

Local Residents' Attitudes Toward Forest Management

A survey conducted by the Southwestern Crown Collaborative

The Southwestern Crown Collaborative would like to thank residents for participating in a forest management survey administered in 2018. Members of the collaborative are local citizens, non-profits, federal and state land agencies, and researchers at the University of Montana. Together, we wanted to understand how local residents and communities have been impacted by forest management decisions in the Seeley-Swan and Blackfoot areas. This survey provided us with insight on how we can better incorporate local concerns into national forest decisions.

Yes, to thinning and salvage logging No, to clearcuts

There was overwhelming support (80%) for **mechanical thinning** near communities and for **salvage logging** (95%) after disturbances. However, **clearcuts** as a silvicultural treatment were unpopular with only 30% approval.



Yes, to prescribed fire, but be mindful of smoke

Most residents (67%) felt that **prescribed burns** are an acceptable tool for fire management. Residents were divided on letting wildfires burn even without a threat to lives or property, with 42% disagreeing and 48% strongly agreeing. Half of residents agreed smoke from prescribed burns was justified.

You want multi-use management

Residents were not divided over forest management goals. Over 85% felt reducing wildfire risk, maintaining wildlife habitat, and reducing weeds were important. Supporting the local economy through timber production (79%), tourism (67%), and recreation (67%) were also important.



Overall satisfaction with forest management was low

Over one-third of you (39%) thought there was sufficient opportunity to comment on management. However, few (16%) felt that comments were seriously considered, and most (61%) felt that decisions were already made prior to the public comment period.

You want to be heard!

People care deeply about the management of their national forests, but few engage with traditional public comment mechanisms. While people are talking to their neighbors, more informal and formal public engagement opportunities are needed. Managers should evaluate their current communication efforts against the public's desire for information via local newspapers and one-on-one interaction.



For the full report visit the Southwestern Crown Collaborative website (www.swcrown.org) and select "Monitoring."



www.swcrown.org



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