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Dear Participant;

I want to thank you for your participation in the Southwest Idaho listening sessions held earlier this year in Boise regarding the Forest Service's interaction with people that care about National Forests. Using the facilitation expertise of the Metropolitan Group, you gave voice to your needs, wants, and expectations of the Forest Service and the management of the land.

Throughout February and March, a total of 21 listening sessions were held in nine different communities throughout the Intermountain West. Locations include Duchesne, Cedar City, and Saint George, Utah; Elko and Las Vegas, Nevada; Jackson, Wyoming; Salmon, Challis and Boise, Idaho. In total, 187 external constituents and 150 Forest Service employees gave feedback and ideas in the formal listening sessions or during in-depth, one-on-one interviews.

A diversity of perspectives was heard. Yet a number of overarching themes emerged:

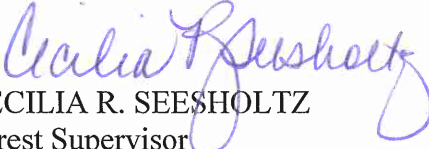
- 1) People tend to lead with their emotional love of the land, which can be an underutilized opportunity for connection;
- 2) Growing threats to natural resources are fueling the "environment versus economy" debate rather than inspiring unified action toward solutions;
- 3) National Forests are highly unlikely to be transferred to the states for management, despite high-profile attention;
- 4) There seems to be a disconnect between the Forest Service's work and mission in that the work is not communicated in the context of why the agency does what it does (its mission), creating the impression of an agency driven by its "to-do" list;
- 5) Individual leadership styles dictate the public's experience with the Forest Service, as opposed to organizational brand and reputation, resulting in mixed impressions;
- 6) Forest Service employees and leadership often change locations and there is a frequent turnover of rotating positions, this is resulting in unintended consequences in communities;
- 7) The public reacts positively to the Forest Service's presence when employees let go of a "do more with less" mindset and engage on shared interests; and
- 8) Communicating during controversy would be better than staying silent; others often tell the agency's story, and it would be better to hear from the agency itself.



The attached Draft Report is a synopsis of what was shared during the many listening sessions. The report also makes a few recommendations on future actions the Forest Service can take to increase public engagement and awareness of the Forest Service in the Intermountain Region. The Regional Leadership Team, which I am a part of, and the Regional Forester intends to further explore the recommendations and identify actions to deliver on the agency's mission.

When it comes down to it, we all value the land. I appreciate your time spent at the Boise sessions and am committed to continuing the dialogue on working together in the management of the National Forests so as to serve present and future generations.

Sincerely,


CECILIA R. SEESHOLTZ
Forest Supervisor