

**Multi-party Monitoring Holland Pierce HFRA Project  
Community Benefits: Assessing USFS Outreach  
Results (April 26, 2007)**

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**Executive Summary**

- This information is based on a phone survey conducted by volunteers at SEC during January 18- February 1; Belsky continued to call and conduct phone surveys throughout the month of February. Approximately 60 interviews were completed from a list drawn up by SEC of 100 names of residents near the HP project area or who had indicated an interest in the project (60% response rate).
- The majority of people interviewed during the phone survey were male (67%), average age 60 years, property owners (62%) for 11-29 years (32%) or 30 years or more (38%).
- Their key value or management objective for their property was to live in the woodlands (58%), to have privacy (19%) and enhance forest health (10%).
- Most respondents are concerned about risk of wildfire on their property (77%) and have either cleaned underbrush near their residence (57%) or thinned, cut trees near the residence (38%) to reduce risk of wildfire. 88% are concerned about risk of wildfire near their residence.
- 57% had heard of the Seeley-Swan Fire plan while 75% had heard of the Holland Piece HFRA project; virtually all knew that the latter was about fuels reduction.
- 27% thought their property was “somewhat near” the HP project area, 18% thought it was “adjacent”, 13% thought it was “within project area” (latter most likely hold leases to the land) and 5% are “far” from the project – the rest did not know (37%).
- Most residents heard about the HP project from mailings to their home (47%), newspaper (37%), neighbors (33%) or from a personal phone call or meeting with a FS person.
- Most did not raise a concern (77%). Only 1-2 people raised one of the following concerns: project area too large, don’t want to see understory vegetation disturbed, impact on wildlife, logging machinery will compact soil/spread weeds, slash piles will be a mess, or more or less trees should be cut near their own property.
- Of those that raised a concern about the HP project, only a few felt that the FS somewhat or strongly did not hear their concerns; most felt that the FS somewhat or strongly heard their concerns and changed the project to accommodate their concerns. Average 3.76 on a scale 1-5 (with 5 being strongly heard concerns). Approximately 2-3 residents were strongly critical that while the FS representative “heard” their concerns, the project plan was not altered and they criticized the plan as developed by distant bureaucrats.
- The majority of respondents strongly liked (22%) or somewhat liked (22%) the HP project; 10% didn’t have an opinion either way, and 5% somewhat disliked the project and 3% strongly disliked the project; 38% would not provide an answer, mostly because they were not aware of it or because they wanted to reserve opinion until actions were taken on the ground. Average 3.86 on a scale 1-5 (with 5 being strongly like/supported the project).
- 25% had read the HP decision notice.
- 33% felt the HP project would lower the value of their property, 10% thought it would raise the value and 57% thought it wouldn’t affect it or did not have an opinion either way.

- There was strong support for further participation of residents in FS project planning. Regarding how to be informed, 95% said yes to information mailed to their homes; 67% said yes to public meetings; 55% said yes to announcements in the newspaper; and 32% to email (the latter provided their email addresses which will be shared with SEC).

### **Project Summary**

**Objectives:** This component focused on the HP HFRA project's outreach efforts. These included the USFS holding public meetings and public tours as well as distributing information to landowners adjacent to the HP project area. The primary objective of this component is to assess the extent to which adjacent landowners and other interested parties were aware of proposed treatments on the HP HFRA forest lands, and whether they felt concerns they expressed to the USFS were listened to in terms of the USFS's final decision.

Secondary objectives of this component included:

- a. summarizing residents' concerns regarding HP HFRA actions;
- b. residents' attitude and behaviors regarding fuel reduction on their own property (including whether the HP HFRA outreach influenced these);
- c. identifying preferred ways for public outreach and information sharing for future USFS activities; and
- d. raising local (i.e., SEC, NwC) capacity to conduct social assessments/phone surveys in the future.

**Methodology:** The main method was a phone survey. A master list was drawn up by SEC of residents adjacent to the HP HFRA (both full time and part-time residents) and others who had either attended a public meeting or field tour of the area, or provided a comment. After residents with unworking phone numbers and duplicates were excluded, the list included approximately 100 names. An information card was mailed to the permanent home one week before the phone survey began alerting them that such an exercise would be occurring and requesting that they contact SEC if they wanted to schedule a special time to be called and interviewed. The majority of the phone survey was conducted by volunteers at SEC during January 18- February 1; Belsky continued to call and conduct phone surveys throughout the month of February. Approximately 60 interviews were completed (60% response rate).

Approximately 5 volunteers conducted the phone interviews (Paula, Kathy, Betsy, Susan and Jesse). Belsky provided 2 days of intensive training involving extensive review and revision of the questionnaire and 1 day of practicing interviews. (Anne and Mo joined the training session). See appendix for specifics on training, including information sheet for guidelines how to provide background information and to appropriately "probe" for answers. Belsky monitored and gave feed back to the volunteers during practice interviews, and then each volunteer conducted the interviews independently, mostly from SEC though also from their own homes. A debriefing occurred among the volunteers and Belsky on Feb. 2, 2007 at SEC. Based on my observations of phone interviews, completed surveys and feedback from the volunteers, I concluded that the capability and contribution of these volunteers were exceptional, and this suggested to me that the secondary objective of raising local capacity for administering phone surveys was very successfully achieved.

**Caveats:** First, regarding the sample itself, it is difficult to know if there is a pattern or bias as why 40% of those on the master list either were not home, refused to pick up the phone (despite calls to them at different times and from different locations should they be using caller ID) or refused to be

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interviewed. Nonetheless, the phone survey achieved a reasonable sample size (60% is considered a sufficient percentage for assuming with some assurance that the results are representative of the larger sample) and especially that it was able to include seasonal residents as well as full time residents.

Second, initially we asked to speak to any adult in the house (i.e., to ascertain who was aware of not of the HP project). Later we realized that given the objective to assess outreach actions, we should have asked to interview the person who personally interacted with the USFS outreach earlier, or is most interested in the USFS fuels reduction activities. Belsky attempted to recall and redo interviews where it was noted that the person who was interviewed said it would be better to talk to someone else in the household.

Third, regarding analysis, below are the results of the phone survey. There are many possible ways to analyze these results (for example, to view them through the lens of a particular characteristic of the sample, such as perceived proximity of land to HP area, resident status, age, etc.). Additional analyses can and will occur if requested by the multiparty monitoring team. All survey results presented below are rounded up; total (sample) count equals 60 and total percentage equals 100% unless otherwise noted. Selective quotations from open ended questions are also included. These narrative responses are not intended to reflect the most common responses, but rather to provide further insight into particular viewpoints.

**Descriptors of the (phone) sample:**

1.Average Age	60 years	
2.Gender		
women	20	(33%)
men	40	(67%)
3.Residency Status		
Full-time	37	(62%)
Part-time	22	(37%)
Not a resident	1	(2%)*
*very elderly man doesn't visit the property anymore		
4.Current Property Status		
Owners	37	(62%)
Leases	21	(35%)
Renters	2	(3%)
5.Years Held In Above Property Status		
1 yr or less	2	(3%)
2-5 yrs	7	(12%)
6-10 yrs	9	(15%)
11-29	19	(32%)
30 yrs or more	23	(38%)

6. Years Lived in the Swan Valley

1 yr or less	2	(3%)
2-5 yrs	6	(10%)
6-10 yrs	11	(18%)
11-29	24	(40%)
30 yrs or more	16	(27%)
missing answer	1	(2%)

**Property Values, Concerns and Management:**

7. Major Property Value/Management Objective

Live in woodlands	35	(58%)
Privacy	10	(19%)
Enhance forest health	7	(10%)
Recreation	4	(7%)
Enhance wildlife	2	(2%)
Livestock	1	(2%)
missing answer	1	(2%)

8. Perceived Proximity of Property to HP HFRA Project Area

Within project area	8	(13%)
Adjacent	11	(18%)
Somewhat near	16	(27%)
Far	3	(5%)
Don't know	22	(37%)

9. Are you concerned about risk of wild fire on your property?

no	13	(22%)
yes	46	(77%)
Don't know	1	(2%)

10. Have you or anyone else done anything **on** your property to reduce risk of wildfire?

no	2	(3%)
yes	57	(95%)
Don't know	1	(2%)

11. What was done to reduce risk of wildfire?

clean underbrush near residence	34	(57%)
thin, cut trees near residence	23	(38%)
Don't know	3	(5%)

12. Are you concerned about risk of wild fire **near** your property?

no	6	(10%)
yes	53	(88%)
Don't know	1	(2%)

“Holland Peak fire (last summer) really scared a lot of us. It got many of our neighbors to do fuels reduction. Now our cabin is free of trees and don’t think a neighboring fire would threaten our home.”

**Knowledge and Opinions of Community Fire Plans, including HP HFRA**

13. Have you heard of the Seeley-Swan Fire Plan?

no	25	(42%)
yes	34	(57%)
Don’t know	1	(2%)

14. Have you heard of the HP HFRA Project?

no	15	(25%)
yes	45	(75%)
Don’t know	1	(2%)

15. Crosstabulation of heard of HP HFRA by residence

			Residence status			Total
			Full-time	Part-time	Not a resident	
Heard HP	no	Count	8	6	1	15
		% within heard HP	53.3%	40.0%	6.7%	100.0%
	yes	% within residence status	21.6%	27.3%	100.0%	25.0%
		Count	29	16	0	45
		% within heard HP	64.4%	35.6%	.0%	100.0%
		% within residence status	78.4%	72.7%	.0%	75.0%
Total	Count	37	22	1	60	
	% within heard HP	61.7%	36.7%	1.7%	100.0%	
	% within residence status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Confidence level/significance .596

16. How did you hear about the HP HFRA project?

Source	No	Yes	Don’t know/remember
Neighbors	40 (67%)	20 (33%)	
Newspaper	37 (62%)	22 (37%)	1 (2%)
Mailings to home	27 (45%)	28 (47%)	5 (8%)
Public meeting	47 (78%)	12 (20%)	1 (2%)
Public field tour	53 (88%)	7 (12%)	
Personal field tour	52 (87%)	8 (13%)	
Phone call	45 (75 %)	15 (25%)	
Personal meeting with USFS rep	45 (75%)	15 (25%)	
Other (at work with DNRC or Fire Dept.; NwC, SEC, Tom Parker)			

17. Did you raise particular concerns about the HP HFRA?

no	45	(75%)
yes	15	(25%)

18. If you raised concerns about the HP project, what was your primary concern?

Primary Concern	Count	Percent
No concern or didn't give an answer	46	76.7
Too large an area	1	1.7
Shouldn't use logging machinery	1	1.7
Slash piles will make a mess	2	3.3
Increase cutting near my property	2	3.3
Shouldn't prescribe burn	2	3.3
Reduce cutting near my property	1	1.7
Unsure treatment will really happen	1	1.7
More trees need to be cut	1	1.7
Wont reduce fire danger	1	1.7
Spread noxious weeds	1	1.7
Shouldn't cut old growth	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

“I think it’s good to reduce fuels near structures but not necessary in the wild.”

“The [fuels reduction] methods proposed to be used in essence would destroy the forest and create a tree farm and do away with the understory. Nothing they do will eliminate wild fire in the area and we have to take our chances. Their methods of fuel reduction destroys what a forest is supposed to be. I wrote a letter to the FS and did not get a response, nor did anyone come to visit and see what they are talking about in their forest. I want it drummed into the FS heads that I don’t think the way to save a forest is to make it into a city park. This destroys the understory and all the shrubs.”

“I think [prescribed burning] is a damn fool idea. Nature took care of two of the drainages last summer. I am a biologist. The FS doesn’t have any concern for small wildlife, rare plants (orchids) or insects. Why are they burning way up in the mountains and destroying habitat? I don’t like it. What about the squirrels and chipmunks?...I don’t think they should do it. I think it’s a waste of wildlife. Fire is a natural part of the ecosystem. All these different approaches; suppress and now let it burn.”

“Earlier 2005-2006, John from the FS cut and piled wood but did not burn it; that’s left to private landowners to do and this and its expensive. But I like the HP project because fuel reduction needs to be done. My concern is the FS has its hands tied by EPA regulations.”

“I’m concerned about bug infestation – if (buggy trees) are not harvested then trees will be subject to fire. I have seen enough people with clip boards that have not gotten anything done. (But) we are dealing with the government – what else can we expect?”

“I’d like to see local loggers hired to do the work.”

“I think these people [from the FS] are trying to do a lot of work... least impact to the ground and forest. They might want to use new machinery but the question is in order to buy that machinery and operate it can you afford to do it with the price of timber? Some of the thinning is just going to have to be done by hand. “

19. On a scale of 1 (strongly did not hear) to 5 (strongly did hear), how well do you feel the person you spoke with from the forest service listened to and heard your concerns?\*

	Frequency	Percent
No answer	43	71.7
1 Strongly did not hear	2	3.3
2 Somewhat did not hear	2	3.3
3 In between	1	1.7
4 Somewhat did hear	5	8.3
5 Strongly did hear	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

\*asked only to those who said they raised concerns or made recommendations

### **Average 3.76**

“I think the FS is trying hard to help the forest. I think the project will be good and am glad that the FS is contacting landowners about it. We looked at a map together and told him that we thought one area needed to be changed and they changed it.”

“My concern was the reduction they had planned wouldn’t make much of a difference in reducing the fire danger and would create a nuisance because they would have to build a road across a neighbor’s property. But the FS modified its plan after listening to my concerns.”

“I was quite pleased with John coming out and speaking with us and explaining his work to us. When we called him back he was very helpful. We’ve had a good personal relationship with him and we appreciate him and his crew.”

“I think the project overall is pretty good. I still feel like it was locked in before they spoke to the public, that the agenda was already set by the FS.”

“Initially we weren’t so sure about the project. Our concern was this was drawn from an office. The fact that the parcel at top of Rumble Creek was deleted, maybe some of this wasn’t thought through. Maybe some missing areas, such as the one we had that should have never been proposed to begin with. We went on a group field tour, about 5-6 homeowners that went with Ingebretson to see the top of Rumble Creek. We did appreciate his personal review, that he took the time to go with us. Good to know its not just rubber stamped without public comment.”

“What I say about their policy isn’t going to make any difference. I was pleased when the FS guy came and talked to me. But for the FS “This is the policy, no matter what you think.” It all comes from national laws in Washington. The FS says they can’t do anything about it...I think they could become more locally oriented and stop saying “Its national policy.” I pay \$1200 a year to lease the cabin and it goes up 5% a year and they don’t do a damn thing – no road grading. The fuels reduction is not done in an appropriate area...The regulations come from California; the places across the land look like a park. I’ve been trying for a year to get permission to put in a driveway to the cabin. They have to send up a team of 6 to approve it. It’s always someone in Washington that says what you can do. The FS needs to act locally, make laws that apply here in Condon.”

20. Have you read the Holland Pierce “Decision Notice?”

no	45	(75%)
yes	15	(25%)

21. On a scale of 1 (strongly dislike) to 5 (strongly like), what is your opinion of the HP project?\*

	Frequency	Percent
No answer*	23	38
1 Strongly dislike	2	3
2 Somewhat dislike	3	5
3 In between	6	10
4 Somewhat like	13	22
5 Strongly like	13	22
Total	60	100.0

\*15 had not heard of the HP project and the remainder would not give an answer because they said it depends on what happens on the ground.

**Average 3.86**

“I didn’t personally meet with the forest service person but I knew they came by. We’re not at the property that much. But I’m very much in favor of this project...I don’t want to see a catastrophic fire come through here and wipe out peoples’ homes. Forest health and viability should be managed near residences (via thinning and get rid of the buggy trees). I’m strongly in favor of the HP project, it needs to be done – we’ve waited too long to get this work done. Everyone had a fit when they cleaned the campground. But now it looks great.”

“I’m afraid it’s never going to get done. Just mark trees and not get the work on the ground done.”

“I requested that they don’t clear at all near my place. I strongly dislike the project because it will clear out wildlife; I don’t think this is a good idea. We are afraid that the thinning to come will eliminate our views, privacy and interrupt wildlife habitat. It will be a mess for 20 years... Yes, the guy from the FS was polite and listened to our concerns, but didn’t change anything... The FS didn’t take our concerns to heart... I think the FS needs to take into consideration peoples’ requests to go lighter in areas where it affects landowners’ values, aesthetics and neighborhoods. This will

really disrupt our privacy and wildlife and my property value will go way down. The project information did change our views “somewhat” and we have done more clearing near the house.”

“Since the Crazy Horse fires in 2003, peoples’ awareness about fire danger rose and now they take it very seriously. I like the HP plan as long as they don’t clear cut and keep sufficient woods for wildlife.”

“I have reservations because they haven’t started yet...much depends on how they leave it. There’s no place to see a finished product – so it requires a lot of trust.”

22.How do you think the Holland Pierce project will affect the value of your property?

Lower its value	20 (33%)
Raise its value	6 (10%)
No effect or no opinion	34 (57%)*

\*Either because the HP project is located too far away to make a difference, or it doesn’t think it will make a difference.

23.Did anything you learned about the project change your ideas or the way you manage your property now or in the future?

no	51	(85%)
yes	6	(10%)
Don’t know or no opinion	3	(5%)

“I didn’t learn anything new because I attended meetings at SEC, at community hall through DNRC, and heard about how we need to be firewise... brushing out, limbing trees, keep everything as safe as possible. Anybody who attends these meetings has gotten a lot out of it. There are a lot of proactive people in this valley; the meetings were well attended.”

“Yes, the information about HP changed my ideas. I have looked at the ideas and decided to remove diseased and dead trees from my property. I have decided to cut even more trees off of my property.”

“Yes. It definitely changed the ways we manage our property. It was the kickoff to doing [fuel reduction] on our own property”

24. Preferred ways you would like to be involved or informed by the USFS in the future

<i>Source</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Mailings to home	3 (5%)	57 (95%)
Newspaper	27 (45%)	33 (55%)
Email	41 (68%)	19 (32%)
Public meetings	20 (33%)	40 (67%)
Field Tours	19 (32%)	41 (68%)

“I think we have to be a part of all the decisions that the FS make with the forest. In their meetings they need to explain their plans. Then we have a way to comment. We (public) need to be involved. We need to do some parts of the logging and we also need to be careful with streams. No more clear cuts, need to return and manage for the future. The parts we want to be wild we should keep wild.”

**25. General Resident Comments:**

“I think it’s good that there are organizations like SEC to do some gatekeeping. I’d like ongoing information and information that is multi-sided so I can see the whole picture, not just the FS side. More impartial information and not in FS “speak” which I don’t always understand, and not just what’s in the FS agenda, in order for me to formulate a good opinion.”

“Them idiots at the FS don’t know what they are doing...They’re not thinning, clearing, cleaning enough; they shouldn’t leave anything on the ground – clean it up...They should involve local people more who know something about this ground. “... idiots from somewhere else making policies; they don’t realize how important it is to thin completely and don’t leave anything on the ground or all will burn...It is useless to talk to the USFS, not if you are an average citizen. They’ll listen to folks at SEC but they are stupid over there. I want the USFS to do something – thin, log and commercial logging. The land in the Swan needs this. They’re spending too much money fighting fires rather than preventing them. I’ve been a logger my entire life and the USFS used to do something in the past, got stuff done on the ground. Now they just sit in offices only; they’re just a big bureaucracy that doesn’t accomplish anything.”

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Appendix 1. **Phone Survey Questionnaire**

Appendix 2. **Information Card**

Appendix 3. **Training Manual**

Appendix 4. **Information Sheet for Phone Surveyors**

Appendix 5. **Probes for Phone Surveyors**

Appendix 6. **Call Record**