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 15th 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