Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values in Latah County:

An Investigation of Local and Absentee Property Owners

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1. Introduction

Across the non-metropolitan Western US population and demographics are rapidly changing (Beyers and Nelson 2000, Brehm et al. 2004). While many areas in the West have experienced double digit population growth in the past 15 years, nearly all have experienced social and economic changes, such as the decline of traditionally important production industries, increases in the service or recreation economy, and changes to local demographics (Masnick 2001). Many areas have also experienced increases in rural housing development and absentee ownership of second homes, vacation cabins, and rural properties (Maestas 2003). These changes, especially those related to demographics and absentee ownership, have important implications for the places they affect (Hansen et al. 2002). As the population of a place changes so to will the meanings associated with its landscape, which can influence people's attitudes and their reactions and behaviors towards further changes in land use (Jorgenson and Stedman 2001, Stedman 2002). Furthermore, changing population demographics can lead to changes in the development and trajectory of local communities (Theobald and Hobbs 2002). Understanding the relationship between people, place, and community is therefore important for developing strategies to deal with demographic and population changes, and changes in land use and management.

2. Objectives

We selected 3 non-metropolitan counties in Idaho and Oregon to investigate the relationship between people, place, and communities (Latah and Benewah Counties, Idaho and Wallowa County, Oregon). We investigate the attitudes, meanings, attachments, and values that people hold towards each county – summarily described as sense of place. We also explore the effects on sense of place of specific demographic characteristics, such as absentee property ownership and length of residence. This report details the results for Latah County, Idaho.

3. Methods

A list of 500 private property owners was developed in the Fall of 2004 for use in administering a social survey. Property owners were stratified by zip code of their property tax bill mailing address to ensure that an adequate number of local and absentee property owners were sampled. A mail questionnaire was constructed and implemented according to Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method, which is based on systematic administration of the survey instrument and consistently achieves high response rates with the general public. All questions in the questionnaire were either adapted from other published research, or developed in the course of preliminary interviews and questionnaire pre-testing. A mapping activity was also implemented in conjunction with the mail questionnaire following methods of Brown (2005). However, due to the nature of the mapping data, results from the mapping activity are not yet complete.

Of the 500 questionnaires that were mailed in Latah County, 56 were undeliverable due to incorrect or out of date addresses, 6 were not completed because the property had been sold to another owner, and 28 were not completed due to illness, death, or distress of the owner, leaving 410 eligible respondents. The results reported here are based on 212 (52%) useable questionnaires.

The data reported here have all been analyzed using the statistical analysis software SAS 9.1 © (SAS Institute Inc. 2002-2003).

To check for non-response error[1], 100 of the 758 non-respondents from all three counties were randomly selected and an attempt was made to contact them by telephone (45 were immediately removed because they had no listed phone number). Twenty-nine non-respondents were successfully reached, and 21 were willing to answer five questions related to the study. There was no statistically significant difference (α=0.05) between these non-respondents and the respondents on the following variables measured: age, years of property ownership in the county, years lived in the county, and reported degree of importance of social, cultural, and natural features of the counties. The non-respondent sample did have a slightly lower level of education than those who responded to the survey. The sample of respondents is, however, presumed to be reasonably representative of the population of property owners in all three counties.

4. Results & Discussion

Results from the mail survey are divided into different sections according to the types of questions asked and the types of analyses conducted. Results are split into five main sections: demographics, the County, communities, values, and land use and management.

Data in this report are reported according to the following rules. Average results for all participants are reported when no statistically significant difference exists between analysis groups. In cases where groups are statistically different, data are reported for each analysis group. In a number of cases statistical differences do exist; however, the small magnitude of difference brings into question whether the statistical difference is meaningful. These cases are reported and discussed. Finally, one of the foci of the research project is to better understand the differences between local and absentee property owners. The sample frame of property owners was stratified by zip code to ensure that an adequate number of likely local and absentee property owners were contacted. In reviewing the data we noticed that in a small number of cases the pre-determination of owner type (i.e., local or absentee) did not match the respondents self-reported data. For example, a few property owners categorized as absentee indicated that they spend 12 months a year in Latah County. The discrepancy between the sample categories and the self-reported data is likely due to property owners moving either into

[1]Non-response error occurs when the population of respondents gives answers to questions that are statistically different from the answers that would be given by the people in the sample who don't respond. Standard mail survey procedures to test for non-response error are to telephone a sample of non-respondents and compare answers for selected questions to the answers from respondents.

or out of Latah County between when the sample frame was developed and when the survey was implemented. For that reason, we chose to categorize absentee landowners as those landowners who spend less than six months per year in Latah County (44 out of 52 cases spend zero months per year in the county), and local owners as those who spend six months or more a year in Latah County (149 out of 157 local cases spend 12 months a year in the county). Two cases left the *months* field blank and were therefore coded according to zip code, one a local property owner and one an absentee property owner.

4.1 Demographics

Participants included local owners (N=158) and absentee owners (N=53), which roughly reflected the sample stratification and is also approximately representative of property ownership in the County. Participants were asked questions related to ownership of their property. As expected local owners have lived more years of their lives in Latah County and spend more months of the year in Latah County (Table 1). On average local owners have lived over 25 years more of their lives in the County than absentee owners, and they are year round residents. While absentee owners on average have owned property in the County for almost two decades, half of all absentee property owners have lived in the County for less than 15 years (median=12 years as compared to local owner median=38 years) and three-quarters spend less than 1 month a year in the County (3rd quartile =0 months).

Table 1. Latah County Ownership mean measures by owner type.

Measure	All (N=211)	Local (N=158)	Absentee (N=53)
Average Years lived in Latah County	–	39.3 yrs.†	13.0 yrs.
Average Years owned property in Wallowa County	26.8 yrs.	–	–
Average number of months spent in Wallowa County each year	–	11.9 mos. †	0.3 mos.

† Indicates item in which the difference between local and absentee property owners is significant ($p<0.0001$).

Second, participants were asked questions about general demographics. Statistically there is no difference between local and absentee property owners in education levels, occupational groups, income, or political ideology (Table 2). Local and absentee owners do, however, differ in their ages. Results from the demographic questions indicate that local and absentee owners are socio-economically similar while their life histories in Latah County differ substantially.

Table 2. Latah County demographics by owner type. Where no proportional differences (p>0.05) exist between local and absentee owners, all owner proportions are reported.

Measure	All (N=213)	Local (N=159)	Absentee (N=53)
Gender * (p=0.3721)			
Male	71.7%	–	–
Female	28.3	–	–
Age (p=0.0212)	–	59.1 years	63.9 years
Education (p<0.0001)			
<High School	3.0%	–	–
High School	17.6	–	–
Some College	23.1	–	–
2 Yr Degree	7.0	–	–
4 Yr. Degree	20.1	–	–
Advanced Degree	29.2	–	–
Occupation (p<0.3870)			
Farm & Ranch	19.9%	–	–
Natural Resource	8.1	–	–
Service Sector	10.8	–	–
Professional	24.7	–	–
Social Services	5.9	–	–
Management	2.2	–	–
Industry/Mfg.	16.7	–	–
Government	4.3	–	–
Other	7.5	–	–
Income (p<0.1676)			
<$15,000	1.2%	–	–
15,000 – 24,999	2.9	–	–
25,000 – 34,999	15.0	–	–
35,000 – 49,999	19.7	–	–
50,000 – 74,999	27.2	–	–
75,000 – 99,999	15.0	–	–
100,000 – 149,999	11.0	–	–
>150,000	8.1	–	–
Political Ideology (p=0.8346)			
Extremely liberal	0.5%	–	–
Liberal	14.3	–	–
Moderately liberal	13.8	–	–
Neutral	13.3	–	–
Moderately conservative	25.5	–	–
Conservative	27.6	–	–
Extremely conservative	2.6	–	–
Other	2.6	–	–

* The male gender bias likely reflects a cultural legacy of listing males first on property records when property is jointly owned by a husband and wife, and is therefore likely an artifact of sampling rather than a pattern of property ownership.

4.2 Latah County: Connection, Meanings, Attachment, and Attitudes

A number of questions asked about Latah County as a place. These questions focused on meanings of, attachment to, and attitudes about Latah County. All questions about the county were asked on 7 point scales, mostly in which a score of seven (7) indicates a response of very strongly agree, a four (4) indicates a response of neither agree nor disagree, and a one (1) indicates a response of very strongly disagree.

4.2.1 County Connection

Participants were asked about aspects that were important to their connection with the County. While most respondents indicated that they agreed that social, cultural, and natural aspects of the county were important to their connection with the County (Table 3), participants rated the natural (physical) landscape higher than social or cultural aspects of Latah County. Local property owners also consistently rated the values, culture, and way of life in the county higher than absentee property owners (Table 3) who tend to only *somewhat agree* that those cultural elements are important to their connection to the county.

Table 3. Measures of agreement with the social, cultural, and natural importance to respondents' connection to Latah County.

Measure	***Score****		
	All	**Local**	**Absentee**
My relatives, friends, and social connections	5.9	–	–
The values, culture, and way of life	–	5.8†	5.2
The physical – natural landscape	6.1	–	–

† Indicates item in which the difference between local and absentee property owners is significant ($p = 0.0028$).

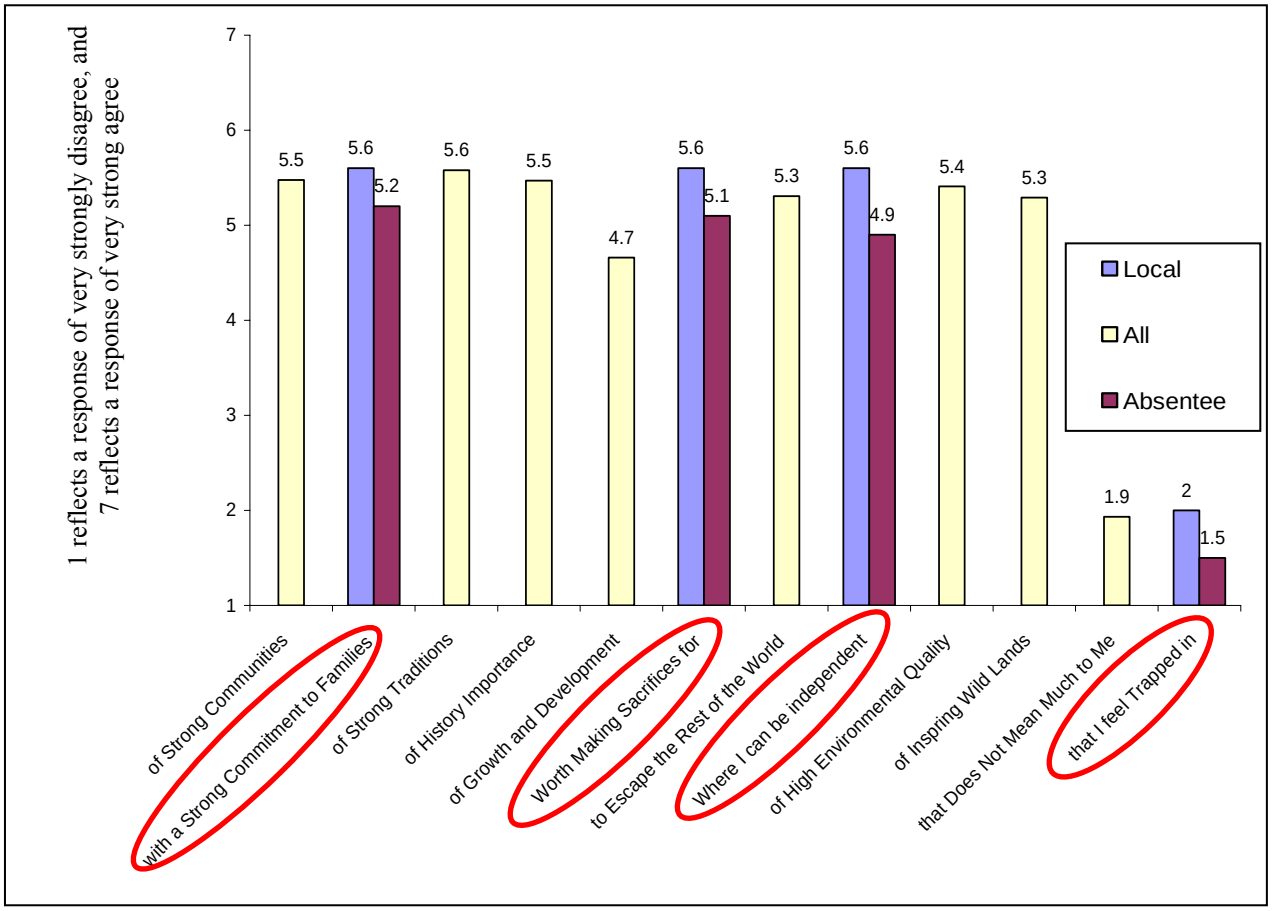
* 7 indicates very strongly agree, 6 indicates strongly agree, and 5 indicates somewhat agree.

4.2.2 Place Meanings

Participants were asked to agree or disagree with a list of 12 statements about, "what kind of place Latah County is." The statements offered concepts that preliminary study suggested would be meaningful in Latah County. While all respondents tended to agree with most of the given meanings (Figure 1) a number of results are worth highlighting. First, only one item, "Latah County is a place of growth and development," was rated on average near neutrality. This, however, reflects a diversity of perspectives on the item (response variance for this item is highest of all items) rather than overall respondent ambivalence. The average neutrality on this item may reflect a tension between those who wish to see growth and development in the County continue, and those who oppose the current trends. Second, a number of items demonstrate statistically significant differences between local and absentee landowners. Local property owners consistently agreed more strongly than absentee owners that Latah County is a place: 1) "with a strong commitment to families," 2) "worth making sacrifices for," 3) "where I can be

independent," and 4) "a place that I feel trapped in." These results demonstrate the strength of the personal commitment that local owners have to the County, while also indicating that the strong commitments to living in the county may lead some owners to feeling isolated. Despite the statistical differences that do exist between the meanings that absentee and local property owners attribute to the County, it is important to note that overall respondents view Latah County most strongly as a place of strong communities, families, traditions and history.

Figure 1. Latah County meaning items by owner type (each meaning item can be read as follows: e.g., Latah County is a place *of strong communities*). Circled items reflect items in which statistical differences between local and absentee property owners exist.



4.2.3 Attitudes about Latah County

Attitudes about 12 social, cultural, and environmental aspects of Latah County were measured using seven-point semantic differential scales. Semantic differential scales ask respondents to evaluate where their beliefs fall between two opposite poles. For example, we asked respondents to evaluate their position about jobs in the County using the following scale:

Has good job opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○	○ Needs more job opportunities

Among the 12 items (Table 5), both local and absentee owners rated seven items with relative neutrality (average scores between 3 and 5), and no items are rated negatively (average score greater than 5). Six of the neutral items are socio-economic and one is environmental. The neutral socio-economic items include the state of local communities, job opportunities, residential development, tourism and recreation, and the housing/land market. The neutral environmental item is access to public lands. Of the remaining five items, all are rated on average toward the positive pole. The state of Latah County's rural culture is the only socio-economic item rated positively; the four remaining positive items are environment-related and include scenery, hunting/fishing opportunities, forest health, and the amount of "wild" lands in the County.

Only the attitude item about the affordability of local land and housing successfully differentiates local and absentee property owners (Table 5). Although both groups fall in the neutral zone, local owners tend to evaluate the land and housing market as expensive, while absentee owners tend to evaluate the market as affordable. The result is also notable because the difference in response to the land and housing market item is larger than most differences throughout the entire survey.

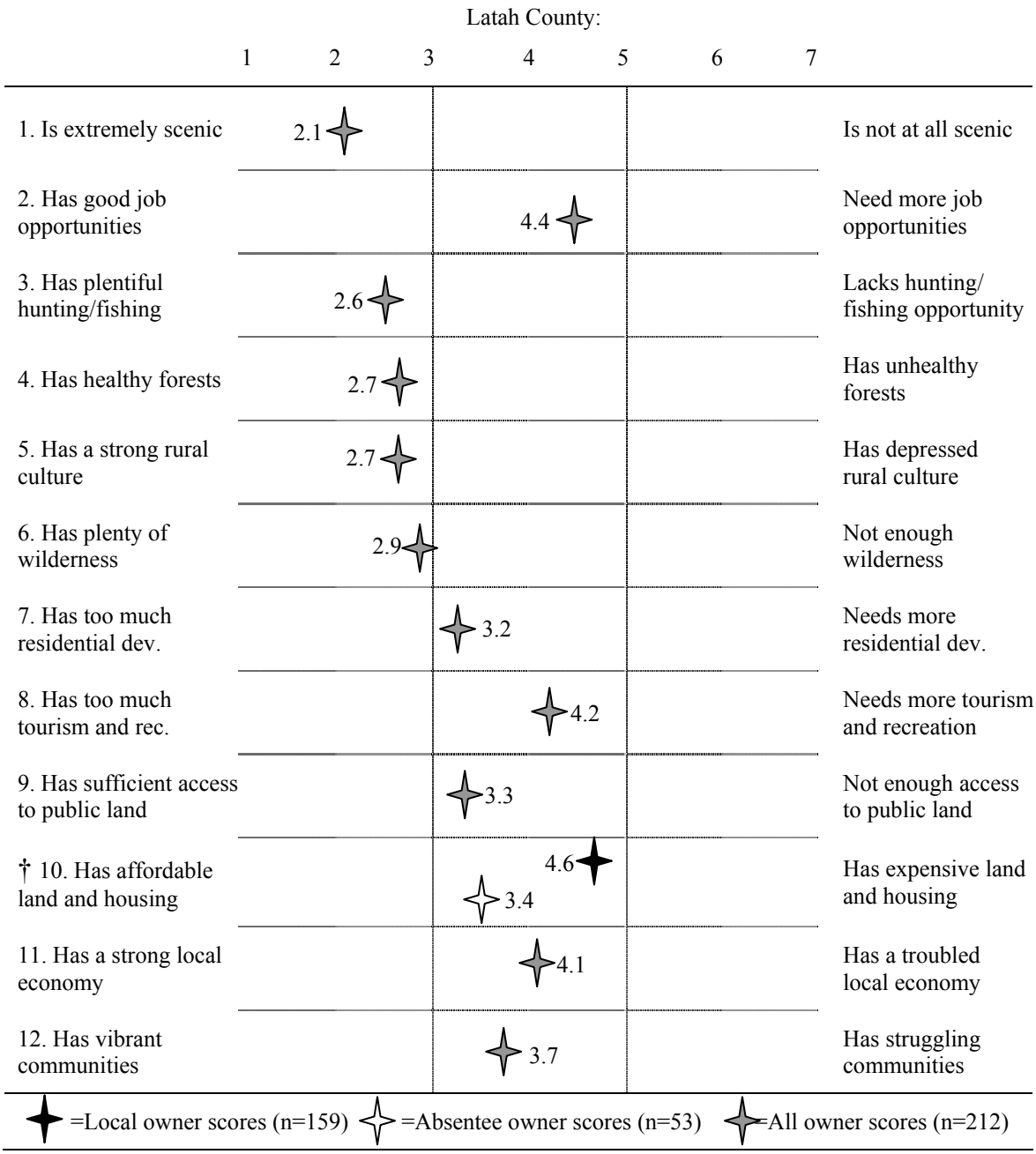
Although many average attitude scores for local and absentee property owners tend to show neutrality, it is important to stress that property owners in Latah County are not necessarily ambivalent in their attitudes about the County. The data for four of the seven neutral scoring items have the four of the five highest variances for all attitude items, indicating that attitudes are indeed strong, but balanced between strongly positive and strongly negative (jobs, residential development, land/housing market, access to public lands). The high variances on these items likely reflect tension in Latah County over the future direction of the County policies on growth and development.

While the hypothesis that local and absentee property owners would exhibit different attitudes about the county is not well supported in Latah County, future hypotheses must focus on finding categories that better differentiate attitudes.

4.2.4 Place Attachment

Place attachment (PA) has been described in the sociological literature as the emotional and contemplative bonds between a person and a place. Attachment to Latah County was measured with a 6 item scale that has been demonstrated to be reliable in the sociological literature. An analysis of the scores of those six items (Table 4) reveals that participants responded inconsistently to two items, which were therefore discarded from the scale. A composite score was then created by averaging the remaining 4 item scores to reflect a single measure that quantifies attachment to Latah County. A significant difference in place attachment scores does exist between local and absentee owners. Responses from local owners indicate that they are strongly attached to the County, whereas responses from absentee owners indicate only moderate emotional and thoughtful attachment to the County (Local PA = 5.7, Absentee PA=4.7). Also interesting is the effect of the number of years lived in the County (regardless of place of current residence) on attachment to Latah County. Respondents who have never lived in the Latah County have a significantly lower place attachment than those who have ($p<0.009$). When respondents

Table 4. Mean attitude scores for all (grey stars), local (black stars), or absentee (hollow stars) property owners in Latah County. Scores between the vertical lines indicate relative neutrality.



† Indicates a significant difference ($p<0.001$) between local and absentee owners.

are grouped by length of residence (i.e., 0 yrs., 1-10yrs., 11-20yrs., etc.) and average values for each group are plotted a trend becomes clear (Figure 2), demonstrating a strong relationship between attachment to Latah County and the number of years lived in the County.

Table 5. Measures of place attachment and their loadings on the place attachment factor*.

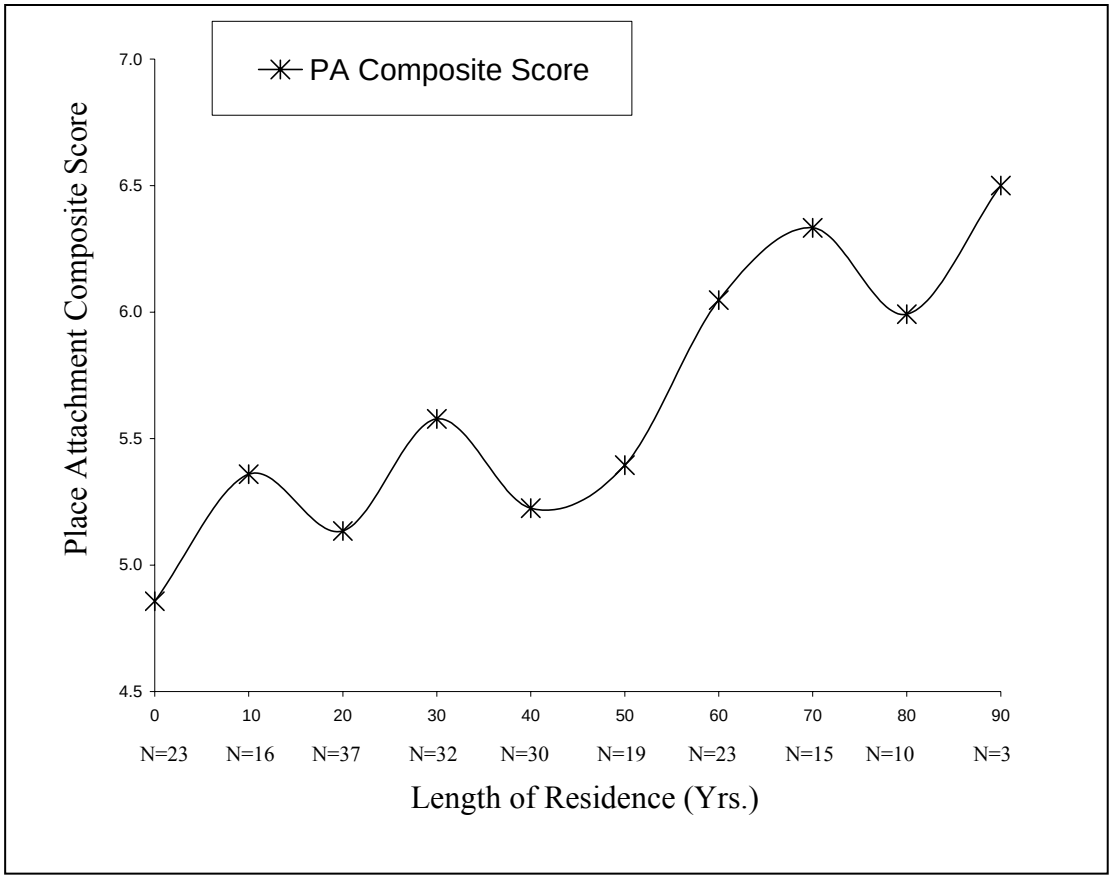
Place Attachment Items	Average Item score		Place Attachment Factor Loadings
	Local	Absentee	
1. It is my favorite place to be	5.8†	4.9	.92
2. I feel happiest when I am here	5.7†	4.7	.93
3. I really miss it when I am away to long	5.8†	4.8	.84
4. As far as I'm concerned there are better places to be	3.2†	3.9	–.51**
5. It is the best place for me to do the things that I enjoy	5.6†	4.7	.78
6. I would enjoy the outdoor activities I do here just as well in another place	4.1		– .31**
7. Composite Place Attachment Score (Average of Items 1 – 5)	5.7†	4.7	

† Indicates item in which the difference between local and absentee property owners is significant ($p < 0.001$).

* Factor analysis is a multivariate statistical method that is often used in social and psychological research to identify underlying concepts, or factors, represented by multiple measurement items. Factor scores close to 1 indicate strong evidence that the item is a reliable measure of a given factor.

** We have discarded items 4 and 6 from the factor score due to relatively low absolute factor loadings.

Figure 2. Average place attachment score by length of residence groups (Label are 0=0yrs., 10=1-10yrs., 20=11-20yrs., etc.). Number of respondents in each group listed below group labels.



4.3 Communities: Importance, Satisfaction, and Involvement

A number of questions asked about communities in Latah County. These questions asked about the community the respondent feels most a part of, important traits of that community, their satisfaction with different aspects of that community, and their involvement in that community. Similar to the questions about the whole county, community questions allowed participants to respond on a seven-point scale, where a score of seven indicates an answer of extremely important, satisfied, or involved and a score of one indicates an answer at the opposite end of the scale. We have selected two ways to report community data. First, we keep the above theme of comparing local to absentee property owners. Second, we report scores for the four communities named in Table 6 when differences exist.

4.3.1 Community

Participants were asked to select from a list of communities which they felt most a part of. Communities included on the list were Bovill, Deary, Genesse, Kendrick, Julietta, Moscow, Potlatch, and Troy. Also included in the list were *none* and a fill in the blank labeled *other*. About 77% of respondents marked that they feel most a part of Moscow (94), Potlatch (27), Deary (20), or Troy (19). Of the remaining 23%, respondents selected none (13), Kendrick (11), Genesse (10), Bovill (6), and others (6). A chi-square test of equality of proportions shows that local and absentee property owners tend to feel part of different communities with respect to each other ($p<0.0001$). Local owner responses fell within the expected range of responses given the responses for all owners in each of the four communities listed in Table 6. Absentee owners, however, select other communities or no community more than expected (Table 6).

Table 4. Percent (%) of local and absentee property owners who select the following communities as the one they feel most a part of. A chi-square test for equality of proportions demonstrates that a relationship exists between owner type and selected communities (p=0.0001).

	Moscow	Potlatch	Deary	Troy	Others	None*	Total
Local	50.0% (n=78)	15.4% (n=24)	8.3% (n=13)	10.9% (n=17)	14.1% (n=22)	1.3% (n=2)	100% (n=156)
Absentee	32.0% (n=16)	6.0% (n=3)	14.0% (n=7)	4.0% (n=2)	22.0% (n=11)	22.0% (n=11)	100% (n=50)
All	45.7% (n=94)	13.1% (n=27)	9.7% (n=20)	9.2% (n=19)	16.0% (n=33)	6.3% (n=13)	100% (n=206)

*Absentee owners who respond that they do not feel a part of any community contribute to more than 50% of the chi-square statistic suggesting that this deviation is the main contingency in the relationship between owner status and community.

4.3.2 Important Community Traits

Respondents were asked to rate eight traits of their community on a scale of *not at all important* (1) to *extremely important* (7). Overall, both local and absentee property owners rated the items as important, suggesting that both local and absentee owners are attached and have strong connections to their communities. Three of the eight items successfully differentiate local and absentee property owners (Table 7). Local owners rate higher than absentee owners the importance of family ties, the ability to freely express their opinions about community affairs, and opportunities to be involved in community-oriented projects.

Table 5. Local and Absentee property owner scores for the importance of 8 community traits. A score of 7 indicates a response of *extremely important* and a score of 1 indicates *not at all important*.

	All	Local	Absentee
1. Friends close by	5.4	–	–
2. Family ties	–	5.7†	5.1
3. The surrounding landscape and scenery	6.0	–	–
4. Local culture and tradition	5.1	–	–
5. Opportunities for outdoor recreation	5.6	–	–
6. Ability to freely express my opinion about community affairs	–	5.3††	4.4
7. Presence of birds and wildlife	6.0	–	–
8. Opportunities to be involved in community projects	–	4.8†	4.1

† Indicates items where local owner scores are statistically higher than absentee owner scores ($p<0.05$).

†† Indicates items where local owner scores are statistically higher than absentee owner scores ($p<0.001$).

We also examine whether differences exist in the importance of the eight community traits by community. When testing for differences among multiple groups with different sample sizes a conservative statistical test is needed to reduce the chance that we falsely report difference between groups due to sample size effects. The Tukey Kramer procedure minimizes the probability that we falsely report differences among the different communities; however, the test does increase the chance that we fail to find differences when they truly exist. We believe that erring on the side of caution is warranted given large differences in sample sizes between communities (e.g., 94 respondents from Moscow versus 19 from Troy). Given the conservative test, only one difference exists between responses from the four communities listed in Table 6. Property owners that identify Deary as the community they feel most a part of rate opportunities for outdoor recreation more highly important than do those from Potlatch – using the standard test Deary scores higher than all other communities except Troy.

4.3.3 Community Satisfaction

To assess the level of satisfaction participants have with the community they feel most a part of, we asked participants to rate six items on a scale of e*xtremely satisfied* (7) to *extremely dissatisfied* (1); the midpoint on the scale (4) was labeled neutral. Four of the six satisfaction items were rated with neutrality (Table 8). The two items relating to recreational access and social ties were rated with satisfaction (Table 8). Local and absentee property owners rate satisfaction similarly among the items; no statistical differences exist in the responses of the two groups.

We resort again to the conservative Tukey-Kramer procedure to compare differences between the four communities. Differences between the communities exist on only one item. Respondents who identify Deary as their community rate their satisfaction with *employment opportunities* in Deary statistically lower than those from Moscow – using the standard test Deary scores lower than all other communities except Troy (average response for Deary corresponds to a response of *dissatisfied* [3.1], which is approximately one point lower than all other communities except Troy).

Results from Latah County on community satisfaction items refute the hypothesis that local and absentee owners are satisfied or dissatisfied with different aspects of or have different levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with local communities.

Table 8. Satisfaction scores for 6 community aspects separated by community and owner status. A score of 7 indicates a response of *extremely important* and a score of 1 indicates *not at all important.*

	All	Local	Absentee
1. The community character	4.8	–	–
2. Employment opportunities	3.9	–	–
3. Local commerce and business	4.3	–	–
4. Recreational Access	5.1	–	–
5. Relatives and friends	5.6	–	–
6. Local politics and governance	4.0	–	–

4.3.4 Community Involvement

Involvement in the community was measured by asking participants to rate their involvement with ten types of community groups on a scale from *extremely involved* (7) to *not at all involved* (1). An eleventh item was also included that asked participants to rate their overall involvement in the community rather than focus on specific types of groups. Overall magnitude of responses is low, tending towards the *not at all involved* pole of the response scale. Eight of the 11 items differentiated local from absentee

property owners (Table 9). As expected, local owners exhibited higher degrees of involvement than absentee owners on all items (Table 9).

No differences exist for involvement items based on the respondents' community ($p>0.05$ for all items).

Table 9. Involvement scores for participation in community groups separated by community. A score of 7 indicates a response of *extremely involved* and a score of 1 indicates *not at all involved*.

	All	Local	Absentee
1. School board	–	2.1†	1.0
2. Community arts	–	2.2†	1.5
3. Chamber of commerce	–	2.0†	1.4
4. Planning groups	–	2.4†	1.5
5. Economic development groups	2.1	–	–
6. Church groups	–	3.3††	2.4
7. Natural resource organizations	–	3.0††	2.1
8. Youth or senior groups	2.7	–	–
9. Soil or water conservation groups	2.8	–	–
10. Production organizations	–	2.9††	2.2
11. Overall community involvement	–	3.2†	1.8

† Indicates items in which the difference between local and absentee owners is significant ($p<0.01$)
†† Indicates items in which the difference between local and absentee owners is significant ($p<0.05$)

Although average score magnitude is low (i.e., involvement tending toward the *not involved at all* pole of the scale), this may not necessarily indicate low overall participation in community affairs. First, average score for overall community involvement is higher than nine of ten other measures. This may indicate the inability to completely capture community involvement with the ten types of community groups listed in the questionnaire. Second, an exploratory factor analysis reveals two main types of involved respondents (Table 10). The first are those who participate in land management groups, focusing on organizations emphasizing the production and conservation of resources. The second is comprised of those respondents who consistently participate in local socio-economic activities, focusing on organizations that emphasize local commerce, cultural, and planning issues. That an exploratory factor analysis easily differentiates involvement in land management and socio-economic groups reflects prominent local concerns for and continued relevance of a healthy and productive resource base and strong local communities. Finally, low scores could be due

to ambiguity of the left endpoint of the scale, labeled *extremely involved*. As opposed to *not at all involved* what constitutes *extremely involved* is ambiguous, and future investigations may want to use response scales that give discreet response options (e.g., *once a month, etc.)*.

Table 10. Factor loadings for community involvement dimensions. Underlined items represent those item grouped in exploratory factor analysis. Church groups were excluded from the analysis because they did not load on either factor.

	Resource Factor	Socio-Economic Factor
1. School board	.19	.71
2. Community arts	.23	.50
3. Chamber of commerce	.29	.72
4. Planning groups	.24	.73
5. Economic development groups	.31	.77
6. Church groups	–	–
7. Natural Resource Organizations	.57	.46
8. Youth or senior groups	.21	.50
9. Soil or water conservation groups	.97	.24
10. Production organizations	.49	.22

4.4 Values-orientations

Value-orientations (the tendency towards one or another of a number of land management paradigms) were assessed using two methods. Respondents were asked to rate a series of nine statements relating to land management, production, and conservation. Responses ranged on a scale from *very strongly agree* (7) to *very strongly disagree* (1). Value items were developed to reflect 3 main resource management paradigms: 1) human-centered, 2) environment-centered, and 3) human-altruistic. The second method used a mapping activity included in the mail survey to assess the geographic distribution of natural resource values across the County. Results from the mapping activity are not yet completed

The scales for the three resource management paradigms did not function reliably with Latah County respondents (Table 11). Therefore, interpretation of individual items must be conducted rather than analysis of the three paradigms. Local and absentee property owners in Latah County exhibit no differences in values orientations (Table 11). Overall,

respondents agree with values that relate to active management (ie., items HC1, HC3, HA1, HA2). Respondents also strongly agree that nature has inherent values (EC1). The combination of high levels of agreement with active management and inherent values suggests that on average Latah County property owners have a strong stewardship ethic. Only one difference exists among all value items between communities. Respondents that identify most with Moscow score significantly lower (less agreement) than those who identify with Deary on the item *Nature's primary value is to provide products to people who depend on them* – using the standard test, Moscow scores lower (less agreement) than all other communities (Averages: Moscow – 3.9, Potlatch – 4.6, Others – 4.7, Troy – 4.8, Deary 5.3). Five of the nine value orientation items have standard deviations greater than 1.5, indicating that a substantial amount of diversity in values orientations exist in Latah County.

Table 11. Average value item scores and factor loadings for human-centered (HC), human-altruistic (HA), and environment-centered (EC) value items. A score of 7 indicates a response of *very strongly agree* and 1 indicates a response of *very strongly disagree*. Inconsistent factor loadings for the hypothesized resource management paradigms (i.e., HC, HA, and EC) indicate that the paradigms fail to accurately reflect respondent values, or that the items did not provide accurate measurement.

	All	Local	Absentee	HC Factor	HA Factor	EC Factor
HC1. The primary value of forests, range, and agricultural lands is to generate economic self-reliance for communities	5.0	–	–	.83	.21	.01
HC2. Nature's primary value is to provide products to people who depend on them	4.4	–	–	.77	.13	–.04
HC3. Forest, range, and agricultural lands are healthiest when people actively care for them	5.8	–	–	.43	.65	.01
HA1. Forest and rangeland health are dependent on human restoration	5.3	–	–	.38	.46	.05
HA2. Good land management practices can benefit both nature and human communities	6.2	–	–	.08	.67	.00
HA3. Wildlife and plants should only be taken or killed to directly support human survival	3.6	–	–	–.02	.01	.69
EC1. Nature has value whether people use it or not	6.0	–	–	–.06	.43	.10
EC2. Wildlife, plants, and people have equal rights to live	4.2	–	–	–.10	.11	.68
EC3. Past management in forests and rangelands has reduced the quality of the environment	4.3	–	–	–.45	.08	.25

4.5 Land Use and Resource Management Scenarios

Participants were asked about the likelihood that they would undertake specific supportive or opposing actions given four hypothetical scenarios. The four scenarios were oriented towards changes in land use or land management in the County, and included: 1) rapid residential development on agricultural lands, 2) the designation of a new park or recreation area on Moscow Mountain, 3) plans for substantial forest thinning conducted by the US Forest Service under the Healthy Forests Initiative, and 4) land use regulations to protect native Palouse Prairie. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would support a scenario by talking to friends or writing a letter, joining a group in support of the scenario, oppose the scenario by talking to friends or writing a letter, joining a group opposed to the scenario, vote for a law opposed to the scenario, or whether they would be ambivalent towards the scenario. Responses were coded as likely to support the scenario, likely to oppose the scenario, uncertain about their response to the scenario, and likely to be ambivalent towards the scenario. Uncertain cases were coded when respondents rated both supporting and opposing behaviors as unlikely. In a small number of cases participants responded that they were likely to engage in at least one supporting behavior and one opposing behavior; these cases were removed from the analysis.

No differences exist in the levels of support, opposition, uncertainty, and ambivalence between local and absentee respondents on all the scenarios ($p>0.05$ for each scenario). Uncertainty is relatively high in all scenarios. The two scenarios in which uncertainty is lowest are residential development on agricultural land and forest thinning by the USFS. Due to the prominence of both topics in Latah County, and the Western US more generally, it is likely that respondents have thought more carefully about these issues, and therefore it is not surprising that uncertainty is lower for these two scenarios. Another reason for high uncertainty is the relatively short scenario description given in the questionnaire, which undoubtedly left some respondents unable to make a decision for want of more details about the scenarios.

Among all respondents increases in residential development on agricultural lands is opposed nearly three to one; however, whether this translates to increased support for land use regulations on residential development is unknown. Land use regulations to protect native Palouse Prairie is generally opposed (approximately 3:2), but it is notable that support for prairie protecting regulations is nearly 40% of those respondents when uncertain and ambivalent respondents are removed. Fuels management on Forest Service land and public designation of land for recreation were generally supported. Respondents support forest thinning in Latah County under the Healthy Forest Initiative by nearly a 4:1 margin to those who oppose. A park designation on Moscow Mountain was also supported, although by a lesser margin of approximately 2.5:1.

Responses to land use and land management change scenarios may provide guidance for local and Federal officials faced with making decisions about private land use and public land management. That nearly 80% of all respondents are either unsure or opposed to land use change on agricultural land and regulations to protect native prairie supports a

Table 12. Percent of respondents likely to support, oppose, or be unsure or ambivalent towards three land use and resource management scenarios. Only responses where all four scenarios were rated were analyzed. Scenario likelihoods may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Scenario	Local – % Likely (n=128)	Absentee – % Likely (n=44)	All – % Likely (n=172)
1. Residential Development on Agricultural Land (p=0.0791)			
Support	–	–	15.2
Oppose	–	–	40.1
Uncertain	–	–	37.8
Ambivalent	–	–	7.0
2. Park Designation on Moscow Mountain (p=0.2692)			
Support	–	–	33.7
Oppose	–	–	12.8
Uncertain	–	–	50.0
Ambivalent	–	–	3.5
3. USFS Forest Thinning and Fuels Reduction (p=0.3557)			
Support	–	–	40.7
Oppose	–	–	11.1
Uncertain	–	–	41.3
Ambivalent	–	–	7.0
4. Land Use Regulations for Native Palouse Prairie (p=0.2356)			
Support	–	–	17.4
Oppose	–	–	28.5
Uncertain	–	–	51.7
Ambivalent	–	–	2.3

measured approach to future land use change and regulation. These results suggest that non-regulatory methods to achieving land use goals may be worth exploring or supporting. The results also suggest that support exists for active management and more designated recreational areas on public lands. Finally, the results also fail to support the hypothesis that local and absentee property owners in Latah County will have different behavioral intentions towards land use and resource management scenarios.

5. Conclusions

Non-metropolitan counties across the Western US are experiencing economic and demographic transitions, and Latah County is no exception. Although Latah County does not have the amenities that attract droves of second and vacation home owners (e.g., high mountains or substantial bodies of water) approximately 30% of non-industrial private property owners are absentee owners. It has been suggested elsewhere that absentee owners typically bring with them different sets of attitudes, beliefs, and values about the place where they own property.

We investigated the attitudes, beliefs, and values reflected in the County and its communities by Latah County property owners. Our results show that while a few differences exist in the way local and absentee property owners view Latah County, that local and absentee owners are similar in many aspects. Few differences exist in what Latah County means to local and absentee property owners, although local owners more strongly agree that Latah County is a place worth making sacrifices for commitment to family and one's own independence. One concept that consistent and significant differences do exist is attachment to the County. Local owners have stronger emotional and contemplative bonds with the County. In another difference absentee owners tend feel a part of smaller communities in the County or no community at all as opposed to local owners who tend to feel a part of the County's larger communities. Although consistent differences also exist in community involvement with local owners being more involved, few differences exist in the importance or satisfaction with specific community traits or the values orientations held by local and absentee property owners. In general property owners rate the features of the landscape surrounding their communities more highly important than social or economic traits of their communities indicating that Latah County's landscape is highly important in becoming attached to the County. Satisfaction with communities is highest with recreational access and social ties to the communities, while satisfaction with local economies and governance of communities is only neutral. Latah County's four main communities exhibit similar levels of importance of community traits, satisfaction, and involvement, and property owners from all communities exhibit a stewardship values-orientation. Finally, both groups of property owners responded similarly to land use and natural resource management scenarios. Although many respondents were uncertain about their responses, those who were certain were likely to support stewardship and recreational land management actions, and likely to oppose land use change and regulations on private lands.

These results for the most part fail to support the hypothesis that local and absentee owners have different attitudes, beliefs, and values about Latah County. On the other

hand the results support a more specific typology of absentee property owners. For instance, in Latah County half of all absentee property owners surveyed have lived more than 12 years of their lives in Latah County. Furthermore, 85% of all absentee property owners in Latah County report that they do not spend any time of the year in the County indicating that they do not come to the County for vacation. These two statistics combined with the lack of support for the absentee hypothesis suggest that absentee property owners in Latah County are, for the most part, not second or vacation home owners, but rather former residents who have for one reason or another left Latah County for other places while holding onto their property. Reasons for holding onto property as an absentee owner may be due in part to strong attachments to the area. A more detailed analysis of absentee owners may suggest that absentee owners who are former residents, as exhibited in Latah County, may be more similar to local owners and therefore have fewer impacts on local culture than absentee owners who are second and vacation home owners. On the other hand, increasing rates of *former resident* absentee owners may not provide the economic opportunities presented by absentee owners who purchase homes or property for vacation or escape opportunities. Further research could help refine an absentee owner typology by investigating the impacts of absentee ownership on forest and farm management.

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