

*Stakeholders Forum for the Nantahala  
and Pisgah Plan Revision*

*December 2015 & January 2015  
Conversations*

***Themes & Summary  
of What We Heard***





- Those not aware of the MOU or who had not participated were surprised that so many Forum members were working on the effort and felt it was a breach of trust within the Stakeholders Forum
- MOU text - mentioned hunting, fishing, and timber, and trails yet wildlife and trails representation weren't involved
- Dismay that after the MOU was released, there were multiple news pieces and the signers continued to push the media campaign, even with the turmoil within the Stakeholders Forum
- Some felt the MOU signers should be removed from the Forum



- Those who participated in the MOU process did not expect or understand the negative response to its release
- MOU work had been progressing for several years and wasn't intended to impact or circumvent the Stakeholders Forum
- MOU timing – pushed by the December 15<sup>th</sup> deadline for comments on Wild and Scenic Rivers and potential wilderness areas
- Signers wished they had shared the MOU with the Forum prior to releasing it; there was some confusion within the MOU group about roles



## MOU Release - Impact

- Coverage in the media led to public confusion about the role of the MOU group, the Forest Partnership, the Stakeholders Forum, and the NFF
- Wildlife members were “getting hammered” by their constituents, asking why they are participating in the Forum, as a result of the media coverage
- Other members see the MOU as a non-issue for the Forum and a distraction. The group should refocus on specific Forest Stakeholders Forum assignment.



## Group Dynamics

- Hard line positions, like “No Wilderness” or “No management,” create challenges for collaborative efforts. Insurmountable? How to address?
- Some members also feel the MOU is a “hard position” and a “coalition” that will make it difficult to work collaboratively across the table
- Concerns expressed about incivility between members inside and outside of meetings and that actions/words are not respectful or constructive for strengthening relationships
- A few people talk much more than others during meetings and often monopolize or derail the group discussion; desire to hear from everyone



## Stakeholders Forum Process

- Wildlife members interpreted the Code of Conduct differently and didn't call on their constituencies to send comments against Wild and Scenic Rivers and/or potential wilderness areas to the Forest Service
- Some members are questioning whether to continue with the group
- Concerns about the Code of Conduct; language too vague and open to different interpretations
- Suggestions to improve the Code of Conduct's clarity, specifically about commenting to the Forest Service and communicating with the media



## Moving Forward

- It's still worthwhile to continue the Stakeholders Forum
- A strong core of members see the Stakeholders Forum as a great opportunity for the Nantahala Pisgah Forests
- Suggestion to narrow what's on the table for SF discussion
- Building trust is not an easy task, but members understand the value in continuing and moving beyond the battles