



The Red-Cockaded Woodpecker as an Asset: Creating Community Benefits from Habitat Restoration

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North Carolina Chapter of the Nature Conservancy
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About the Cover

Photo One (top left): The Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), USFWS photo (<http://endangered.fws.gov/i/b4a.html>)

Photo Two (top right): The Bobwhite Quail, the subject of a recent state initiative for restoration through the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

Photo Three (middle left): The Raeford Hotel, in need of restoration as part of the city's revitalization efforts.

Photo Four (middle right): Possible Raeford City Park, walking trails.

Photo Five (lower): Possible park site at the community of Addor.

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*“My big fear is that the red-cockaded woodpecker
is a nuisance and not an asset.
Like the Army.
They used to have a terrible reputation
in Fayetteville and they had to change that.
They deliberately turned that around so that
people saw them as an asset.” [state official]*

Section One: Introduction and Approach

Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is charged through the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with restoring and protecting habitat of species determined to be threatened or endangered. Among the possible strategies to accomplish its mission, the Service has stressed the importance of voluntary and community-oriented measures. In some areas, and notably in the Sandhills area of North Carolina, it has facilitated partnership approaches in order to share the burdens and the benefits of habitat restoration. Partnerships offer several advantages over a regulatory approach, the most significant being that they can foster a multi-dimensional approach to problem solving. That is, other community concerns, land use challenges, and community goals can be brought into the process for mutual resolution. Partners can advocate for policy change that a member alone may not be able to do.

The mission of the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership is to “develop a conservation strategy for the red-cockaded woodpecker, other native biota, longleaf pine and other ecosystems in the Sandhills of North Carolina compatible with the land use objectives of the partners.” Its membership is composed of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg, the U.S. Army Environmental Center, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the North Carolina Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and the Sandhills Ecological Institute. It also has a range of other stakeholder groups that includes local governments, various state offices (Agriculture, Forestry Extension, Parks, Natural Heritage Program), Sandhills Area Land Trust, Environmental Defense, forestry consultants, pine needle harvesters, and real estate representatives. The Partnership and its affiliates have recently instituted working groups focused on the recovery strategy of the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW), reserve design, resource management, land protection, education and public relations, research, and GIS/data management.

The Partnership contracted with James Kent Associates (JKA), based in Aspen, Colorado, to engage in a process of community contact so that the broader interests of the community would be served by its partnership effort. Specifically, it wanted citizen concerns and opportunities identified early so that the partnership can be as responsive as possible to the community and build upon its interests.

The objectives of the JKA work were to:

1. Describe the local communities affected by mission of the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership in social, cultural, and economic terms. Identify the publics, their interests, their lifestyle routines, and communication pathways.
2. Describe the human geographic boundaries by which local residents distinguish one area from another as a means to work within the specific culture of each area. The maps will form the basis of management strategies.
3. Identify the citizen issues and opportunities associated with conservation and with community life, including the individuals, networks and groups that carry the issues.
4. Develop a communication strategy to maintain ongoing dialogue and issue resolution at the informal level of communities.

JKA was asked to focus our community description to Hoke County and eastern Moore County, and specifically to key habitat areas from Raeford north to Ft. Bragg, west to Aberdeen, and including the area of private lands between Ft. Bragg and Camp Mackall.

The JKA Approach

The JKA philosophy is that local residents know more about their environment than any “expert” and, further, that efforts to restore biological habitat must include people who live on the land and others who are affected by conservation programs. These people have

to participate in discussions about the condition of the environment, bring forth their own knowledge of the land, and share in the responsibility for habitat renewal. It has also been our experience that habitat restoration efforts can bring clear benefits to individuals and to a local community in terms of better productivity of the land, fostering community spirit, improving access for recreation uses, and contributing to recreation and tourism economic sectors. We have developed a *biosocial* approach to ecosystem management in which a balance between the physical and social environments is a goal (Preister and Kent 1997).

Our approach for learning about communities is called The Discovery Process.TM It involves “entering the routines” of the community in order to see the world as residents do. We look for descriptions from residents about: settlement patterns, publics, informal networks, work routines, recreation activities, support services and geographic features. Appendix A contains information about this methodology.

In practice, we contacted and listened to as many people as we could, to hear their stories of the land, their understanding of the red cockaded woodpecker, and their ideas for improving the land and their communities. We always asked people whom else we could talk with, and those people whose names came up several times we made a special point of contacting. In addition, we frequented the gathering places in the area—the restaurants, the laundromats, churches, and stores, engaging residents in conversation.

We made a point of talking with a wide variety of people—long time residents and newcomers, young and old, farmers and townspeople, and commuters and storeowners. We talked to several kinds of recreationists—hunters, fishers, off-highway vehicle enthusiasts, campers, and hikers. We talked to whites, African-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics. We spoke with woodlot owners, owners of horse farms, and pine straw balers. Our contacts included officials from Ft. Bragg, the many local, state, and federal agencies engaged in natural resource issues, staff from many social agencies, county commissioners, and city councilmembers.

In all, we interviewed at least 212 people and talked to many, many more at local gathering places. We wanted to let people speak for themselves in this report so we relied on the frequent use of quotes. The team devoted a total of 61 professional days in October and November to community fieldwork in the area.

This report is laid out in six sections. Section Two provides a summary of key findings. Section Three describes the trends and issues that most concern residents with whom we spoke. Although a bit long, this section is important in laying the groundwork for a discussion of natural resource management in Section Four. Section Four describes ties to the land, community values for conservation and protection, and local perceptions about the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). Section Five outlines current Fort Bragg-community relations. Communication strategies to create partnership opportunities is the topic of Section Six, and Section Seven closes with JKA recommendations.

Section Two: A Summary of Key Findings

1. Hoke County residents express strong kinship ties, strong geographic attachment to place, but weak ties to the land. People now live more on the land (suburban use) than off the land (rural use tied to production).
2. At the same time, Hoke County residents reflect a keen interest in conservation, land protection, and rekindling ties to the land through hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking opportunities. While worried about government intrusion, they want to do what's right for the land.
3. Hoke County is in danger of being stretched apart. The east side is oriented to Fayetteville and contributes more to Cumberland County than to Hoke. The west side is developing a horse economy oriented to Moore County. Southwest Hoke County orients to Laurinburg. The town of Raeford has significant issues with downtown revitalization and economic diversification. Economic leakage is high and threatens the ability of the county to manage its own destiny.
4. Fort Bragg is a frequent topic of conversation and the past perception of unfairness lies just below the surface. The benefits of Fort Bragg to Hoke County has not been as high as benefits to neighboring counties. Coupled with the present vulnerability of Hoke County in terms of development pressures, Fort Bragg's southern flank is at risk within a generation. Because the County is not in a place to create positive outcomes from the present trends, it is open to intrusive pressures that it currently does not have the capacity to absorb. Fort Bragg is at risk of backlash because of the unmanaged nature of these trends.
5. Fort Bragg should institute a community development initiative focused specifically in Hoke County because conservation and land protection are key community values.
6. The Sandhills Conservation Partnership has developed a diverse organizational structure, bringing together many of the important players to meet the objectives of habitat restoration.
7. Given the strong local value for land protection and conservation, and because of the successful applications of habitat restoration programs in Moore County and other places, the Sandhills Conservation Partnership should extend these programs into Hoke County and count on a fair measure of success. A number of people have expressed interest in existing stewardship programs, including cost sharing programs, conservation easements and other agreements. If early innovators are selected who are respected within their networks, adoption of new practices will be more likely. Four

opportunities for land purchase for local park and habitat development have been identified.

8. Stewardship activities directed solely to the environment, however, are not sufficient to meet the goals of the Sandhills Conservation Partnership. Without stewardship of communities as well, the long-term issues related to Ft. Bragg will resurface and affect the success of land stewardship programs. In short, stewardship efforts must include broader community interests, with action developed in a collaborative, partnership manner. Habitat restoration efforts that include such community interests as youth activities programs, employment, youth conservation corps, recreational activities, community parks and centers, and economic development will be successful and more sustainable.
9. The Sandhills Conservation Partnership should continue to expand its diversity to include other agencies and potential partners, committing to a broadened community-based approach to conservation based on ongoing informal connection in the community.

Section Three: Trends and Issues in Hoke County and Eastern Moore County

This section provides a description of the local communities, especially current trends affecting them and the issues discussed by residents. Figure One below shows a map of Hoke County and eastern Moore County. The map shows that there is a social boundary in western Hoke County, to the west of which people relate primarily to Aberdeen and Moore County. Along this line, residents told us that about half the commuters went to Raeford to the House of Raeford, Unilever, Burlington, or their own business, while the other half went to Moore County to the furniture plants, construction and maintenance jobs, or the many service jobs. JKA calls these human geographic areas Human Resource Units (HRUs) and they are the areas within which people conduct most day-to-day and month-to-month activities, personal and face-to-face knowledge of others is high, and caretaking systems are well developed. In Figure One, we have labeled the two units the Moore and the Hoke HRUs.

The map supports a conclusion drawn in Section Two about Hoke being pulled in many directions. Because the northern part of the county has been closed off by Fort Bragg, Hoke has lost its boundary and its markets to the north, as a couple of officials were insistent in pointing out. But western Hoke, also, is oriented more strongly away from Raeford, namely to Moore County; similarly, eastern Hoke County contributes more to the Cumberland area. In short, the picture is one of decreasing influence over its territory for Hoke County over time.

Residents are well aware of these changes and aware of where the current boundaries are. Here is what people had to say about western Hoke, for example:

“This area has wanted to annex to Aberdeen and Moore County for years, but it will never happen.”

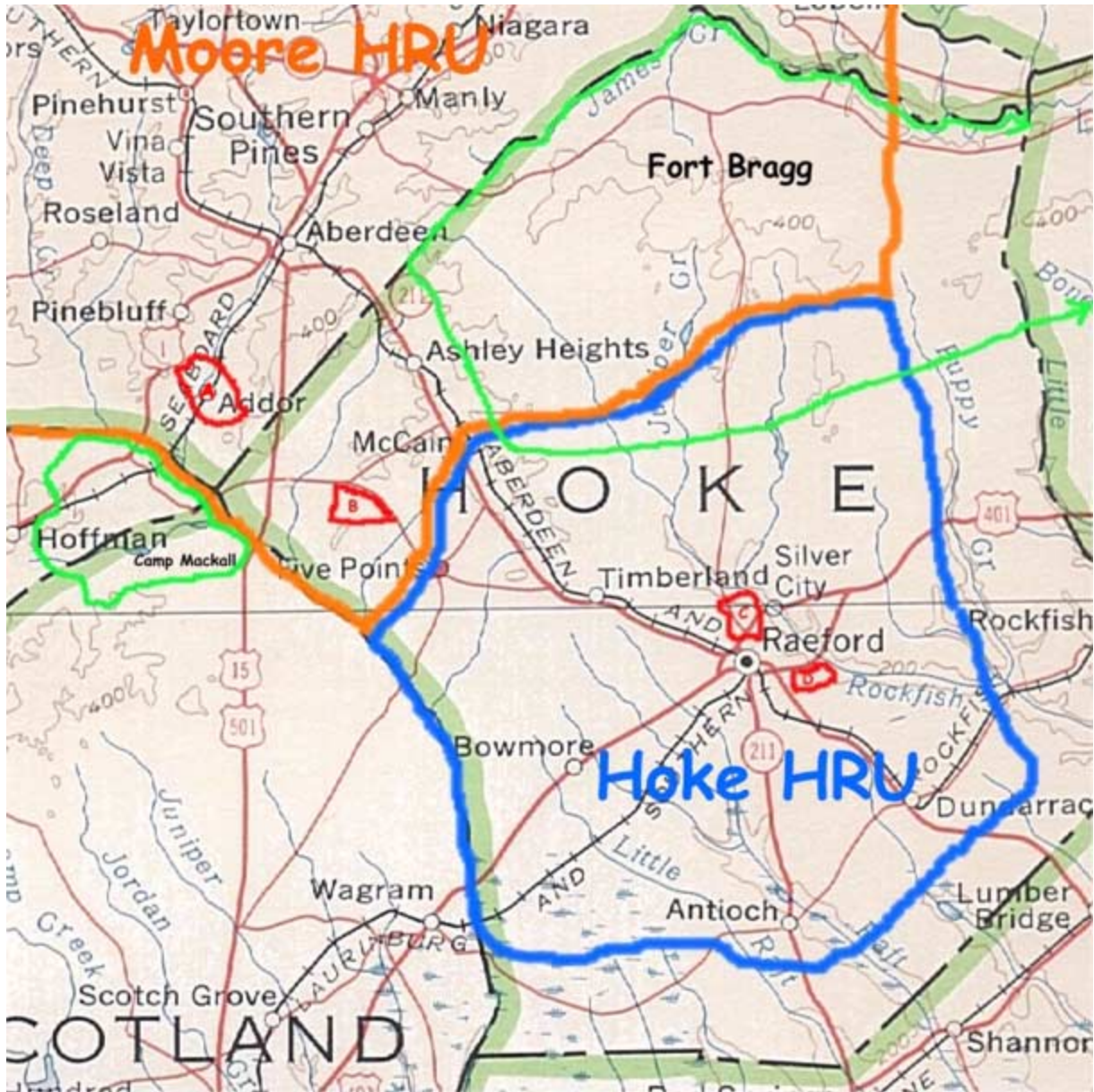
“From the prison west is really Moore County. All those people have Aberdeen addresses.”

“I live in Hoke County but I have an Aberdeen address and phone.”

“Most of the workers around here [Ashley Heights] go west. They work in Aberdeen and Southern Pines. Everybody shops over there.”

Figure One also shows some of the smaller neighborhood areas in the rural parts of the area, Addor in Moore County, Cameron Village in West Hoke, and Clay Hill north of Raeford. These areas, plus the Sandhills Community College campus in east Raeford, are potential sites for community parks that offer habitat opportunities.

Figure One:
Map of Moore and Hoke Human Resource Units (HRUs) Including
Smaller Neighborhood Areas



(Source: Department of Interior map, U.S. Geological Survey. Legend: Bright green shows approximate boundaries of military installations; orange is Moore HRU; blue is Hoke HRU; red shows community areas with potential for habitat oriented parks: a) Addor; b) Cameron Village; c) Clay Hill [Tylertown]; d) Sandhills Community College campus adjoining City of Raeford property.)

There are four significant geographic units for our purposes here, Hoke County as a whole, two sub-units of Hoke County, West Hoke with its strong ties to Moore County, and Raeford as the economic and political center of the county, and finally eastern Moore County. Each will be described in turn.

Hoke County

We found that youth issues were the most predominant in Hoke County, followed by high levels of concern about growth and development. Concerns about strengthening the economy were discussed, as well as infrastructure, recreation, support services, and Hispanic immigration.

Kids and Youth

The most consistent issue reported by people in the communities related to concerns for children and youth. Everybody seemed to want to comment on young people, primarily that kids don't have enough to do and that there are not adequate services for young people. Officials in Hoke County with responsibility for youth painted a picture of scarce resources and high needs for the younger population. Hoke County has lots of two income families, so both parents are out of the home during the day. No easy way exists to transport kids to activities, jobs, or counseling sessions. Outside of school activities, little exists for the to do. Movies, bowling and other urban-type activities require transportation to Fayetteville or Southern Pines. The dropout rate is a concern. Juvenile caseloads are growing. There are few jobs for teenagers—some at fast food places, the House of Raeford, some at the hatchery. There are few jobs to come back to if kids go on to college.

On the positive side, EMS, police and fire departments have formed youth groups. Boy scouts and girl scouts are active in the area, mostly through the schools. The 4-H programs are active in the county through the Extension Office.

“Teen pregnancy in Hoke County was third highest in the state. Now it's first.”
[agency staff]

“Kids need to know their community cares about them, so they will care about themselves.”

“Kids go home to empty houses.”

“I couldn't work kids. They don't want to do this kind of work or take direction. I start at \$5.75. I pick them up. If they are not ready, I don't wait. They just don't want to work.” [pine straw baler]

“Kids need variety. Career day was scarce—not many choices. Many kids want to stay but see it the same way I saw out—getting out is the only way of getting up.”

Many people supported the recent proposal for a youth and senior activity center.

“The county is in desperate need of youth activities and recreation, especially in south Hoke. There are many one-parent families, low income, low parental involvement in kids’ lives. Transportation is also a problem—kids have no way to get to activities.” [county commissioner]

“The County Parks and Recreation Department should be much more active and visible in advocating and providing activities for kids.”

“The county needs youth activities and a center with staffing for things like gymnastics, karate, basketball, swimming.” [common]

“We need after school programs but the county doesn’t have the resources. The parents don’t either.” [common]

“____ and ____ started a soccer program about four years ago, just on their own. About 270 kids are involved. They use two open spaces for soccer fields in Raeford and need more. The high school and middle school football fields are trashed.”

“All over these counties, people are asking for community centers.”

“I am excited. The county and city just commissioned a group to find a way to obtain a senior/youth center in Raeford. That is badly needed.”

Other people commented on problems in education.

“Kids’ activities and education is not a high priority in the county. I send my kids to a private school.”

“The education system in Hoke County is really poor and the alternative school is a joke.”

“The problem is school funding. The Leandro Case at the state level is about how smaller and poorer counties are not funded like the others. Salaries are mandated, so all Hoke can do is pay salaries—there is nothing extra.”

“I sent my son to public schools through the 4th grade, but then sent him to a private school because I wanted him to be able to read.”

“The new superintendent has a chance, but you can’t change 90% of the people with a committee of six.”

“I bus my kids illegally to Moore County. I would not tolerate Hoke County schools. They have no money and no certified teachers.”

Parenting comes in for scrutiny as well.

“Poor parenting is really behind the teen problem.”

“The problem is one of deteriorating families. Parents are not in counseling and there is only so much I can do with the kids. The solution is to strengthen family units.” [church pastor]

“I’d like to see the program here that they do in Lumberton—where parents are required to do 12 counseling sessions if their kids are in the Day Reporting program.”

“Statistics show that most juvenile crime happens between 4 and 7 p.m. and in the summertime. Where are the parents?”

Growth and Development

The County is in its third year of an economic development effort. Most people felt the program is beginning to be effective in addressing the infrastructure needs of the county and in creating a favorable climate for business and industry.

“The County approval of a sewer system means they are serious about attracting development.”

“Hoke County missed the boat on eastern Hoke County development. Developers should be required to build parks and provide open space.”

“The city has acquired 25 acres of land and has a grant to develop a park.”

Concern about sprawl was the second most common issue after youth activities.

“I love the open farming area. I don’t like the land going to small tract subdivisions and manufactured homes. I got some good neighbors out of it but the land is taken.”

“You can see the mixed uses in this area—a trailer next to a big gorgeous home, next to a double-wide. Growth is not being planned for.”

“I am most concerned with the city coming in from Fayetteville. They cut everything down and destroy things.”

“My biggest fear is that development will destroy the county and keep poor people in poverty.”

“I think Hoke County has an ordinance requiring ugly buildings. The county has poor zoning standards.”

“We are the melting pot for development. There are no restrictions.”

“It’s just a shame how land is getting cemented over for shopping malls and subdivisions. Hoke County government tried to control it on the east boundary next to Cumberland County, but has not been successful. I want to see the land kept open and in farms as much as possible.”

Economy

An adequate employment and business base is one of the major concerns of people in Hoke County. It would make possible a higher quality of life for residents and a sufficient tax base to fund desired social programs within the county.

“Jobs and tax base are important in order to address other county issues, such as activities for kids.”

“Almost all my business is local.” [common]

“My only customers are friends and old people.”

“Why on earth would commissioners turn down a mall because they don’t want another light on 401, it goes across to Cumberland along with the light, and we lose? We need retail.”

“Even with some of the manufacturing jobs around here, people still scrape by on child care. Many need assistance, especially single parents.”

Many people commented on the need for industrial, commercial and retail growth in Hoke County. Residents are keenly aware that residential growth has been the mainstay over the last several years. Whether or not residential growth “pays its way” was a subject of active debate. Many people did not believe it did, while others thought that after two years, or ten years, the taxes taken in began to be sufficient for the services new homes demanded. One person commented that rural residential development is accompanied by high service demand because the homes are dispersed and so does not pay for itself.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure needs, primarily sewer, are felt to be important to attract business and industry. An official at Lumber River Council of Governments described an ongoing water study of the two main aquifers serving Hoke County, the Black Creek and the Upper Cape Fear. Hoke is on the edge of both aquifers. They have 10 years of data on ground water levels. Although it is clear the overall water level is dropping, the reasons are not fully understood.

“Hoke County has adequate water in the short term, but if large scale users came in, it would be a problem.”

“Water is a big emerging issue. Hoke is in the Cape Fear water basin—a Raleigh engineering firm is looking at agricultural needs for water in the basin.”

“Water problems are coming.”

Recreation

Hoke County residents avidly enjoy motor sports. Motocross is a family activity. At the Montrose Motocross, whole families were cheering and lounging at trailers between races. All ages were represented. It is an expensive hobby. Dirt tracks are common.

Lots of people go to Myrtle Beach and other coastal spots for yearly vacations.

Residents commonly reported their desire for more activities to do locally.

“Kids have nothing to do.”

Support Services

Social programs have declined over the last few years because of welfare reform, according to local people. However, agencies reported good success in getting grants for childcare in Hoke County. Lots of low-income people have trouble with utility and heating bills in the winter. Poor transportation, inadequate day care for working families, and low expectations for education and employment are reported to be issues.

Caretaking of others is clearly a strong community value, to hear the stories of residents.

“Because of _____, we don’t sell _____ anymore, but he needed to do this. If he didn’t expand this way he would have lost his business.”

“My grandson does a lot of charity. He makes up food for the Relay for Life cancer walk, charity golf, etc.”

Churches are a primary means of support.

“There is no domestic shelter in the town or county for women with kids or kids who get kicked out of their homes. Kids on their own can’t get aid from the state. Churches often get calls requesting help—sometimes a church will let a kid camp out there for a day or two, or will rent a hotel room for a family.”

“There are about 100 churches in the county but no cohesion. The Ministerial Association has started to do a “unity service” at different churches. We want to coordinate our activities.”

The Ministerial Association is trying to improve the quality of life—improve family stability, rural transportation, education, good jobs.”

“Churches are essential if you want to get anything done at the people level in this community.”

Hispanic Immigration

Many people in the community commented on the larger numbers of Hispanics in Hoke County. Some observers pointed out that after recent hurricanes, Hispanics began to settle out of the migrant stream and take up permanent residence. The House of Raeford employs about 1300 people, of whom 500 (38%) are now Hispanic. Hispanics have a reputation for being hard and dependable workers. They are often the pioneering member of their family and send wages back to homes primarily in Mexico. Some do not speak Spanish but only Indian dialects. Transportation for many is an issue and apparently a private van transports workers to the House of Raeford for a daily fee. In addition to work at the House of Raeford, Hispanics work as pine straw balers and many have begun their own businesses.

The community is adjusting to this growing presence. Some local businesses have promoted Latino business, having “Latino Saturday,” for example, and having Spanish speakers on staff during certain times. The schools reported inability to find Spanish language instructors for classes because of increased numbers of Hispanics. The churches have responded with Hispanic ministries and efforts to assist Hispanics adjust to U.S. life, such as teaching English, and preparation for driver license tests. Some residents told stories of harassment and sometimes beatings of Mexicans in the area.

Raeford

Raeford residents were quite concerned about the future of their town. The downtown economy and city/county relations were talked about the most.

The Downtown Economy

“I was raised here. The bank was downtown and then bought out by BB&T. Now there is no bank downtown. Lots of other businesses are gone now.”

“Main Street used to be so thriving—a movie theatre, bakery. It isn’t nearly what it was. On the other hand, who wants to go to some small theatre when you can drive a comfortable four-lane highway for 20 minutes and have all the choice you want?”

“There are four hardwares here, and they are all doing poorly. Walmart and other places really killed downtown.”

“People come here although other businesses are closer. They like the service and that I’m open on Saturdays.”

“The old Raeford Hotel is owned by the city. It has significant damage. The county looked at it for their new office space but turned it down.” [See Photo 5, front cover.]

“The large number of absentee business owners makes our job more difficult. The roof at Bo’s Food Store leaks but we can’t get the owner to address it. This is very common.”

“The condition of downtown reflects the health of your community, as potential clients see it.”

“Raeford needs to develop retail!” [common]

“I want to see Raeford have shopping. I think local fathers are holding down retail growth. Nothing is happening.”

“I want more open space and parks in Raeford. The downtown parks are too congested for older people.”

City/County Relations

“The county did not want to use the Raeford Hotel for its office space, but then started looking out at 401 by Fidelity. That will split up county offices and make people drive back and forth. The county should help downtown revitalize.”

“We need a good working relationship. The county did change its mind about the building. They are now making decisions about sewage that should help.”

“We don’t want control of decisions, just communication. But I don’t want to give you the impression it’s all bad, it’s not.”

“Raeford and Hoke have to cooperate better, put aside personal agendas, to really begin to turn things around. There is no common goals or vision, especially related to revitalizing Raeford, or youth and senior issues.”

“You know, the county’s proposed to move out of the downtown is an example of the lack of awareness.”

West Hoke

Western Hoke County and eastern Moore County are on the edge of larger economic centers. In the past, these areas were agriculturally based and had some semblance of a local economy. As roads improved, commercial centers developed, and agriculture declined, the area has become one of dispersed suburban settlement of commuters. Moreover, this pattern has not contributed to people knowing each other. Both spouses typically are working, commuting adds to the length of the workday, and there are few activities or interests that bring people together for a common purpose.

“When I came here 30 years ago, there were 10 farmers and only four houses along this road. Now there are lots of people and only two farmers. Residential commuters are now the community.”

“The economy here is golf, horses, and pine straw. There are lots of jobs now for people that want them, in building around golf, motels, eating places, maintenance work.”

“There is no 4-H anymore. The community development group is gone.”

“There are too many mobile homes and Hispanics moving into the area. I don’t know the newcomers. Growth is too fast.”

“We are the forgotten residents of Hoke County, except for taxes. When we call the Sheriff, it takes a half an hour. They can’t seem to ferret out the drugs.”

“We get no police, 911, or other services from Hoke County, yet they have the highest tax rate around.”

“Most of the people around here work in the factories of Moore County.”

“People in western Hoke County tend to be more skilled and to work in Moore County.”

Many people in west Hoke thought that crime was the number one community problem and getting worse. They pointed to the number of break-ins of the last several months and to the drug activity in the area.

“The crack and cocaine situation is getting bad around here.”

“There’s been a lot of break-ins lately.” [common]

“Drugs are the biggest community issue. There is a guy who lives within 100 yards of me that worked at the furniture plant. When they started drug testing this guy quit. He still drives a nice car, though!”

Youth issues were the second most frequent community issue in West Hoke.

“There are no community connections here except churches and PTA. There is nothing for kids.”

The Emerging Horse Economy

The creation of the Five Points Horse Park in 1998 has stimulated comment throughout Hoke and Moore Counties. Most people have viewed it as a positive development, contributing to the economy and community of West Hoke. Many are very aware that the primary economic benefits with the current situation will go to Moore County. Discussion is active about how to create benefit in Hoke County from this emerging economic sector. Land advertised for sale around Five Points now mentions proximity to this facility as a selling point.

“The horse development is OK. It will bring in more desirable clientele.”

“Horses are getting strong now. Millionaires are buying these farms.”

“Moore County is divided into 10 acre parcels, with acres going at \$25-35,000. Hoke County is very attractive because of this.”

“Land has gone from \$800/acre to \$5,000 an acre in just a short while. This is good as it will upgrade the area.”

“Land around here is getting downsized now because of Five Points. People want to be able to sell it.”

“The Five Points people called Moore County when it was time to build their fence. They didn’t even use local contractors.

“The average person coming with the horse industry won’t have kids to educate and won’t be a drain on county services. They are low crime rate people—they don’t cause any trouble.”

“Once surrounding development is complete with motels, restaurants and gas stations, horse parks will bring in big bucks. A typical event has 400 horses, with 2.5 people per horse, and each person spends \$125/day, which totals \$125,000 spent per day in the county.”

“Moore and Southern Pines is getting too crowded for some horse trainers and others who like breathing room. They are moving where land is cheaper and taxes are lower, sometimes even leaving the state.”

“Ten acres in Southern Pines is called a ‘farmette.’ People with money want more land than that.”

“I’ve gotten calls from several folks who are specifically looking for horse farm land around Five Points.” [realtor]

“There have been people from France, Israel, two from Spain and one from South America that have come around lately, asking about horse property in this area.”

“There’s that horse farm. We won’t like the traffic. Property values will probably go up.” [common]

“We’re becoming horsey country now with Five Points and other horse farms. I like it—it’s better than the alternatives of more subdivisions and manufactured homes. The horse folks care about the land like the farmers—most landowners out here sort of feel that way.”

Eastern Moore County

Eastern Moore County, with the communities of Southern Pines, Pinehurst, Aberdeen, and Pinebluff, is a location of tremendous wealth, thriving economy and current growth. It is known for world class golf courses and golfing events, horse farms and international horsing events, and an ample trade and services sector to support the primary sectors. It is known for numerous small businesses. Water supply is an emerging issue for Moore County.

“There are lots of retired Ft. Bragg people here, but not many that are active on the base.”

Our team concentrated its effort in the Addor community because of its central location in prime RCW habitat. This is a poor, rural community of about 500 families. Local

residents described a past as more vibrant and healthy, with families, many neighborhood stores, and a working population. The closure of the local school in 1949 was especially difficult to recover from. Today, Addor is known to others in the county as a high crime, high drug area. Although local residents readily acknowledge problems in the community, they also point to the many residents who have continued to remain in the community and work to improve it, the strong caretaking of others in the community, and the aspirations of residents to work together to continue improvements.

“Young people are driven away. There are no interests to keep them here.”

“We need an after school program. Girls are having babies and there are too many drugs.”

“The loss of the local school in 1949 still affects us, still makes it hard to pull our community together. We need to draw people back in.”

“We are trying to create a park on 2.5 acres that has a spring. We could improve the habitat once we get it purchased.”

“Our community center needs fixing up.”

“Absentee owners make it hard to fix up the community. We want to do Section 8 HUD homes but we can’t get the absentee owners to go along.

“They were selling drugs at the corner. I couldn’t even walk by.”

“We want to develop a community center that could house a sheriff substation, community health, after school program and recreation.”

Section Four: Natural Resource Management

Hoke County and eastern Moore County are rural in history and temperament. This section discusses the ties to the land that people described, the strong community values for conservation and land protection, and local perceptions regarding the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW).

Ties to the Land: “From Living off the Land to Living on the Land”

Ties to the land are not strong in this region. As one person put it so well:

“Living off the land was historic. Now there’s a shift. Now you work elsewhere in order to live on the land.”

From nearly all accounts from local residents, there are now fewer people earning income off property. More people have their homes on the land and commute to their job in the urban areas. Although the area still seems rural, it has become suburban.

”People ignore the land.”

“People today have no connection to the land and don’t know where their groceries come from.”

“This land used to be farms. Now, it’s more suburbia, individual dwellings.”

Hunting, fishing, and other activities that get people on the land are not widespread. This is especially true of young people and poor people. Perhaps it is because there is so little public land—many of the fields and ponds of the area are posted with “no trespassing” and “no fishing” signs. It may be that habitat has been declining, as a few people pointed out.

“Hunting and fishing are not strong traditions.”

“Nobody around Tylertown hunts or fishes. Camping and hiking are not done.”

“People don’t fish much around here. We have little access to private ponds.”

“My neighbor and I used hunt on a daily basis 8-10 years ago. Then birds disappeared. We used to get a whole bucket in a day but not now. Five years ago it started to improve slightly.”

“We used to hunt as kids. Not so anymore. There seems to be less game and people have lost their interest in hunting. I think treated crop seed has killed off birds and rabbits.”

By far the most important reason cited by residents for lack of land based activities is “no time.”

“Years ago, people had time to do things together. I remember as a kid hunting squirrels and deer, but not for many years. Nobody is interested or has any time anymore.”

“There used to be canoeing in the Lumber River and Aberdeen Creek, say in the 1920s. Now there are trees across it—it’s not used that way anymore.”

“People like to fish around here. There are lots of ponds. You have to get permission.”

The exception to the lack of land-based activities is hunting clubs. They are the means to provide access for individuals to private lands, and they make hunting affordable for its members. There are several hunting clubs in this area. Membership can range from 25-40 or more members. Clubs, on behalf of their members, lease land from landowners. They often engage in property upkeep measures, such as fencing and posting the property, trash clean up and the like. They also improve habitat for game species, such as planting winter food. One man from a club said his club members “chased people off” of their lessor’s land on a regular basis. One club reported hunting on the same land since 1936—their lease was not renewed this year because the land is for sale, reportedly to a conservation group. Clubs often have strict membership rules related to safety and land stewardship.

Woodlot and farmland owners have reported a common practice of leasing to hunting clubs for supplementing income and for land stewardship. They stressed that hunting clubs have taken good care of the land and the wildlife.

In other work, JKA has developed a theory of cultural attachment. It holds that cultural attachment, defined as well developed ties of kinship, sense of geographic place, and ties to the land, are important for long term sustainability (Kent 1995). In Hoke and eastern Moore Counties, two of these elements—ties of kinship and rootedness to geographic place—are strong, while the third, ties to the land, is weak. Without strong cultural attachment, a culture is vulnerable to outside intrusion and absorption. If our theory holds, the Partnership should find that successful efforts to rekindle and strengthen ties to the land, such as through habitat conservation and recovery programs and through public access to land, are highly important in rebuilding community. As people are “re-attached” to the land through specifically directed Partnership activities, rich dividends will be yielded in terms of increased resilience and community empowerment.

Community Values for Conservation and Land Protection

Even though we have made the case that people are not as tied to the land as they once were, land stewardship remains a strong cultural value. This value is a pathway to the development of habitat continuum through restoration and recovery. Indeed, we found that land stewardship was a frequent topic of conversation and one very likely to generate strong feelings. We concluded that conservation and land protection are key community values.

“Never sell land.”

Despite the numerous times we heard that statement, buying and selling of property, of course, occurs on a daily basis. The prevalence of the statement reflects the strong rural orientation of people to the land. In the rural economy, selling land meant cutting off families from productivity and livelihood. Although land is less important for livelihood, it is crucial for wildlife habitat, open space, and an overriding interest in preserving the rural lifestyle. Moreover, townspeople and suburbanites have expressed high interest in access for camping and hiking, and particularly, as a way to address the needs of youth.

”I don’t hunt or fish but land protection is a good idea. I moved from Maryland several years ago. The only fishing water here is on private ponds. I don’t know what kinds of wildlife there is in this area.”

“This is a rural area, so the idea of preservation is important to local people. A wildlife park with trails would be very desirable. I go up to Weymouth once a year and I really appreciate it.”

”I want to see open farm and forest land preserved and not lost to development. My uncles and kids would feel the same way.”

“My original idea was to get people to buy land to protect their interests and preserve their way of life, like for hunters. Then I learned about land trusts. What a great idea.”

“I heard the environmentalists are after the _____ place. That would be a plus because then that parcel would not become city. I just don’t want a quarantine approach—the land should not be locked up.”

“I don’t want to sell but I have a lot of interest in conservation.” [common]

“Some people around here hunt and fish, but not a lot—deer and some rabbits. I hike and a lot of people in my church and neighborhood hike around church property. I would welcome habitat areas that would allow public access.” [a pastor whose church could be in the proposed conservation area]

The Lumber River Conservancy was begun to preserve habitat. Its goal is 300 feet or more of buffer along the waterway through donations of land or easements. The Lumber River is enrolled in the Scenic River designation. The Conservancy turns the land over to the state parks department. A new Lumber River State Park was created near Fair Bluff near the South Carolina border. The Conservancy wants to create two more such facilities along the 128 miles of the river.

Members of the Conservancy stress that they value private property rights and are only working in a cooperative, voluntary manner. They believe that the twin values of private property rights and good land stewardship are compatible if landowners are communicated with directly.

Economic Livelihood from Forests

People gain income from forested lands in this area primarily through woodlot management and the pine straw economy.

Woodlot management is of interest to many because of the economic livelihood the land still represents and because of the value for stewardship that permeates the culture. Landowners variously use: consulting foresters; timber company buyers; and agency personnel from the many agencies with responsibility in natural resource issues, such as North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Generally, the larger landowners utilize services of consulting foresters or timber buyers, but smaller landowners, especially, rely on the services provided through government agencies.

The picture on reforestation was not clear. Professionals were mixed in their opinions about whether replanting occurs on a regular basis. No one could point to studies that would document this question. Generally, professionals do not prefer clearcuts and summer burns, although both are legal and do occur.

“Yes, clearcutting occurs but almost everyone replants. The companies have a policy of planting two trees for every one they cut.” [local resident]

“I just replanted 500 acres in Super Long Leaf Pine. International Paper improved the tree. Natural 4-5 year growth in a tree is six inches, but they improved on that. I planted also in '91 and those trees are now 20 feet. In thirty years they will be a good size.

“Super long leaf has timber value about as good as loblolly. I sell to the utility pole market. You can get \$86/ton for utility poles, so it can be good money.”

“The southern pine beetle is a problem. I am aware of the woodpecker issue. I refuse to cut trees that I know are woodpecker habitat.” [forester]

The raking, baling and selling of pine straw has become a *bona fide* economy in the Sandhills. Pine straw is used for mulch in the urban areas and is valued for retaining its color and for not washing away with precipitation. Although the long leaf pine is the preferred species, other species are utilized as well. Many landowners in the area sell their pine straw to balers who then market the material to one of the many buying stations in the area. Some balers are part time people who use the activity to supplement their income. Individuals, pickup trucks and portable balers were noted throughout the area. Others, and more commonly, are into full time employment. Pine straw workers are reportedly trying to unionize.

“There are too many cutthroats in this business now. There are too many people doing it. It’s not as good a living as years past. I’ve been in the business 31 years.”

Statistics on the economic value of pine straw production were not available. Typically, landowners enter into long term relationships with balers, relying on them year after year. A landowner can get 3-5 harvests per year. “No straw raking” signs were common in the area and several residents told stories of pine straw theft. Competition comes from throughout the south, but particularly Florida and Georgia. Apparently, the South American market is becoming strong—what costs \$.07/bale there costs \$2.35 here.

Generally speaking, pine straw harvest is compatible with RCW habitat needs. The woodpecker is ecologically linked to older growth long leaf pine, absence of underbrush, and the elimination of mid-story hardwoods. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been promoting a three year rotation for pine straw harvest—rake, fallow and burn. Prescribed burns can be accomplished with cost share programs. Many species are dependent on fire to germinate and flower, so the Service prefers fire to chemicals. Many times, more than one crop of pine straw is possible in the harvest year, but the idea is to leave enough pine straw on the forest floor so that a fire will carry in the burn year. Although the Service is aware a three year rotation causes some loss of income, it believes in the long run productivity and ecosystem values are enhanced.

“The Fish and Wildlife Service is trying to push 3 year rotations, but that makes these guys lose a year’s income. If they are still paying for the land, they need that income. Instead of fire, they should stress selective spraying and fertilizing for the nutrients.”

Nowhere is the value for stewardship more apparent than the responses of many landowners to questions about habitat improvement programs.

“We’re already doing all of that now. Why should I sign on the dotted line to do more?”

I sold all my pine and replanted my 50 acres. No program, I just did it. It's all set in timber now."

"I have managed for birds, always will, so why do I have to do more, do it different, or be in a program?"

"I have always taken care of the land and wildlife."

"We've always tried to leave cover and feed for wildlife. My grandad said there used to be a lot of turkey here—now there's not much of anything but deer."

Perceptions of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and Habitat Restoration

Our fieldwork uncovered these shared perceptions about the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) and efforts to restore its habitat.

1. The RCW is used as a statement about the role of government.

"The woodpecker is worth more to the government than people. Look at all the millions they spend to send these guys around in their pickups." [common]

"They should take the money they are spending on woodpeckers and spend it on people."

"The government comes in and tries to tell people what to do with their property."

"Are you for or against the woodpecker?"

"It's important to save the woodpecker, but we have to use common sense. There was a story of a guy who dug a ditch around his house to save it from fire. He destroyed mouse tunnels and got in all kinds of trouble."

2. General awareness of the threatened status of the RCW is good, but knowledge about the woodpecker is low. Only two people reported actual restrictions, but many had fears that restrictions could come to pass.

"We thought at first that we wouldn't be able to build our house because of woodpeckers. We got it worked out, but I have talked to others who were not allowed."

"Can you cut timber? People are afraid of the 100 foot radius restrictions around trees if they see woodpeckers."

“I don’t know much about the woodpecker, though I’ve heard of the problems.”
[common]

“I never heard of endangered woodpeckers. What does ‘habitat’ mean?” [Latina
maid]

“My son knew about the RCW and described it to me. He had gotten brochures in
school.”

3. Almost everyone talked about sitings of the RCW.

“The woodpecker likes long leaf. I’ve seen most in the bombed impact areas, after
areas are shelled from Ft. Bragg.”

“My neighbor has a cedar house and was plagued by woodpeckers. They had to
feed the birds to save the house.”

“We had a big woodpecker that kept making a racket by our house. He probably
shouldn’t have done this, but my husband scared it away with a shotgun.”

“If you want to find woodpeckers, you should go to the golf courses where they
are using all the pesticides. The woodpeckers seem to love it there.”

“Woodpeckers are not extinct. There are too many and they restrict needle
harvesting.”

“I see woodpeckers all over around me. I feed them from my bird feeder. I hear
them pecking on trees in the woods. I see no sign of them diminishing.”

4. Many people linked the health of the bird to Fort Bragg operations.

“Why does Bragg need more land?”

“We are seeing restrictions on timber harvest but you go up to Ft. Bragg and those
woodpeckers are all over the damned place.”

“We don’t want to help the Fort Bragg woodpeckers.” [Southern Pines tack shop]

“There isn’t much awareness of woodpecker issues. People around here think
Bragg birds are doing OK.”

“The military cuts their own timber but asks others not to. I know because I used
to work on the base.”

5. Many people cited poor information and the need for better education.

“I’ve been here 12 years. When I first came, there was lots of misleading information. You can’t cut timber and so on that is just not true. It took me awhile to find the right information.”

“I have never seen a brochure on the woodpecker. Our office has never been involved in woodpecker education.” [NRCS staff]

“They will never get the RCW back because it is linked to old growth long leaf. No one is going to wait that long to cut timber.”

“The state just got 2000 acres of the McCain tract. They want to make it a ‘pecker ranch.’”

“We have to educate about the whole ecosystem, not just the woodpecker.”
[common professional orientation; although professionals tended to stress the RCW as part of an ecosystem including multiple species, residents tended to view the issue as single-species recovery.]

6. Habitat restoration programs are diverse but could be more widespread. Residents varied greatly in their understanding of safe harbor, conservation easements, cost share, zoning designations, and other programs designed to foster habitat recovery. Those “close to the action” had good knowledge of programs and were the least inclined to cite habitat recovery as a sign of government going awry. People we met in the safe harbor program, for example, related only positive results. A recent dissertation on the subject of the RCW and safe harbor from North Carolina State University concluded that knowledge of safe harbor was quite low—only 16% in the five counties of the Sandhills represented in the study. The study recommended a proactive marketing approach in promoting the safe harbor program (Drake 1999).

“I was just sending information to a friend in another town about safe harbor. The program has worked very well for me.”

People in general had a low understanding of conservation easements. Many farmers, we were surprised to learn, had not heard of the concept. Although worry was expressed about any restrictions applied to the title of the land, the stewardship opportunities represented by easements were readily obvious.

“I think conservation easements are a very good thing to use.”

“What are easements? How do they work? [common]

“We have stimulated a few easements through the sale of property.”

“People who have wealth are the only ones interested in easements. If you don’t depend on the land, easements can work.”

“I favor easements. I want to keep farmland open and in productive use. I want to keep the rural way of life.”

Use of cost share programs was very common.

“I am enrolled in the stewardship program. My plan is signed off on but I haven’t yet applied for cost share.”

“There must be another way than cost share. Pretty soon, everyone is just chasing the money. Now there is money behind every bush.”

“I went five years ago to get long leaf seedlings. They said they’d send them, then they said they had run out. I haven’t tried since.”

“We have demand for 2 million longleaf seedlings a year, but we only have one.”
[forestry official]

Section Five: Fort Bragg Community Relations

Fort Bragg is a common topic of conversation with residents of Hoke County. People began talking of the base whenever talk of the RCW came up. We noticed three themes in the comments that people offered.

1. Fort Bragg has multiple activities and relationships currently in Hoke County, many of them creating positive goodwill. The overall effect, however, is of a patchwork quilt and not a systematic or goal oriented effort.
2. The past, with its onus of unfairness related to “the land grab”, is never far from the surface.
3. Hoke has not received proportionate benefits from the presence of Fort Bragg.

Theme One:

“Current relations are positive but tenuous and sporadic.”

One comment from residents about Fort Bragg was that, “They’re always there for us.” When we asked them what that meant, people said things like, “They help us with the Turkey Festival.” There is a widespread sense that Fort Bragg responds to requests when the right person hears it. At the same time, a number of people felt that communication was poor, proper access to the most appropriate people was a mystery, and that the bigger picture was being missed in current relations. These points will be elaborated, but first, let’s review current relations.

Special events and festivals

“Fort Bragg always helps us with the turkey festival. You know, the camp commander has family ties here.”

“We honor requests for bands, Golden Eagles, parachute team for special events.”
[Ft. Bragg staff]

“They give us trailers for the turkey festival. Generators when we have an emergency.”

“The city is planning its centennial and Bragg is helping with museums. They furnish speakers for public events and help at the turkey festival.”

Hunting and Fishing. About 1000 deer a year are harvested through the Fort Bragg Wildlife Branch. Requests for fox hunting have been turned down for liability reasons.

“Used to be there would be hunting on the base. But birds are now hard to find. Biologists are checking it out. Is it farm chemicals or what?”

“You go to McKelley Lodge on Groover Road for permit with Ft. Bragg Fish and Game. It costs \$20/year for fish and game and \$40 for sportsmen license of hunting and fishing.”

“Fort Bragg has 17 lakes! Mott Lake is just up the road and the fishing is great. Fort Bragg takes infractions seriously, you don’t want to cross them, but I’ve seen big deer come out of there.”

“Some people stay up all night to get a permit.”

Noise

“Artillery and demolition create substantial noise. We get 1-2 calls a week.” [Ft. Bragg staff]

“I’ve lived in this house for 15 years. My pictures are always crooked. No, I’ve never called to complain.”

“Fort Bragg does maneuvers two miles away. For days on end it will be noisy. The house shakes. Then they’ll be gone for months. My husband is retired military so we accept it.”

Disasters. Fort Bragg has an engineer and civil affairs units that assist in disasters, fire fighting and civil engineering projects in the Fort Bragg area. The base dispatched soldiers to fight forest fires in Montana last summer, for example.

Forest Products. Pine straw sales for fiscal year 2000 were valued at \$248,596. Under the State Entitlement Act, 40% of Fort Bragg timber harvest (pine sawtimber, pulpwood, pine straw and firewood) go to the state for redistribution back to counties. Hoke County gets 55.6% of this revenue, estimated in fiscal year 2000 to be about \$1 million.

Off Road Vehicles. Motorcycle track has been closed down for liability reasons. Off road (4X4) driving is done on perimeters close to population areas, but is not sanctioned. Bicycle riding is permitted on major roads but no mountain bike trails are present.

Horses.

“I’ve been threatened with tickets while on horseback. How can a horse hurt a dirt road where they run tanks? Fort Bragg should schedule down times for community use to build community goodwill.”

A number of military wives own horses that are boarded in the area.

Youth. All senior high school students go to off-base schools, supported by federal impact aid.

“Sgt. ____ from Fort Bragg was working with me to help with youth activities. Just as we were getting going, he was shipped to Saudi and no one was available to carry on.”

Landscaping. Fort Bragg provides landscaping assistance at the new Rockfish Elementary School.

Maneuver Licenses. In the past, Fort Bragg had an active program of soliciting maneuver licenses from local residents. These licenses would permit the army to enter private lands at no cost for training purposes with no advance. If damage occurred, the army would pay. At one time, 34,000 acres in Moore County was under this program. The large scale willingness of landowners to support the military in this program is testimony to the potential of the present conservation initiative.

“I agreed to maneuver permits in the past. Fort Bragg is a good neighbor.”

“There haven’t been any maneuvers on the farm now for years. Don’t know why.”

“Maneuver agreements have been OK.”

“We used to get free deer permits in exchange for maneuver permits but not anymore. We don’t get nothing from them anymore.”

Finally, there was a strong sense by residents that Fort Bragg offered a positive influence and should be supported.

“We need Ft. Bragg but they can’t even do maneuvers anymore.”

Theme Two: “The Past is Ever Present.”

“Ft. Bragg has one third of the county, what was once the prettiest area of the county.”

“Why does Bragg need more land?”

“You know, a lot of folks in the county will react with suspicion to Fort Bragg involvement with habitat work. They are going to feel like they are going to get the short end of the stick in some way.”

Both residents and Bragg staff were concerned about the poor communication between Fort Bragg and Hoke County residents.

“We don’t have any contact up there.” [frequent]

“County government has almost no relationship with Fort Bragg. We don’t even know who is up there. I’d like a directory of Bragg and titles. We could do the same.”

“We have to get word to Raeford and Hoke County people about civilian hunting and fishing on the base. There are positive benefits to both.”

“We never know who to call.” [common]

“We don’t even get invitations to the events, like other counties and cities.” [city official]

“There was a helicopter crash at Fort Bragg and they told the media it was Cumberland County but it was Hoke.”

Theme Three:

“Hoke County has not received proportionate benefits from the presence of Fort Bragg.”

“We get negative from Fort Bragg.”

“Hoke County lost its tax base with Ft. Bragg but Cumberland gets the benefits. Cumberland has the people.”

“Studies have documented the lack of benefits to Hoke County.”

“We have all these planning issues, and, no, Fort Bragg has not assisted us.”

“The military cuts its own timber but asks us not to.”

“Heritage Village is in Hoke County toward Fayetteville. That agriculture is now lost. These people go to Hoke for schools so we get the impacts, but they only associate with Fayetteville and spend their money there.”

“Heritage Village has not been good for Hoke County. Do those people even pay property taxes?”

“Parker and Galatia Churches are growing up there and our church in Raeford is losing members.”

“We have nothing to offer Bragg here. There is no recreation or services.”

Section Six: Communication Strategies to Create Partnership Opportunities

Listening to residents and officials, and discussing possible options throughout conversations in the area, JKA determined that there are five categories of partnership opportunities in creating community-based approaches to habitat restoration. The five are:

1. Broaden the Sandhills Conservation Partnership.
2. Ft. Bragg should develop an effective Community Development Office specifically focused on Hoke County.
3. “Hoke is a jewel.”
4. Find ways to make youth the beneficiaries of habitat restoration.
5. Extend Education and Habitat Programs.

1. Broaden the Sandhills Conservation Partnership.

- a. Utilize other potential sister agencies and government units in accomplishing the mission of the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has county-based personnel, experience with landowners, and a Conservation Reserve Program.

The County Extension Service. This office recently sent out a letter to County forest landowners, polling their interests on 24 topics for winter meetings. Their interests correspond and overlap with the Sandhills Partnership. Topics included conservation easements, wildlife management, forest management and the law.

The Regional Land Use Advisory Commission (RLUAC) was formed many years ago to foster regional cooperation on land use issues affecting and affected by Fort Bragg and other bases. The Commission was “partially successful” in holding the line on residential development in areas determined to be in safety or noise zones of Fort Bragg (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: 1990). Residential development has occurred in these areas but at far lesser densities than otherwise would have been the case. And new construction is appropriately using noise sensitive materials. Resurrected in part by the Sandhills Conservation Partnership, RLUAC is a means to connect habitat restoration efforts on both private and public lands.

The City of Raeford and Hoke County could play a very positive role in fostering habitat restoration. The strategic plan of Hoke County, for example, offers policy guidance very consistent with habitat goals, such as cluster development, natural buffers, and preservation of agriculture and forest lands (Hoke County 1994). The City's interest in parks, downtown development, and youth activities could be tapped for application to habitat restoration.

North Carolina Healthy Task Force was recently formed to undertake a community assessment and to coordinate agency programs on health issues. Environmental issues identified by the task force could be incorporated into habitat recovery efforts.

Walthour Moss Foundation and other horse people have a natural interest in habitat, can monitor land degradation, and participate in restoration activities.

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts in both Moore and Hoke Counties are active and effective. They also work closely with landowners and could identify conservation opportunities at the local level. They can also attract dollars and undertake projects.

Create a Resource and Conservation District (RC&D) in Hoke County. The Army could encourage USDA to get the paperwork done by offering to fund the salary for five years. The Coordinator's office could be on base, thereby getting the community more involved. The RC&D could begin a Community Foundation which are having great success around the country by working at the neighborhood level. Small grants for neighborhood projects could have gentle strings attached so that everyone must work together to get the job done.

The Division of Community Assistance, North Carolina Department of Commerce, a member of RLUAC, has special expertise in planning

b. Continue to extend the partnership to social networks and individuals that are not formally organized.

Churches	Horse people
Youth and youth pastors	Agriculturalists and woodlot owners
Health issues	
Workforce development	

c. Create a coalition of individuals interested in access to newly acquired public conservation lands.

A horse economy is emerging in West Hoke. Like farmers, horse people have natural interests in land conservation. It is possible that they could be stewards for newly-acquired conservation lands through an opportunity to create a trail system.

They are not yet thinking this way, partly because their number has not reached critical mass, and partly because the Walthour Moss Foundation fills a large need for horse trails.

“We will work on things that better our sport. But we can’t have bridle trails where there is hunting. Some environmentalists won’t work with us because they think we’re hard on the land, but it’s not so.”

“We see erosion right away and can report it. We could organize to help monitor new habitat.”

“I came from a horse community in the west. Horse people can be sensitive, pack out trash, get things done. Bragg sees them as trouble but they can be helpful.”

“A horse council got a law passed that said property owners are not liable for accidents of riders across their property. This is great for horse people, who can now ride cross country.”

The Sandhills Equestrian Conservancy could act as a point of local contact with the Sandhills Area Land Trust for keeping land open and undeveloped through the use of conservation easements, and so on. Five Points could even be the caretaker for a body of surrounding acreage that could be owned by the trust.

Other conservation interests in the area with interest in access to habitat lands are numerous. Scouts, other youth groups, church groups and families have expressed an avid interest in camping, hiking and other outdoor opportunities as they may develop. It is conceivable that such groups would participate in trail construction and maintenance, planting, monitoring, and other activities.

“Seniors would enjoy outdoor areas and would take advantage of access.”
[senior agency administrator]

Other church members and I like to hike on property around our church. We would welcome habitat areas that would allow public access.” [church pastor]

“Getting young people into hiking and camping would be good. My sons and I camp and fish regularly. My church regularly takes youth on outings around the state.” [church pastor]

Economic benefits that are possible through newly-acquired conservation lands could be channeled to local contractors, creating an economic multiplier effect for the local economy, or they could be channeled to nonprofit groups to fund social programs.

d. Utilize immediate opportunities to help neighborhood areas create community parks. Four areas are possible:

1. The Addor community has been trying to purchase 2.2 acres for a community park. They would immediately sign a conservation easement in return for support in purchasing the property. This effort could be used to trigger other easements by contiguous property owners that could create an outstanding wetlands area as well as a public access area through trails. (See Photo 5, front cover and Figure One, page 7.)
2. The Cameron Village area near Five Points (Figure One, page 7) is among the most organized of the hamlet areas in West Hoke. With about 180 families, they created the “Humboldt” organization to further community goals. They managed to buy a two acre piece of land and want modest development of it. Again, support of this effort and creation of habitat would spawn similar activities throughout the community if handled right.

“A refuge would be a chance to educate people about outdoors, how to care for the environment. If the horse farm people and farmers agree to easements, we can really protect the rural lifestyle. It would improve the value of the whole area.”

3. The Tylertown area (Figure One, page 7), also called Clay Hill, has been organized through a volunteer fire department and the churches. This area has a strong interest in a community park as well as hiking and camping opportunities. This area is in the critical habitat area identified by the Sandhills Conservation Partnership.
4. The City of Raeford and the Sandhills Community College have several acres of land adjoining each other in east Raeford at the site of the new SCC campus. (See Photo 4, front cover.) The City has acquired 25 acres and intends a park. SCC has 65 acres that could be prime habitat created around trails and educational interpretation. SCC could provide classes in environmental education, wildlife biology, forestry and other studies related to habitat recovery.

2. Ft. Bragg should develop an effective Community Development Office specifically focused on Hoke County.

Among the possible roles such an office could play are these:

- a. The Adopt a Unit military program encourages long term relationships between a local community and a military unit. For example, the 35th Signal Brigade at Fort

Bragg has had a 10 year relationship with Hope Mills. Described as “mutually beneficial,” Brigade soldiers have helped townspeople in their Festival of Lights, in constructing a veterans memorial, and in cleaning up a nature preserve (The Fayetteville Observer, 10/25/2000).

- b. Sponsor a joint visioning process with the City of Raeford and Hoke County so they can act with one voice in responding to current development challenges.

“Maybe a third party would be good for this work, with no personal interest or agenda, to help improve dialogue and develop a common vision.”

“Good planning, conservation and economic development are a whole and should be promoted.”

- c. Develop a range of policies that will direct economic benefit from Fort Bragg to Hoke County.

“Fort Bragg could direct its purchases when possible to here. With enough time, local suppliers could even re-orient themselves to these opportunities. The airport has received a benefit from Bragg in the skydiving training there.”

- d. Develop a more systematic effort to connect the human resources at Fort Bragg.

- The base has people from all over the world. There are probably soccer players who could teach and coach soccer, and supplement the soccer program in Hoke county.
- The new Hoke Center for Sandhills Community College will enable new programs to be offered in Raeford for which Bragg could provide some instructors—automotive and diesel mechanics, nursing assistant, environmental programs, and other occupational vocational skills already present at Bragg.
- Allow some activities on base—4-H and Scouting, camping for kids, 4-wheeling trails, horse trails.
- Adopting schools—tutoring kids, mentoring kids, dropout and teen pregnancy prevention.
- Health—provide specialists for screenings, shot clinics, dental clinics, teen pregnancy intervention, health fairs.

- e. Devote Fort Bragg resources for Hoke construction projects.

Residents had these ideas:

“Ft. Bragg should schedule ‘down times’ for community use. Mott Lake, Vass Road, Boundary Line Road could be used for water sports, horseback riding, mountain biking, and so on.”

“I’d like to see more interaction between Fort Bragg and Hoke County schools which isn’t existing now.”

“Fort Bragg could have a Hoke County Day on the base where Hoke folks could shop at the new commissary, use the swimming pool and other facilities. Bragg has a lot of facilities that Hoke does not have.”

“Now that I’ve had a chance to think about this, I feel like I should also take initiative on our end to engage Fort Bragg people.”

The Environmental/Natural Resources Division at Fort Bragg plays a crucial role for habitat restoration. Its four branches—Environmental Compliance, Natural Resources, Endangered Species and Wildlife—should be encouraged to communicate more actively and to undertake a community-based management approach. Such a management style will reduce the regulatory burden because citizens will assist in monitoring and compliance. The goal of community-based management is to foster collaborative problem-solving in order that residents participate in management. The civilian personnel of this division, under no circumstances, should be replaced, as is threatened by the so-called “A-76” initiative, because they represent in this vision continuity and personal relations in the community. They should be more fully trained in the methods of social ecology.

3. “Hoke is a jewel.”

The Sandhills Conservation Partnership should encourage Fort Bragg, in conjunction with the City of Raeford, Hoke County, and other partners, to assist Hoke County in positioning itself around the theme, **“Hoke is a jewel.”** By that, we mean that Hoke County appears to be in a reactive posture relative to development. There is a sense that Hoke has waited so long for development that now that it is Hoke’s turn, the posture is that “Anything will do.” As officials reviewed recent development decisions, they are aware that opportunities were missed for open space, parks, and school land. The emerging attitude is “We’ll do it better next time.”

It seems to us as outsiders that the an appropriate position is that “Hoke is a jewel.” Contrary to the public image of poor or underserved, Hoke offers the region relatively unspoiled open lands and the potential for high quality development. It has more to offer developers and new residents than many surrounding places—uncrowded space, rural atmosphere, cheap land and an eager workforce. Its history and culture are part of a story that will attract others to want to be here.

“The County has a lot to offer—cheap land, 2/3 of the county is on water.”

Census Bureau estimates show that Cumberland County growth has slowed significantly, just 3.3% in the 1990s, while Moore County grew at 22.6% and Hoke County at 36.1%

(The Fayetteville Observer, 10/20/2000). This trend should be worked with so that it does not victimize the county. The goal should be quality development, with a mix of residential, retail, commercial and industrial, to assure long term local benefits. Support from developers for open space, school property, and development costs should be put in place now. Retail space, soccer fields, and parks—that is, an integrated community, can promote local spending.

The rationale for this approach is to expand community capacity so that the long-term goal of stewardship can be realized.

“I want open space, parks, and interpretive trails for residents to use—especially kids and senior citizens. There should be environmental awareness opportunities, school programs and outdoor space.”

Finally, offer incentives for newly arriving horse people to relate culturally with the local community in order to improve schools, develop employment and business opportunities, and otherwise insure that benefits from horse farm developments accrue to Hoke County.

4. Find ways to make youth the beneficiaries of habitat restoration.

The only “outside” idea we discussed with local residents was the idea of a youth conservation corps, wherein youth could gain employment and training while working on habitat projects in the area. This idea received very positive responses. As pointed out earlier, youth issues are the most widespread throughout the area.

“Use 4-H Clubs, at-risk school programs such as school enrichment and Life Skills. The “wildlife habitat” evaluation program won State competition. You could create a fit with these programs.”

“Why couldn’t local kids do the monitoring, clear understory, or install cavities?”

The youth groups formed by EMS, police and fire departments could be used for this purpose.

“Impact crews have a good reputation in Hoffman. These are youth in trouble with the law. They do hardwood removal, brush clearing. It didn’t work at Fort Bragg, but it has other places.”

“I’d like to see every young person be required to do some conservation work. Young people could provide manpower for conservation projects.”

5. Extend Education and Habitat Programs

“If this is done right, the project could be an item of community pride to have a special area of woodpecker and other species protection. Make it a positive rather

than a resented limitation. It could draw in people from outside, like Weymouth Park. It could have Park Rangers, interpretive walks.”

“The biggest challenge is education. Let people know what they can and can’t do. Lots of people feel like they can never cut, never build a home.”

“You have to educate the urbanites. Landowners and professionals have their part to play but we get conflicting programs. There has to be a consistent message.”

“My biggest gripe with Bragg and the State is that they burn year round, especially in the spring when quail, rabbits, and other species are nesting. It kills the new broods. I don’t understand why and when I call the State, I can’t get answers and no one pays attention to me.”

“There needs to be a steady drumbeat of public education. People need to understand that taking land off tax roles is not the only issue. Study after study shows that folks who take care of their habitat have a strong economy—that it enhances the economy.” [realtor]

“We’d be further without penalties. Incentives are better. The Fish and Wildlife Service has done a great turnaround with the safe harbor program. The field staff must be respectful—new students today tend to have firm ideas and they alienate. If they are careful to listen first, they’ll do better.”

“We’ve been down the road on community outreach and education. It takes a lot of effort and we simply do not have the time.” [person from nonprofit conservation organization]

“I am eager to get more details, to get out on the ground with project sponsors and discuss opportunities.” [county commissioner]

- a. Orient workshops on conservation easements around rural and lower income people.

“Older members in a family often support easements because they don’t want the land cut up. Younger family members often worry that the land can’t be divided or that the land value will go down.”

“There’s lots of suspicion about easements—fear about hurting heirs. A lot of people here are land rich but cash poor.”

- b. Utilize respected conservationists to get the word out about habitat recovery programs.

- c. Communicate clearly the intent to manage for more than just a single species. Given the cultural importance of bobwhite, the recent initiative of the North Carolina Wildlife

Resources Commission to restore bobwhite habitat should be integrated with the RCW effort.

“I don’t like Bragg just managing for woodpecker—what about quail, turkey, deer, others?”

d. Keep the funds created through natural resource management on Fort Bragg available for restoration on the base. We understand these now become “general funds” and may or may not come back for land restoration on the base. Unless this ecological link is made, ecosystem sustainability is less certain.

e. Continue to foster cost share programs. By and large, professionals as a group tended to view cost share programs as the most effective use of funding.

“Target landowners with habitat interest. It’s the best option for your program. There is a big demand for cost share monies.”

“You could do more incentives for reforestation. They could raise the 50% cost share proportion.”

Section Seven: JKA Recommendations

Specific

1. Clean up the language used to describe and advertise the partnership agenda. Terms like “acquisition”, “we dictate the terms” and other power expressions should be replaced by “collaboration,” “cooperation,” “trust,” “what’s good for the land,” “land protection,” “conservation,” and so on.
2. Clearly explain the current habitat and population situation for the RCW and why this project is needed (and don't rely just on the Environmental Assessment for explanation). There is little common understanding of it in the community, as supported by comments like "There's woodpeckers all over Bragg now". Explain the consequences of doing nothing. There is widespread and historical acceptance of Fort Bragg by locals (although sometimes it isn't spoken). Any current and accurate information about Bragg is rare in Hoke County—at all levels.
3. Have clear consistent information about conservation easements - how do they work, mandatory and optional language, rights of each party, successes in other communities, and so on. Have other parties involved with explaining them to publics and farmers—such as: the U.S. Army Environmental Center (A.B. Crawford is well regarded); The Nature Conservancy; Soil and Water Conservation Service (Albert Troutman); Hoke Coop Extension (Keith Walters); and Sandhills Area Land Trust. Orient the information to rural and low income residents, not the rich horse people from Moore County.
4. There seems to be huge variance (or simply lack) of understanding of what habitat objectives and restrictions are for the RCW and other species. People are forming opinions on hearsay. Negotiating successfully for easements depends heavily on clearly laying it out, including options. Clearly spell it out soon, and get the information out to everyone.
5. People want habitat for multiple species - quail, dove, turkey, rabbit, deer - not just RCW. To do otherwise just creates resentment toward the woodpecker and the government. If multiple species will be managed for, then clearly say so and follow through. If single species management is the objective, then be honest about it up front. Better yet, ask people what species should be managed for and involve them in setting habitat objectives. That would be huge win-win.
6. Continue to engage private and local agency foresters with habitat issues, such as 4 and 5 above.

7. Hunting is an important cultural tradition, even if few locals take part. The overall plan should factor hunting opportunities in, even if is only for lands adjacent to habitat lands. Excluding hunting overall would miss an important local link.
8. Farmers see themselves as conservationists—they always have tried to take care of wildlife. Whether this is fact or impression, build on the good they have done. Give them credit for it publicly and generously.
9. Lay out the possible benefits to the various parties of the community and community as a whole - youth, farmers, rural unincorporated communities like Addor, education (Sandhills Community College, Hoke Schools), and the horse community. Invite their involvement in creating a larger vision for the community.
10. The creation of public lands with access seems like a popular one, in a county with limited public lands. Highlight this early on and emphasize opportunities for trails, environmental education, youth employment, camping, picnicking, wildlife viewing., etc. The Woods tract would be a good one since it's underway.
11. Attend to protocol between Fort Bragg and the local area. Two simple steps could be taken immediately: a) ensure that the City of Raeford and Hoke County officials are consistently invited to Fort Bragg events; and, b) Get a current directory of Bragg personnel to Hoke County (and Hoke should give theirs to Bragg).

General

1. Begin a process for immediate action to build local momentum and trust. Candidates for early action, described more fully in earlier sections, are community parks in Addor, Cameron Village, Clay Hill (Tylertown) and the new Sandhills Community College campus. In addition, there are ample opportunities for easements and acquisition which JKA can facilitate or make introductions at the appropriate times.
2. Use informal networks identified through this project to establish relationships and trust, prior to the announcement of new initiatives. Talk things over with residents, and design new initiatives with them. Key gathering places and network contacts can be provided by JKA when the Partnership is ready to undertake this step. In addition, we have compiled a list of interested people and leaders who want to be contacted early as this program gets underway.
3. Adopt a “do with” and not a “do for” attitude. For example, if purchase of land for local parks in Addor and Clay Hill is feasible, engage in a community-based process so that local residents participate in development and design, neighbors are included in habitat projects, and also so that they have responsibility for stewardship after the dollars are gone.

Conclusions

The real strength of a report like this is not the information it contains but the relationships it represents. JKA is prepared to work with the Sandhills Conservation Partnership in making links with key residents in the community, to foster early action on conservation goals, and to create programs that benefit individuals and communities. Our work has identified important gathering places for sharing information in the community, network caretakers who are respected by others, and communicators who move information. By working at the informal level of community, the Sandhills Conservation Partnership will be able to avoid the political pitfalls and limited capacity associated with partnerships that work only through formal organizations.

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Appendix A

The Discovery Process and Cultural Descriptors

The Discovery Process™

The Discovery Process was pioneered by the Foundation for Urban and Neighborhood Development (FUND) in the 1960s, and developed and refined by James Kent Associates over the years. It is a means of “entering the routines” of a community in order to understand it from the “inside out.” It is a means to create social change.

The Discovery Process has as its basis three premises:

1. The individual is the basic unit of society.
2. “Power” is the ability of the individual to control, predict, and participate in his/her environment in a way that does not oppress others.
3. Every neighborhood has its own rate of growth or capacity to accommodate change. Positive accommodation of change will occur only if the positive growth mechanisms and their interaction can be mobilized and maximized within the local constituency.

During the discovery process, individuals learn through a series of focused activities their personal strengths and methods for maintaining control in their environments.

The following techniques are integrated in the discovery process:

- Describing
- Reflecting
- Being a stranger
- Listening
- Focusing
- Topic generating
- Documenting
- Issue building
- Strategy planning
- Building concepts and theories
- Implementing
- Evaluating
- Crisis learning

In the discovery process, trainers help those involved to:

- Become conscious of changes within an ecosystem and their impact on the system and themselves.
- Use identified skills and informal management networks to communicate and participate in decisions about the impacts of change before thresholds are reached.
- Develop mitigation processes to help deal with negative impacts.
- Implement designated mitigation processes.

The figure below illustrates the steps of the discovery process used in the development and implementation of social change. The steps in the process include:

1. *Describing the geographic area.* Seven cultural descriptors describe how a human ecosystem is structured and performs.
2. *Generating themes.* Themes are broad topics of public interest or concern and are the

first indications of discernible change in the ecosystem. Themes cannot be directly acted upon, but focus the describer to pursue identification of issues.

3. *Identifying networks.* Networks are the structures that carry the specific issues to be acted upon. Network identification is done in tandem with issue identification. Issues have three stages: emerging, existing, and disruptive—each of which will influence the type of action needed for its resolution.

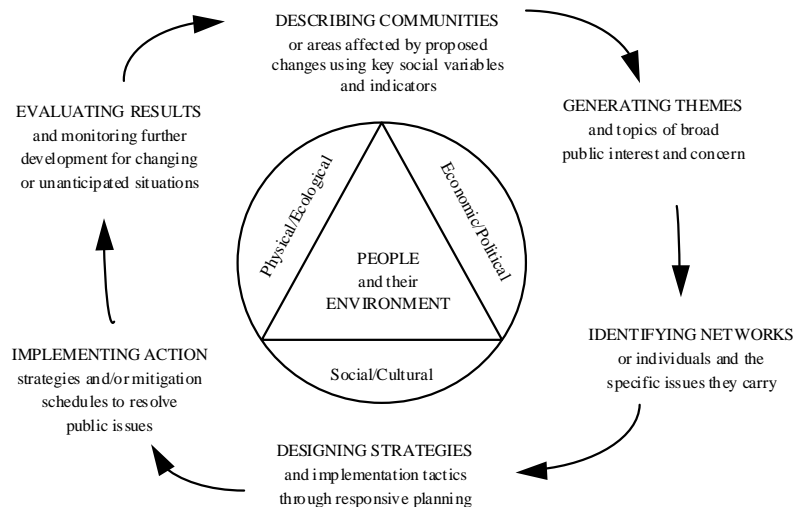
4. *Developing strategies.* Issues are transformed into strategies for action.

5. *Implementing action.* Implementation of structural change processes begins on a grassroots level.

6. *Evaluating results.* A re-descriptive phase of ongoing monitoring concerning change.

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Discovery Process™ Intervention Strategy



James Kent Associates, Aspen, Colorado

Seven Cultural Descriptors Used In Community Assessment

Publics: Segments of the population or a group of people having common characteristics, interests, or some recognized demographic feature. Sample publics include agriculturalists, governmental bodies, homemakers, industries, landowners, loggers, miners, minorities, newcomers, preservationists, recreationalists, senior citizens, small businesses and youth.

Networks: A structured arrangement of individuals who support each other in predictable ways because of their commitment to a common purpose, their shared activities, or similar attitudes. There are two types of networks, those that are informal arrangements of individuals who join together as a way to express their interests, and those that are formal arrangements of individuals who belong to an organization to represent their interests. Networks functioning locally as well as those influencing management from regional or national levels are included in this descriptor. Examples of citizen networks include ranchers who assist each other in times of need, grassroots environmentalists with a common cause, or families who recreate together. Examples of formal organizations include a cattlemen's association, or a recreational club.

Settlement Patterns: The distribution of a population in a geographic area, including the historical cycles of settlement. This descriptor identifies where a population resides and the type of settlement categorized by its centralized/dispersed, permanent/temporary, and year-round/seasonal characteristics. It also describes the major historical growth/non-growth cycles and the reasons for each successive wave of settlement.

Work Routines: The way in which people earn a living, including where and how. The types of employment, the skills needed, the wage levels, and the natural resources required in the process are used to generate a profile of a population's work routines. The opportunities for advancement, the business ownership pattern and the stability of employment activities are also elements of this descriptor.

Supporting Services: Any arrangement people use for taking care of each other, including the institutions serving a community and the caretaking activities of individuals. This descriptor emphasizes how supporting services and activities are provided. Commercial businesses, religious institutions, social welfare agencies, governmental organizations, and educational, medical and municipal facilities are all examples of support services. Caretaking activities include the ways people manage on a day-to-day basis using family, neighborhood, friendship or any other support system.

Recreational Activities: The way in which people use their leisure time. The recreational opportunities available, seasonality of activities, technologies involved, and money and time required are aspects of this descriptor. The frequency of local/non-local uses of recreational resources, the preferences of local/non-local users, and the location of the activities are also included.

Geographic Boundaries: Any unique physical feature that defines the extent of a population's routine activities. Physical features generally separate the cultural identity and daily activity of a population from those living in other geographic areas. Geographic boundaries include geologic, biologic, and climatic features, distances, or any other characteristic that distinguishes one area from another. Examples of geographic boundaries include topographic features that isolate mountain valleys, distances that separate rural towns, or river basins that shape an agricultural way of life. Geographic boundaries may be relatively permanent or short-lived; over time, boundaries may dissolve as new settlement patterns develop and physical access to an area changes.

This methodology is described more fully in: "Methods for the Development of Human Geographic Boundaries and Their Uses", in partial completion of Cooperative Agreement No. 1422-P850-A8-0015 between James Kent Associates and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Task Order No. 001.