ATV use within the corridors, and firearms regulations. These participants recognized an underlying

conflict of values between the agency and the local culture. When asked if he thinks the community trusts the NPS, an agency participant replied,

> *I don't know if they really do. I think maybe on a whole, they have issues. Maybe overall they do trust, but that goes back like you don't want to say [the NPS] can manage the land because you're giving something up, you don't want to give anything up. I gave my land up, but I don't want to give any credit to that agency that did that, and there are issues from ATVs and road systems, horses and things, cause people do have a livelihood that's made from people that visit here in our communities.*

Another agency participant equated firearms regulations to blasphemy among the Ozark people and saw this as a source of "hard feelings" and distrust:

> *For instance, we have…there's a rule, nationwide rule that a park, you can't have loaded weapons in your vehicle when you're driving through the park. That's opposite of the culture in the Ozarks. That's pretty close to blasphemy, I'll tell you that. And that's caused a lot of hard feelings, so the other thing is maybe motorboats issue. Limiting horsepower was a very, very big argument, and there's still lots of people who believe that we would rather have zero motorboats on the river. Not true, but you will never convince them of that. From the very beginning, it's kind of been understood that motorboats of some kind were a part of this river and so they would remain a part of this river. But you will never convince an awful lot of people that somewhere in the back, it's not some secret agenda to eliminate motorboats from the river. People are very distrustful.*

According to another participant, the community's trust is fleeting and highly dependent upon management outcomes. He offered an analogy used in fire management:

> *I think trust can be pretty easily broken or people can become distrustful. Particularly if they don't understand what's being done and why it's being done. …Like we used to say whenever [we got] into prescribed fires in parks– the trust is only good as your last fire. And if you allow the fire to escape the boundaries and burn up some homes, then you're back to zero on trust. So, I think you can build trust in the community, but it's always kind of on shaky ground, waiting for the next big event to happen, and whether or not they agree with the next big event. And if they don't, then you've got to do mending and the repair starts all over again.*

A community participant suggested that trust has grown in the communities as residents begin to recognize the benefits of the agency. He explained, "I think at first they thought the government was trying to take the properties away from them and then I think they seen what they've done and what benefit they gave to the community and that's made a [difference]."

Most community participants attributed trust to stable, long-lasting relationships built through frequent interactions and communication. A community participant described having a "good relationship" with the agency. He explained, "If I see something that I don't feel like is right or right for the people or the visitor, I tell them and we try to fix the problem." The importance of communication and being able to work through problems together was mentioned by another community participant:

...They have pretty well fulfilled their commitment to us, not 100 percent, but I'd say better than expected. I've been able to talk to them on issues that people were concerned about. ...I've always been able to work things out with them. We've had disagreements and we've been able to negotiate a peaceful settlement and where everybody was pretty happy. ...I think by listening to the people, their demands, their wishes, staying in touch with them as they did before, keep them informed.... It's being informed and getting involved, the Park Service getting involved with the community, that is a key element right there. ...I think you build trust in each other, then the locals feel that they are a part of the riverways and it makes them feel good.

Likewise, distrust was seen as the result of communication gaps:

For instance a community participant described the relationship between the community and the agency as "not that good." He added, "[Community members] may resent the fact that they're here, this is their home, you know. …I think it's just that lack of communication. And again, it's that whole outsider thing."

Building relationships with individual personnel can increase trust in the entire agency, according to a community participant who has had a concession contract with the Ozark Riverways. Moreover, he suggests that as his relationship with NPS personnel "evolved" he began to recognize their common goals:

Having a concessionaire contract, we dealt a lot with them. What I find is whatever superintendent they seem to have, really permeates the entire organization down here. We've had some that we weren't so fond of, and more recently, some that we get along with very well. I think someone from this area, you know, and not in an office off somewhere can really add a lot to how the place is run. Our relationship with the Ozark Riverways people is great, and I think we have a lot of similar goals. I didn't start out that way, but the relationship has evolved over 20 something years, and now we really have a good relationship with them.

Similarly an agency participant credits the community's trust to the many agency employees who grew up in the area and who are considered "locals":

I think [the relationship between the NPS and the community is] good and I'll tell you why it's good. It's because of people like [employee name]. He's local, he's a ranger in the Northern District. He's worked 32 years here. We've got a bunch of these guys that work in maintenance and law enforcement and so on, and people like me who've been here forever and they trust us.

Perceptions of Management Outcomes and Processes
In addition to questions about trust, community participants were asked what they expect from the agency. Agency participants were asked what they believe the community expects from the agency. Both groups were asked the extent to which they feel the agency has fulfilled those expectations. Thus, the following themes and excerpts reflect expectations, as well as performance evaluations based on firsthand experiences or observations, anecdotal evidence, or general assumptions. The first set of themes is tied to outcome-based perceptions and reflects comments about the values, knowledge, and capacity reflected in management decisions and actions. The second set of themes encompasses process-based perceptions, including comments

about how decisions are made and actions are taken through communication, collaboration, and cooperation with local communities. It should be noted that some participants acknowledged expectations for both management outcomes and processes. For instance, management actions and public relations played a role in this community member's trust in the NPS:

> *[The agency-community relationship] first started off kind of rocky and then we went through a spell of where we had a superintendent that was an extreme environmentalist and he didn't want to expand or improve our Big Spring park and I told him to his face that he put us back 20 years in growth, tourist growth, and now we have an outstanding superintendent and assistant superintendent, who is a local boy and …they've improved the public relations tremendously between the public and the National Riverways. So it's on the upswing.*

Outcome-based Themes
The themes presented here are organized as values, knowledge, and capacity.

Values:
Community participants expressed a diversity of values for the Ozark Riverways and in turn they expect a range of values to be protected in its management. These values include:

- river preservation,
- recreation, and
- economic

Agency participants who grew up in the area suggested additional values significant to the community, including:

- open-space protection and
- cultural preservation

River preservation
Several community participants emphasized the importance of keeping the river "clean." Other similar comments include "retaining the character of the land" and "maintaining the river."

> *Preserving and protecting the river, you know, I think that's top priority. We have a few projects going on that need to be addressed that I don't think the park is addressing as far as keeping the river clean. I think that should be the number one top priority, so the river can be used for later generations and not be polluted.*

> *I think they just need to make sure that they keep things as, pristine is not a good word, to try to retain the character of the land, which that was supposed to be the intent anyway. And then to make it as accessible to folks as possible from the standpoint of building our tourism for the region, because it is a draw…I'm a believer that every time someone spends a dollar here, we all profit.*

> *They maintain the river. They make sure that it's clean. They maintain their parks where they are nice when you go into visit and their headquarters is always really nice and maintained and I think that they do a good job for the people that come here and are on the rivers.*

Recreation

While recreation values were significant to many community participants, perspectives differed on how the NPS should best provide for quality recreation opportunities. Some stressed the need to "accommodate" visitors and maintain facilities: "I expect them to try to keep the facilities up to date and everything in as good a shape as possible to accommodate the tourists that we have come here because that's mainly the people who use it…" One participant argued that law enforcement can detract from recreation experiences and even displace visitors:

> *There are certain issues that come up, you know, this here park was set up for recreational use by Congress, and sometimes they get off thinking it's something like a Yellowstone…. They could do things a little differently, you know, to try to work together with everybody and try to keep the visitor coming back and having an enjoyable time here. …For example, the law enforcement division of the park service gets carried away sometimes. People come down here to have a good time, relax, go on vacation. You want them to come back, and you are supposed to accommodate them, you know, help them, public relations, you know. Lots of times they run them off, and they won't come back.*

In contrast, other community participants contended that the agency does not have enough of a law enforcement presence on the rivers and as a result, the river has become crowded with people partaking in unsafe and lasciviousness behavior. One agency participant from the local area asserted that the NPS is "catering" to this environment:

> *There's so many more people than ever and it's not the people it used to be. The Saturday would be crowded, but it would be with grandparents and their kids fishing or mom and dad and their three kids canoeing. Those people don't come here any more. It's people that are stripping off their clothes and drinking and throwing their cans in the river and having sex on the gravel bar in front of your kids as you float by. …The people that we would like to see here, that were here normally, have all left and they said that they'll never be back. You don't take a church group floating down the river with a bunch of drunk, naked people, and that's what it's turned into. … But the park is catering to that. They saw the change just as well as everyone that lived here. It's like wait a minute – we don't have any more grandparents fishing, what's happening? It's obvious. It's like a cheap entertainment or something like you can bring 20 of your best friends and get drunk on the gravel bar and maybe spend 10 bucks to get an inner tube for the day or whatever. But instead of trying to control that by allowing them to have more law enforcement, which they don't, we have very little law enforcement on this whole field to cover the whole thing, it's impossible for them. Instead of that, we spend the money on building bigger parking lots to hold more of those drunk people. It doesn't make any sense.*

One participant called for more emphasis on improving opportunities for hunting and fishing on the river. He said, "If they would take a little more interest in stocking the streams and protecting the game. They have done a little bit in the last few years, but very little."

Economic

The economic impacts of the river's federal designation, including increased tourism-based business opportunities and increased property values translating into increased city and county tax bases, were significant to some community participants:

On all those sections [outside of the Ozark Riverways] of the river, all the homes that have been built, the businesses that have gone in—a lot of commercialization and we'll have more. It's just a question of how quickly it will grow, but I think probably all things considered, the Park Service has probably benefited this area and I know a lot of folks who are in business that I don't know what they would have done if it hadn't been for tourism, canoes, concessions, and so on.

The value of the land was before the National Park came into being and the riverways was almost, you can buy it for nearly nothing. The values went up tremendously and it just keeps going up. River property today you can't hardly touch. I used to have one and I sold it when it wasn't too high, but boy, now I can tell you, you can hardly find it – a building site on the river. And if you find one, it's going to cost you an arm and a leg. … it helps your tax base, county tax base, city tax base tremendously, oh yeah. … It has made a world of difference.

Cultural preservation
Several agency participants who grew up in the area considered the preservation of the community's character, lifestyle, and cultural heritage important to local community members.

According to an agency participant, values associated with open space protection and the assurance of the existence of the Ozark Riverways are revered by community members. He said he has heard from other community members who appreciate that much of the riverways is protected from private development:

[Community members] talk about how bad the government is and how they took our land and so on. But almost all of them were reconciled in the end and they would say we were poor people, and we know that had we kept that land, and future generations had inherited it, they would have subdivided it and instead it would be wall to wall houses along the banks of the Current and Jacks Fork. And they're right. So it's a double-edged sword. It's good – bad – good.

Community members also expect the agency to understand that living in the area is somewhat of a sacrifice, but that they chose to stay because of the rural landscape and lifestyle. As an agency participant explains, community members aren't looking for "radical changes."

They expect the park to recognize that we pay a price to live here. And since we pay a price to live here, we really don't want this to be like the city. If we want to be like the city, we'd move to the city. Look, if you don't like the way it is, the roads not good here and everything, go back to the city, but don't change this, don't make this like the city. So I think the people expect the Park Service to recognize that these people made a sacrifice to live here. They're not really ignorant people, and they can make a living someplace else, a whole lot better living. But they sacrificed all that just to live here, and they don't want the federal government to make a lot of radical changes in their lifestyle. And so when they start making decisions, they would like some input.

A central theme among many agency participants was cultural heritage preservation and interpretation. Participants generally agreed that cultural history is significant to local communities, but diverged in their evaluations of the agency's success in meeting community member's expectations for preservation and interpretation. The first excerpt below identifies the

agency's rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings as being respected by community members. In contrast, the second excerpt suggests that community members do not respect the way the agency is preserving their cultural heritage. This participant uses a farm site and the spread of invasive plants as an example.

> *Like I said about the river and about the historic buildings we have. They took care of those and they have rebuilt them in some instances. I'll get back to the historic, once they're gone and they're done away with, the people can't ever again go and look at a old house, cause it's gone forever, and they respect it. The local people does because that gets back to years ago, when people lived here. So I believe that the local people, they respect that.*

> *…They don't like the way the Park Service preserves things sometimes. I'll give you an example of a cultural resource that people are not happy with. …You've got a farm, an old farm, it's been cleared off, beautiful fields and that's actually a cultural resource, but we let it grow up and when it grows up, it grows up into things that never was there ever before; something that was introduced here in the late 50's and early 60's. It will grow up in a lot of multiple rows, we can't walk through it, nothing can walk through it. It grew up thorn brush, it grew up cedars. If you wanted to go back to its natural state, humans had a hand in changing this natural state and you have a hand in helping it go back. And so, in my opinion, we should go back and replant whatever was there before we interfered with nature. I just don't think that the people have any respect for the way the government's doing it.*

Knowledge:
Community participants held certain expectations for the knowledge and expertise that go into management decisions and actions. Participants emphasized the need for "common sense," as well as an understanding of the local landscape and culture.

Common sense
In general, the NPS personnel were praised for their practical, "common sense" approach to management. A community participant asserted, "We've got some good people in here now that have a little common sense approach to how you get along with the people that are all known as "hillbillies". (19) Yet, one participant added that in some instances, "You have guys that come through, rangers, that don't know nothing except they got an uncle that got them in the park service. They cause a little trouble every once in a while, but they don't stay long."

Local knowledge
Two agency participants who grew up in the area further elaborated on the importance of having local knowledge and experience in Ozark Riverways management. According to one participant, land management agencies' flip-flop in their approach to fires and forest management in the area is a source of consternation among community members. She explains,

> *The first major government interventions into the area and we're talking about in the 1920s and 30s, and my dad will tell you that all these years, they told us not to burn the woods. No, you don't burn the woods. Smokey Bear says don't do it and Woodsy Owl says don't do it. And now they're doing it. And this has got these old boys all shook up. And generally, they agree…they said "We knew that all along that you've got to burn it to keep the fires down in the future and also to provide for wildlife and you can get rid of the ticks and all these benefits of*

burning the wood." And they did it for 100 years before [the government] came in and bought up all this land up like the Mark Twain. And now it's Mark Twain and [Missouri Department of Conservation] and the Park Service is doing prescribed burn. And they say government was stupid, they did. We knew this all along.

A second agency participant criticized the NPS's standardized, "one shoe fits everything" approach to policy making. He described how the proposed rule on personal flotation devices has upset local community members and has made them skeptical and distrustful with respect to the Ozark Riverways and its rules:

> *The government itself tries to fix everything with one shoe fits everything and it doesn't fit. I mean there's like this whole thing that we're going through with the National Park Service proposed rule on personal flotation devices, which will include everything that is commercially invented, and here, that includes tubes. Well, nobody wants to wear a PFD while they are in an inner tube and we can't explain to the locals that it's a stupid rule because then we're telling them that we're stupid, but how do you tell them that you're going to try to get it changed? So it's like they don't trust the government to make smart rules and so [we say] "Yep, we're working on it." Those are the easy things that we can say, or "Yeah, I think it's going to go away," but they don't know. I really can't tell them 100 percent that that rule's not going to come through the system. We don't want it to, but unfortunately when those rules are codified by Congress and they become law and regulation and our law enforcement people have to go out there and enforce the law in that area. It's kind of muddled with people. Some things that the government does, doesn't fit common sense.*

Capacity:
Several participants had expectations related to the NPS's capacity to turn decisions into actions and outcomes associated with law enforcement, commitment, and consistency.

Law enforcement
Law enforcement in particular, was identified by community participants as an expectation and a problem on the Ozark Riverways.

> *It's very important to have a presence in for one; law enforcement is probably the biggest thing. We've had some problems with that in recent years. People come here, as I've mentioned before, they think it's a Disney World ride or an amusement park, that there's no law, no rules. I think it's important that people know that the same rules apply on land and on the river. We want everyone to have a good time, and you know, and enjoyable experience, but not at the expense of other people, and not at the expense of breaking the law. (20)*

> *The need for probably more law enforcement could probably enhance some of the things. Some of these guys that are out here could be arrested and they probably need to be arrested. One or two rangers in this whole district can't cover it all.*

One community participant acknowledged the budget shortfalls that many National Parks are facing and how that has affected management capacity:

Oh, I think it's managed all right. I mean, you know there are places that could make, put more things in for the people. I see on TV where they're supposed to be the National Parks, they don't have enough money to hardly run that now. Did you see that? ... Yeah, some of the parks are closing down, half of the rangers cause they don't have any money, short of money.

Commitment and consistency

Two agency participants who grew up in the area suggested that demonstrating a commitment to the Ozark Riverways and consistency in management are important capacity expectations among community members. For instance, agency restructuring and additions in administrative positions, may send the impression that the agency is not committed to having a strong presence in the ground:

> *What the people see anymore is they see jobs, positions. They see what [the NPS has] been doing in the last few years is adding more positions in the administrative end of it and not out in the field. And the local people sees that. They say "what in the world is going on?" We're continuously adding positions in the administrative end of it, but in the field, out there where the people are, there's nobody out there. ...They see when they go in the headquarters building, they look and there's people everywhere. ...Then they come out here and there's nobody out here working. They made new positions and they've restructured things to do that. ...Why don't they fill positions out here in the field, because we got a lot of vacant positions. We've had them for two years and they won't fill them.*

Inconsistent enforcement practices may also diminish the community's trust. An agency participant described how the NPS's scenic easement program along the riverways has fallen short of expectations:

> *Just about the time we think we're getting their trust, then the Park Service deceives them again. The case in hand – the people on these scenic easements. ...Scenic easements come up for sale and there's a covenant that is transferred. In other words, the covenant of the original agreement goes with it, you can't expand outside the footprint of the original building; you can't build another building, you can't improve it. So there were people who wanted to buy a tract of land that was a scenic easement. They would come to the park and [the NPS] would tell them this is the way it is, you can't do anything with this. They said well the building's too small. And then somebody else comes along and buys it and what they're going to build is an elaborate home. Now how does that make that first person feel that couldn't do it? And these are people from the community. And that's what's happened within the last four years. ...Inconsistent enforcement of the scenic easements is a major problem here and probably in getting the public trust. If I go out there and I say I want to buy that piece of land and I come up here and say "What are the covenants on it?" "Well, you can't do this and you can't do that" and [I] say, "Well, I don't want it. It's too much of a hassle" and then some good ol' boy comes along and he buys it and the next thing you know, there's new roads in there, there's new buildings, garages, out buildings, everything and this first guy and his family and they all say what happened? You told us we couldn't so this and this guy comes along and look what he did? So that's why we have problems. Inconsistency.*

Process-based Themes
According to a community participant by listening, being informed, negotiating, and getting involved with the community, the NPS can build trust and further the feeling that the local community members "are part of the riverways."

> *…They have pretty well fulfilled their commitment to us, not 100 percent, but I'd say better than expected. I've been able to talk to them on issues that people were concerned about. …I've always been able to work things out with them. We've had disagreements and we've been able to negotiate a peaceful settlement and where everybody was pretty happy. …I think by listening to the people, their demands, their wishes, staying in touch with them as they did before, keep them informed…. It's being informed and getting involved, the Park Service getting involved with the community, that is a key element right there. …I think you build trust in each other, then the locals feel that they are a part of the riverways and it makes them feel good.*

<u>*Communication*</u>:
Communication emerged as an important theme related to management process, especially among agency participants who were native to the area. The interviews provided insight into what should be communicated and how it should be communicated between the agency and the local community.

Participants suggested that communication should:

- be frequent,
- be consistent,
- reflect honesty,
- promote understanding, and
- display respect.

Frequent
An agency participant who grew up in the area called for "more public meetings." He said, "They did that some—[to explain] what their goals are and what they plan to do. The county and the state people, too they all need to be involved.

Consistent
An agency participant also stressed the importance of a consistent message from agency staff. He believes it is the superintendent's responsibility to ensure that employees are in step and not "passing the buck" when interacting with community members and local officials:

> *Within the administration that we have in the park itself, the top officials I'm talking about, there is a problem. There's a serious problem there. …[These] are small communities; everybody knows everybody and they know what's going on and they're getting two or three different stories, it just makes them madder. …[The agency is] always try to pass the buck somewhere else. …[The superintendent] can't let someone in his division go out to the public and say, "well, he just won't do that, we'll try to get this changed." You can't do things like that and the county and the state has to do the same thing with the park. …They're getting mixed signals and the superintendent needs to get that squared away.*

Honest
The virtues of honesty were extolled by an agency participant who grew up in the area. He asserted that he knows the community and they respect honesty, even when they may not agree with what's being said:

> *You have to be honest with people. They may not like that decision that you make, but if you're honest with them, they will at least respect that, and we haven't had too much of that. [The NPS employees] tell too many different stories, and that is one of the problems that I see is with not being honest. You have to be honest. That's my opinion. I know how the community feels, plus I work for the park and I see those things as well as the people in the community see that. …Tell them. And be honest about it. They may not like that, but like I said, they will respect that.*

Promotes understanding and display respect
Several agency participants believe that promoting understanding and displaying respect are central to effective communication. According to these participants, clearly communicating *what* the agency is doing and perhaps even more importantly, *why* the agency is doing it will increase stewardship and support for management and will reduce the spread of misinformation:

> *I think that we probably could communicate better sometimes. It's very difficult to do that sometimes, but I think that we could communicate better. Make it more clearer what we're doing and why we're doing it. We have done a better job of that in the last year or so, and I think that's probably the best thing to do – clear communication about what we're doing and why we're doing it. Sometimes, the reason for why we are doing it are things that the local community would agree to. They just don't know why they're doing it. And if they knew, they would probably agree and support it – maybe silently, but they would probably agree. And so when we don't communicate clearly and that kind of thing, we miss that opportunity.*

> *People always want to know what it is that I am doing. If we're sampling water and they see us sampling water, they want us to tell them what we're doing, what we're testing for, why, and is the quality of the water good and the answer to that is generally "Yes, it's good" and they're happy to hear that. Then they usually have some kind of input about how they think the tourist are littering wherever …or some particular source of pollution that they are aware of, or wonder if there's a problem or something like that. Generally, it's positive. I guess they see what I do as something that doesn't bother them in the lake versus a ranger might give them a ticket for parking in the wrong place.*

> *But at the same time, too, there are a lot of things that the park does positive but they don't tell people about it. If people understood when they go to a cave, for instance, you've been going there forever and you're going to take a couple of friends to see it, and you get there and there's a cage over it and it tells you do not enter. If they had some way of knowing and reading about why the park does that about the bats that are in there during the migrating season, or certain areas that there's a certain orchid that grows there and if it doesn't grow…if they would tell people those things, then they would see that there is positive things that they are doing. But nothing's ever shown except for the obvious that if you*

didn't work here and be in the fields, you wouldn't know about a little orchid that they found, that it's nowhere else in the state of Missouri. You're not going to know that because we don't tell people about it. But you would know about it if I were a law enforcement ranger and gave you a fine for digging up a plant or picking up a rock.

To me, it's trying to talk, just to be open communications. Start with certain, I won't say individuals, but at least certain maybe organizations and then maybe individual contact you have just take the time with them and explain whether they agree with what you are doing or not, but try to explain why you're doing something and let it expand. Make sure they understand correctly so there is not this misinformation or misunderstanding that's brought out, cause it will spread to the whole community for sure. Family to family, community to community.

An agency participant also contends that improved communication can lead to a better relationship through enhancing the agency's understanding of and respect for the local culture:

I think mainly communication and let the public feel like they've got some input in what's happening. So this is their life and as Park Service people move around, they can't understand what having roots in a place really is. Just don't understand. You don't understand what it's like, "OK, hey, I've got grandparents who were born here in 1818." It's hard for them to understand. So I think some kind of public forum that people can really voice their opinions and things would help.

Many times [community members] feel like because maybe they don't have the best education, most of the time they're speaking to people that a lot better educated than they are –got a better way of words– that the Park Service probably looks down on them and doesn't recognize them as having a good understanding of what this really means to them. And I think that's the biggest thing is they just don't feel like the government tries hard enough to understand their view of things and I believe if they can solve that problem, this whole thing would smooth out in lots of ways.

Collaboration:
The interviews revealed that collaboration is important to both community participants and agency participants. Participants' comments provide a definition of good collaboration in Ozark Riverways, including key characteristics and mechanisms of collaboration. Participants believe collaboration must be sincere and should:

- engage the community,
- represent an equitable distribution of power, and
- include local organizations and agencies.

Engage the community
One community member recalled participating on an advisory board for the NPS:

I would trust them as long as they were involved with local people, trying to understand. That was the reason, when this park was formed, that they had us local men on an advisory board and we met with them once every three or four months in the beginning and offered suggestions to them, and they followed them.

Another community participant described the public involvement process as "too formal." He feels like the procedural regulations have inhibited the agency-community relationship:

> *It seems that the government's process whether it's Mark Twain Forest or whether it's Riverways, it seems to be rigid to me, I guess. Formal. Maybe too formal. Why can't you have meetings with people and sit around and just talk like we're talking. Just talk about, "What bugs you the most about the river?" Or "What bothers you the most about what we're doing?" Just sit and talk informally. It seems to me like they have all of these regulations about here's how you conduct meetings and this is what you do and we're going to get public comment. I would think that there could be an improvement.*

An agency participant agreed that the NPS needs to engage the community, but he called upon local community to be more supportive of the process, as well. He said, "I think they do need to listen to the local people. On the other hand, I think the local people needs to try to work with the park more instead of getting mad over some issue and then they just get further away from each other instead of getting this issue resolved."

Represent an equitable distribution of power
Several participants believe that the community is skeptical about the sincerity of collaboration and the distribution of power. Issues such as tokenism, demands from the local tourism industry, the influence of urban perspectives in Missouri's metropolitan areas, and political pressures from state legislators were discussed.

Two agency participants described a feeling of tokenism among community members with respect to local community involvement in planning:

> *[Community members] expect [the NPS] to involve them somewhat in the major decision-making and in some ways, we do. We're supposed to have public hearings, but so much of the time by the time something gets to a public hearing, peoples' minds are made up, it seems. And that's the way the public views it. They just feel like that. If we got an idea about something, we ought to bounce it off them a little bit, see what they thought, since they live here.*

> *We have…had a friends' group about four – five years ago. The friends group…the effort was to try and improve the relationships with the community. The park has seriously made several attempts at this and the friends' group was one of those attempts. However, the people who we got to sit on the friends' group were almost all of those people who had moved into the area. We couldn't convince very many local people to be involved with the friends' group. The friends' group ended up falling on its face and you could point your finger, I'm sure, to lots of different reasons. Why? I don't know the exact reason, but the comments that I heard was that the friends' group felt they were just formed as a figurehead, that they didn't have any influence or any role, and it kind of died on the vine. Some of that was probably our fault; we didn't have enough people committed to the friends' group to make it a success, perhaps. But I did hear them complain that it was a useless point. They didn't have any influence.*

A few community participants suggested that the NPS caters to Missouri's urban communities and are inattentive to local residents. A participant asked, "I don't know of any public meetings

that the Park Service has. Do they? ...If they do have any meetings, it's in St. Louis and Kansas City, in the bigger cities." Likewise, another participant contended,

> *That is one thing that is bad about the Park Service, they do their surveys, they call it. They go to St. Louis and cities and they ask a thousand people what they think, but they never even been here. And then they don't pay one lick of attention to what the local people say. You know that, that's just the way it is.*

Collaboration efforts early in the riverways' designation were more inclusive and representative of the community, according to one agency participant who grew up in the area. However, she asserted that these interactions have dropped off and now the community perceives that the "concessionaires run the park."

> *There is no meetings with the public in the park. I've never heard of one. Except when they first in the 60's [began] coming here saying we need to preserve this and we're going to make a national park. Then people would come, they'd have the meetings and people came together and they discussed it, but I've never heard of anything since then. The people are questioning all the time. They'll see something that the park has built or spent money on this huge something and you'll hear people say you know what, they didn't even ask anyone. We didn't want that here. But it wasn't for us. It was for these concessionaires that live up and down the river that rent their inner tubes and canoes. People aren't involved at all. ...People are just completely fed up. And they see that if you live here, you're the ones who are getting pushed further and further and further out so we can make room for more masses of people. So instead of...seeing that this area right here is already so crowded, we build bigger parking lots for more inner tubes and more canoes. ...they just make more room for more people. And this river can't take more people. It's full. It's too full. And everyone sees that. Everyone sees that. And everyone knows that we can no longer get in our boat and run upriver with our kids anymore. ...But when you go and it doesn't matter if it's at Van Buren or Eminence or anywhere on this river, any coffee shop even, they're going to say that the concessionaires run this park. The entire 134 miles of it. That none of us have any say about it. They all say that. Unless you talk to the concessionaires.*

Several participants charged that political pressures play a major role in the NPS's decision making. Both agency and community participants described how politics have influenced decisions and intimidated local community members:

> *The motorboat limitations is an example of [political power in the community]. The Park Service proposed a certain set of limitations. Political pressure came in, negotiations happened at the Washington level because of that. That wouldn't have happened before and a negotiated compromise is what we end up with and it came out a political situation. It's probably as good of an example as any, but any time anybody doesn't like something that we're doing around here, the local representative gets a call and we get the call. Sometimes it has little or no effect if you send a letter back to the complainant explaining why we did something, it's an annoyance, other times, depends on what you do.*

When asked if they have participated in any planning processes, an interview participant and her husband who sat in on the interview replied,

Husband: *Well, mainly, it don't do us any good to say anything, cause they don't listen.*
Participant: *Usually the decisions are made higher up than here in Van Buren and they are not made in this office. A lot of decisions come from higher up.*
Husband: *All the decisions are political.*

An agency participant confirmed this sense of hopelessness and intimidation among community members:

> *I've talked to so many people in this area, up and down the river, that are wanting so bad to see alcohol stopped on the river – that the only way we see to stop the people that are coming here and nobody's giving them a place to go say OK, stand up and say what you think we need to do. Where do you go with that? You start speaking it out in town, then you've got these people who, they're big supporters of [local representative's name] and all they're going to do is make a phone call and she'll stop what you got going before you even get it off the ground. So where are we supposed to go with that information? You've got people wanting to do things and they got ideas, real good ideas, but nobody knows where to go with them. They don't trust telling it to the park, they know they can't speak out without some representative speaking out ahead of them, so I don't know where they are supposed to go with it. That's why everyone is so frustrated. It would be great if they were given an opportunity to.*

Include local organizations and agencies
One community participant acknowledged the involvement of local organizations in decision making. Unlike some of the other interviews, this participant believes most decisions are made locally and in coordination with local governments and clubs:

> *I just expect them to go on and do their job. . . preserving this land . . Working with the state of Missouri, the conservation commission. Leaving it open and free to the access of the people. Most of the decisions are made right here and I believe if it was going against the grain of the community, some of these organizations or civic minded people would stand up and say "Whoa, we want you to reconsider this" and to my knowledge that hasn't been done. I don't think there has been any confrontation with any of the civic clubs because most of [the NPS employees] people are members of those organizations.*

<u>*Cooperation*</u>:
The third process-based theme is cooperation. Participants expect that the NPS management provides local benefits and opportunities for cooperative ventures big and small. Specific avenues of cooperation mentioned by participants include:

- providing jobs,
- boosting economic revenue,
- preserving and interpreting cultural history, and
- working with local governments

Providing jobs

Several participants believe that the NPS plays an integral role in providing jobs in the community. An agency participant noted that hiring local residents was "one of the big promises" outlined in the Ozark Riverways' founding legislation:

> *If you go back to the founding legislation, that was one of the big promises that this park made that we will hire local people. They would be a major employer. And it has been. We call it the Ozark Full Time Employment of 1975, when it became, when Patricia Nixon cut the ribbon, by the way for this park. And that was part of the original covenant with the people.*

A community participant recalled a time when the community relied heavily on the NPS "payroll." He explained,

> *But really and truly, I am pretty high on the National Park Service. ... Yeah, I like what they do, they provide a tremendous payroll and they provide jobs, payroll. Back in the early 80s, if it hadn't been for the National Park's payroll here I don't know what we would have done. We probably would have been...what was the old saying, dried up on the vine here, this little town. But that constant payroll brought us through. So it did a lot of good. If you get maybe a representative that's not a good PR person, can do you damage, but, and cause you some grief, but so far in the last few years, we've had good people in management.*

A second community participant and her husband agreed that the NPS has provided employment for the local community:

> Husband: *They bring a lot of money to our community. Yep, from the people they bring in, the Park Service pays good. ...Yeah, they pay good, as far as jobs around here. In fact when I retire, I'm going to try to get a job with them.*
> Participant: *They give a lot of people jobs from this area that wouldn't have jobs.*

Agency participants recognized the economic hardships in the local communities and the opportunities offered by the NPS:

> *Economic depression isn't all that unusual to lots of communities, but I believe that the depression here has gone on for a long time. The employment is almost nil. The federal government offers the best employment of the area. Logging used to be high income – that's drying up of course the resources are becoming depleted year after year.*

An agency participant acknowledged that the agency has "pumped" money into the communities, but he criticized some of its hiring practices. He described a situation in which longtime seasonal employees from the local community were forced to reapply for their jobs and lost their jobs to outside applicants:

> *Financially, the Park Service has pumped quite a bit of money into these communities, but the government does some very strange things. They hire seasonals here and a job is hard to come by here. [For one position there] were over 100 qualified applicants who applied for that job. It's a GS-4 job and I'm talking about people with master's degrees applying for this little GS-4 job here.*

And so jobs are hard to come by in this area. Something that recently happened was the seasonals were getting their re-hire rights going. And recently, they decided that they make them all re-apply and when they did, we got people all over the United States applying for the seasonal jobs and a lot of them had various reasons for doing it. Some of them just wanted to come to the Ozarks and spend the summer and work here and go someplace else until next year. Some of them are retired people. Some of them are young people that's maybe still in college. ...We had people that had worked here for 12, 15 years for the Park Service, they lost their jobs and boy did that cause a stir-up here in the community. Everybody got involved and the congresswoman was involved. ...So they're saying "OK, now here we are – we don't particularly like them, but we're working for them and now what they want to do they want to take the jobs away and give them to somebody from another state and here we are, one of the poorest counties in the state." and so that, they seems like every once in a while, they make a real bad blunder like that that causes a big stir-up you know.

Boosting economic revenue

Besides providing jobs, participants discussed expectations for improved economic stability in the communities. A community participant declared that he won't do business with the NPS because of their bidding methods. He added that the agency should be more committed to using local contractors:

As businesspeople here in town, in the community, we have to make a living, we have to make a profit. The Park Service will not let you make a profit.... So I don't bid, I don't bid them. I don't do any business with the Park Service itself. I do business with the people that work there or are park people. I do business with a lot of those. ... I mean as far as them being honest, yeah, I think they're honest people. I don't like their methods, bidding on their [contracts]. I think they ought to, instead of getting [services] from somebody in two counties off, I think they ought to get their gas in the community from where they're at. That helps the community; that helps everybody.

An agency participant who grew up in the area described the expectations community members had for the Ozark Riverways and the local economy. She contends that few have actually benefited:

I talk a lot to people who even went to Washington to fight for the park. ...And now, they are greatly disappointed and embarrassed that they were part of that. They thought it was going to promote people, meaning more money in the community. Cause this was right after the logging. There was no money here. ...But the only people who gained from it were these very few handful that are still here doing it.

Preserving and interpreting cultural history

A third expectation under the theme of cooperation is preserving and interpreting cultural history. An agency participant illustrated how the NPS and local community members have the opportunity to share photos and artifacts with each other.

People in the community [knew] that we house all these things, artifacts. Whether it's books or photographs or old maps or whatever, but it wasn't accessible to anyone because there was no one here. Well, now there is

somebody and people know now that that's available. So that's going to be great that we can actually say now, "We've got it, and we'll be glad to share it with you." And that's also going to open up where they are going to share stuff with us, too I'm hoping. But it makes a huge difference to this. [Employee name] and I both are from here. [Community members] wouldn't allow copies being made if it were someone from outside of this area, so we're able to get things that other people wouldn't be able to. [Community members] would never talk to [agency employees] if they weren't from here. There's a huge "them and us" with the park and the locals.

Working with local governments
Cooperation should be extended to local governments, as well. An agency participant described a program in which the NPS has teamed up with local fire departments to improve emergency response in the area. He added, "that helps us out too."

> *…What we've done is gone out into the communities, not just what we have within our legislative boundaries, and we've mapped all, well… I'll use Camber with its rural fire department there. They had not really a good idea of how many people were in the protection zone that they had mapped out. And we went in, mapped, gave locations of water sources, hazards such as propane tanks, utility lines, picture of the house. So now the fire chief gets a call or they get called out, they can literally punch into the computer at the engine, the person picks it up and they can say so-and-so's house. They do that and a GPS unit kicks in and enables them to go directly to that house as they go. They can read a real quick blurb from a short sheet of paper that will tell them the house, closest water source, and …you may know that there are infants or you may know there are people that are older in age or have medical problems that you would recognize when you got there that you may have to deal with. We try to do that for much the adjoining communities to the river. That helps us out too, if we have a fire anywhere along the river in close proximity, then we also know from that if we need the public or the folks in the community would be affected if we can't stop a fire, and we have some pre-planning.*

Cooperation has not gone as smoothly in other aspects of government, according to a second agency participant. He asserted that "The local people thinks that the park tries to dominate the state and tries to dominate the county. …They think that the federal government …doesn't pay attention at your county level or at your state level. They think that the federal government is not listening to what they say. …They think that the park is overstepping their boundaries.

He used law enforcement issues as an example of how the federal government and county government have clashed:

> *They have a problem with law enforcement. …[Community members] think that they're overstepping their boundaries on the county issues and also at the state issues. Basically on their roads they travel, what they do, they think that the federal government, or the park, is overstepping that. The local people don't think they should do that. …That is the biggest problem they're having. …They've had meeting after meeting after meetings about this. The superintendent, the deputy superintendent, the county commissioners and they've had several meetings about that and they're not getting anything resolved as I can see. It just keeps getting worse, it looks like to me. …The [local residents]*

think your county people or your state people, like your conservation agents should be the one to issue the tickets, if they catch somebody doing something along the county road or a state road, not the federal government.

Key Constraints and Opportunities
Analysis of the 17 interviews revealed issues, constraints, and opportunities that play a significant role in the Ozark Riverways agency-community relationship and may influence trust. The first set of themes reflects historical and present day constraints associated with the cultural context of the community-agency interface. Many of these constraints are based on historical events or learned stereotypes. Some of the themes are drawn from descriptions of real or perceived sociocultural boundaries that have evolved between NPS employees and the local community.

Cultural Constraints
Cultural constraints encompass the sociocultural context of the community, including social values, attitudes and beliefs.

Historical resentment:
The interviews revealed that the NPS has reputation among some community members of being authoritative, uncommunicative, and uncooperative—and untrustworthy. Much of what was frequently referred to as "resentment" is in response to the designation of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and the land acquisition practices of the NPS.

> *The Riverways has done a lot of good things and I know that. I know basically how the local people feels about that, and a lot of that is from when the park itself come down and bought all the land and stuff along the river. They bought it back from people, generations. So the people, as their children got older, most of the old timers is gone, they resent the fact that the federal government bought up their property and stuff. They resent that.*

> *When the Park Service come in here, they did some practices in buying the land that wasn't very good, really. And some of the people that understood what was going on got good profits out of the land. People who didn't understand, well they said that this was the government, they're going to take the land if we don't sell it so they just sold it for whatever they could get out of it. And then after the government finally bought the land, they started looking around [saying] "I had better land than him and he got twice as much out of his land as I got out of mine." And they realized that this wasn't fair, what took place here. And so the mistrust in the federal government continued on at that time. The people who settled here was pretty much anti-government anyway. Mostly Scotch and Irish and then a lot of Cherokee Indians. …And they didn't like a strong federal government. This is bred into, I think, the people in this area and they're very independent people.*

> *If you examine it, most of the good farming is all along the river. They settled up the rivers. And so when they took the land, they took the land not just for the land, but the way the people looked at it is taking land that's traditionally ours for a 100 years or longer. So the Park Service come in here with some pretty bad feelings.*

Besides land acquisition in the 1960s other events have had an impact on the community's trust. Two agency participants who grew up in the area described a series of "broken promises" related to preserving and interpreting the community's cultural heritage:

> *What they expect or what they were told when they took over this property and it's not happening. They were told we will protect, preserve and interpret and that didn't happen. They dozed their houses, their farms; the ones that they did leave are slowly deteriorating. There's no interpreting their history. They took our culture when they took over here. They dozed all of our hand-made log cabins on the river and our subsistence that people had on this river was just dozed, and we put parking lots for more shuttle buses and more inner tubes and more canoes, but the people who live here get pushed further and further and further away without ever being considered that I know of. That's why there is such a bad feeling.*

> *There's just a few people. People that are in the park, the concessionaires, the ones who have permits to view the rental list canoe and inner tubes, and the people here that have the trail rides. They have thousands of people come every year, thousands of people and they pay them to use our river. Those people are the ones who make a lot of decisions and it could be, like that's a good example. It may be that your grandparent's home place for three generations was right here, and the park said you have to leave, but we're going to protect it and we're going to preserve it and we're going to interpret it. And you come back and you see the only people that are on this property is this guy that's making money with this trail rides or people are camped there, or there's a big, black-topped parking lot. It's not at all what they told 'em we would do. Not at all.*

> *See in the relocation in the 30s by Mark Twain and when these people negotiated for this land, when the Department of the Interior negotiated for this land, people were concerned, "Well, my family's cemetery's on that place." [The NPS said,] "Oh, that's okay, we'll take care of it…. We'll maintain it…." Well they didn't. And these people come to us all the time and say, "They said that they would do all this stuff. They would save the old homeplace. They tore it down." So, there's a lot of distrust and some of it is actually hatred. You get down to abhorring the government for what they did …because a promise was broken.*

An agency participant from the local area traced the community's distrust for the NPS back to the Civil War and the strong confederate roots of the area. He believes that the hostile feelings people had toward the Union back then have been passed down through the generations and are manifested in today's agency-community relations.

> *Some of my family has lived here [since] 1818. …The people in this area, practically all of them, were Confederates. …I think that some of the problems that maybe the Park Service has now even tie back to that period of time because of some of the feelings that the people developed and passed on to their children. …I'll tell you a story or two about some things that happened. …There's a family living there and they owned these fields and they had two houses. The man come home just in time to see Union soldiers killing his wife and one of his kids. And so, that's kind of an example of the hatred that started to develop against the government. As far as they were concerned, states' rights was what it was about. They didn't have slaves down there to speak of. It was states' rights and they felt*

like the federal government was too powerful and they was taking over all their rights. …The mistrust towards the government started way back there. And I think it still plays a part in what's taking place today. …Another thing that I feel like that plays a part in it is a lot of people here are part Cherokee Indian. Having these ancestors in this population here, it gives another reason to have mistrust against the government.

Another source of the historical distrust in the community may have to do with its cultural roots and traditional lifestyle. An agency participant from the area explained, "These Scotch-Irish were wild and people, when they came here, they wanted the isolation. They shunned government. Hunting and subsistence was their life way. And they still try to hang on to that in the 21st century. And there is a distrust of government. …And oftentimes, rightfully so." Several agency participants characterized the early settlers of southeastern Missouri as independent people who lived off the land and rejected government control:

> *The control the federal government represents is something that these people have fought for many, many years and many generations. …So many local people came here when there were no regulations. For example, the National Park Service hasn't been here that long. Back in the '60s is when it came into play. Prior to that, people weren't used to control. They hunted when they wanted; they killed as much as they wanted; they fished as much as they wanted. There were really no stipulations. …So when the Park Service moved in, and took a lot of peoples' lands for eminent domain action, people still, even in my generation will say the government took my grandpa's land and they remember that.*

Current sociocultural boundaries:
The image of the NPS in the local community is shaped by current perceived and real sociocultural boundaries. A "them and us" attitude appears to predominate much of the community and the agency, according to participants. An agency participant from outside the community alleged, "…You also have to deal with the Ozark tradition; you know, if you're not born here, you'll never be part of the community per se." A community participant proposed that NPS employees are partially responsible for these attitudes: "I think that's been part of the problem is that some of these [agency employees], I don't know, maybe they didn't want to be a part of the community and it's sort of a catch twenty-two. They weren't part of the community so people didn't want them to be a part of the community." A second agency participant appealed to both groups to overcome the stereotypes: "I think the main, the most important thing is they've got to get past the "them and us" thing or nothing's ever going to work. Ever."

When asked if he feels like he is part of the local community, an agency participant replied, "No, not really. I think that's been one of our issues with this location is that we feel like outsiders coming into this area…. With business dealings with some of the local folks here. They understand that we work for the Park Service and we're not treated I guess the same way."

The interviews provided further insight into how the "them and us" attitude has developed.

Economic status
Several participants characterized the cultural division as an economics issue. For example, a community member said that the wage differential between agency jobs and other jobs available to community members "always will be an issue." She explained,

> *It's always been an issue how much money they make compared to local people and I guess that always will be an issue. We're in an economically deprived area. Most of the jobs here are not high paying jobs. We still have a lot of six, seven, eight dollar an hour people out there in sawmills and so consequently they see someone making forty-five, fifty, sixty thousand dollars a year and they think the government's wasting money.*

According to other agency participants, the agency's public displays of prosperity and its employees' lifestyles have reinforced the perceptions of economic disparity between the NPS and the community:

> *There really isn't a relationship. …It's always them and us to the people that live here. …Like the new building they just put in. It's a big display of money waste, and it's up on the hill overlooking Van Buren and it's them and us.… They're in their uniforms and their ties and you don't see most of them, the management, the ones who make the most money are the people you never see trading in this town. You don't see them in the grocery store.*

> *Here you have the people who are drawing unemployment and seeking desperately for work, sitting in the…seeing us come in and buy whatever we want to on the menu because we can afford it, not that we're rich, but in this community, people who work for the government are…okay, they see us go in and order whatever we want on the menu, while they're telling their child you can only have something to drink. So you can see if you lived in that environment how day after day…and then when we publicize an award or something, that an employee does something well and we put it in the newspaper, people aren't happy for that person, they are angry at that person. In the local schools, you'll find that the children of National Park Service people, Forest Service people, those children have more opportunities because we can afford better clothes, we can afford to take them to Jefferson City, if there is something going on they want to [attend].*

Language
Language differences also may serve as a sociocultural boundary between NPS employees and local community members. An agency participant who grew up in the area described the community as "An alien culture to a lot of people." He has helped some government employees adjust to the local culture. He explained,

> *The language is such – and this is the thing I tell them first – is that the language is such that if I ask you, "Would you take me into town?" You say "I don't care to do that." That means "Yeah, I'll take you to town." But in your world, "I don't care to do that" means "I don't want to do it." Here at the office there's a lot of things like that, that they must know in order to understand these people. So there is a different world.*

The sociocultural boundaries between the community and NPS and ensuing distrust have taken its toll on some employees, especially those who grew up in the area. An agency participant described feeling pressured to justify particular management decisions and defend the NPS.

> *Well, to be perfectly honest about it, it's kind of a bad situation to be in because I'm working for the Park. …if [community members] don't like some rule or*

regulation, I say "I can't do anything about that. It has nothing to do with me, you need to be talking with the superintendent about that." And that's the way all the people feels that works for the park. They really do. It puts you in a bad place, it really does. And one reason why is everybody knows everybody. It's a small community. …Once in a while, you will get some positive stuff, but very seldom. You know most of the people will say everything negative. They won't say anything good about things they're doing, and when I start getting the negative stuff, I say "Well, here's what the park did, local people have benefited from the park."

Another admitted feeling like a "traitor" when he took a job with the NPS. He said, "The first few years that they were here, I went to work for them. And it was kind of like you had been a traitor or something to work for them, it's kind of you taken up with the other side." (3:95A) Similarly, a second agency participant said that working for the NPS can be "very frustrating, embarrassing sometimes." She added,

To see the park's decisions and what they're doing and then to be from here and [people say] "I can't believe that you would work for such a place like that" There's definitely times of being embarrassed, very frustrated at some of the decisions that are made and wanting really bad for them to do more outreach, to show what cool things they are doing.

When asked what it is like to work for the NPS, another agency participant said, "Well, it has some problems." He then described a recent interaction with a community member in which he felt he was threatened:

I had a guy come to my house last night and …he said, "I'm concerned about your well-being." "Well why is that?" And he said that there's some people that's really mad at you. They think you're trying to close roads and he said "I like you and I didn't want you to get hurt." So, occasionally things like that spring up.

<u>Competing values</u>:
Some agency participants acknowledged how difficult it can be to meet diverse community expectations in terms of management outcomes. For example, an agency participant described a vision of a more "manicured" park setting held by some community members. Initially she suggested that the NPS does not have the capacity to meet these expectations, but then she intimated that an underlying values conflict may be present.

I consistently have local people say we were better off before the federal government came because when the states were managing the parks, they were well mowed, they were manicured, they were clean, there were swing sets and there were teeter-totters, and they describe a lot of the things that existed when the state was in control. I've even had people who I know as dear friends who are older tell me that when they were a child, the parks were managed better by the state. When they say managed better, they always go back to having areas consistently mowed and well manicured, and pretty. The Park Service has – I don't know if it's because we don't have the staff or maybe our goals are quite different than the state, but we don't mow like the state used to do. Hey, the state has consistent people mowing all the time, so their lawns were very, very short and well manicured. They also seem to have more things for kids to do that the

federal government or at least since I've been here hasn't provided. So I think they expect no change. They want things to stay the way they were. And when they do come to the park, they want everything to be free. They don't think they should have to pay anything.

Several agency participants recognized strong ties and emotional bonds many community members have with the landscape.

I think you see a lot more family tradition of remaining in the area. People don't go to high school and leave for college and then come home to visit; they pretty much go to high school, maybe go away to college, but almost always end up remaining here to live forever. The people seemed very tied to the land.

The community's unique perspective on "ownership" and control also emerged. This type of attachment to the landscape may also translate into an animosity for outside control:

The people here have a different appreciation, I think, of the natural resources. More of an ownership. They consider it to be theirs. …They seem to resent the fact that outsiders can come into their community and take their jobs and tell them what to do with their land or their river or their wildlife.

Another thing too that you'll hear out of older locals is that this is our river, not the government's. This is our river. They feel an ownership of this area. These people were raised here, but when you get away from here …people don't have that feeling and they don't even understand it. [Locals say] "Hey this is our river." No, that's not your river. That belongs to Ozark National Scenic Riverways. They feel strongly, "this is our river and they shouldn't be telling us how to do this." We feel an ownership in this river, because it was always understood, even the landowners and even the state law, that you had a free right to float this river, travel this river, and so everybody felt like this is ours, it belongs to us.

They expect the land management to, as a whole, I think keep all those who are from the outside and visit the area under control, but don't bother us who are local from using the area. If you can capture that in one sentence I guess that's about it.

This is again unique because there is a possessory interest from everybody around here on each section of land, …and a lot of our national parks are, the big parks are carved out of public land that had no settlements on them, you know, and so there's not a possessory interest by too many people other than the Native Americans, maybe. But any park like this, like Shenandoah, Blue Ridge or Delaware Water Gap, there's somebody left in the area that their grandfather owned that farm and now it's Park Service and they're not really happy about that. And that will still remain here for the next several generations, but on the other hand, they know if it were left up to Grandpa to stay on that farm and their son inherited it, it probably subdivided the cabins and it would have been a mess, so they didn't like it, but they don't like the alternative.

Limited community awareness:
A final cultural constraint revealed in the interviews is a lack of community awareness, understanding, and appreciation of natural resource management and in particular, the mission and responsibilities of the NPS. One participant characterized this issue as an "identity crisis." He surmised,

> *With this community, again it comes back to …what's their understanding of what federal agencies are supposed to do and some of these folks can't tell us apart from the US Forest Service. And I tell them "Hey, they cut the trees and we protect the trees and that's about the basics. We wear the flat hat, Smokey wears the flat hat, but none of the Forest Service people wear the flat hat." And they don't know the difference. They can't differentiate us between the state and anything else. There's always an identity crisis. They just had to know we're the ones that are on that section of land along the river, and trusting that they know anything about us or wanting to know. They didn't know if we're with the Department of the Interior or Ag, they don't know, they don't care. They just want to know can I do this when I get there?*

Agency participants argued that the community has little understanding of the financial challenges of managing the Ozark Riverways. When asked what he believes the community expects from the NPS, this agency participant replied, "Clean bathrooms." He explained,

> *The number one thing they want, they want clean bathrooms and they want soap. They expect us to deliver clean everything. Well, buildings in good repair, roads in good repair, a ranger always available when you need one and never there when you don't want him. They think the government has more money than it knows what to do with and is probably spending what it has poorly. They expect a lot of stuff that if they actually understood how much it cost to produce that, they realize that you can't do that.*

An agency participant was unsure if the community recognizes the economic benefits of the NPS:

> *I don't know whether the community recognizes the extent of how much we assist the economy. I think a lot of people would recognize that we bring dollars into the community, but, and even I couldn't say how much we bring into the community. So I don't know whether it's known out there just the impact that we have in the area, particularly when you think of our 5.4 million dollar budget, for starters, plus the tourism economy that's generated by the Park being here. It's a fairly significant boost to the local economies and what are some of the most depressed communities in area counties in the state.*

Institutional Constraints
Several agency participants identified constraints within the agency that play role in the agency-community relationship. These institutional characteristics and phenomena have strained the Ozark Riverways ability to meet the community's management outcome and process expectations.

Agency structure:
One participant stated that departmentalization and poor coordination are to blame for some of the agency's problems in providing quality outcomes:

You've got people in natural resources, you've got people in cultural resources, you've got people in maintenance, you've got people in law enforcement and all these different divisions need to be able to put a program together. ...I think that's part of the problem. For instance, if you're in cultural resources, you're worried about archaeology, you don't care maybe so much if a tree's cut or something like that, but don't disturb anything in the ground. Natural resources, they're concerned about vegetations and stuff. Maintenance is concerned about cutting the vegetation, if there is, it's in the way and somewhere, we've done a poor job of coordinating all these activities together to produce what I think would be a good product.

Inadequate leadership:

Several agency and community participants emphasized the importance and role of the Superintendent in building strong relationships with community members:

It depends on the Superintendent. It depends on who's doing [the public involvement]. I'm not saying it's unfair, but what it depends on is how well they perceive that person understanding their viewpoints. In other words how, if they think that the Superintendent [is] a understanding man and he's recognizing them as people that need to be heard, then I think that makes all the difference in the world. So, as they have these public meetings and they got somebody they don't trust, they think "Well, what's the use to go there, they've got their mind already made up and it's not going to make a bit of difference whether we're there or not there."

I think it should be [the superintendent's] business to make sure to participate in community happenings. In other words, if you sit out in exile from the city limits of Van Buren you're not making much headway with it. But if you let yourself be known as a member of the park service and you want to help, that makes a lot of difference.

Staff shortages:

Staff shortages make it difficult for the agency to meet community expectations and demonstrate capacity. An agency participant admitted that she feels like she is "losing ground" in her work instead of making progress: "My problem is I have two people who work for me and we are so strapped, we can't even get through a week without losing ground."

Agency participants were cognizant of the effects of staff shortages on community relationships. This participant noted that many government employees are "spread too thin":

The problem is we're real good at starting something, but not real good at finishing it. Chamber's probably a perfect thing. When I first started the Chamber last year, I went every month. I missed December and January because of the workload. I went in February, I'm not going to be able to go in March – my workload is too great. The message I believe that sends is "Oh, you're interested right off the get-go to see what you can get, then when you find out that you're not getting much, you're leaving just like everybody else does." I really think that's the message that it sends. And we do that with so many things, like our Friends group. We started out great guns to form a Friends group. We got one formed, and it fell apart. I think it fell apart a lot because we didn't put enough commitment into it. But we were spread so thin, just like the maintenance

people trying to mow all these areas instead of just these three, when you start mowing all of them, you're spread too thin, you can't do a good job in anything. I think that all of us who work for the government have become spread so thin that we end up not doing a good job at anything. So we start great ideas, but we don't finish them.

<u>Staff turnover:</u>
Perhaps the most destructive phenomenon in terms of building relationships and trust is staff turnover. According to agency participants, staff turnover impacts the community and NPS employees, because of frequently shifting management direction and short-lived programs. An agency participant concluded that as a result, local community members are "losing confidence" and view the NPS as "indecisive." She explained,

> *I think that the few times that local people might have started to see what they saw as a glimmer of hope, that new management would move in and in their perspective, things would change. I don't think things really change. I think they just have different styles of dealing with the public, and different opinions of what's priority to the park, but I don't think local people have the benefit of knowing all those things. All they see is the final outcome. They might start to mow the Big Springs area regularly. And then we have a change. Perhaps the change is budget. Perhaps the division chief who's moved in determines that we're going to put our focus over here instead of over there, but what the public sees are those people who are going to that area that was looking like they were making an improvement, now we're going backwards again. So they are losing confidence in us when they start gaining it and that's happened in many areas as it would with even a parent who moves into a family, who have a different idea of raising children. The same thing happens here. Every time a new parent moves in, a new division chief, a new Superintendent and the focus changes, I think the public, the local people start to see that as indecisive as "OK, they're jerking us around again." They look like they're doing one thing; next thing we know, they're doing something else.*

Another participant argued that while he recognized the value of new ideas, "stability along the river is a good thing." He said,

> *The turnover is the biggest. It's not just a two-year thing and you're out; you don't get to belong to the community in that time. And most people in the federal government do move, but some stability and faces along the river is a good thing. Not necessarily the whole work force, cause you need an influx of new ideas, and management, too so you don't stagnate, but I think the community, you'll hear them, 'oh, they're federal, they'll leave in a couple of years,' so you've already lost a little bit of credibility with them, at least that's the feeling I get.*

Similarly, two other agency participants called for more consistency:

> *The message that that also sends to people is that they came here to retire and then realistically, they are not here very long, because they are towards the end of their career. … the things I'm talking about aren't a one-year, two-year project. They are long term. I don't see us getting a management team this year for 10 years. And that's what I think we need. I think we need a management*

team that's consistent, the consistent people, the consistent perspective and goals.

…There's such a turnover of management here. See you may come in today and you're in charge of cultural resources for this park, and I'm leaving, so everything that I have been doing now you change it all because you're this new person and then you're going to leave, somebody else. So nothing's ever followed through. It may be someone in management tells a local here that they can't build something here on their easement property. The next guy comes in, says gee, you can. So they see that it's all political. It's not being managed like you would think. …Very inconsistent.

Staff turnover has consequences internally, as well. An agency participant recalled a time when a new superintendent came into the agency with a new management style that inspired many employees. When he left, several employees were upset:

I remember probably around early 1990s, the Superintendent came in with a new idea that he wanted employees to feel like ownership. No matter what your grade level was, he wanted you to be part of the team. There was a lot of enthusiasm that started to build. Employees, and I'm not talking the local people now, I'm talking about our own employees, were starting to say "I volunteer" "…tell you what; I'll help do that." It was amazing. But no sooner did that get started then management changed again, and the direction was different. This Superintendent had a whole different view of chain of command and although he said that he welcomed the maintenance workers' opinions, the maintenance worker was no longer on the committee talking to the superintendent. It was chain of command. So then those people became very angry because they gave a lot of themselves during that timeframe when they thought they had a voice and then we took it away in their minds.

Limited public engagement:
A common sentiment throughout the agency and community interviews was that the local community has not been adequately engaged in natural resource management. Public involvement has not been a tradition in the Ozark Riverways, according to this agency participant:

I think the Park Service hasn't gone far enough to gain trust or to gain local community participation in anything. And I think that's one of our weaknesses here that we haven't historically gone and try to foster those types of relationships. We've got certain personalities that have worked for the park and currently work for the park that are trying to make those inroads but I think there's a long way to go to build those trust relationships before those things can progress much further. …It's kind of like management in a vacuum that has traditionally happened here. Management decisions have traditionally, it's not a comment for the existing management staff, cause they're trying to make a difference there, but management decisions in the past have been made inside the headquarters building …and would not involve community input…. I think if you go back through the records, you'll find an alarming lack of NEPA documents that have gone out from this park. So there's a total lack of community involvement with those types of things – management decisions.

Another participant noted that public involvement has been restricted to "extremely controversial issues." He explained,

> I don't think that there has been enough real dialogue with the community around the park. …I feel that there just hasn't been a lot of public exchange between the entire community and park management. It just hasn't occurred. The only time it seems to occur are on extremely controversial issues.

Issues such as horse trails have prompted some efforts to promote collaboration:

> There has not been much more public involvement in park management in recent years than there ever was. I could think of one or two examples of working on horse trail issues and we did actively go out and seek people who ride in the park and actively, honestly seek their input for planning purposes. We did that the three years. That's an example of where we're going now, trying to get public input early in the planning process….

However, some agency participants perceive that diverse public interests make true collaboration difficult:

> A lot of it is because it's too cumbersome to do that. You go out and look for public input for every management decision, you'll never get any decisions made, you'll never be able to run the park. And I thought rather than that, do the best you can with your knowledge of the public, what the public wants. The other thing is that the public input for this park is difficult because it has clientele from disparate areas. You have the local people, you have the counties surrounding the park, and are 30 miles away and then you have the people who travel from the St. Louis area that make up the bulk of the visitor ship, especially from, who have totally different needs sometimes and wants. When we have public meetings for big decisions documents like the general management plan, we went all over the state to try to collect that input.

> The problem is that oftentimes the communities…it's just not one voice out there speaking. The community is 100 different entities or, I don't know what the number is, but 100 different entities that's speaking with their interests in mind and that's the difficulty as I see it with …managers sorting out, oftentimes, these competing interests. 'Cause I mean the environmentalists will see things differently than an ATV retail outlet for example. The ATV retail outlet will want to see the trails open for ATV uses and the environmental community will want to see ATVs prohibited. So…how you sort out those competing interests or a special interest is what makes life interesting. But the manager has to be active in the community and has to project that the manager is really interested in getting that input regardless of what the people think. You've got to be open enough to at least receive the input, and then you can sort it out as to which is most appropriate for this park.

Another challenge to decision making and integrating public interests are the vast procedural requirements associated with the National Environmental Policy Act:

> For 16 years, I've sat in meetings where management has said horse trails are a problem; we're going to fix them. Year after year after year. And that's really not a blame of those managers. It's difficult to get policy changed in a park this big

because there are so many things they have to consider before they change a horse trail. Okay? They have to look at the natural resources impact. They have to look at NEPA compliance if they're going to put hitching posts in. They have to look at the impact of erosion on this trail. So if you were talking a five-mile area; no problem. They could probably do it within a year. But we're talking this area, with a multitude of horse trails. So to evaluate the impact of erosion, they have to go to all these trails and by the time they get it started, they have to start back again where they were in the beginning because things have changed. The erosion situation has become different. The funnel of the river has changed since the last evaluation. So, we never got to a completed project. And right now, this management team is doing the same thing that we started 16 years ago. And the people see that because we do press releases saying we're going to do a trail system. Folks, you folks who like horses, we're going to fix it for you and we're looking and we're working on there. People go, "ah, they're finally going to do something." And then the NEPA processes and the rules that have to be sent through for all kinds of review for our plans and ...the designing company that we have to use and after we get their feedback and they want changes, and then their changes impact the erosion evaluation and it's...you can see it's just like a big old ball of twine and every time you move a string, it changes the other strings, so to get it completed...impossible. And we have staff who are dedicated to that project. They have jobs that have tremendous responsibility. That project is a goal among many.

The complexity of policies and esoteric nature of agency jargon can make communication and thus, building trust daunting in local communities daunting, according to some agency participants:

I believe when we make decisions without consistent guidance. ...I have heard our employees and local people many times say "They're the Park Service, they're the government, they just do what they want to do." I think they say that because they see us stand up in front of a group and say these are the rules, we're trying to explain to you why we're going to do this. Only then the next time something that looks very similar happens, we don't follow those rules any more. And some of it is the rules have changed, some of it is those rules only applied in that situation, this situation is different for these reasons, therefore the rules don't apply, but we don't deliver that to the people. The only thing that we deliver to the people is when the process requires it.

This type of group don't really deal with that kind of environment, understanding regulations and government languages and stuff, so we try to transpose that to common sense terms and what do we really want from them. Basically we're renting canoes and tubes and that's not really complex, but it does get into insurance and liabilities and some laws and regulations that they have to understand and they're pretty good about it. They're not stupid people. ...Government language is not really easy to follow even for a government employee, so we just try to kind of facilitate those understandings and whatever.

They don't understand the resources degradation. Those are government terms. ...Those don't transpose and transfer over to the guy who makes $8.00 an hour that just wants to go swimming and fishing. And then we're always down there thinking, "Well, why does that idiot throw his can on the ground?" Well, nobody

probably ever told him that in the last 50 years that it was against the law unless he read it on a sign. So it's that whole, we know everything and all the laws and regulations.... It's just a communication gap. I mean nobody goes home and reads the 36CFR of all the rules and regulations and when we say something to them, they think well, why can't I do that and it's kind of hard to say just exactly why, it's because it's here in the book. It doesn't build trust. Having laws and regulations don't build trust. They would understand it if there was a way that we could communicate it to them better.

Opportunities to Overcome Constraints
Besides defining several cultural and institutional constraints, the interviews suggested a number of opportunities available to build trust in the community.

<u>*Inspiring Leadership:*</u>
As mentioned above, leadership is viewed as integral to building agency-community relationships:

> *It depends on the type of management you got. ... It means the world. If you got a good personality and they get involved with the community, people like that person and everything goes so much easier. ...[Community members] like a person that they can talk to one on one, and meet with different organizations, be a guest speaker, and give more information on what's in store for this riverways and what in the way of development and improvements, so they like to keep in touch.*

Several community and agency participants recognized current leadership as a strength and as having the potential to open up lines of communication and build trust in the community. An agency participant summarized, "It has a lot to do with [the Ozark Riverways administration] and it has to do with the Superintendent. We have a very good Superintendent who believes in this mission, for years, we didn't." (13:554A) Another participant speculated, "There's some areas that is getting better, there's some that's not. The first step that I think that's getting better is the superintendent. I think he means well. He hasn't been here that long. …I think I can see that's he's begin to try to get these problems straightened out and find out what is wrong."

<u>*Local Hires:*</u>
As reported earlier, the community expects the NPS to provide jobs for its residents. Several agency participants praised the agency for doing just that:

> *Well, we hired quite a few local folks that work here; in fact I would say a huge percentage of the people that work for the National Park Service here are from the local community, so the Park Service is doing that if that is truly one of their expectations, we do try to work with the local community on things instead of trying to work against them....*

Some participants believe that employees who have grown up in the area and are considered "locals" are more likely to be trusted in the community:

> *I'm happy that people feel comfortable about calling me with their problems. They may not agree with everything I say, but they don't take it personally. They don't and I don't take it personally. I just tell them, you know this is the government and the government moves in this manner and you may not like it,*

you won't understand it, but it's not going to change and they kind of accept that better from me than they would from somebody that comes out of New York City, Chicago or someplace else. It's just the way you talk to people I think in some respects. It's easier for me to talk to these folks, cause I've known them longer than most people.

Longtime local employees also serve as a valuable resource of information to the agency and new employees:

I think that would help too if management...you've got people—the maintenance guy that mows the grass at Big Spring, he's been here for 32 years working here, but he's also lived here his whole life—there's so much information right there. You come here as a manager, we're not a bunch of dumb hillbillies that mow the grass; there's a lot of information in those people. We've got law enforcement that's retiring after 28 to 30 years. A new law enforcement guy comes in; you should be talking to him. He's been here for 30 years in this job and he's lived here his whole life. There's a wealth of information right there.

Cooperation:
Many participants believe the agency has the opportunity to encourage a sense of cooperation between the agency and community. Acting together and achieving mutual benefits has broken down boundaries and confronted the "them and us" attitude. Agency participants identified several ways in which the agency and community can cooperate, including interpretation of the local culture, providing unique hunting opportunities, and assisting local fire departments.

One way is by recognizing the local Ozark culture just like anywhere there is a park, there's usually a culture associated with that park area, with that region anyway, and so recognizing that and interpreting that to visitors that come in from the outside and seeking involvement. ...There are a lot of things that could happen with special events inside the park that emphasizes the local culture or heritage-type days or stuff like that that would let the people see in this community that the park is a part of their life and a part of their community and that they should also enjoy it.

I think the deer hunt that occurred this past year at Big Spring, I think maybe was a step, with the public, with the Missouri Department of Conservation, I think probably overall, that it has been fulfilled somewhat. I think we're moving out of a planning mode. The park is not just for planning, but maybe steering us more field work that will build esteem at least my thought is that will help with the public opinion, they see more work occurring, begin to feel lots of different kinds of things.

[The relationship between the agency and the community has] strengthened. I think it has strengthened us and certainly with government individuals in a better light to those organizations than maybe had been in the past. You know, here as a federal agency, you drive around in a fire engine that cost $100,000 and it's all brand new and they can't even get a beat-up $15,000 hand-me-down engine. Through a couple of initiatives, they've been able to start to get equipment, especially protective equipment to individual firefighters. Maybe not the big heavy type of equipment, but yeah. And that has helped train and that's an understanding of how we operate and what we do versus what they do.

A few agency participants acknowledged widespread community support for some programs, including prescribed fire, cultural interpretation, and volunteer led demonstrations:

> *Overall I think [the community is] supportive. ...First off, we're not dealing with wilderness issues, with wilderness with the riverways as far as that type of designation. And with overall forest fire within the Ozarks, be it Missouri or Arkansas, generally the public is supportive. They understand why there is a fire and why you put certain fires out, why certain fires are started by the state or the Park Service or the Forest Service, cause they actually burnt their land too, every so often. And they have actually a pretty good understanding of fire...*

> *[Employee name] who's in interpretation. ...She's been widely accepted in this Eminence area, she's an interpreter out at Alley, and she started new programs making hominy and soap, and they had a garden last summer with hominy corn and hickory cane corn and squash, and pumpkins and all that kind of stuff, and she has a good following of all the old ladies. Now that's one thing that we feel and we sense and so on is that these old-timers and not necessarily the younger generation, but these old people want us as interpreters and so on to show the world how we lived here. Our architecture, our subsistence farming, our herb healing, and all the things of our lives. And the park is just now beginning to do that again. ...Saturday, day after tomorrow, we're building a blacksmith shop with volunteer labor at Alley. Now that's good. These are people in the community going to come and help us put up this little shop, an old looking Ozark blacksmith shop so that people visiting us can see what we did here. ...many of them have been to the Great Smokey Mountain National Park and they have seen Keck's Cove, which preserves lots and lots of the architecture and the mills and the way that those Appalachian people lived, which is identical to how we live here, and they constantly say why can't we do that here? Why can't we tell the world how we live and show them.*

> *Other things that we're doing to involve communities, things out at Alley Mill with the cultural demonstrations, we're looking for volunteers to help us out up there. We're building a blacksmith shop up there this weekend. We're doing it with volunteer labor, but we're involving folks from local communities to come in to do that. This summer, we're going to be moving a couple of craft buildings from an area to a more visible area, but we want to involve the local communities there to help either do that or put on cultural demonstrations, exhibits or whatever, but we want to bring some life back into some of these areas like Big Spring and Alley Mill. Inviting the public back out to places that aren't on the river; you don't have to float the river to go and enjoy these types of things.*

DISCUSSION

The study findings illuminated some common and contrasting perspectives associated with the importance of trust in natural resource management, Ozark Riverways community members trust in the NPS, signs of distrust, and sources of trust. Overall both agency and community participants believe that trust plays an integral role in effective natural resource management and

successful agency-community relationships. Perceptions varied as to the local community's trust in the NPS. Individual community participants generally expressed trust in the NPS personnel and especially those employees who are native to the area. Most participants concluded that the community is fairly evenly split in its trust in the agency. Several agency participants recalled flashpoints of distrust among community members, from dissatisfied letters to the editor of local newspapers to a protest by hundreds of local residents on horseback. At the heart of this study is understanding how trust is created and maintained in agency-community relationships. Two sources of trust emerged in the analysis: outcomes-based trust and process-based trust. While some agency participants focused on the role of management decisions and actions, community members and agency participants native to the area emphasized the relationships developed through communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

As the literature reviewed affirms, trust is derived from positive expectations about another person or group's behavior. Therefore, establishing exactly what the community expects from the agency and its staff is imperative. The study indicates that local community members expect certain management outcomes and particular processes for monitoring those outcomes. Trust then is fundamentally grounded in 1) what the Ozark Riverways and river management provides, or *the outcomes* and 2) how opportunities are created that enable the community to register its expectations for Ozark Riverways management and monitor outcomes, or *the process*. The role of management outcomes and processes were assessed further in an analysis of participants' expectations for and evaluations of Ozark Riverways management and their perceptions of the community's expectations and evaluations.

Outcome-based trust is predicated on the expectations for *what* is exchanged between the agency and the community. These transactions are evaluated by the values represented, knowledge used, and capacity demonstrated. Process-based trust represents the expectations for *how* the exchange is registered and monitored through some form of a relationship. Relationships are evaluated in three ways: communication (i.e., how information is exchanged), collaboration (i.e., how decisions are made), and cooperation (i.e., how actions are implemented and benefits are attained). Outcome and process-based trust are not mutually exclusive; rather they represent overlapping elements of trust. In fact, past literature suggests that process-based trust may contribute to outcome-based trust. In other words, as community members build a relationship with agency personnel, they are more likely to understand, accept, and have trust in management decisions and actions.

Study findings indicate that the community has outcome expectations for the Ozark Riverways. The community expects management decisions and actions to embody a range of values, knowledge, and capacity. River preservation or "keeping the river clean," recreation, and economic values are significant to community participants. Agency participants who are native to the area suggested that open space protection and cultural preservation as two additional value expectations of the community. Some indication of a conflict of values within the community surfaced. While participants generally agreed that recreation is significant to the Ozark Riverways, attitudes diverged in how to best provide for quality recreation experiences. Some participants identified a need for "accommodating" visitors and limiting law enforcement, others suggested that the NPS needs a stronger law enforcement presence on the rivers. Participants revered "common sense" and local knowledge when making decisions and taking action on the Ozark Riverways. Community participants expect the NPS to have and control the resources to turn planning and decision making into action and positive outcomes. Participants emphasized the need for the agency to follow through on management decisions through enforcement of rules and regulations and by demonstrating consistency and commitment.

Process-based themes that emerged in the interviews were organized into three phases: communication, collaboration, and cooperation. Talking, deciding, and achieving together gives the community several and diverse types of opportunities to get to know the agency. Agency and community participants agree that communicating and interacting play key roles in building trust. The relationship enables the community to register trust expectations and monitor management outcomes. According to agency participants who are native to the area, communication should be frequent, consistent, honest, and should promote understanding and display respect. Participants asserted that sincere collaboration should engage the community, represent an equitable distribution of power, and include local organizations and agencies. According to some participants, the community perceives that the agency caters to the special interests of local recreation businesses and the state's urban centers. Politics was also seen as a driving force in decision-making processes that may intimidate local community members. Community participants provided several examples of how the agency should cooperate with the community by providing jobs, boosting economic revenue, preserving and interpreting cultural history, and working with local governments.

As indicated by the study findings, the community's trust in the NPS is multifaceted and complex. The study also elucidates some key constraints and opportunities that may influence trust. Here, agency participants who are native to the area provided unique insights into some of challenges that face the NPS in overcoming these constraints. Two types of constraints were identified: cultural constraints and institutional constraints. Cultural constraints are rooted in the unique historical and sociocultural context of the community and its interactions with the NPS. For instance, several participants described a deep-seated historical resentment of the agency and traced this attitude back to residents' Scotch-Irish heritage and anti-Union political ideologies during the Civil War. In this case, a general distrust and animosity for government and outside control is transferred to the NPS and its administration of the Ozark Riverways. A second, but perhaps even more pervasive attitude is anchored in sociocultural boundaries related to economic status and language differences that have evolved between community members and Ozark Riverways employees. According to many participants these attitudes manifest themselves in a "them and us" mind-set. Agency participants admitted feeling isolated and in some cases, alienated from the community. Other constraints to building trust are tied to competing community and agency values and the community's lack of awareness of the agency's role or its limitations. A few agency participants argued that it is difficult to meet diverse and high outcome expectations that the community has for the Ozark Riverways. Agency participants identified institutional constraints that have impacted trust. Staff turnover and limited community engagement garnered the most attention from agency participants. Participants argued that staff turnover and its consequences, including shifting management direction and short-lived programs makes the agency unreliable in the eyes of local community members. Other institutional constraints, like departmentalized structure, staff shortages, and inadequate leadership also have challenged relationship building in the Ozark Riverways.

Despite these constraints, several opportunities exist to build trust in the community. Participants commended current leadership and acknowledged shared values and support in the community. Some participants praised the agency for hiring locals and highlighting the area's cultural history through various programs.

Recommendations for overcoming these constraints and exploiting opportunities are provided below.

We have developed three overarching recommendations based on the study findings. They are described in detail below.

Agency-wide Recommendation
1) Prioritize Relationship Building
To build trust in local communities, the NPS should prioritize relationship building and support employees in their efforts to encourage community participation in management and to engage in the community themselves. Ozark Riverways' personnel emphasized the importance of trust, and employees who were native to the area provided particular insight into the historical resentment and sociocultural boundaries that have tarnished the image of the agency in the community. These employees also suggested strategies that the NPS could adopt to improve relations, such as establishing more consistent management direction, communicating and interacting more regularly with community members, and hiring locals. However, several institutional characteristics and phenomena emerged as constraints, including staff turnover, inadequate leadership, hiring practices, and staff shortages. An agency participant explained, as an outsider coming into a community, building trust demands commitment and takes time:

> *It's really not that much different than any other communities around national park areas. Whenever you come into a small rural community and you move in, you're the outsider, so it takes some time and a lot of effort to get accepted in the community... It even takes a fair amount of time before people recognize you as somebody who could contribute to the community. It's a rare occasion when someone openly invites you into the community or calls you on the telephone and says there's a party going on this weekend...would you come? Usually I've found that it's pretty much up to the initiative of the person moving in to go out and interject yourself into these community activities, so that you can start to get involved.*

Another agency participant emphasized the importance of being involved in the community. He said, "I think that it's critical that we become members of the community even if it's by just joining clubs and participating in those types of things. ...Just participating in school activities, whatever it takes, but we've got to show that we are interested in the local area." (14:462A)

It is understandable then, how staff turnover, inadequate leadership, and staff shortages may spoil the agency-community relationship.

We recommend that the NPS foster relationship building and community service. To do so the agency should prioritize community relations, including training and supporting personnel in their efforts to get to know and interact with the community. Employees at every position would benefit from training in public relations. Longtime employees and those who are native to the area should mentor new employees by teaching them about the cultural history and customs of the local communities and introducing them to community leaders. Staff turnover, can have a devastating effect on trust. Community participants acknowledged a sense of loss and apprehension as trusted personnel leave and new employees take their place. Initiatives that encourage longer tenures at NPS units, especially for employees who have strong ties to the community, would help maintain trust. One key opportunity to establish an identity and emphasize service in the community that should not be overlooked is hiring the local workforce and contracting with local businesses. Hiring locals provides inroads into developing rapport with the community and underscores the economic opportunities presented by the NPS.

Procedural requirements and agency jargon must not restrict community engagement. NPS units need the budget and staff expertise required to consistently attend community meetings, participate in community events, and cooperate with community members. As employees become more visible in the community and develop personal relationships with community members, sociocultural boundaries will begin to break down and trust in the agency will increase. As employees maintain a more consistent dialogue with the community and more clearly articulate management objectives, outcomes, and community benefits, trust in the agency will continue to rise.

Ozark Riverways Recommendations

2) Develop a New Image within the Community
We recommend that the Ozark Riverways work towards developing a new image in the community through communication that displays respect and promotes understanding, collaboration that is sincere and equitable, and cooperation that provides mutual benefits to the agency and the community. To address some of the hostility within the community related to the past, the NPS should acknowledge past practices like eminent domain and validate the contributions and sacrifices of local citizens by interpreting the history of the Ozark Riverways.

Several agency participants stressed the importance of getting out into the community and participating in community organizations, events, and day-to-day life. By becoming an active and contributing member of the community, the Ozark Riverways will foster a sense of shared identity and partnership among community members. Informal, repeated interactions build strong relationships and community members begin to identify with agency staff on a personal level. As the community's impressions and expectations of the USFS become increasingly grounded in face-to-face interactions (versus reputation or stereotypes) and assuming these interactions are positive, trust will grow. Furthermore, trust built through this process tends to be more durable than trust based solely on management outcomes (Rosseau et al., 1998).

The current image of the NPS in the Ozark Riverways largely is based on reputation and perceptions of sociocultural boundaries. The agency can begin to break down those boundaries by developing a new image. As an agency participant responded when asked how the relationship between the agency and the community could be improved, "I don't know of any other way to let people know that we are not being unfair and treating people differently or poorly if we don't get out there and prove it."

3) Engage and Empower the Community
A prevailing theme in the agency participants' interviews was that the traditional forms of public involvement fail to engage many local community members in the management process. As the study indicates, this can be partly attributed to community apathy, however, many participants pointed to institutional constraints that have hindered local involvement. Agency participants recognized that policies and documents meant to guide actions and share information are complex and use language that can be difficult to decipher. In fact, one agency participant admitted, "…Government language is not really easy to follow, even for a government employee." Study participants also acknowledged a sense of skepticism in the public involvement process itself, which may also discourage community members from participating. This skepticism captured in this quote repeated by an agency participant: "They're the Park Service, they're the government; they just do what they want to do."

If managers are going to increase community participation, improve support for policies, and get the community to buy into agency programs, it has to invest in communication, and in particular creative and alternative ways of interpreting the management process. Management interpretation should go beyond general management plans and Internet web pages. It needs to be understandable, relevant, and sensitive to the local community audience. In other words, agency personnel should limit jargon, summarize complex ideas, provide real-world, site-specific examples, and encourage face-to-face dialogue.

Besides hiring local residents, using local contractors, and patronizing local businesses, the NPS can empower community members and tap into the community's cultural resources to demonstrate its commitment to cooperation. Every community has its experts. Whether they are highly knowledgeable or skilled in the community's historical or present-day cultural traditions, local experts represent an invaluable resource to natural resource agencies. Many agencies wisely have begun to make use of the services of locals as interpreters and tour guides. The next step is to take advantage of the broader range of local expertise and to become a hub of community culture. Ozark Riverways managers should identify a variety of local experts—historians, storytellers, craftspeople, artists, photographers, writers, and recreationists to lead programs, showcasing local knowledge and expertise. These experts can interpret their experiences in and connections to the Ozark Riverways for other community members and visitors. Community experts can help serve as liaisons between the agency and the community.

Further research into community culture and interests, such as a community needs assessment would assist managers in identifying opportunities for outreach. Research investigating the meanings local community members ascribe to natural areas and landscapes helps managers to promote and protect a sense of place. For example, Stewart, Leibert, and Larkin (2004) examined the meanings Illinois residents attach to local community landscapes through autophotography. Davenport and Anderson (2004) used in-depth interviewing to explore the meanings Nebraska residents attach to a national scenic river. Similar studies focusing on the meanings local community members ascribe to the Ozark Riverways are recommended.

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Agency Interview Guide

Your connection to community
1. What is your connection to the community?
    F1. Tell me what it is like to work in this community.
    F2. Do you feel like you are a part of this community?

Your relationship with the community
2. Describe for me your relationship with the community here.
    F1. Tell me about some of your interactions with the community.
    F2. What has been your role in planning and decision making processes?

3. Do you trust the community to help manage [ ]?
    F1. What has prompted this feeling?
    F2. Has your trust changed? How?
    F3. How important is it that you trust the community?

The agency's relationship with the community
4. What do you think the community expects of a public land management agency?
    F1. To what extent do you think the [AGENCY] has fulfilled those expectations?

5. What does [ ] mean to the community?

6. How would you characterize the relationship between the community and the [AGENCY]?
    F1. Tell me about some of the interactions between the community and the [AGENCY]?
    F2. What has been the community's role in planning and decision-making processes and is it fair?

7. Do you think the community trusts the [AGENCY] to manage [ ]?
    F1. What has led you to think this?
    F2. Has the community's trust changed? How?
    F3. How important is it that the community trusts the [AGENCY]?

8. What effects has the community had on the management of [ ]?

Perspectives on management
9. What goes into management decisions?
    F1. What information and knowledge go into management decisions?
    F2. Whose (or what) values are reflected in management decisions?

10. How have management decisions affected the community?

Vision for the future
11. What are some ways in which you can improve your relationship with the community?

12. What are some ways in which the [AGENCY] can improve its relationship with the community?

13. What are some ways in which the [AGENCY] can improve its management of [ ]?

14. What are some barriers to building trust between the [AGENCY] and the community?

15. [Optional] Suppose the [AGENCY] followed your suggestions, how would this influence the community's trust in the [AGENCY]?

16. [Optional] What would it take for the community to trust the agency to manage [ ]? **OR** What would it take for the community's trust in the agency to be maintained?

17. Is there anything else I should know about your perspective?

Community Member Interview Guide

Your connection to community and place
18. What is your connection to the community?
   F1. Tell me what it is like to live in this community.
   F2. What does living in this community mean to you?

19. What is your connection to [ ]?
   F1. What is it like to live near [ ]?
   F2. What does living near [ ] mean to you?

20. How important is the management of [ ] to you?

21. How involved are you in the management of [ ]?
   F1. [IF not involved] What has kept you from being involved?
   F2. What do you see as your role in management?

Your impressions of the agency
22. What are your impressions of the [AGENCY]?

23. Do you trust the [AGENCY]?
   F1. What has prompted you to feel this way?

   F2. Has your trust changed over the years? How?
   F3. How important is it that you trust the [agency]?

24. What do you expect of the [AGENCY]?
   F1. To what extent has the [AGENCY] fulfilled your expectations?

25. How would you characterize your relationship with the [AGENCY]?
   F1. Tell me about some of your interactions with the [AGENCY].
   F2. Do you trust the [agency] public involvement processes? Do you think it is fair?

26. How would you characterize the agency's management of [ ]?
   F1. What do you think goes into management decisions?
   F2. Do you trust the knowledge and skills that go into management?
   F3. Do you trust the values that go into management?

27. What have been the effects of management?

The community's relationship with the agency
28. What does [ ] mean to the community?

29. Do you think the community trusts the [AGENCY] to manage [ ]?
   F1. What has led you to think this?
   F2. Has the community's trust changed? How?
   F3. How important is it that the community trusts the [AGENCY]?

30. How would you characterize the relationship between the community and the [AGENCY]?
   F2. What has been the community's role in planning and decision-making processes and is it fair?

Vision for the future
31. What are some ways in which the [AGENCY] can improve its relationship with you?

32. What are some ways in which you can improve your relationship with the agency?

33. What are some ways in which the [AGENCY] can improve its relationship with the community?

34. What are some ways in which the agency can improve its management of [ ]?

35. What are some barriers to building trust between the community and the [AGENCY]?

36. Is there anything else I should know about your perspective?