



**JAMES KENT ASSOCIATES**  
*Global Cultural Analysts*

Services Package of  
James Kent Associates for  
Natural Resource Agencies

2008



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*Enhancing Productive Harmony between Human and Natural Environments*

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# Services Package of James Kent Associates for Natural Resource Agencies

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## Background

James Kent Associates (JKA) is pleased to offer a suite of services available to natural resource agencies in their quest to foster healthy landscapes and communities. We have worked for many years to bridge the public and the private, the formal and the informal, in encouraging community-based collaborative stewardship. We have witnessed, and participated in, a growing professionalism in natural resource agencies in engagement with diverse publics. Internal expertise has grown, and the focus in the last few years is on Implementation—"closing the loop" with citizens so that responsibility for stewardship is a shared enterprise. The focus on Implementation is ushering in a truly exciting period in natural resource management. JKA is pleased to include this focus on Implementation in our Training Programs for 2008.

This document outlines the services provided by James Kent Associates (JKA) to the natural resource agencies, especially at the federal level. The direct services and the training programs are described below. The attachment to this document is a list of BLM activities undertaken by James Kent Associates in the last several years, entitled, "JKA Company Activities with BLM since 1995." During this time, our firm has been involved in these activities:

- Participated in the development of and instruction in the Partnership Series suite of courses offered by BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona covering "Learning Community," "Community-Based Ecosystem Stewardship," "Community Economic Assessment," and "Place Based NEPA." In addition, we designed and currently instruct the "Planning Concepts" course for BLM. These courses have brought us to over 70 different communities in



the West that have led to well-grounded stewardship projects, new programs, and the formation of citizen-led stewardship groups<sup>1</sup>.

- Assisted several BLM and Forest Service offices in project troubleshooting, land use planning, and management training. This has included the Field Offices of Phoenix, Yuma, Las Cruces, the Arizona Strip, the Central Oregon Initiative (Deschutes, Ochoco NF and Prineville BLM), Farmington, Baker, and others included in the attachment. In Phoenix, our work yielded significant contributions in dealing with urban encroachment in rural areas through land use decisions. In Farmington, significant reform in addressing oil and gas impacts was achieved. Key to this success has been to use NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) as a collaborative tool through focus on the policy intent of Section 101.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2002, we created a GIS product for the Eugene and Salem BLM Districts, as well as the Willamette National Forest, in the southern Willamette Valley, Oregon (population: 800,000), with extensive community contact to identify trends, citizen issues, and opportunities. By making social and economic information visible through human geographic mapping, this information is now on equal terms with biophysical data in the agencies' GIS system in a manner that was not possible ten years ago. This equalization of the social and economic universes accomplishes the framework for fulfilling the "productive harmony" requirement of NEPA, contributing to an expanded proactive management capacity. Re-labeled the Field Guide in Social Ecology for the Willamette Valley, the complete interactive report can be found at our web site: <http://www.jkagroup.com/methods/willamette-index/index.htm>.
- Our Human Geographic Mapping system has been adopted in land use plans in 15 different federal offices.<sup>3</sup> Human Geographic Mapping reflects the way humans distribute themselves on the landscape, and the "mental map" by which they distinguish one area from another. At different scales of

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Preister and James A. Kent, "Social Ecology: A New Pathway to Watershed Restoration." in Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices, by Jack E. Williams, Michael P. Dombeck and Christopher A. Wood, Editors. Bethesda, Md.: The American Fisheries Society, 1997

<sup>2</sup> Kevin Preister and James A. Kent, "Using Social Ecology to Meet the Productive Harmony Intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)," Hastings West-Northwest Journal of Environmental Law and Policy, Volume 7, Issue 3, Spring, Berkeley, CA.: Hastings College of the Law, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> James A. Kent and Kevin Preister, "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, 1999.



geography from small Neighborhood Resource Units (NRUs) to regional Social Resource Units (SRUs), the maps reveal how people currently mobilize to adapt and survive in a changing environment. When public involvement programs, projects and policies reflect this social reality, greater opportunities for collaborative relationships are possible.

## *Direct Services*

### **1. Community Assessment**

- a. **Issue Scoping:** Through our unique Discovery Process,<sup>™</sup> we offer non-traditional scoping that can "level the playing field" to provide a broader and fuller reading of public interests than other methods. Rather than relying on a few public meetings and a postcard campaign of an organized group, the agency is able to offer multiple ways to participate that is comfortable and meaningful to residents. We identify citizen issues at their emerging stage of development when they are easiest to deal with.
- b. **Social and Economic Assessment:** JKA has extensive experience in NEPA compliance, and can conduct social and economic assessments suitable for inclusion in NEPA-related efforts including land use planning and project readiness. JKA also develops social and economic criteria for decision making, as well as conducts analysis of alternatives from a social and economic perspective.

### **2. Human Geographic Mapping**

People everywhere develop an attachment to a geographic place, characterized by a set of natural boundaries created by physical, biological, social, cultural and economic systems. This is called a Bio-Social Ecosystem. The term was created in 1991 by James Kent and Dan Baharav to integrate social ecology and biology in addressing watershed issues, with people being a recognized part of the landscape. Unique beliefs, traditions, and stories tie people to a specific place, to the land, and to social/kinship networks, the reflection and function of which is called culture.

For the first time in United States history, social and cultural systems have been mapped by the JKA Group. The first Human Geographic Maps (HGMs) came into existence in the late 1970s and early 1980s as part of JKA's work with the Forest



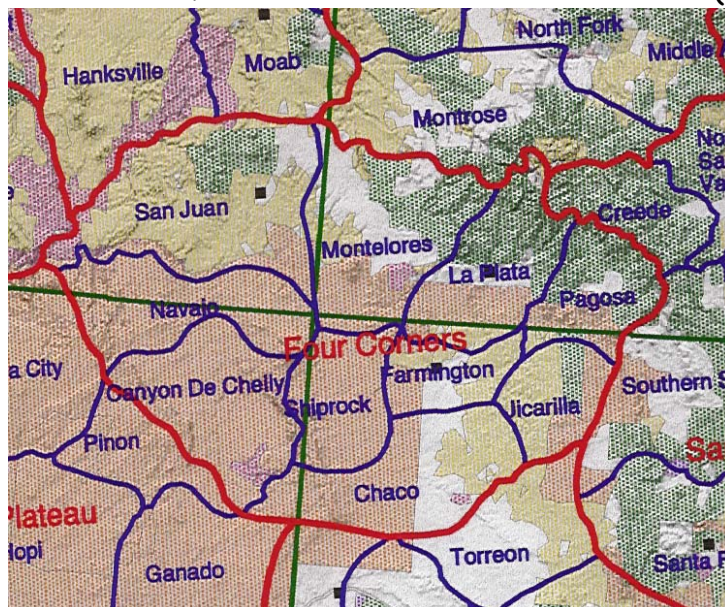
# Human Geographic Mapping

Treating the land and the people as one

planning process of the U.S. Forest Service, Region 2. The USFS was looking for new and creative ways to empower citizens as part of the Forest Plans. The HGMs were published as an integral part of the Forest Plan implementation. This was followed in 1986 by a contract with the US West (now Quest) Corporation to map the 14 states that made up their service area in order to launch their cell phone business based on cultural word-of-mouth and natural boundary systems. Subsequently the HGMs have been used by communities, businesses, corporations, governments and citizens to improve relationships, make trend projections, develop market segments, and to understand emerging patterns in order to change the way government and business is conducted. In 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the Department of Interior, entered into a license agreement with JKA to digitally produce the Human Geographic Maps and to use them in planning and management within BLM district offices.

As an example of Human Geographic Mapping, Figure One shows the Four Corners Social Resource Unit (SRU) in southwestern U.S., within which are embedded several Human Resource Units (HRUs). The maps, with attendant social and economic

Figure One: The Four Corners Social Resource Unit (SRU)



Information, were used to structure the public involvement program related to the San Juan National Forest Plan revision and the community visioning process that accompanied it.

Operating at the proper scale brings optimum efficiency and productivity to projects, programs, policy formation and other actions by working within the appropriate social and cultural context. The mapping allows a visual display, capable of integration with GIS, of social and economic information of importance in local communities. It is especially appropriate for a baseline analysis of an area with a focus on current social and economic trends that will affect agency decision making.

### **3. Project Troubleshooting**

Conflicts around natural resource management are common and typically lead to polarization in which communication breaks down, little direct contact occurs, and groups begin to project negative characteristics on others. In such an environment, a clear discussion of the issues is difficult to achieve and opportunities to foster win/win solutions may not be obvious. JKA's Discovery Process is very useful in reestablishing direct contact with a broad range of participants, hearing again in a safe environment the actionable issues that drive political action, and creating new opportunities to cultivate collaborative relationships. This approach worked very well in assisting with the Farmington BLM revised Resource Management Plan (RMP) in which disruption was pronounced. This approach has been used with Phoenix BLM, the Willamette National Forest, Baker City BLM, Prineville BLM, St. George BLM, Las Cruces BLM and other sites.

**JKA Training Programs:**  
**"The Social Ecology of Natural Resource Management"**

**1. Course Title: The Discovery Process™**

Length of Course: 2.5 days

Maximum Number of Participants: 30

**Course Description:** The Discovery Process™ is a means to "enter the routines" of a community so that citizen issues, informal networks, gathering places, caretakers, and communication patterns may be identified. This information is useful, not only for planning and NEPA documentation, but issues at the emerging stage of development may be targeted for responsive action. This process has been used successfully to deal with controversy, build public support, and create community-based ecosystem stewardship of natural resources. The course develops responsive public policy as an outcome of citizen contact. The course uses classroom time, interactive exercises, and a three-hour community fieldwork experience to foster learning in the concepts of Social Ecology.

**Topics Covered:**

- The Discovery Process™: How does this community work?
- The role of informal networks in local communication and adaptation
- Themes vs. issues
- Stages in the life cycle of citizen issues
- Handling change: From intrusion to absorption
- Fostering community-based ecosystem stewardship
- Social capital: Tool for fostering citizen empowerment and reduced government.

**Outcomes Expected:**

- Broadened concepts by which to view the role of collaboration in governance
- Skill development in the practice of community description and direct citizen contact
- A set of resources to draw upon for future endeavors
- Strategies for "next steps" in creating a collaborative environment of governance
- Clear opportunities for responsive management practices and public policy.



## 2. Course Title: Discovery Weeklong

Length of Course: 4.75 days

Maximum Number of Participants: 16

**Course Description:** This course uses the Discovery Process™ to develop staff capacity for ongoing citizen contact and issue management. Through the course of this week, JKA staff participate with agency staff in describing local communities and developing strategies for more effective communication and governance. By “entering the routines” of the community, specific measures for identifying citizen issues are developed, resulting in communication strategies sensitive to social and geographic diversity. Capacity to bring management attention to all levels of citizen issues—emerging, existing, disruptive—is enhanced. This course is specifically designed for a public land management office interested in staff development of community-based approaches to land management decisions. It is well-suited to a current management challenge for which new opportunities are needed. This course minimizes classroom time and focuses on hands-on community fieldwork oriented to current management challenges.

### Topics Covered:

- The Discovery Process™: How does this community work?
- The role of informal networks in local communication and adaptation
- Themes vs. issues
- Stages in the life cycle of citizen issues
- Handling change: From intrusion to absorption
- Fostering community-based ecosystem stewardship
- Social capital: Tool for fostering citizen empowerment and reduced government.

### Outcomes Expected:

- Diagnostic criteria by which to evaluate the current status of collaborative governance
- Significant progress in understanding the social dynamics of a current management challenge
- Strategies in place for deeper and broader communication and for building a coalition of support in moving forward
- Increased comfort in the practice of community fieldwork
- Strategies developed for creating a collaborative approach to governance that is unique and tailored to specific local conditions.



### 3. Course Title: Human Geographic Mapping

Length of Course: 3 days

Maximum Number of Participants: 16

**Course Description:** Human Geographic Mapping is a method of research designed to describe human culture. Using seven Cultural Descriptors, the workings of local communities are identified, documenting social and economic conditions, citizen issues related to natural resource management, opportunities for responsive management practice, and communication strategies tailored to geographic areas. This information is placed in geographic information system (GIS) databases, along with the human geographic maps developed during description, that show how residents distinguish one population from another. The product serves as the basis for social assessment, documentation of social and economic conditions, and fulfills requirements for planning and for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

#### Topics Covered:

- A unique social assessment approach
- Geographic Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Understanding social and economic trends
- Integration of qualitative and quantitative information
- The influence of human geography on natural resource management, public involvement programs, and public policy.

#### Outcomes Expected:

- An understanding of how local human geography influences natural resource decision making
- Strategies to proactively work with trends to create positive resource conditions and community effects
- A GIS system capable of integrating social and economic information with biophysical data to foster the ability to treat the land and the people as one
- An enhanced ability to operate as a learning organization by identifying trends and emerging issues early enough to be proactive in their management.

## 4. Course Title: Getting to Implementation

**Background:** It has become clear over the years that what some would call the “partnership movement” is really about the way in which we take care of the land. Partnerships are an essential means by which stewardship occurs, the emerging term for which is “Community-Based Ecosystem Management.” Generally, agencies have become more skilled at including diverse publics, but less skilled in “closing the loop” with citizens, that is, in getting to the implementation of collaborative approaches.

### 4a. Three-day course

Maximum Number of Participants: 14

**Course Description:** This course will introduce concepts related to implementation of community-based ecosystem management. The notions of shared decisions and citizen ownership generate strategies for citizen contact and for turning over to citizens tasks that broaden the management ability of the agency. The course will draw upon the current situation of the participants to devise approaches to broaden and strengthen collaborative approaches to governance. It is designed as a “hands on” course. It includes community fieldwork and active strategy development.

### 4b. Three month course

Number of participants: open

**Course Description:** This course addresses the need for agencies to get beyond discussions and meetings about community-based ecosystem stewardship and to focus on direct application. It is oriented to the design and implementation of a management program that: 1) Is capable of staying in a dialogue relationship among the informal networks of community; 2) Incorporates formal partners such as other units of government, agencies and organizations; 3) Creates responsive action in the day-to-day management of government; and, 4) Sets the stage for policy development capable of being grounded, practical and effective. Success in responding to emerging citizen issues will drive the course. The course has two training sessions, a five-day opening session to initiate the process and a three-day follow up course three months later to evaluate implementation efforts. In addition, the course allows for 6 professional days of JKA staff being on-site to promote the effective implementation of the program and for troubleshooting specific situations.

### **Topics Covered:**

- The Discovery Process™: How does this community work?
- The life cycle of citizen issues: emerging, existing, disruptive
- Integrating citizen issues and management concerns
- Innovations from local, national and international settings
- Fostering community-based collaboration
- Social capital: Tool for fostering citizen empowerment and reduced government
- The creation of a Human Geographic Issue Management System (HGIMS™)
- Public policy development that aligns formal and informal societal interests.

### **Outcomes Expected:**

- An ongoing system of identifying and responding to emerging issues
- A set of communication strategies capable of sustaining dialogue with key social segments
- Direct and immediate application to a current management challenge
- A broadened set of concepts with which to consider collaboration as a goal of governance
- Increased comfort in the practice of community fieldwork
- Diagnostic criteria by which to evaluate the current status of collaborative governance
- A set of resources to draw upon for future endeavors
- Implementation of a management system designed to foster collaborative, citizen-oriented governance, responsive to emerging citizen issues and the immediate changes in local conditions.