

**THE HIAWATHA NATIONAL FOREST: AN EXAMINATION OF TRUST  
BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCIES AND LOCAL  
COMMUNITIES**



**Case Study II**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Mae A. Davenport, Ph.D.  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale**

**Jessica E. Leahy, Ph.D.  
University of Maine**

**Dorothy H. Anderson, Ph.D.  
University of Minnesota**

**and**

**Pamela J. Jakes, Ph.D.  
USDA Forest Service North Central Research Station**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **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 the Hiawatha National Forest. 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.

## **Hiawatha National Forest**

The Hiawatha National Forest (HNF) was established in 1931 through the proclamation of President J. Edgar Hoover. Today, the forest encompasses 879,000 acres of northern hardwood forests, pine forests, wetlands, rivers and streams. HNF is split into an Eastern and Western Region. The Munising District, where this study was conducted, is comprised of the northern portion of the Western Region. The district is adjacent to several small communities including the cities of Munising, Christmas, Au Train, and Wetmore within Alger (pop. 9,862) and Schoolcraft (pop. 8,903) counties (U.S. Census 2000). The primary industries of the area are timber harvesting and paper and lumber production and tourism.

## **Study methods**

A sample of residents living in nearby communities and USFS personnel working at HNF 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 HNF. The sampling plan was designed to capture a range of perspectives on the agency-community relationship. In total, 12 community members and six agency personnel were interviewed during fall 2003 and winter 2004. A UMN researcher conducted all interviews.

On average, agency participants were in their late forties, had been USFS employees for 21 years, and had worked at HNF for 16 years (Table 1). Community participants' average age was 61. They had lived an average of 42 years in the community. One hundred percent of community and agency participants reported being involved in local organizations. One hundred percent of community participants and 83 percent of agency participants stated they recreate at HNF. Thirty-three percent of agency participants held positions in upper management. 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 18 interviews uncovered several themes associated with participants' perceptions of trust, expectations for management, and the factors they perceive inhibit and promote trust. The study findings are arranged in four sections: 1) perceptions of trust, 2) components of trust, 3) challenges to trust, and 4) opportunities for trust.

Community members were asked if they as individuals trust the USFS. Both participant groups were asked if they believe the community trusts the USFS to manage HNF. Many study participants explained how important it is that the community trusts the agency because of their dependence upon the HNF.

Community participants were asked what they expect of natural resource management in administering natural resource areas and to what extent the USFS has met those expectations at HNF. Overall, community participants' narratives reflect a clear set of expectations for the transaction (outcomes) and for the relationship (process) components of agency-community trust.

Within the transaction component of trust, three key themes emerged:

- Values
- Knowledge
- Capacity

Within the relationship component of trust, three distinct phases 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, community participants expressed a range of values for the HNF that they believe should be protected by the USFS. A mix of knowledge and skills also was emphasized as imperative to effective management. The third theme, capacity, encompasses expectations for the USFS to accomplish what it sets out to do. The relationship component the expectations community members have for the process of decision making and action taking. Community participants expressed varying expectations with respect to three phases of the relationship: communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

In participants discussions several factors and mechanisms that constrain the process of building trust emerged. They include:

- Competing values
- Capacity problems
- Communication gaps
- Collaboration limitations
- Staff turnover

Community and agency participants identified several opportunities for building trust that exist in the HNF local community. They include:

- Community support
- Community character
- Community resources
- Mutual benefits
- Interagency 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 a significant amount of trust in the USFS to manage HNF. At the same time, the findings also indicate that trust is not absolute or eternal. Five overriding recommendations were developed.

- Reestablish the USFS identity and service role in local communities
- Identify and integrate local community values and knowledge into management
- Demonstrate capacity to turn planning into action
- Expand communication; facilitate awareness and understanding of management process and outcomes
- Engage and empower community members through collaboration and cooperation

## 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 Hiawatha National Forest (HNF).

### **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. 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. 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) argue, 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.

## **Hiawatha National Forest**

The Hiawatha National Forest (HNF) was established in 1931 through the proclamation of President J. Edgar Hoover. Today, the forest encompasses 879,000 acres of northern hardwood forests, pine forests, wetlands, rivers and streams. HNF is split into an Eastern and Western Region. The Munising District, where this study was conducted, is comprised of the northern portion of the Western Region. The district is adjacent to several small communities including the cities of Munising, Christmas, Au

Train, and Wetmore within Alger (pop. 9,862) and Schoolcraft (pop. 8,903) counties (U.S. Census 2000). The primary industries of the area are timber harvesting and paper and lumber production and tourism.

The HNF is currently in the process of revising its forest plan. In 2003 the HNF published a Notice of Intent to revise the 1986 forest plan. The USFS held a series of public meetings in area communities to provide information about the proposed changes and the planning process. A 60-day public comment period was held in 2004. A draft Environmental Impact Statement is slated to be completed this year and will be open for a 90-day public comment period, following its publication in the Federal Register. Community concerns have been documented on issues related to wilderness management, timber harvesting, public access, and motorized use.

## STUDY METHODS

In the fall of 2003 and winter of 2004 a UMN field researcher contacted and interviewed six agency personnel and 12 community members. 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 HNF. 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. No one contacted refused to participate in the study. On average, agency participants were in their late forties, had been USFS employees for 21 years, and had worked at HNF for 16 years (Table 1). Community participants' average age was 61. They had lived an average of 42 years in the community. One hundred percent of community and agency participants reported being involved in local organizations. One hundred percent of community participants and 83 percent of agency participants recreate at HNF. Thirty-three percent of agency participants held positions in upper management.

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 minutes 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 HNF community and the managing agency.

Table 1. HNF study participant profile

	Sex		Age (mean)	Years in community (mean)	Involved in community orgs. (%)	Engaged in onsite rec. activities (%)	Years at HNF (mean)	Years with USFS (mean)
	Female	Male						
<b>Community (n=12)</b>	7	5	61	42	100	100	-	-
<b>Agency (n=6)</b>	3	3	49	22	100	83	16	21

## STUDY FINDINGS

Analysis of the 18 interviews uncovered several themes associated with participants’ perceptions of trust, their expectations, and the factors they perceive inhibit and promote trust. The study findings are arranged in four sections: 1) perceptions of trust, 2) components of trust, 3) challenges to trust and 4) opportunities for trust. The first section is drawn from agency and community participants’ perceptions and examines the importance of trust and the current status of trust. The second section outlines community participants’ expectations for the management of the HNF. The third section describes several factors as identified by agency participants that hinder trust. The fourth section highlights the factors as identified by agency and community participants that promote trust.

### Perceptions of trust

Community members were asked what their impressions of the USFS are and if they as individuals trust the USFS. Both participant groups were asked if they believe the community trusts the USFS to manage the HNF. Several participants perceive trust to be important in the proper functioning of the USFS at HNF. Trust was deemed integral to maintaining a working relationship with the agency. The following excerpts demonstrate the importance of trust in natural resource management.

*We’ve got to be able to work together, and the community as a whole has to be able to communicate with the Forest Service.... Everybody’s got to be able to bend a little bit and if you don’t trust somebody, you’re not going to be able to work with them. So I think that is important.*

*I think it's pretty important. They are in charge of a lot of the land up here and I think that it's important to know that they are making decisions that I will agree with, for the most part. Yeah, it's very important.*

However, one participant argued that trust is extraneous to the relationship. She explained, "Until they screw up, not extremely. It's an irritation not to trust them, but I think it comes with the territory because it is a bureaucracy. It would be nice, but it's not extremely important.

Participants' trust in the USFS varied. Many participants made a clear delineation between their trust in the local HNF staff and their trust in the USFS as a government agency. Trust in individual employees was generally high, largely because of the positive interactions participants have had with HNF staff.

*Yeah, I'd say I trust them. I know most of the local people, and I don't have any reason to distrust them at this time. I have the ability, if I want to, to go down and ask for [the district ranger], and she'll give me 15 minutes of her time. ... We've had some questions of the Forest Service, and they've tried to answer them as best as they can.*

Trust in the agency appears to be constrained by what one participant referred to as "politics." He clarified, "Certain individuals within an organization I trust. I have a hard time having much trust in certain agencies within government whether they be the Forest Service or some other agency because of the political aspects of the political appointments starting from the top on down...." (7:205) Participants criticized several elements of federal agencies including, top-down decision-making, outside authority, and slow decision implementation.

*Yes, I trust them in things that I am doing or associated with... I'm skeptical about putting total trust in anything controlled by government. Even though the people who relay the message down to me or to somebody else, it may not be what they agree with, but their job says this is the way it will be done. So they're really protecting their job. And you've got to be pretty bullheaded to tell your boss's boss that "Hey, you've got your head up your rear end!" That is not the way things go. Yes, I trust the Forest Service, to limits.*

*I trust the main branch here. You know, individually I do. But, I mean if I were to look over the whole country, some of their logging stuff, I don't know where they get off with some of that. But, the main office here in Munising, oh, yeah, they're a good bunch of people. They really are. ... They're open, you know, and they'll tell you what's going on and they'll bend over backwards to help you and listen to you.*

The power of special interest groups and their influence on the natural resource management was enough to keep one participant from trusting the USFS:

*No. ... When you have a million squeaky wheels and you have to attempt to satisfy them, you're going to pick the squeakiest wheel. And in my experience, most of the local people here, myself included... don't have the wherewithal to hire an attorney and take someone to court because [we] disagree with a policy.*

Participants generally believed that the philosophical views of the presiding national administration greatly affect the HNF and in turn, affect their community. According to one participant, trust may be

tested as a result: "...The people that are running this particular forest, they're all good people. There's no problem with them, but what they have to follow, depending on who's in charge, which affects what they can do and as a result affects us."

Community and agency participants were asked about the agency-community relationship and the community's trust in the USFS. Most participants agreed that the community is divided: "Oh, boy. On the whole, I don't know. I've heard both. I've heard that some that do and some that don't at all." Some participants felt a greater portion of the community trusted, "As a majority, yes. It's just that you're always going to have your sour grapes," while others felt that more distrusted the agency, "I think the community trusts them less than I do. Oh yes, yes. This is a community that relies on sustenance hunting and fishing and being able to wander anyplace you want, anywhere you want, anytime you want and of necessity now, there's a lot more rules and regulations." Agency participants' overall characterizations of the relationship ranged from healthy—"I believe there's a healthy relationship and strong relationship between the Forest Service and the whole community here" to pretty good—"Pretty good. There's some people that just hate the Forest Service. There are others who disagree, but they're still friends of the Forest Service. And then there's some that think the Forest Service is the greatest thing to ever hit the community." An agency participant acknowledged the community's reluctance to trust government agencies. She said,

*I think the community doesn't trust federal agencies and I don't think the community trusts the Forest Service. I think the community trusts individuals. The community trusts the people that they know. I mean, that is what I hear a lot. You know, they say "well, you're okay to work with, but how do I know what the rest of the Forest Service is going to do? And so they may trust [HNF employees' names] but I don't think they trust the federal agency.*

### **Components of trust**

One major objective of this study was to examine the expectations intrinsic to trust. In other words, we wanted to identify exactly what community members trust (or don't trust) the agency to do. To gather this information, community participants were asked what they expect of a natural resource management in managing natural resource areas and to what extent the USFS has met those expectations at HNF. While some participants provided a broad overview of their expectations, many gave detailed descriptions of what they believe the USFS's role should be. Participants generally assessed the USFS's performance with respect to those expectations. Several participants were cognizant of the challenges that the agency faces in meeting their expectations. Overall, community participants' narratives reflect a clear set of expectations for the transaction (outcomes) and for the relationship (process) components of trust.

Within the transaction component of trust, three key themes emerged:

- Values
- Knowledge
- Capacity

Within the relationship component of trust, three distinct phases 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, community participants expressed a range of values for HNF that they believe should be protected by the USFS. A mix of knowledge and skills also was emphasized as imperative to effective management. The third theme, capacity, encompasses expectations for the USFS to accomplish what it sets out to do. The final theme, relationship, represents the expectations community members have for the process of decision making and action taking. Community participants expressed varying expectations with respect to three categories of the relationship: communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

### ***The transaction***

Analysis revealed that one set of agency responsibilities revolves around generating outcomes, including decisions and actions that reflect or demonstrate certain values, knowledge, and capacity. Overall, community participants expressed a range of values for HNF that they believe should be protected by the USFS. Incorporating a mix of knowledge and skills also was emphasized as integral to effective management. The third theme, capacity, encompasses expectations for the USFS to accomplish what it sets out to do.

### **Values:**

A diverse mix of values was revealed as central to community expectations. Community participants, themselves, expressed a wide range of values for HNF and in turn, expected many of these values to be protected through management. These values include:

- Recreation
- Economics
- Community character
- Conservation

Recreation access to HNF and the opportunity to enjoy the forest were key expectations among community members. One participant surmised, “Hopefully they never take it away from the people. The people will always be around to enjoy this, you know, have the ability to go into the forest and enjoy it.” Road closures and restrictions on motorized use were hot topics in the interviews. Several participants argued that these actions have significantly affected recreation at HNF:

*There’s not really handicapped access for people who would like to get back to some of those places here. Many of those spots were open 10 years ago, people could drive to them. ... Yeah, you made a wilderness area out of it? Okay, big deal, you put non-motorized traffic in there. But what did you do? You took away the usership, 90% of it.*

*There’s a gate in the Whitefish area that’s below the 440 on the Rapid River truck trail going west... I don’t see any reason to gate that... That gate probably should have been opened up in the fall and they could have shut it down again after deer season... That would allow access. ... Especially if you’re older, you know, it’s pretty hard to drag a deer five miles out of the woods. You have to quarter ‘em up, pack ‘em up and carry it out. That’s hard to do. So those are some of the things I’d like to see them do; open up some of the areas.*

Community participants value opportunities for a diversity of recreation experiences at HNF and for many, this includes motorized use: “I expect them to manage for all types of recreation: hiking, biking, horseback riding, skiing...and ATV riding...”

The economic values of timber management and tourism on the forest also were commonly discussed. Many participants described the community as highly dependent upon timber harvest and tourism revenue. One participant said succinctly, “The less timber they put out, the less money they have and the less money that comes back to the community.” (7:82) Another participant characterized timber management as good stewardship:

*Because it's mostly wooded, mostly forest, it is a forest, I would expect them to manage the timber to the best of their abilities; to do cutting where cutting is needed and to manage the land as a crop. Being an old farmer, I can use that word. And not to let the forest get overgrown. The hardwood should be thinned and managed properly. The softwood should be managed maybe in a clear-cut manner, but they should use best practices.... We have a responsibility as stewards of the earth to do the best we can and harvesting timber and managing the crop and I think they do a good job.*

In contrast, one participant questioned the use of clear cutting and its effects on scenic values: “I don't like some of the clear cutting they're doing with some of the forest out there. I guess they have to do it though because that is forest management, but I've heard complaints.”

Forest dependent tourism was seen as a primary industry in the area: “If we didn't have the forest or something like it our tourism would go down a lot. ...The only other industry we have is the paper mill and then we have the prison and the school system... Other than that, there's not really anything here.” One participant noted that making a profit for small tourism service providers in the area can be challenging. She explained,

*It's very difficult to earn a living here and tourism is our biggest industry. But when you're in the forest like this, in a very small mom and pop business, and there are a great many of us scattered throughout the forest, you basically have six weeks of summer and six weeks of winter to earn a living, and so you're always scrambling to find a way to make a little extra money here and there.*

Several participants expressed concern about the changing community character driven by new forest management policies and practices, immigration, and a shifting industrial environment. According to some participants, the independence and communal quality of the rural area has been impacted:

*This is the [type of community that has a history of] sustenance hunting and fishing and...being able to wander anyplace you want, anywhere you want, anytime you want and out of necessity now, there's a lot more rules and regulations....”*

*...City people are moving in to a rural area and trying to make it into a city area. They moved because they liked the way it was, the lifestyle here, but when they got here they put a sign in the area that says “No trespass.” They immediately took away the effect that they moved here for. I see it happen every year, many times over. I don't know what they're looking for. They wanted to move to a rural area that's free and open to everybody, but they don't want anybody to trespass on their land. I see that happening for years to come.*

*I had a neighbor that was a logger and he used to buy timber sales for his business. ...I call him a one-horse logger. He worked all by himself on a small scale. The insurance, that the government required of him got to be more than he could handle and so he was disgruntled about that and actually quit bidding on sales because for*

*one, he couldn't afford it. ... When he started in the business, the government didn't care if you had insurance or not, but all of a sudden the policies changed. He is long gone. That was one thing that was negative.*

One participant noted that longtime community residents are most intimately affected by the changes: “There’s just a lot of older people. It probably affects the older people more than the young ones, because they were the ones that everything was open, wide open years ago, where now it’s closing.

A few participants called for continued conservation and supported restrictions on recreation access. These participants valued the long-term forest preservation for future human generations and threatened wildlife populations:

*...The locals hate the wilderness stuff, and that's a tourist thing. And yet, you still have to have that, that's like the Pictured Rock Shoreline, if it isn't preserved and maintained and managed, like it is, it's not going to be there later on, because we have too many people in the world now that don't think about that. ... When I was a teenager, that kind of stuff never entered my mind. I didn't think about that; I didn't care about that. We used to climb to the top of Miner's Castle, you know, climb all over that rock. We didn't think about the fact that we were possibly defacing it, and letting it erode quicker because we were climbing, back then. All we knew was we were having fun, you know. So what they do at least helps somewhat try to preserve what we have so it's there when our kids get old and their kids get old, you know what I'm saying? It has to be done.*

*They used to build a road into some little thing to cut and they would leave it open. As soon as you leave a road open, you've got tons of people. You have people driving down it. Now they're closing them off, which, I think that's a good idea. Because once people start getting into these areas, it affects the wildlife tremendously, forever, you know. When they close them off, the wildlife started coming back after a while. When they don't, people get into it, snowmobiles or whatever they're driving, the wildlife is gone. There was an area over here that used to have pine martin, and this was years, years ago, and they opened it up and people now keep driving into the pine martin habitat. When they close them off, at least they come back. They're getting better at that.*

However, other participants were explicit in their opposition to setting aside “too much” land for the protection of scenic areas, “I don’t always agree with putting too much of our land in preserves. It’s fine to have an area where people go and see timber that’s never been cut, like virgin timber type areas. But also, they need to harvest and if there is value there, then they can do it,” or wildlife habitat.

#### Knowledge:

Community participants expect that HNF staff possess a certain level and mix of knowledge and expertise. According to those interviewed, management decisions and actions should reflect:

- Science
- On-site experience
- Practicality

Some participants expressed trust in the HNF employees because of their intelligence, “I think they are very intelligent people and have the best interests of the forest at heart,” and professional scientific expertise:

*Well, I guess they are the professional people and they know the ins and outs of the ecosystem and those kind of things, which I don't know. So I feel that we trust these people who are knowledgeable and are hired to do the job and to keep the land available to the public, you know, not shut them out, basically. ... These people are hired, they're knowledgeable, they've been trained in this, so you pretty much trust them.*

A few participants criticized the USFS because “they don't get out” into the forest enough. In turn, these participants questioned their on-site experience and knowledge about the forest:

*...I guess one of my biggest complaints about them is that they don't get out there. They sit in that office and make decisions and they don't get out there and that's the biggest thing I think they need to do. They need to get out there, get off that... behind that desk and see what's happening before they make decisions you know. That's what I think.*

*They don't recreate out in the National Forest very much, you know, and that's the only thing that I would say. Most of them don't ski or bike or hunt or fish or anything and I guess if I worked for the Forest Service I would be out there all the time, so I would know what's happening.*

As mentioned earlier, road closures was a hot topic among study participants. Two participants challenged the USFS and its decision to protect Canadian lynx habitat. One clearly disputed the scientific evidence of the lynx and the other contested the agencies logic in closing a snowmobile trail. While these perspectives reflect recreation values over conservation values, both comments reveal that practicality is expected in decision making.

*We lost the Doty Bridge. The Forest Service condemned it a month before the snowmobile season about four years ago. ... So we have a parallel road, that runs parallel to the bridge so we can use it for the winter. They said no, there's a lynx area on the other end of that land, the Canadian lynx. At the past couple of meetings I've been to I've brought it up. There's never been a Canadian lynx seen in the UP, let alone the eastern end of that road that they manage the habitat for. They're managing the habitat for Canadian lynx that has never been here, is never gonna be here. You're spending tax dollars to manage that.*

*No one's ever seen a lynx in this forest even the old-timers that are 90 to 100 years old. No one's ever had any evidence of a lynx, and yet we're told to manage because there's the possibility of a lynx coming down from Minnesota. So they were told that they could not grade or widen that road and it was a trail and it was wide enough, about four feet on each side, and grade that because it was an area that... a corridor for lynx. Now that to me is crazy. They've got to cross M28, which is about six times as wide as that freaking little trail road that they want to groom out for.*

A third participant challenged the agencies management of a popular lake. Again, the agency's scientific justification for its actions was called into question:

*We had a lake over yonder that fishermen went in and they were causing some erosion so the Forest Service went in and built a boat launch to accommodate the traffic, which was fine. But then the lake was over fished, so they stocked it and recently—when I say recently, recently to me is anything within the last eight or nine years, time goes so fast. They either poisoned it or netted it to take out the fish. They printed in the paper that they had taken out 3,000 some odd pounds of fish and when they figured it out, the fish all weighed an ounce and a quarter. Their reasoning was that they were harassing the big fish. Now, it has been a long time since high school biology, but most fish eat other fish. And I think all of them, but they said these little fish were disrupting the food supply of the big fish. Now, I find that real, real hard to swallow. The last time I checked, fish were not vegetarian, and they were not disrupting the food supply of these big fish. They were the food supply for these fish. So in that case, I didn't trust them, no. I felt that we were being lied to and I resent the implication that I am stupid enough to swallow all this crap.*

Capacity:

The final transactional expectation is tied to the agency's capacity to act. Capacity expectations are linked to:

- Cost effectiveness
- Time efficiency

In general community participants expect the USFS to make decisions and take action in a cost effective and time efficient manner. The following excerpts are from participants who blamed the agency for wasting time and money in maintenance, appeasing special interest groups, and paperwork:

*Somewhere in there, you asked about community relations and one of the things that constantly amazes us is the waste of money that we've seen. Before this road out here was resurfaced a number of years ago, it was surveyed four years in a row. And when I asked why, I was told because if we don't spend the money now, we won't have it when we need it. That's asinine. As taxpayers, there has to be a better way, and I'm not saying the Forest Service can change it, but we've lived here 17 years. Most of those years, that road looked like downtown Beirut. It had more holes than a sieve. One year, they even came out and painted them all orange, so you could see them, which made it look like they had leprosy. Things like that just make them look like...they make them look ridiculous. I won't say what I was going to say [laughs]. If you're going to waste our money, don't let us see it, how badly you waste it; I guess is what I'm saying. It's like paying snowplow drivers to tear up the roads when there's no snow to plow. We would rather see them play cards and pay them to play cards than to have them out there ruining the road, or in this case, wasting the money and the manpower to survey a road that's not going to be resurfaced again this year.*

*A lot of time and money goes into everything they have to do now to try to make a decision. A decision that seems like it should only take weeks really takes years because of all the hoops they've got to jump through. And any time they try to do something, the special interest groups will file a lawsuit against them cause they don't think they're doing it right, so that slows them down. They made a comment last meeting, that everything they've done they've been able to get through pretty easily, but without having lawsuits filed against them. I'm not sure where they're coming from, because I know there were lawsuits filed against them for not having*

*the forest revision done on time. The special interest groups seem to force them to spend more money, in court, even, because of all the things that they pull. ...It's irritating. And it's our money they're wasting. All of us are paying taxes for the forest, and because they have to jump through so many hoops, it does nothing but cost more money. So they have less to actually do anything in the forest, because they are spending it all sitting in an office, doing reports, filling out paperwork. Here's an example, this is the Environmental Assessment for this bay project, and that's not very big compared to what some of them are. That's probably three-quarters of an inch thick on both sides. That's a lot of money, putting that together, and I don't see the point in a lot of it. It's wasting my tax money.*

*I hate the process. It's too lengthy. God, it takes them four to five years to do the plan. I've been to two meetings and asked what the timetable was. I've got a deadline. I've already commented once, now I have a deadline by the end of the year and need to comment a second time. It's going to take until 2006 before this plan is even written. By the time they get all the paperwork done and all the environmental assessments, I'm not going to be working. I want to be retired by then*

### ***The relationship***

In addition to being asked what they expect of a natural resource management agency, community participants were asked to characterize their individual relationship and the community's relationship with the USFS. Overall, the relationship is seen as an opportunity to get to know the agency and how the agency operates. All of the community participants described the types of interactions they've had with the USFS, which were grouped into three broad phases of the relationship:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Cooperation

Within these phases, participants had particular expectations and were able to articulate the extent to which the USFS has met those expectations. According to participants, the local community depends on these interactions to stay informed, provide input, and attain mutual benefits.

### **Communication:**

The communication phase of the agency-community relationship reflects the formal and informal interactions between community members and the agency in which information is shared. The most obvious means of communication is through dialogue at planning meetings or during agency sponsored events. However, informal dialogue in the community setting—on the street, at the grocery store, or at social events—was also an important means of sharing information between the groups. Communication is seen as integral to keeping the community abreast of who the agency is, what its values are, how much progress it has made, and what challenges it faces in managing HNF. Community study participants expect honest, clear, and frequent communication with the agency.

When asked if she had any recommendations for building trust in the agency, one participant likened the agency to a neighbor who needs to communicate with the rest of the neighborhood:

*I guess just continue to keep people informed.... If [you buy a house] and there's a neighbor over there, I would recommend you go and see that neighbor as soon as you move in, because if that neighbor needs you, versus wondering who you are and what kind of a degenerate person you are, he's going to be a better neighbor right away. It boils down to, if I don't know who you are and what you're doing, I don't*

*trust you as much as if I know what you're doing and who you are. So you've got communication. It's important to keep that going in any neighborhood.*

Similarly, another participant emphasized communication and the need for the agency to become a part of the community.

*People who have the time to stop and visit, who know your name, who know your kids in high school, who know your kids play football, who know who rides snowmobiles, who know who has a camp on whatever lake, that type of stuff; who mingles with the community and becomes a part of it and not just the most exclusive part of it, that's important.*

Honesty, despite the pressure from special interest groups, was an important quality for some participants. One participant contended that natural resource management agencies have been dishonest in the past about the impacts of recreation use. He said,

*I think they are trying to protect it for the future, because of the increase of the population of the world, we're increasing the potential of ruining the forest, and it's good to have these interest groups that are trying to keep the increase in the use of the forest down, I have no problem with that, but they go overboard. I consider myself a good environmentalist, but some of the things don't make sense to me. And they use whatever means they can to get the people who live in the city, who don't know what the devil's going on out here, to believe them. They tell lies. One good lie, in trying to keep the snowmobiles out of Yellowstone National Park, they told the public that snowmobiles in Yellowstone on a warm day create more pollution than the whole city of LA does in one day. And that's an absolute lie. There's no way that's true...that's ridiculous.*

Several participants called for clearer communication. For example, two participants mentioned agency jargon and frequent policy changes as having contributed to confusion in the community: "I think, sometimes, when they change the rules for fishing licenses and things like that, it is a matter of confusion. It is a matter of irritation." (10:688)

*Try to make it a little more simpler, you know, other than that, the best thing, I guess, try not to make it so, when the average Joe wants to get involved and try to figure out what's going on, try to make it into their language. And I know a lot of their writing they've been trying to do that, when they write these things, they try not to use the so-called Forest Service slang, you know, which every organization has it, they try to use normal terms so people can understand what they're reading.*

Others called for more consistent communication, including more frequent meetings and meeting announcements: "Part of what they could improve is more meetings, longer notice. I would like to have a real sense that what we say isn't blown off, because it doesn't agree with their preconceived notions.... More communication I think." One participant described feeling "in the dark" about agency projects:

*There's so many things, like this bay project, the only way that I found out about it was at the Friends meeting, and they had submitted that on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> and the meeting was on the 24<sup>th</sup> and you have 30 days, and that was the first I heard about it. Once I started asking questions about what this project was actually all about, then I started trying to get people to write comment letters back to the Forest Service, to keep them*

*from making these changes. So, I don't subscribe the Marquette newspaper; I guess that's where they published it. That's the only way you find out about that stuff, is if you happen to see it in the newspaper or somebody happens to hear about it and tell you about it verbally. It's tough to know some of the things they're doing, because you are kind of in the dark—a lot of times until it's too late.*

#### Collaboration:

The collaboration phase represents the decision making process. The term collaboration connotes shared responsibility and power. Perceptions of the decision making process varied. Some community participants felt that the planning process has been fair and that management decisions reflect public input.

*I don't know of any problem we've had as property owners that's come up that we haven't been able to sit down with them and get an equitable decision. There's one going right now that I'm hopeful will turn out to both of our satisfactions. My personal opinion is that there's a lot of misinformation that gets back to the forest service and they are getting fragmented input that is somebody's personal opinion rather than fact. I don't see where this is going to be a problem for us, but let's say we're not going to let it be a problem for us.*

*We go and complain to them a lot, like now for the ATV trails and that. They were very helpful to us. We'll go there and we'll say "Well, now we really think in order to get from A to B, we need all these open and they do hear us and sometimes they'll help give it to us and sometimes, they still won't, but they're sort of helpful.*

In contrast, many community participants expect more collaboration with the local community members. For some this means that decision should be made at the local level:

*I would like to see them more responsive to the area, and I think there's some movement afoot from the supervisor's office, not the district office, to have the local community have more input on what happens on the forest.... I think you need to have more local control. I think that any decisions made on a local basis, are more grass-roots. And I think it would be better for the community, whether it is the federal government or it's the state government. ...I certainly think the more hands on power we can give the local people of the Forest Service, whether it's in Munising, Escanaba, Rapid River. People who will listen. If they're just going to let them voice their concerns and then not listen to them, then it won't have any effect at all.*

Several participants emphasized the need to keep the power of national special interest groups in check. According to these community participants, special interest groups, and in particular environmental organizations, have exerted too much influence on the HNF:

*I expect them to be a little more closer in touch with the local community than they are. I know it's a federal agency and they are supposed to respond to all people of the U.S. over the years. When they ask, send questionnaires out, it isn't just those people who are using the forest, it's people in California that don't even know where we live. Supposedly their vote counts as much as ours and we have a hard time understanding that philosophy. I think that we community people should count more than someone who's never going to be here, never going to see this place. It's a problem, in my eyes, for a lot of people. And a lot of it is environmentally driven. They know which horns to blow, how many letters to write. Their votes count and*

*they've got hundreds of thousands of people can send an e-mail or a postcard or whatever and they give their opinion. That's a problem.*

*It's an unfortunate situation throughout the world. Why does the minority rule? ...These people who belong to these groups, they certainly have a right to. That's their opinion. But I guess going back to those negotiations, these people...you don't seem to be able to talk to them. You can't sit down and say, "Hey, come on, let's talk realistically about this. Listen to my story." But they don't want to hear your side of it, they have already set their mind system.*

*Oh, it definitely has an effect on the Forest Service, because the group that complains the most is the one that gets it done their way. And that's like I say, [the environmental groups] have such deep pockets that a lot of the comments on something like an EA that gets published for the Hiawatha, the Sierra Club for example, has groups all over the country, and they send out this information to say we need your comments on this particular forest. They've never been here before, a lot of them. And they send their comments in, saying keep motorized transportation out, or whatever that particular complaint happens to be. And they have nothing to do with this forest. But their comments are heard, and if there's twice as many comments to shut down this particular trail, then that's probably what they're going to do.*

To others, the way to promote agency-community collaboration and fair representation is to get locals engaged in the process. Several participants admitted that the community isn't motivated to participate in USFS sponsored meetings for several reasons, including community member apathy, the time commitment required, and the complexity of the process:

*They don't get enough people at their meetings; I think is what it is. They do get some, but only the ones that are concerned like, say, the snowmobilers, the ATVers, people like that. They only get certain ones there. They don't get the majority of the people that they probably should. [Those with] a special concern would be the ones that would be going to the meetings, and the rest all just complain well because of this wasn't done or that wasn't done.*

*The process is way too lengthy. A lot of the timber industry people won't attend these things. And I have had people down in the Forest tell me "If you don't show up, we're not going to get the votes" because we've got all kinds of environmental people that show up to these things and I realize that but, most people for some reason or other, they've got a lot of free time on their hands and I don't know why. And they've got all the money and those of us who work for a living and are interested in production. ...But I will go and attend all the meetings. They know how we feel.*

*I think a lot of the decisions like the planning they're doing right now on the forest, it gets too complicated. I guess is the best word for it. Because, again, it's because of the political stuff, but they make it too much of a long, drawn-out process, so not enough people get involved until there's like this fireworks issue, then more people will go. But for the general community to get more involved in what they do, they need to simplify it. It is way too...let me give you an example. [Participant refers to the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore General Management Plan] This is the National Parks, OK? And Forest Service has got pretty much the same thing going*

*on. But, OK, how many people have got time to sit down and read this whole thing? This is their redoing the management of the park...I mean, yeah, OK, it's big print, and everything, it's user friendly, don't get me wrong, but it's just too much time to expect the average person to spend.*

Another participant called for a citizens advisory committee to help instill the community voice into the decision making process.

*I would like to see a public group formed and I don't know how would do this; whether you would call it a committee or maybe a liaison type office before things have gone too far in the planning stage. And I'm sure it would hold with other areas of the forest in different parts of the country. I'm sure those people feel the same way and I do think that the residents that live there should have some input. It maybe everybody's forest, but it affects us most strenuously – this is the way I want to say it.*

Yet, one participant argued that new requirements aimed at promoting collaborative decision making have made the agency more accountable and in some cases have increased agency-community tension.

*But I think it works against them, too, because they used to not do that, you know, if they wanted to do something, they just went out and they did it, you know. And now they've got to have this and this and this and it's good, but in some respects it's not, because sometimes, when they wanted to close something off, they just went and put up signs and closed to such and such and that was the end of it. Nobody knew about it. It was just closed. In some respects that's good, cause people just bitch and complain and bitch and complain because things get closed off. Where before they didn't know it, it just happened [laughter] and, you know, there it was, OK, and then they would go in and bitch and complain and they'd say "Oh, that's too bad, it's already closed." But they can't do that any more.*

#### Cooperation:

The cooperation phase entails the process of acting and achieving benefits together. Cooperation suggests mutual responsibility and mutual rewards. Some participants emphasized the expectation that the agency will provide opportunities for the local community to get involved. One participant described cooperation in terms of his working relationship with the USFS:

*As far as my working relationship with what I wanted done in the forest, I've had a very good working relationship with [the employees] here at the local level. There are a few things more that I want, a few things more that they want and we try to work together to iron them out. I take some stuff off my end and they put some on theirs.*

Participants praised the USFS for the cooperation in timber harvesting, trail maintenance, and volunteer programs:

*We work with the Forest Service, you know, loggers work with them a lot, logging operations, and a lot of logging operations traverse, carry logs out over our roads. And there's a lot going on, deterioration of our roads. ...The Forest Service has cooperated with us in a lot of these areas as far as road conditions go. We've had some good things with the U.S. Forest Service.*

*Well, I guess the only thing I really know much about is that they have the permits for people to get firewood, which really brings it right down to the households, and I know my own son has been involved with that, and there seems to be no problem with it. I think they keep pretty good relationships with the things going on. They work with people and people work with them.*

*We work together at Valley Spur in the winter, with the ski trails and the maintenance of them and you know, if there's any problems, you go and say, "this needs to be done" and they'll do what they can to fix it and they've worked diligently. So, any time you go to those guys over there and you say you've got a problem, they'll listen to you and they'll take care of it. And I respect them for doing that, I really do. They're a good group of people.*

*The three of us have been instrumental in getting volunteers when we worked on the old lighthouse. We went to Milwaukee and received an award for that.... That was great. [The USFS] put us up in a nice hotel and they had a nice luncheon and a very nice dinner and it meant a lot. We didn't do the work for that reason, but to get that award, and the picture in the paper and all that goes with it.... It meant a lot to know that, hey, the government actually recognized what we were doing and they appreciated it. To be nominated, that meant a lot to us. It was fun.*

A few participants questioned the cooperation between the USFS and the local community, especially with respect to inconsistent policy enforcement and insensitivity to local community members:

*When there is logging done, the logger is bonded.... Sometimes, damage happens, culverts are crushed, there have been [times that] the logger got his bond back and the culvert is still crushed. The money was there, the culvert should have been replaced. It's a road I use...and as a result it floods. There are times of the year when we can't use it and we have done some repairs ourselves, but we don't have the equipment, we don't have the money to go in and the money was there, the enforcement was not.*

*Make sure they follow their own rules to an extent. Had a case last winter, there are rules and regulations about how close you can shoot a gun off at a deer in reference to homes or in a vehicle and again, this is enforcement. A complaint was made by a homeowner, license plate, description was furnished. It turned out to be a state [government employee]. No ticket was ever issued. I don't like that and every time a story like that gets around the community, it's like it's there family, it's not mine. If it had been me, I'd have lost my vehicle, the gun the license...*

*I was thinking back to the summer when I had a friend whose daughter got married or wanted to get married at Bay Furnace, and they started several months ahead of time, and talked to the Forest Service and got an OK. And then within three days of the wedding, they came out with all these rules and regulations that had to be met three days before the wedding. I don't know; that kind of thing leaves a bad taste. I don't know the specific instance where that happened, but it is a typical type of thing that happens. You shouldn't have to write a proposal to have a wedding for three hours on a Saturday afternoon. You shouldn't have to jump through hoops and write a book. And believe me, I've written proposals for the Forest Service. They are books. That's what I'm saying about the paperwork. It's not about the paperwork.*

*It's about the forest. I guess that would be what I would like to communicate more than anything. It's the forest that's important.*

### **Constraints to trust**

One of the primary objectives of this project is to identify factors and mechanisms that inhibit trust between natural resource agencies and communities. Agency participants acknowledged many constraints to building trust in the community. As illustrated earlier, many of the community participants' narratives confirm their perspectives. The constraints that emerged in the analysis were organized into five broad categories:

- Competing values
- Capacity problems
- Communication gaps
- Collaboration limitations
- Agency employee turnover

These constraints are multifaceted and rooted in both the agency and the community, including agency and community culture, as well as the perceptions and behaviors of individual members.

### ***Competing values***

Competing agency and community values emerged as a constraint to building trust. In the example provided by an agency participant below, wilderness preservation values and community economic values are at odds.

*Mistrust in the government comes from when they do have policy reviews, public meetings, open houses, management plan reviews, comments, this, that and everything else, the format that the government uses –all government uses –is not taking into account the social and economic impacts of the area. It's the resource impacts that they look at and following environmental policy. But they don't look at what it can do economically to a community. And a good example is when they created the Big Island Lake Wilderness Area, which was a Congressionally mandated thing that if you got something that even remotely resembles wilderness then either make it wilderness or make it a roadless area. And the one little small community of Steuben down there had one thriving little business that had rental boats on every one of those lakes. Well, as soon as it was a wilderness, then those rental boats were no longer permissible to use on the lakes. So you have to take them out. There was a huge loss of income right there, because the whole summer and fall season that guy thrived on that boat rental business as well as his store. And then once he didn't have the rental business, he didn't have the people coming into the store to rent the boat and probably buying, you know, some beverages and some food, this, that and everything else – their fishing license, their hunting license, whatever, where now they'll go to a chain store, gas station or whatever and get their supplies and stuff.*

### ***Capacity problems***

Demonstrating capacity within the local community is a significant problem for the USFS at HNF. Both community and agency participants were aware of constraints related to financial and human resources. Agency participants, in particular, expressed great concern about having to meet increasing internal procedural requirements on a shrinking budget with a declining workforce. For example, one participant specifically identified the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act as a constraint on the agency's ability to act on decisions. While she noted that the "concept is good," she acknowledged how "frustrating" the paperwork and time commitment can be.

*NEPA's one, it's really tough because the whole concept is good. I mean, who is going to argue against making sure you know what all the impacts are and making sure you work with the public, but it's become so overpowering within the agency. It's very frustrating for the employees, it's very frustrating for the public when we tell them, "Well, we're still in the NEPA process." It just takes so long because of lawsuits, the amount of detail that goes into it now that doesn't add value necessarily, you know. You know, you get 80% and you've got pretty much what you need, but it's that extra 20% that takes tons of time and doesn't add that much value and that's really where we are with NEPA. You know, they're trying to change that nationally. It's tough. So a trail project we want to do on Grand Island probably everybody else supports, but it needs to go through that NEPA process and maybe there's a person that doesn't support it. One person and so, you know, you can't really cut corners or go NEPA-light just because they may have the project remanded and back to you to do again. So it's frustrating to us, the amount of time that we spend on paperwork, and it's frustrating to the program.*

According to several employees, their time out in the field and ability to interact with the community has been sacrificed as a result of changing demands:

*We get frustrated because with budget cutbacks, less people here... There used to be three full districts on the west side, now there's two offices and most of the people are shared. So used to be that folks would stop a lot and talk to people, or you'd stop in the stores when you're out in Au Train and I'd buy ice cream or coffee or something and talk to people. We don't do that any more. So, while I'm talking big about being informal, I'd say we don't do the outreach that we used to do, the amount we used to do.*

*I think we just don't have either enough people or enough time – manpower to work on it to dedicate to having somebody at every Kiwanis Club meeting, that really personal stuff, because I really think that makes a huge difference in how we're seen in the community, having our people do follow-up with local things and even if it is just in your free time, and to have more people involved in more things, and we just can't cover all of those bases. I think that's the biggest thing to reaching out and spending the time to go to local clubs, you know, local whatever is important to the local people. We do what we can, but I think if we did more, it would be a benefit.*

*Guilt is the gift that keeps on giving and I carry a great deal of guilt for not being more involved in the community...so lack of time and too many things, both on the job and one's personal life as well. You try to balance it all. Available time is definitely a barrier. It's probably the largest barrier. And if one had more time that solves a lot of this.*

Another participant characterized the problem as one of enforcement:

*We've got laws, regulations, we've got all these policies, this and that and everything else, but we have no enforcement. So it's a big laugh in the community. The government's got all these policies and there isn't nobody out there to enforce them. So why even bother putting it on paper? People know what they can get away with. So they laugh at it. And I'm not saying everybody, but a lot of people that I know.*

Internal procedural requirements or what was called “upward reporting” also represents a disconcerting shift in the fundamental purpose of the USFS, according to one participant:

*To some extent, I think maybe the Forest Service needs to get word out or maybe blow its horn a little more about the things that we are doing. We need to sell ourselves more. We don't take the time to do that, we don't operate in a business-like way. Overall, the Forest Service is becoming just too internally-focused, upward reporting-focused. I mean Congress, you know, that's a big part of our constituency. Our bosses may represent the public, so we have a lot of upward reporting that way and it takes a lot of time, our internal process stuff. And it seems like more and more from higher levels, there's a bigger priority put on that, than on our local connections that are public connections. So, it makes it really hard at this level. Sometimes you feel like upper levels have forgotten what it's all about, and so it would probably be at those higher levels of having folks remember that and gear the processes to serving people on the ground again.*

In a somewhat divergent perspective, one participant attributed capacity problems to individuals within the unit and the promulgation of personal agendas:

*...being around here for 30 years, when I first started the job, it was real fun. You can go out and do things. Now it seems we have internal problems to the point where we have people trying to stop everything. Our own employees are sabotaging the management by just finding too many little things to worry about. Bringing in their own likes and dislikes into a management plan. Or trying to, I don't know, put a feather in their cap by doing something that they probably didn't have to do.*

### **Communication gaps**

Agency participants acknowledged several communication gaps related to the amount and type of communication between the agency and the community. Community and agency cultures clash in attempts to formally communicate each other's interests and goals. For example, an agency participant described the USFS sponsored community meetings as “very poorly attended.” He explained, “[The USFS is] revising the forest plan which they do every 20 years. They have a community open house, and they say this is what we're doing and they ask for their opinion. They are very poorly attended, very poorly and they are advertised...it's in the newspaper. So people know about these meetings.”

While community apathy was mentioned, many agency participants recognized the time commitment, the format, and the complexity of the public involvement process as confounding constraints on effective communication:

*Well, I think, realistically, having public meetings, there's only a certain amount of people that are going to come. Or, partially, because they only care so much about coming, but partially because everybody is busy and they're going to their kids' things and all that—there's only so much time you want to dedicate to something else. So that alone, I don't know that meetings are the most effective except for those people that really have strong concerns one way or another. I think using our website more for forest planning, for projects, probably not enough for just what do you guys think. I think that helps because it reaches more people on their terms, you know when you have time to look at that.*

*You know, we meet the legal requirement by doing these scoping, sending letters to people on proposed actions, to meet the legal requirement. We publish our proposals*

*in our quarterly newspaper that the forest level puts out and it's called the NEPA Quarterly, which again, formally advises folks of projects that are starting up. So, yeah, we meet that formal requirement. You send someone a six-page somewhat technical document on what we're proposing and we send a bunch of maps out in that proposal. We meet the legal requirement, but I think frankly, John & Jane Q. Citizen, I don't know if that is the very best way to get to folks. Open houses or open meetings I think can help draw people in but frankly, folks are busy with their daily lives and they're bombarded with scoping letters, as we call them. I don't know. I'm not sure that's very effective. We often won't hear from folks during the three years of the process of the environmental document about their issue or their concern. We won't hear about that till, you know, the logging equipment starts up across the road from them. It's only then that they realize that there is a project that they are interested in.*

The fact that most agency sponsored meetings are limited to broad, forest-wide issues and not site-specific issues was identified as a barrier to communicating with the local community:

*They don't speak to specific things. If you have an open house, the government has a formatted way that they are going to run the meeting, and I guess that keeps control in the meeting and everything else. And everything is spoken of in generalities. There's not a lot of specifics about certain public concerns. Where one person may have a concern about one area, you know, like he would say "such and such a road, I'm wondering what's going to go on with that road." So the facilitator would stand up in front and say "Well, in other words, what you're saying is you have concerns about roads in Hiawatha National Forest," and he says right back, "no I don't. I have concerns about that road" and they don't get into the personal answering of the specifics of that road or it will be, "Well catch us later," but we can't write our plan to specifics like that. We can draw a line around it and call it 3.2 or 5.7. The other one is the terminology and we've got it, you know, hanging right on the wall with the recreation opportunities spectrum classes or the classes that they have in the Forest Plan, where there's the primitive non-motorized, the semi-primitive non-motorized, the semi-primitive motorized, primitive motorized, you know. All of those and where anything that says non-motorized, well - the government says, "Well there are different management practices in each of those areas. ...The general part of the public around here perceives anything where it says non-motorized as basic wilderness management. And they feel that the government—both us and the park—are pushing everything into basic wilderness management.*

When asked, what do you think the community expects of the USFS, an agency participant emphasized the need for concise and simple language. He said,

*To listen to the people. Not to a book. To do the best they can by a law that's written, but not overdo it. Not to do a 700-page document when a 35-page document will suffice. And, you know, people will come here and pick up a copy of a draft environmental analysis, well, it's bigger than a Webster's dictionary. And there are very, very few people that will take the time or the energy to go through that and see exactly what's in there. And when it is in there, a lot of it is written in terms that I guess using the old term a Philadelphia lawyer would have a hard time understanding. So, they don't keep it simple enough. They make everything so complex.*

Along the same vein, an agency participant criticized the tone of some communication as a problem. He offered signage as an example. When asked how the agency can improve its relationship with the community, he said,

*By listening to individual concerns and desires, or maybe not desires but at least concerns and addressing those in a timely manner, rather than putting it on a shelf or passing the buck or saying well we just can't do that because of this. Try to do a little more public education [in a] more positive way. I'll use a perfect example: being involved in recreation management of the forest, we have bulletin boards in all our campgrounds. We have bulletin boards in all of our picnic areas. We have a bulletin board here. We have a bulletin board there and we have signs here. We have signs all over. And if you were to go up into our little sign storage area up there [and,] count the "do not" signs versus the "do" signs... Don't put up signs all over that say "don't pick the flowers," "don't be loud," "don't do this," "don't do that." Why don't they put a big sign up that says "Here's your national forest –enjoy it and have a good time." I'm not here to screw up your vacation, you know.*

The need for more communication as a marketing tool was stressed by a participant:

*The Forest Service, you know, they've done a phenomenal job, I think, with the forest in this area that I've outlined, compared to when I was here as a child. For Pete's sake, you know, all the campsites, the river, Indian River. I mean they've done so much, but they don't talk about it. I mean I'm not being negative, I'm just being open here to say that the Forest Service has no marketing setup to market the product that is there or the general public to use.*

One consequence of communication gaps may be misconceptions and faulty assumptions about the agency. Two participants noted an identity crisis rooted in community members' incapability of distinguishing the USFS from the NPS:

*I don't think that people necessarily divide the National Forest and the Park Service and say "I trust the National Forest, I don't trust the Park Service," I think we're all wrapped together and we're wrapped together with the state Department of Natural Resources, too. So, it's really important that people know individuals, cause I think that's, in my opinion, that's where the trust is.*

*People at times do get us mixed up with Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the National Park Service. They tend not to differentiate between the two. And there is kind of an ongoing disagreement going currently with the park, and the city of Munising. Actually, the city wanted some land returned to them, this area here in the city limits, due to a proposed wilderness area around Beaver Lake. The city itself is against designated wilderness. So there's definitely conflict there. And I think maybe that kind of affects us a little bit.*

### **Collaboration limitations**

The collaboration limitations described by agency participants revolve around community members' perceptions about the collaborative decision-making process. Issues of power and equity surfaced as common themes in the interviews. Once again, the National Environmental Protection Act was identified as a constraint—in this case, on collaboration with local communities.

*I read a couple of articles and I think that the trust in government has declined over the years. And that probably has affected us also.... I think part of it's due to when the National Environmental Protection Act came into existence, you know, and that brought a lot more opinions in on what should be done. It wasn't local any more entirely. Before that, I think local residents had a little more say in what happened, than they do now. Cause now we have to consider everybody's opinion, whether they live in Munising or Detroit or some other area. So, I think they may feel that they've lost a little bit of control over what they used to have.*

The local community perceives the USFS as “spineless” when it comes to standing up to special interests groups, like the Sierra Club, according to one agency participant.

*[The communities] feel that the government - both us and the park - are pushing everything into basic wilderness management, and that the government listens and is spineless to special interest groups and I don't know if I can speak out and say the name of the groups, but I'll use the Sierra Club as an example. The Forest Service, rather than being called to task by the Sierra Club, will listen to and follow their every want and need. And write their plans so they won't get called to court. And if they do get called to court, then they will re-write the plan to avoid a confrontation. I guess what I'm saying is they don't have the backbone to stand up to the large powerful special interest groups. They're afraid to go nose to nose with them. They do avoidance with the big groups and with the small, non-organized groups or just a small group of individuals or even an individual, they don't pay any attention.*

Accurately representing the role of public involvement in natural resource management and the agency's procedures for balancing public interests and its own legislated mandates pose major challenges to the USFS.

*Then the other [barrier] is well, and this is the public saying this –you go through all the time and energy to get all of this public input to do your management plan and hear our concerns, when in fact, when it comes out, you knew before you even had a meeting exactly the way you were going to write it. So why even bother wasting the money and asking us? Cause you knew what you were going to do before you even talked to us. And if you ask us this, this, this and this and in the same token say, well you have to remember this is not a vote and I guess the old vote used to be the American way, where if you asked a question, or you put out a referendum and you had 7,000 yeses and two no's, then 7,000 yeses won out. Well, in the case of the way we do things, the two no's can win out and 7,000 yeses were of no concern. So why make it sound like you're taking a vote if you're not? Why make it sound like a petition if it's not?*

*The forest planning: it's giving the update, give them information, answering basic questions, generally, it's trying to share information and get feedback from people. Our role usually isn't to try to sell something to people, although that is a big trust thing. I mean, we hear a lot the comment “you people already know what you're going to do,” you know, “you're just asking us because you know you have to. It's your process.” So, sometimes it's challenging, getting past that. [We tell them] that we don't know what we're going to do. We don't know what we're going to do and that we really do want to hear what they have to say. We may not end up where they want us to be, but we do want to hear what they say to help us make the decision. I got frustrated at the last forest planning meeting when somebody said that because I*

*think most of us take our job very seriously and feel like we're managing this for the public and.... I mean, if the public thinks that we're just going to do what they want if that means OHVs riding everywhere off trail, it's not going to happen, because we are supposed to protect the resources for this generation and future generations.... I mean sometimes I feel like as a [USFS employee] I'm Jell-O, you know, I'm bland because we're supposed to be so opinionless.*

A few of the constraints identified by agency participants were echoed in community interviews. For instance, some participants were aware of the toll of increased procedural requirements and “paperwork.” A community participant attributed this phenomenon to pressures from environmental organizations:

*I feel that over the last, gosh, probably ten years it's been an awful diversion from timber production to recreational interest. And ...there's more people cutting into the pie; getting what they think is their share and it's been primary because of the environmental groups. They've put pressure, they've made the Forest Service people work and a lot of paperwork that wasn't required years ago. There are environmental assessments. They've brought the Forest Service into the courts several times.... They've tied up timbers. The woods that needs to get to market because of some minor problems. We think that it's just a case of planning to exclude logging on the Forest. I believe that is one of their goals. As I understand it, I believe at least 50% or more of the work that's done by the personnel of the Forest Service is paperwork tied into environmental assessments. That's a big problem because when they're working in the office, they're not working in the woods.*

Several participants were wary of the time consuming planning processes and the associated environmental assessments:

*I guess I can say I trust them to a point. I very much trust the local people that I have to work with, but going much beyond that, I really don't know how to say it because I haven't worked with all of them. It seems to take them so long to get anything done. I mean, some of the stuff is ridiculous. It doesn't take them but five minutes to close the road, but it takes them two years to open it. ...I don't trust the Forest Service as far as going into upper management and trying to get stuff done. It hasn't worked over the years. But if I get something out of the local office here, I can pretty well say, “Yes, that's going to happen.”*

### ***Agency employee turnover***

An additional constraint not explicitly mentioned by agency participants is the uncertainty of government and specifically, the effects of employee turnover on trust. Below, two community participants describe their concerns about the future.

*The people at the Forest Service at that time were very cooperative.... At that time we seemed to be getting our fair share, what we wanted. ... What I was concerned about, when you're dealing with the federal government, it's not like you and I making an agreement. It's every three or four years you've got a different group of people to deal with. And they feel that the guy that was in their job before them didn't do it right. So now they want to change it. So that was one of my big concerns, what is going to happen to us ten years from now?*

*There are still things that we have to go back to them periodically and say, “Hey, that’s not what the legislation says.” Part of that probably goes back to what I was afraid was going to happen. They’ve completely changed forest service management. There are very few people left in positions of management in the forest service right now that were there when these negotiations took place. The local ranger is one of them. [She] was involved with the local negotiations, and she knows pretty much what the original negotiations said. ...From an individual group from the island, we did lose some of our best friends, in respect that they understood what our needs were and where we were coming from, and tried their best to help us get what we wanted. ...I would just suggest that when they do change people in these upper management positions, that they be required to be fully knowledgeable of the procedures and process and what the process says on when they took over the island. Not to try to rewrite the legislation which has already been written.*

### **Opportunities for trust**

Community and agency participants identified several opportunities for building trust. They include:

- Community support
- Community character
- Community resources
- Mutual benefits
- Interagency cooperation

A few agency participants acknowledged the support and appreciation they have received from community members:

*If the Forest Service puts up a gate and closes a road in certain areas, on a road that any one person may have been use or using for years. [Community members] think I know why that gate’s up and use me as the sounding block for that. And then a lot of times when there is something good that goes on, I hear quite a bit about that, too. You know, about “Boy, you guys did a really nice job on that and you’re managing this well, managing that well”*

Similarly, the community character, including a friendly and welcoming environment, was recognized as an asset. One agency participant compared the HNF to other forests he had worked and asserted that the HNF had a much “friendlier atmosphere”:

*I worked on the Hiawatha my entire career, but I have been on other forests in detail, and on wildfire details and this may be because I’m not a local resident of the areas that I’ve been to, but I’ve always felt that the Hiawatha had more of a friendlier atmosphere. That people were a little bit friendlier to the employees than elsewhere. So...it’s been a positive experience here.*

*One of the interesting things about a small town is that, when you stay for a while, everybody knows everybody. So a lot of people may get frustrated with things, but they really don’t have a tendency to be belligerent or rude or threaten you or whatever, because if you were active in the community at all, you’re usually going to run into them.... You know I’ve been leading meetings with a hundred angry people about a possible road closure, but overall, I think folks know that they have to work with each other because we’ve got a limited amount of people, so we have to agree to*

*disagree then continue to work on things. So that's nice from that standpoint, having people come in and knowing the majority of the folks, or somebody in this office, if it's not me, somebody in this office knows just about everything that comes to the counter. So you know, I think they're generally greeted nicely and feel welcomed...*

The community's resources—both infrastructure and human capital—were cited as important to the agency in communicating with residents and building relationships. An agency participant suggested that they should take advantage of a local radio show to share information:

*Maybe just with the community as a whole, I think maybe if we could be a little more aggressive with the amount of contact we provide the public in a couple of ways. Maybe, and we've even talked about this, doing a weekly or at least twice a month kind of a news release to the local paper, just to let the local folks in our community know what's going on, what's happening on their national forest. I think we could do that. There's now a local radio station. Well, there's been a local radio station for a long time, but there's a new segment that is a couple of hours long each day, it's weekdays and it attempts to provide an opportunity for key members of the community to share information in what's going on. Perhaps we could have a forest service regular segment there where we provide a little information to the public.*

An agency and community participant's comments below demonstrate the positive impacts of a strong volunteer network. The community participant described the opportunities volunteering has given him in staying informed and providing input.

*I point to the volunteer program that we have. At last count, we have 100 plus volunteers just this last year, who did one thing or another on the National Forest, who volunteered time in fiscal '03. That's certainly what I point to. The relationship we have with the Chamber of Commerce and the Parks and Recreation Commission as I spoke of earlier, I think is strong. We have interaction with landowners; actually, there are landowners on Grand Island National Recreation Area.... We have a relationship with the Grand Island Association that helps us manage the island. So that's kind of a formal–informal relationship. [We] try to stay active with the local units of government, keeping them up-to-date on things that we're doing in the county, the townships. So I guess those are some examples.*

*[The Hiawatha Interpreters Association has] given me a chance to be in the front of what's happening, especially on the Grand Island Recreation Area and anything that's new, archeology. We had an archeological dig two summers ago with some fifth-grade boys and that was great. ...So I've had a chance to do actual things that I normally would not have known about, I guess, and to be a part of what's happening and some of the planning process; what they're doing and what they're planning, have some input into that. So that's been good for me.*

Achieving mutual benefits through cooperation was seen as an opportunity for building trust. An agency participant spearheaded an effort to develop a country music festival in Munising to commemorate its centennial anniversary:

*Some of the interactions I've had, as a citizen what is it, seven or eight years ago, Munising celebrated its centennial, and because I was then a member of the community, I had an idea to do something that I thought would be a good way to help us celebrate our centennial as the city of Munising. So I suggested that we put on a*

*country music festival as a way to celebrate our centennial. So, I sold the idea and we ended up with a committee and a community board off on it. So we put on a one day country music festival, where we had national entertainers here, and big acts and so on and so forth; and so that was an example of my working with the city commission and the centennial committee, and various other groups that were a part of the whole centennial effort, to work together to do something to help celebrate the centennial.*

To another agency participant, interagency cooperation is important. She discussed the visitor center shared between the National Park Service and the USFS as a “seamless” partnership.

*I would say the relationship we have with the National Lakeshore is strong. I think the public likes to see, when they come here visiting. We share this Visitor Information Center here, this 700 sq. ft. space that’s shared between the Forest Service and the Park Service, because it’s our information center and it provides info to people when they get here. They don’t care what color uniform we wear and they don’t care if it’s Park Service or Forest Service, they just want to know what they can see and do and experience here on their public lands. And I think we’ve done a pretty good job at trying to be as seamless as possible, even though there are, you know, there are differences between the agencies in mission, differences between the two entities’ rules and regulations.*

## DISCUSSION

Overall the study revealed that both agency and community participants believe that trust plays an integral role in effective natural resource management and successful agency-community relationships.

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 multifaceted 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 a significant amount of trust in HNF personnel. Community members have grown to trust the employees they know. At the same time, the findings also indicate that trust may not be extended to the entire USFS as a whole. As the literature reviewed asserts, trust is derived from positive expectations about another person or group’s behavior. Therefore, establishing exactly what the community expects from individuals and the agency 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 HNF and forest management provides the community, or *the outcomes* and 2) how opportunities are created that enable the community to register its expectations for HNF management and monitor outcomes, or *the process*.

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 forms of trust. In fact, past literature suggests that process-based trust may contribute to outcome-based trust.

Study findings indicate that the community has transactional expectations for the HNF. The community expects management decisions and actions to embody a wide spectrum of values, knowledge, and capacity. Recreation access and the opportunity to participate in a diversity of activities are two key value expectations of community participants. Many community participants also called for an increased sensitivity to economic and community character values. According to community participants the USFS should use science, on-site experience, and practicality when making decisions and taking action on the HNF. Several participants expressed skepticism in agency science or questioned employees' experience in and knowledge of the forest. Community participants expect the USFS to have and control the resources to turn planning and decision making into action and positive outcomes. Participants emphasized the need for cost effectiveness and time efficiency. In some instances, community transaction expectations diverged and even conflicted. For example, participants expressed varying attitudes about timber harvesting techniques and the broader topic of wildland preservation. Here evidence of a fundamental dispute between anthropocentric and eco-centric ideologies surfaced.

The community's process expectations can be 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 overwhelmingly agree that getting to know each other plays a key role in building trust. The relationship enables the community to register trust expectations and monitor the trust transaction. According to community participants communication should be frequent, concise and straightforward. While a few community participants expressed feeling confident that their voices are heard in decision making processes, many felt that true collaboration was lacking at HNF. Participants attributed this problem to decisions being made outside the local area, the power of special interest groups, and a lack of motivation in the community to get involved in a time-consuming and complex process. Community participants provided several examples of how the agency and the community have cooperated in natural resource management. However, a few participants demanded more consistent policy enforcement and sensitivity to local needs.

The most significant challenges to building the community's trust in the USFS at HNF are linked to expectations for capacity and collaboration. Agency and community participants alike, identified limited budgets, small workforces, and increased internal procedural requirements as barriers to turning decisions into action and outcomes. Many community participants were cynical about collaboration. While community apathy was identified as a problem, perhaps more significant is the distribution of power in decision making. Many community members perceive that outside special interest groups have more influence on the process than the local community.

Despite these constraints, several opportunities exist to build trust in the community. The interviews suggest that a significant amount of support can be found in the community. Agency participants acknowledged their appreciation for the friendly, small town atmosphere in the region. Community resources, such as a strong volunteer work force and a radio show, also were perceived as opportunities in building trust through communication and cooperation.

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**Agency-wide recommendation:**

## 1) Reestablish the USFS identity and service role in local communities

The study provides clear and convincing evidence that the USFS's most valuable resource is its employees—the people of the Forest Service. Community members are far more likely to trust individuals with whom they interact than an agency, regardless of their values and interests. Thus, the formal and informal interactions between agency personnel and community members are critical. Agency and community participants' perspectives converged on the notion that increased procedural requirements, known as “paperwork” to community members and “upward reporting” to agency personnel, have stymied the agency-community relationship. Agency participants from technicians to upper administration admitted spending less time out in the field and in the local communities and more time in the office as a result. Community participants were well aware of this phenomenon and its effect on the community.

We recommend that the USFS reestablish its identity as an organization of individuals and refocus its role on public service, and in particular, service to the local community. 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 staff should mentor new employees by teaching them about the cultural history and customs of the local communities and introducing them to community representatives. 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 forest 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 the hiring of 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 national forest units.

Paperwork and upward reporting must not supplant community engagement. Forest units need the budget and workforce 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, 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. An agency participant eloquently summarized the identity and role of the agency in the local community:

*To the people, the local community, the individuals that work here are the Forest Service. If you're interacting with the community on other levels, say for school, church, historical society, whatever, they're going to have a better opinion of the Forest Service itself. Really, the people that work here are the Forest Service, so it's very important for employees to interact with the community.*

**Unit-level recommendations:**

## 2) Identify and integrate local values and knowledge into management

Managers can bridge the gap between seemingly incompatible agency and community values by seeking opportunities to validate and incorporate community values into management programs and policies within the framework of the USFS mission. To do so, managers should go out into the local communities to identify community goals and ascertain how HNF might fit into those goals. In some instances, goals may reflect a clear conflict of values. However, many times creativity and perseverance can overshadow differences. For example, hiring community members as employees,

using local contractors, and patronizing local businesses all contribute to the community's economic goals. Sponsoring or hosting local events is another effective strategy for incorporating community values into management. Cultural interpretation programs provide opportunities for locals to identify with HNF on a personal level. Interpretation of the community's role in HNF's establishment and current management, including community contributions and sacrifices, helps to pay tribute to these efforts. Telling the story of how HNF came to be and highlighting the stories of those who were most impacted by its designation acknowledges and validates the forest's roots in the local community.

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 tap into the broader range of local expertise and to become a hub of community culture. HNF managers should identify a variety of local experts—historians, storytellers, craftspeople, artists, photographers, writers, and recreationists to lead programs at HNF, showcasing local knowledge and expertise. These experts can interpret their experiences in and connections to the HNF for other community members. Community experts will 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 HNF are recommended.

### 3) Demonstrate capacity to turn planning into action

Capacity emerged as an important expectation the community holds for the USFS. Agency participants also were aware of concerns related to turning planning into action at HNF. Several agency participants identified obstacles, such as internal procedural requirements, budget cutbacks, and a shrinking workforce, that have slowed progress. Many community participants were cognizant of these agency constraints. An agency participant stressed the importance of marketing as a tool for increasing interest in and support for HNF. Weekly or bimonthly updates on agency projects and accomplishments, big and small, will help keep the local community attuned to agency progress. Updates might include a behind the scenes look at the agency and its staff, such as "a day in the life" of an employee. Tie agency projects to community benefits.

### 4) Expand communication; facilitate awareness and understanding of management process and outcomes

A prevailing theme in the agency participants' interviews was that the traditional forms of agency communication fail to reach many local community members. In turn, the community lacks awareness and understanding of management and the agency lacks awareness and understanding of the community. Participants recognized that documents meant to share information with the public are too complicated and confuse the average citizen. Similarly, public involvement meetings have not stimulated much local interest and aren't conducive to sincere dialogue. The interviews suggest that community members expect communication to be clear and concise and to display respect and honesty.

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 forms of communication. 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, avoid using agency jargon, summarize complex ideas, provide real-world, site-specific examples, encourage face-to-face dialogue.

An agency participant recalled some unusual but effective tactics employed by a ranger to communicate with local community members:

You know, the last round of forest planning in the mid '80s, one of the things they did, and the past ranger was really comfortable with...they went out to the bars. They went out to the Bootleg Bar and this and that. And there's a lot of jokes about having these extended conversations with people who'd been drinking and that, but I think certain clientele anyway felt like they were listened to more. (33:422)

#### 5) Engage and empower community members through collaboration and cooperation

One clear message from this study is that community members are skeptical about the sincerity of the agency's public involvement processes. Participants acknowledged that the community questions the power they have in influencing decisions. They also noted concerns about equitability in decision making. Several agency participants recalled hearing statements such as "you already know what you're going to do before you ask us" from community members. Again, clear communication is imperative. Agency employees should strive to demonstrate how community input is integrated into the decision making process and in cases where legal requirements demand alternatives, these must be articulated as well. Getting community members engaged in the process will help dispel some skepticism. As agency employees and community members get to know each other and as the agency interprets the planning and decision making process to the community, much of the mystery surrounding the decision making process will disappear. 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).

Although agency participants appreciated the "friendly" small town atmosphere of the area, one participant noted that "small communities have long memories." (33:673) When information about current management is lacking, community members may rely on reputations or stereotypes to guide their impressions. While trust takes time to build, it can be lost quickly. A few community members shared stories about particular interactions or what they deemed to be broken promises that have had long-lasting effects on their perceptions of the agency.

This project is designed to help natural resource agencies understand trust and develop strategies for building trust in local communities. This report increases HNF managers' awareness of community expectations and helps them identify challenges and opportunities and prioritize steps toward building trust. However, as several participants recognized, the agency has experienced increasing internal demands and in particular, heightened procedural requirements. The result—what has been labeled "process predicament"—is a slower, more deliberate and complex process that has stymied agency personnel's ability to demonstrate capacity and to build relationships in the local community. Rosseau et al. (1998) argue that institutional controls and mechanisms intended to foster trust, may actually work against trust. Standardizing the process makes personalizing the process more difficult. Managers at HNF must find creative ways to adapt standardized public participation processes to the local context. Many of the recommendations above can guide agency personnel in how to engage the community.

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## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDES

### 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 [ ] National Forest?
  - F1. What has prompted this feeling?
  - F2. Has your trust changed? How?
  - F3. How important is it that you trust the community?
4. What effects has your relationship with the community had on the management of [ ] National Forest?

#### The agency's relationship with the community

5. What do you think the community expects of a public land management agency?
  - F1. To what extent do you think the USFS has fulfilled those expectations?
6. What does [ ] National Forest mean to the community?
7. How would you characterize the relationship between the community and the USFS?
  - F1. Tell me about some of the interactions between the community and the USFS?
  - F2. What has been the community's role in planning and decision-making processes and is it fair?
8. Do you think the community trusts the USFS to manage [ ] National Forest?
  - 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 USFS?
9. What effects has the community had on the management of [ ] National Forest?

#### Perspectives on management

10. What goes into management decisions?
  - F1. What information and knowledge go into management decisions?
  - F2. Whose (or what) values are reflected in management decisions?
11. How have management decisions affected the community?

#### Vision for the future

12. What are some ways in which you can improve your relationship with the community?
13. What are some ways in which the USFS can improve its relationship with the community?
14. What are some ways in which the USFS can improve its management of [ ] National Forest?
15. [Optional] Suppose the USFS followed your suggestions, how would this influence the community's trust in the USFS?

16. [Optional] What are some barriers in building a trusting relationship between the USFS and the community?
17. [Optional] What would it take for the community to trust the agency to manage [ ] National Forest?  
**OR** What would it take for the community's trust in the agency to be maintained?
18. Is there anything else I should know about your perspective?

## Community Member Interview Guide

### Your connection to community and place

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

### Your relationship with the agency in general

21. What do you expect of a public land management agency in managing natural resource areas?
  - F1. To what extent has the USFS fulfilled your expectations?
  
22. Do you trust the USFS as an agency?
  - F1. What has prompted you to feel this way?

### Your relationship with the agency locally

23. What are your impressions of the USFS here at [ ] National Forest?
  
24. Describe for me your relationship with the USFS here at [ ] National Forest.
  - F1. Tell me about some of your interactions with the USFS.
  - F2. What has been your role in planning and decision making processes?
  
25. Do you trust the USFS to manage [ ] National Forest?
  - F1. What has prompted this feeling?
  - F2. Has your trust changed? How?
  - F3. How important is it that you trust the USFS?

26. What effects have you had on the management of [ ] National Forest?

### The community's relationship with the agency

27. What does [ ] National Forest mean to the community?
  
28. How would you characterize the relationship between the community and the USFS?
  - F1. Tell me about some of the interactions between the community and the USFS?
  - F2. What has been the community's role in planning and decision-making processes and is it fair?
  
29. Do you think the community trusts the USFS to manage [ ] National Forest?
  - 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 USFS?
  
30. What effects has the community had on the management of [ ] National Forest?

### Perspectives on management

31. What goes into management decisions?
  - F1. What information and knowledge do you think go into management decisions?
  - F2. Whose (or what) values are reflected in management decisions?
  
32. How have management decisions affected the community?

### Vision for the future

33. What are some ways in which the USFS can improve its relationship with you?

34. What are some ways in which the USFS can improve its relationship with the community?
35. What are some ways in which the USFS can improve its management of [ ] National Forest?
36. [Optional] Suppose the USFS followed your suggestions, how would this influence your overall trust in the USFS?
37. [Optional] What are some barriers to building trusting relationships between the community and the USFS?
38. [Optional] What would it take for you to trust the agency to manage [ ] National Forest? **OR** What would it take for your trust in the agency to be maintained?
39. Is there anything else I should know about your perspective?