

Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values in Benewah 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 Benewah County, Idaho.

3. Methods

In cooperation with the Benewah County Assessors office, a list of 380 private property owners was developed in the Winter 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 380 questionnaires that were mailed in Benewah County, 11 were undeliverable due to incorrect or out of date addresses and 17 were not completed due to illness, death, or distress of the owner, leaving 352 eligible respondents. The results reported here are based on 171 (49%) 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 error¹, 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 ($\alpha=0.05$) 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 (5) the pre-determination of owner type (i.e., local or absentee) did not match the respondent's self-reported data. For example, a few property owners categorized as absentee indicated that they spend 12 months a year in Benewah County. The discrepancy between the sample

¹Non-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.

categories and the self-reported data may be due to property owners moving either into or out of Benewah County between when the sample frame was developed and when the survey was implemented. We, therefore, chose to categorize absentee landowners as those landowners who spend less than six months per year in Benewah County (42 out of 61 cases spend zero months per year in the county), and local owners as those who spend six months or more a year in Benewah County (104 out of 108 cases spend 12 months in the county). Two cases left the *months* field blank and were therefore coded according to zip code, which in both cases were local zip codes.

4.1 Demographics

Participants included local owners (N=110) and absentee owners (N=61), 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 Benewah County and spend more months of the year in Benewah County (Table 1). On average local owners have lived over 20 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, more than half of all absentee property owners have never lived in the County (median=0 years as compared to local owner median=27.5 years) and two-thirds spend less than 1 month a year in the County.

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

Measure	All (N=171)	Local (N=110)	Absentee (N=61)
Average Years lived in Latah County	–	31.8 yrs. †	9.2 yrs.
Average Years owned property in Wallowa County	23.4 yrs.	–	–
Average number of months spent in Wallowa County each year	–	11.8 mos. †	0.7 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. The education levels, occupation groups, and income levels differ between local and absentee property, while no differences exist in age, gender, and political ideologies (Table 2). Overall absentee owners tend to have higher levels of education and income, and local property owners tend to work more in natural resource occupations, while absentee owners tend to work more in professional and service industries. Results from the demographic questions indicate that while all owners share a common conservative political philosophy, local and absentee owners have different socio-economic backgrounds and life histories in Benewah County.

Table 2. Benewah 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=171)	Local (N=110)	Absentee (N=61)
Gender * (p=0.7444)			
Male	71.5%	–	–
Female	28.5	–	–
Age (p=0.6406)			
Age (p=0.6406)	57.9 years	–	–
Education (p=0.0009)			
<High School	–	3.9%	1.7%
High School	–	38.5	13.3
Some College	–	31.7	26.7
2 Yr Degree	–	10.6	18.3
4 Yr. Degree	–	10.6	23.3
Advanced Degree	–	4.8	16.7
Occupation (p=0.0063)			
Farm & Ranch	–	14.7%	12.7%
Natural Resource	–	29.5	12.7
Service Sector	–	5.3	14.6
Professional	–	4.2	23.6
Social Services	–	6.3	5.5
Management	–	2.1	0.0
Industry/Mfg.	–	14.7	14.6
Government	–	11.3	9.1
Other	–	10.5	7.3
Income (p=0.0005)			
<\$15,000	–	7.5%	5.6%
15,000 – 24,999	–	12.8	1.9
25,000 – 34,999	–	17.0	5.6
35,000 – 49,999	–	22.3	13.0
50,000 – 74,999	–	28.7	33.3
75,000 – 99,999	–	6.4	11.1
100,000 – 149,999	–	4.3	16.7
>150,000	–	1.1	13.0
Political Ideology (p=0.1982)			
Extremely liberal	1.3%	–	–
Liberal	7.7	–	–
Moderately liberal	11.6	–	–
Neutral	16.1	–	–
Moderately conservative	27.1	–	–
Conservative	28.4	–	–
Extremely conservative	5.8	–	–
Other	1.9	–	–

* 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 Benewah County: Connection, Meanings, Attachment, and Attitudes

A number of questions asked about Benewah County as a place. These questions focused on meanings of, attachment to, and attitudes about Benewah 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 Benewah County. Local property owners also consistently rated the importance of their relatives, friends, and social connections in the County higher than absentee property owners (Table 3) who tend to only *somewhat agree* that those social 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 Benewah County.

Measure	Score*		
	All	Local	Absentee
My relatives, friends, and social connections	–	5.9 [†]	4.8
The values, culture, and way of life	5.3	–	–
The physical – natural landscape	6.3	–	–

[†] 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 Benewah County is.” The statements offered concepts that preliminary study suggested would be meaningful in Benewah 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, “Benewah County is a place of growth and development,” was rated with on average with 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 wish an end to future growth and development. Second, two items demonstrate statistically significant differences between local and absentee landowners. Local property owners consistently agreed more strongly than absentee owners that Benewah County is a place “of strong communities,” and consistently disagreed more than absentee owners that Benewah County is a place “that does not mean much to me.” Although these differences are statistically significant, they may only be marginally meaningful as in both cases the rounded scores reflect the identical response (i.e., somewhat agree and strongly disagree, respectively). Overall, all

Among the 12 items (Table 5), both local and absentee owners rated eight items with relative neutrality (average scores between 3 and 5), and only one item is rated negatively (average score greater than 5). Six of the eight neutral items are socio-economic and two are environment-related. The neutral socio-economic items include the state of local communities, local culture, local economy, residential development, tourism and recreation, and the housing/land market. The neutral environment-related items are access to public lands and the abundance of wild lands. Three items are rated on average toward the positive pole, and each is environment-related including the scenic nature of the county, hunting and fishing opportunities, and the health of forests. Only one item, the state of job opportunities in the county, differentiates local and absentee property owners (Table 5), with local owners having a more negative attitude about the state of jobs in the county than absentee owners.

Although many average attitude scores for local and absentee property owners tend to show neutrality, it is important to stress that property owners in Benewah County are not necessarily ambivalent in their attitudes about the County. The data for five of the eight neutral scoring items have the five highest variances for all attitude items, indicating that attitudes are indeed strong, but balanced between strongly positive and strongly negative (abundance of wild lands, amount of tourism and recreation, access to public lands, strength of the local economy, and the state of local communities).




While the hypothesis that local and absentee property owners would exhibit different attitudes about the county is not well supported in Benewah County, future hypotheses can 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 Benewah 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 one item, which was therefore discarded from the scale. A composite score was then created by averaging the remaining 5 item scores to reflect a single measure that quantifies attachment to Benewah 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 attachment to the County (Local PA = 5.6, 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 Benewah County. Respondents who have never lived in the Benewah County have a significantly lower place attachment than those who have ($PA_{\text{never}} = 4.4$, $PA_{\text{have}} = 5.5$; $p < 0.001$). When respondents 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 significantly strong relationship between attachment to Benewah County and the number of years lived in the County ($R^2 = 0.67$).

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

		Benewah County:								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1. Is extremely scenic	2.2								Is not at all scenic	
† 2. Has good job opportunities									Need more job opportunities	
3. Has plentiful hunting/fishing	2.5								Lacks hunting/fishing opportunity	
4. Has healthy forests	2.9								Has unhealthy forests	
5. Has a strong rural culture									Has depressed rural culture	
† 6. Has plenty of wild lands	3.0								Not enough wilderness	
7. Has too much residential dev.									Needs more residential dev.	
8. Has too much tourism and rec.									Needs more tourism and recreation	
9. Has sufficient access to public land									Not enough access to public land	
† 10. Has affordable land and housing									Has expensive land and housing	
11. Has a strong local economy									Has a troubled local economy	
12. Has vibrant communities									Has struggling communities	

 =Local owner scores (n=112)
  =Absentee owner scores (n=59)
  =All owner scores (n=171)

† Indicates a significant difference (p<0.01) between local and absentee owners.

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†	4.8	.98
2. I feel happiest when I am here	5.8†	4.7	.97
3. I really miss it when I am away to long	5.8†	4.7	.91
4. As far as I'm concerned there are better places to be	3.1††	3.8	-.62
5. It is the best place for me to do the things that I enjoy	5.8†	4.7	.74
6. I would enjoy the outdoor activities I do here just as well in another place		3.8	-.31**
7. Composite Place Attachment Score (Average of Items 1 – 5)	5.6†	4.7	

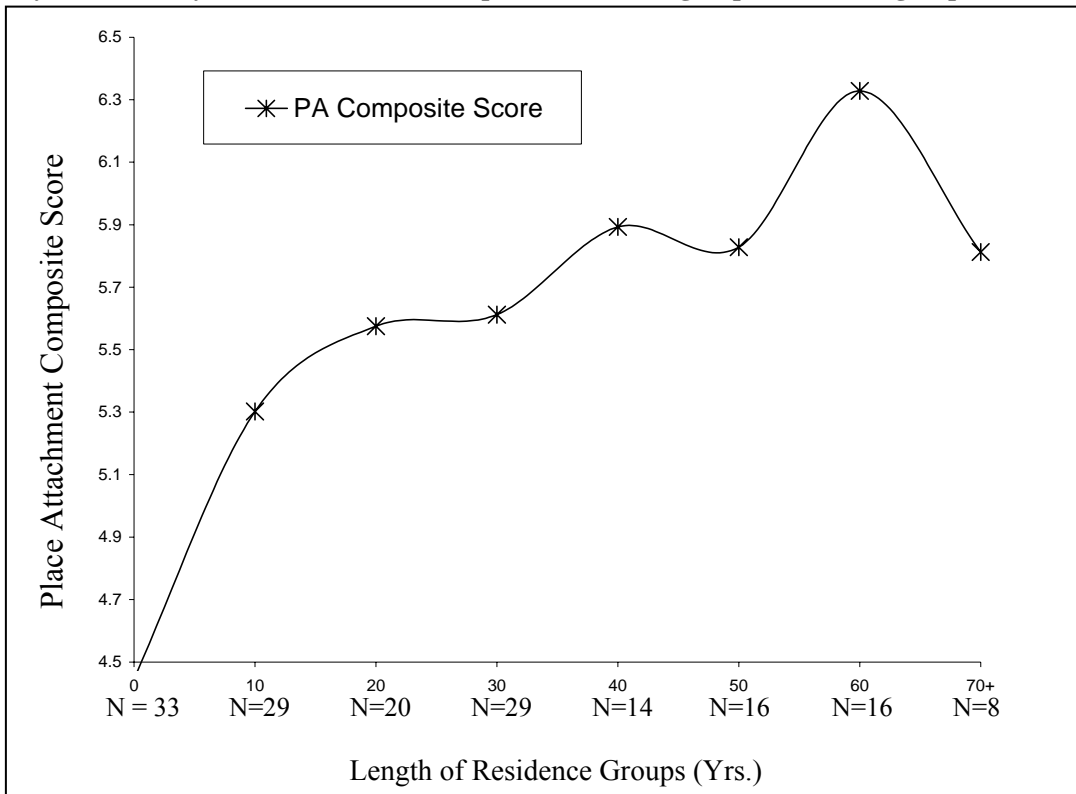
† Indicates item in which the difference between local and absentee property owners is significant ($p < 0.001$).

†† Indicates item in which the difference between local and absentee property owners is significant ($p < 0.01$).

* 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 item 6 from the factor score due to the relatively low absolute factor loading.

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 Benewah 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 groups of 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 Benewah, Desmet, Emida, Plummer, St. Maries, St. Joe, and Tensed. Also included in the list were *none* and a fill in the blank labeled *other*. About 84% of respondents marked that they feel most a part of St. Maries (71); Santa, Fernwood, or Emida (23); Tensed, Desmet, or Sanders (22); or Plummer (21). The remaining 16%, respondents selected none (12), St. Joe (7), Benewah (5), and others (2). 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=0.0003). While differences in the overall distribution of responses do exist, local owner responses tend to fall within the expected range of responses given the responses for all owners. Absentee owners, however, respond that they feel a part of no community more than expected given the overall distribution (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=0.0003).

	St. Maries	Santa, Fernwood, Emida	Tensed, Desmet, Sanders	Plummer	Others	None*	Total
Local	47.6% (n=49)	16.5% (n=17)	12.6% (n=13)	14.6% (n=15)	8.7% (n=9)	0.0% (n=0)	100% (n=103)
Absentee	36.7% (n=22)	10.0% (n=6)	15.0% (n=9)	10.0% (n=6)	8.3% (n=5)	20.0% (n=12)	100% (n=60)
All	43.6% (n=71)	14.1% (n=23)	13.5% (n=22)	12.9% (n=21)	8.6% (n=14)	7.4% (n=12)	100% (n=163)

*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). Four of the eight items successfully differentiate local and absentee property owners (Table 7). Local owners rate higher than absentee owners the importance of friends, family ties, the ability to freely express their opinions about community affairs, and opportunities to be involved in community-oriented projects. Local property owners tend to rate these items as moderately important (scores around 5), while absentee owners tend to rate these items neutrally, indicating that absentee owner attachment to their communities has little to do with social ties or social opportunities in the communities. Interestingly, the importance of the local culture of the County’s communities is rated only slightly above neutral by all respondents. Finally, the three traits related to the environment surrounding the communities are rated highly important by all owners.

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., 71 for St. Maries versus roughly 20 for all other groups). Given the conservative test, only one difference exists between responses from the four groups of communities listed in Table 6. Property owners that identify St. Maries, Santa, Fernwood, or Emida (communities in

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†	4.3
2. Family ties	–	5.1††	4.4
3. The surrounding landscape and scenery	6.0	–	–
4. Local culture and tradition	4.5	–	–
5. Opportunities for outdoor recreation*	5.8	–	–
6. Ability to freely express my opinion about community affairs	–	5.1††	4.4
7. Presence of birds and wildlife	6.1	–	–
8. Opportunities to be involved in community projects	–	4.8†	3.6

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

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

* Opportunity for outdoor recreation is rated more highly important for respondents who identify with communities in the forested portion of the County than communities in the agricultural portion of the County.

the forested portion of the County) as the community they feel most a part of rate opportunities for outdoor recreation more highly important than do those who identify with Plummer, Sanders, Tensed, or Desmet (communities in the agricultural portion of the county). On all other items no statistical differences exist between communities.

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 *extremely satisfied* (7) to *extremely dissatisfied* (1); the midpoint on the scale (4) was labeled neutral. Three of the six satisfaction items were rated with neutrality (Table). The items relating to recreational access, social ties, and community character were rated with satisfaction (Table 8). Local and absentee property owners rate satisfaction similarly among the items; however, local owners rate higher their satisfaction with the social ties they have in their community.

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 St. Maries as their community rate their satisfaction with *the community character* in St. Maries statistically higher than those who identify Plummer as the community they feel most a part of.

Results from Benewah County on community satisfaction items do not well support the hypothesis that local and absentee owners have different levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the traits of the communities with which they identify.

Table 8. Satisfaction scores for 6 community aspects separated by community and owner status. A score of 7 indicates a response of *extremely satisfied* and a score of 1 indicates *extremely dissatisfied*.

	All	Local	Absentee
1. The community character	4.7	–	–
2. Employment opportunities	3.7	–	–
3. Local commerce and business	4.1	–	–
4. Recreational Access	5.2	–	–
5. Relatives and friends	–	5.7†	5.0
6. Local politics and governance	3.9	–	–

† Indicates item where local owner scores are statistically higher than absentee owner scores (p=0.001).

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. Nine 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 each of those items (Table 9).

School board involvement is rated higher among respondents who identify with Plummer (2.6) than respondents from St. Maries (1.7), and Tensed, Desmet, or Sanders (1.4). No other differences exist in involvement by community. Overall, church groups consistently have the highest involvement scores among both local and absentee owners and across all communities.

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††	1.4
2. Community arts	–	2.2††	1.5
3. Chamber of commerce	–	1.8††	1.3
4. Planning groups	–	2.4†	1.4
5. Economic development groups	–	2.2††	1.4
6. Church groups	–	3.4†	2.6
7. Natural resource organizations	2.5	–	–
8. Youth or senior groups	–	2.7†	1.8
9. Soil or water conservation groups	–	2.7†	1.9
10. Production organizations	2.1	–	–
11. Overall community involvement	–	3.2††	2.3

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

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

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 the 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 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 on 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.

	Resource Factor	Socio-Economic Factor
1. School board	.20	<u>.66</u>
2. Community arts	.13	.47
3. Chamber of commerce	.23	<u>.72</u>
4. Planning groups	.33	<u>.84</u>
5. Economic development groups	.44	<u>.72</u>
6. Church groups	.28	.29
7. Natural Resource Organizations	<u>.64</u>	.47
8. Youth or senior groups	.40	.45
9. Soil or water conservation groups	<u>.98</u>	.19
10. Production organizations	<u>.60</u>	.21

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 Benewah County respondents (Table 11, right side). Therefore, interpretation of individual items must be conducted rather than analysis of the three paradigms. Local and absentee property owners in Benewah County exhibit no differences in response to eight of the nine value items (Table 11). The item referring to active management of resources (HC3) resulted in a statistical difference between local and absentee owners;

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	5.2	–	–	<u>.79</u>	–.19	–.18
HC2. Nature’s primary value is to provide products to people who depend on them	4.7	–	–	<u>.68</u>	–.11	–.12
HC3. Forest, range, and agricultural lands are healthiest when people actively care for them	–	6.0†	5.7	<u>.65</u>	.29	.05
HA1. Forest and rangeland health are dependent on human restoration	5.5	–	–	.61	<u>.24</u>	.23
HA2. Good land management practices can benefit both nature and human communities	6.2	–	–	.28	<u>.96</u>	.04
HA3. Wildlife and plants should only be taken or killed to directly support human survival	3.7	–	–	.06	<u>.04</u>	.51
EC1. Nature has value whether people use it or not	6.0	–	–	–.11	.46	<u>.19</u>
EC2. Wildlife, plants, and people have equal rights to live	4.2	–	–	.02	.05	<u>.52</u>
EC3. Past management in forests and rangelands has reduced the quality of the environment	4.3	–	–	–.18	.18	<u>.47</u>

however, the difference is not meaningful as both groups average response to the item rounds to strongly agree with active management of resources (5.0). Overall, respondents agree with values that relate to active management whether for production or restoration purposes (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 Benewah County property owners have a strong stewardship ethic that synthesizes the utility and intrinsic value of natural resources. Only one difference exists among all value items between communities. Respondents that identify most with Tensed, Desmet, or Sanders score significantly higher (more agreement) than those who identify with St. Maries on the item *Nature's primary value is to provide products to people who depend on them*. Finally, five of the nine value orientation items have standard deviations greater than 1.5, indicating that a substantial amount of diversity in values exist in Benewah County.

4.5 Land Use and Resource Management Scenarios

Participants were asked about the likelihood that they would undertake specific supportive or opposing actions given three hypothetical scenarios. The three scenarios were oriented towards changes in land use or land management in the County, and included: 1) rapid residential development on along the St. Joe River, 2) plans for substantial forest thinning conducted by the US Forest Service under the Healthy Forests Initiative, and 3) increased land use regulations along riparian areas in an effort to improve water quality for tributaries to Lake Coeur d'Alene. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that they would support 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. Finally, cases that did not respond to all scenarios were removed from the analysis.

No differences exist in the levels of support, opposition, uncertainty, and ambivalence between local and absentee respondents on the residential development or forest thinning scenarios. The land use regulation scenario differentiates local and absentee owner responses. Among decided respondents local owners tend to oppose the land use regulation scenario 2:1, while absentee owners support the scenario by nearly 3:1. The difference in response to this scenario may reflect the notion that absentee owners are drawn to the County for amenity reasons rather than economic opportunities, while local owners may perceive regulations as an intrusion on their opportunities to make a livelihood.

Among all respondents increases in residential development along the St. Joe River is opposed nearly 3:1; however, whether this translates to support for land use regulations on residential development is unknown. Fuels management on Forest Service land is overwhelmingly supported. Respondents support forest thinning on public lands in Benewah County under the Healthy Forest Initiative by nearly a 6.5:1 margin to those who oppose (52% support compared to only 8% opposed).

Uncertainty is relatively high in all scenarios. Forest thinning by the USFS is the scenario with the lowest uncertainty. Due to the prominence of the topic in the Western US generally, it is likely that respondents have thought more carefully about forest thinning and fire risk issues, and therefore not surprising that uncertainty is lower for this scenario. 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.

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. For example, that nearly 80% of all respondents are either uncertain or opposed to residential development along the St. Joe River supports a measured approach to future land use change in that area. Finally, the results support a more nuanced hypothesis about different behavioral intentions towards land use and resource management scenarios among local and absentee property owners.

5. Conclusions

Non-metropolitan counties across the Western US are experiencing economic and demographic transitions, and Benewah County is no exception. The presence of world-class rivers such as the St. Joe, the solitude of Benewah County's landscape, and the proximity to the growing metropolitan area of Coeur d'Alene will continue to bring change to the county. It has been suggested elsewhere that demographic change driven by amenities typically will bring new and different sets of attitudes, beliefs, and values.

We investigated the attitudes, beliefs, and values reflected in the County and its communities by Benewah County property owners. Our data show that both differences and similarities exist in the way local and absentee property owners view Benewah County. Few differences exist in attitudes towards Benewah County or in what it means to local and absentee property owners. Generally, Benewah County is a place to escape from the rest of the world, independence, and inspiration. Furthermore, all property owners tend to have positive attitudes towards the environmental features of the County, including forest health, hunting and fishing opportunities, and the scenery. There is, however, a consistent difference in the strength of attachment to the county, with local owners exhibiting stronger attachment than absentee owners, and attachment being significantly positively related to length of residence in the County (regardless of current place of residence).

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 three scenarios were rated were analyzed. Scenario likelihoods may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Scenario	Local – % Likely (n=111)	Absentee – % Likely (n=36)	All – % Likely (n=147)
1. Residential Development along the St. Joe River (p=0.7435)			
Support	–	–	10.2
Oppose	–	–	32.0
Uncertain	–	–	46.9
Ambivalent	–	–	10.9
3. USFS Forest Thinning and Fuels Reduction (p=0.5286)			
Support	–	–	52.4
Oppose	–	–	8.2
Uncertain	–	–	35.4
Ambivalent	–	–	4.1
4. Land Use Regulations in Riparian Areas (p=0.0027)			
Support	14.3	41.1	–
Oppose	30.8	16.7	–
Uncertain	50.6	39.3	–
Ambivalent	4.4	3.6	–

More differences are demonstrated with the relationship between property owners and the communities with which they identify. Specifically, absentee owners tend not to identify with any communities. Among those who do identify with a local community, absentee owners find social ties and opportunities less important than local owners, and less important than the environmental features of the landscape surrounding those communities, which was rated highly important by all owners.

Satisfaction with communities is highest with recreational access and social ties to the communities, while owners mostly responded that they were neither very satisfied nor dissatisfied with the local community economies and governance. Involvement in community affairs is also higher among local property owners, and although the magnitude of involvement appears not to be high, involvement in groups does reflect the importance of resource stewardship and local socio-economic issues. A stewardship ethic in values is also common among property owners in the County. Finally, both groups of property owners responded similarly to land use and natural resource management scenarios; however, absentee owners were more likely to support regulation as an acceptable policy tool than local owners.

These results lend moderate support to the hypothesis that local and absentee owners have different attitudes, beliefs, and values about Benewah County. Moreover, the results provide empirical evidence for how people perceive Benewah County and the basis of their sense of place for Benewah County's landscape. As demographic and socio-economic change continue to occur across the Western US, understanding these transitions can help local leaders anticipate the impacts to local culture and communities, and develop strategies that can help make adjustments less rocky.

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