

Four Corners Gateway Initiative

TOURISM ASSESSMENT REPORT

for Colorado and New Mexico

July 2000

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The Four Corners Tourism Assessment Report For Colorado and New Mexico

A study conducted by the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College with assistance from the Four Corners Heritage Council in Blanding, Utah.

Funded by the USDA Forest Service Region 2, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and National Park Service.

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Preface

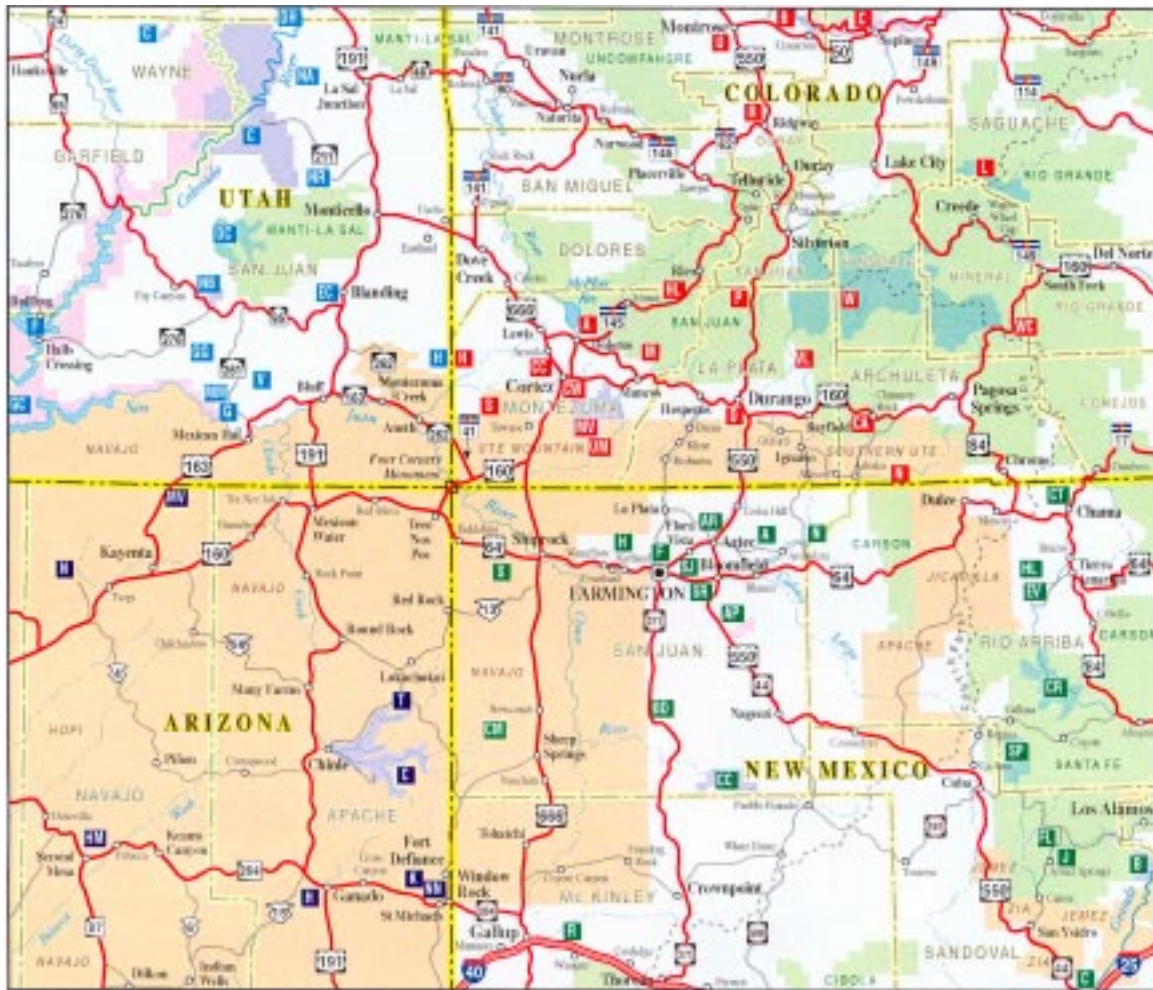
In 1997, interest was expressed by representatives of the Department of Interior to address tourism development needs of rural communities in the Four Corners, particularly those that had not benefited from increased visitation and recreation associated with public and tribal lands. After several meetings around the Southwest, a working group was assembled, made up of tribal, business, college, and land-management representatives to start up what has come to be known as the Four Corners Gateway Tourism Initiative. The group proposed that an assessment be conducted in the Four Corners of community and public land capacity, attitudes, existing and potential tourism-related development projects, and ways in which communities, tourism businesses, and public-land managers can work better together to answer questions of sustainability, and to grasp opportunities at the rural community and regional levels.

The Four Corners Tourism Assessment, conducted during summer and fall of 1999 in New Mexico and Colorado (and through spring-summer of 2000 in Utah and Arizona), is comprised of field interviews with residents, business owners, and government officials in several communities, and with representatives from USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State Parks, and National Parks in the region. A questionnaire was designed to address the these project objectives:

- Forming a regional vision, based on the community perspectives.
- Developing communication linkages among all affected parties (businesses, tribes, public land agencies).
- Clarification of community, tribal, and agency tourism development objectives.
- Determining desired levels of tribal involvement in tourism.
- Identifying cultural and ecological values that would guide development.
- Inventorying stewardship needs of the cultural landscapes and the historical and ecological resources of the region.

The intent throughout the assessment has been to maintain a balanced perspective about tourism, recreation, and related developments. The inquiry was guided by the principle of sustainability of both communities and the ecological resources. The benefits from potential development were viewed as needing to fit within community histories and traditions and the constraints of land and management resources. Determining the parameters of these resources, along with the possibility of strengthening sustainable opportunities, are central tasks of the assessment.

Follow-up planning, implementation, and technical assistance are expected to take place during the second year of the Four Corners Gateway Tourism Initiative, and possibly a third year if funding is available. The information contained in this report contributes greatly to these aspects of the overall Gateway Tourism Initiative.



- INDIAN RESERVATION
- NATIONAL FOREST
- National Park/Monument
- National Recreation Area
- Wilderness or Primitive Area

- ARIZONA**
- C...Canyon de Chelly National Monument
- H...Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site
- HM...Hopi Mesas
- K...Kinichie Ruins
- MV...Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park
- N...Navajo National Monument
- MN...Navajo Nation Tribal Headquarters
- T...Trails

- UTAH**
- C...Canyonlands National Park
- DC...Dark Canyon Primitive and Wilderness Areas
- DD...Dead Horse Point State Park/Island in the Sky
- EC...Edge of the Cedars State Park
- F...Bullfrog/Halls Crossing Ferry
- G...Grosvenors State Park
- GC...Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- GG...Grand Gulch Primitive Area
- H...Riverwep National Monument
- MM...Moki Dugway/Mulroy Point Overlooks
- NA...Needles-Antelope Overlooks
- NB...Natural Bridges National Monument
- NR...Newspaper Rock State Park
- V...Valley of the Gods

- COLORADO**
- A...Anasazi Heritage Center/Esclarene Ruins/McPhee Reservoir
- B...Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
- C...Caecanti National Recreation Area
- CA...Chimney Rock/Asasaz Ruins
- CC...Crow Canyon Archaeological Center
- CW...Colorado Welcome Center
- D...Durango/Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad
- H...Hovenweep National Monument
- HL...Highline Loop National Recreation Trail
- L...La Garita Wilderness Area
- M...Morisco State Park
- NV...Mesa Verde National Park
- N...Navajo State Park
- P...Purgatory Ski Area
- R...Ridgway State Park
- S...Sleeping Uto Mountain
- U...Ute Indian Museum
- UM...Ute Mountain Tribal Park
- VL...Vallecito and Lemmi Reservoirs
- W...Weminuche Wilderness Area
- WC...Wolf Creek Ski Area

- NEW MEXICO**
- A...Aztec Museum
- AP...Angel Peak National Recreation Area
- AR...Aztec Ruins National Monument
- B...Bandelier National Monument
- ED...Bisti/De-na-zin Wilderness
- C...Colorado State Park and Monument
- CC...Chaco Culture National Historic Park
- CM...Chuska Mountains
- CR...Chuska River Canyon Wilderness Area
- CT...Cumbres & Toiyas Scenic Railroad
- EV...El Vado Lake State Park
- F...Farmington Museum
- FL...Fenton Lake State Park
- H...Hagback Trading Post
- HL...Heron Lake State Park
- J...Jemez State Monument
- N...Navajo Lake State Park
- R...Red Rock State Park
- S...Shiprock Pinnacle
- SO...San Juan Dunes
- SP...San Pedro Parks Wilderness Area
- SR...Salinas Ruin

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Executive Summary

Public understanding and support for tourism

Even though tourism has become a key part of the economy of the Four Corners region, a perception exists among tourism professionals that the public has a limited understanding of tourism and what it does for our communities. It is generally felt that too often tourism is characterized as providing only low paying service jobs. Ignored are the many small-business owners that derive most, if not significant portions, of their income from visitors' expenditures and tourism industry workers. Tourism industry professionals are quick to point out that many of these businesses, which are also used by locals, would not exist without tourism. Besides helping support businesses that improve residents quality of life, visitors also pay considerable sales and lodging taxes that are in turn used to help pay for local and state government services.

There is general recognition in the tourism industry that these public perception problems are greatly created by their own fragmented industry. Affected by, and affecting, that fragmentation is a wide array of private businesses and public agencies that play some combined role in visitors' experiences.

Fragmentation of the tourism industry

The tourism industry is made up of many different segments—lodging, restaurants, air and ground transportation, retail shops, service stations, and public and private attractions. These segments of the industry typically are not aware how they are all part of the visitors' experience (delivering customer services), thus there is very little communication and cooperation within an industry that the public already does not understand very well.

Inadequate training of tourism industry workers

The visitor's experience is very dependent upon encounters with a wide range of people (visitor center staff, waitresses, service station attendants, front desk lodging personnel and a variety of land management staff), and visitors expect these people to know their tourism products and services.

Although personal experiences and recommendations of friends and family are still the main criteria people use in selecting where they vacation, the industry has very few organized efforts to train staff to be better hosts. What funding is available for tourism is mostly spent on marketing and promotion. This lack of leadership in training tourism industry workers reinforces the fragmentation problems of this industry.

Tourism industry benefits and costs

Closely related to the lack of public understanding of the tourism industry is the growing awareness among communities throughout the region that the traditional view of tourism benefits and costs needs to be addressed. For tourism to truly be a *sustainable* industry, it must address the issues of benefits and costs to the host communities and to the natural and cultural resources that are the primary visitor-attraction products. Communities must understand and appreciate the benefits they receive from tourism. Natural, cultural and recreational resources must at a minimum not be diminished by tourism, and where possible, enhanced; for example, by generating revenue for trail improvements, resource protection, and interpretation.

Many people within these rural Four Corners communities have experienced strong growth within their tourism industry, which has led to the feeling that they are losing a *sense of place*. Not only does the seasonal crowding of their towns and resource areas by visitors sometimes become burdensome, but residents understand that many newcomers moving to the community often came first as a visitors.

Inadequate state support for rural tourism development

States help little with tourism planning, project development, and training for rural areas. They focus almost totally upon marketing and promotion, which is dominated by resort and urban interests. There is also a lack of good marketing research available for rural areas to use when they do undertake marketing and promotion efforts.

Tourism benefits are concentrated in too few areas; smaller rural communities that have the most need for growth have the least capacity to respond.

Increasing difficulty to manage public lands

Large increases in outdoor recreation are occurring while land management budgets decrease. This issue is very closely related to the *benefits and costs* issue of tourism. The tourism industry within the Four Corners uses public lands and resources as one of their main tourism products. These public resources have helped to develop and sustain this industry; however, if the tourism industry wants to be truly sustainable, it must become engaged in helping to **sustain** the very resources people come to see and enjoy.

Growth in nonprofit organizations to help manage public lands

To help fill the void created by inadequate financial and staff resources within public land agencies to manage their resources, there has been an increase in the number of nonprofit organizations to help out. While some very commendable work has been done, and continues to be accomplished through these organizations, they also struggle with funding. When all is said and done, these groups are very helpful, but we are still just scratching the surface of meeting the needs for improved resource management.

Public land agencies should assist with rural tourism development

Most rural communities feel that through improved working relationships and communications, the federal land management agencies can help with both developing improved recreational opportunities for visitors, but also improve their experiences through better information.

While the tourism and recreation industry has experienced significant growth, many rural areas have benefited very little, while others have come to be dominated by this industry – forever changing the *sense of place* these communities once had. And it is this fear of losing

community identity that has also made many communities with real potential for reaping the benefits of tourism, wary of tourism.

While the traditional model of tourism development that focuses almost exclusively on marketing continues to be the norm in most areas within the region, there is a growing awareness among both tourism and community leaders that the development model needs to be adjusted to address visitor experiences, the host community and regional product development if the industry is going to be sustainable, both from a community-support and resource-protection perspective.

The Four Corners Setting and History In A Tourism Context

The Four Corners of the United States—northwestern New Mexico, southwestern Colorado, southeastern Utah, and northwestern Arizona—form the center of the Colorado Plateau, a visually stunning geologic array of color and formation unique to the world.

Its arid deserts, river-carved and wind-etched canyons, sagebrush and pine-forest highlands, and alpine peaks are so special that national parks, such as Arches, Canyonlands and the Grand Canyon, serve as monuments to and storehouses for, safekeeping nature's work.

National forests, such as the San Juan, Uncompahgre, Manti-La Sal, Santa Fe and Carson, encompass much of the Four Corners region, from its deserts to its summits. Lands cared for by the Bureau of Land Management are also common in the region's lower, arid elevations that bridge national forests, national parks and tribal lands.

The Four Corners/Colorado Plateau ecology is not only diverse, it is a place of extremes and unique ecosystems. Many of the earth's life zones are found within relatively small distances. It is home to what is described as one of the largest living organisms on earth—an aspen forest that grows from a single, continuous root system. It is the headwaters of the Rio Grande and San Juan Rivers. It cradles the great Colorado River and lies below the breadth of the Continental Divide.

Innumerable remnants of early human settlement distinguish the Four Corners

landscape with evidence of a history found nowhere else. Mesa Verde, Aztec Ruins, Chaco Canyon, Chimney Rock, Hovenweep, Sand Canyon, Lowry Ruins, and many other heritage areas and sites showcase and educate visitors about the extraordinary and mysterious society of Ancestral Puebloans who left the area some 800 years ago.

However, several Native American tribes—Navajo, or Diné, Hopi, Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, Jicarilla Apache, Zuni, and Pueblo—remind that while the past is not lost, the futures of tribal cultures and of the Four Corners are one and the same. In 1990, about one of every five Plateau residents was Native American, a number that is gradually increasing (Meinig 1971).

Place names, such as San Juan, La Platas, Rio Piedras, Archuleta, El Rio de las Animas Perdidos, Dolores, Cortez, and Rico testify to the profound historical connection the region has to Spanish discovery and settlement. Ever since Coronado journeyed through in 1540, leaving the horse to change life as it was known, the Spanish influence has been forged forever into the region's history.

The Four Corners is also home to descendants of other Euro-American settlers who built communities out of ranching, farming, logging, mining, and railroading economies. Today, the role of such economic relationships with the land, often public land, is a declining feature of the region's economic and social

character. Within as little as 40 years, agriculture has declined from its dominance to as little as three percent of the economy in some areas.

Tourism-related services are surpassing traditional sectors of farming, ranching, mining and logging as main economic forces. In addition, landowners and developers are subdividing ranches and farms to accommodate the latest round of amenity-seeking settlers seeking their own piece of the West. Agricultural land and its gift of open spaces is encountering the effects of rural sprawl.

Many Four Corners communities have grown substantially during the decade of the 1990s. Archuleta County, Colorado, where Pagosa Springs is the seat, grew 60 percent from 1990 to 1997. Durango and surrounding rural areas grew about 10 percent during that time. In contrast, San Juan County, Utah grew only .5 percent.

But open space is still plentiful. As much as 65 percent of some Four Corners counties is open space as USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or National Park Service land. Another 10 percent is tribal land. This is significant when you consider that 31 percent of tourism in Colorado is attributable to scenic sight-seeing, skiing, and outdoor recreation, all of which dominate vacation travel throughout the Four Corners (Taylor 1967).

Given the prevalence of open, publicly owned landscapes, it is no wonder that what happens in communities affects, or is affected by, the role of public lands in the community economies and governance, and in the lives of the people. Often, tourism for Four Corners communities presents a struggle between being a regular town with its own identity, or a tourist town that forms a romantic backdrop or theme park for visitors.

Because of growth in visitation and relocation, public-land agencies and some members of communities are increasingly concerned about protecting and preserving heritage resources, the environment, and social and cultural identities. They also worry about tourism's capacity to dominate a community's economy to the exclusion of other industries, while other communities are entirely overlooked and neglected.

During June 1990, the Four Corners Governors' Conference hosted 100 tribal and community leaders, and public-land managers and professionals who met to envision the management, protection and promotion of the area's heritage. Out of that conference, the governors of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico produced a proclamation stating that in order to address increasing interest in visiting, understanding, and preserving heritage resources, and to identify resources to help meet those demands, "a need exists to investigate methods of cooperation and partnership among State and Federal agencies, local governments, Indian tribes, private organizations, and the general public that can be used to promote growth in tourism, recreation, preservation, and education" (BLM 1990).

Since then, balancing resource care and preservation with development has coincided with efforts to address tourism trends and demands in communities and in public-land planning and management. Concern has been expressed that tourism rewards some communities, but not others. Apprehension exists over tourism-related impacts on community economic, social and cultural features, as well as on infrastructures and the environment (Grand Canyon Trust 1990).

Residents' readiness for change is often a

consideration. Many blame tourism for the loss of small-town atmospheres and sense of community as new people bring new values.

However, others see tourism as an opportunity to diversify the economy in response to declining traditional industries, and to actually safeguard a quality of life that many enjoy. Given these sincere concerns, many have sought to find some balance between taking advantage of tourism and protecting those social, economic, and ecological values that are common throughout the Four Corners.

The “Golden Circle” — Roots of Regional Development

The history of development in the Four Corners region has been defined by settlement, natural resource extraction, infrastructure establishment and expansion, national park development, and most recently, tourism and new waves of relocation.

By 1885, the Southwest had become commercially linked to the rest of the US through a network of railroads that followed the older caravan and settlement trails to Santa Fe, Flagstaff, El Paso, Denver and Southern California (Meinig, 1971, p. 41). Building upon earlier exploration routes (Coronado 1543, Oñate 1598) and the establishment of Spanish settlements in the Rio Grande Valley, and with extensive intrusion and cultural impact upon Native American ways of life, the Southwest was opened to mining, timbering, ranching, and other economic enterprises. Always in the background of these ventures into the states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah has been an extensive presence of public lands managed by the US government.

The availability of forest and mineral resources in the public domain, in what were otherwise dry and forbidding terrain, made economic activities and human settlement possible. By 1893, Fredrick Jackson Turner emphasized that the western frontier had come to an end. Up to that time, Turner noted, “. . . American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development” (Taylor, 1971).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the pattern of development and settlement of the Southwest in relationship to public lands was being established (Gomez 1991, chaps. one & two):

- John Wetherill discovered uranium in 1898 near Moab, Utah.
- In 1928, Southwest Lumber Mills built its plant in Flagstaff, Arizona, contributing significantly to the population increase in Coconino Country from 14,064 in 1930 to 23,910 in 1950.
- By 1906, Mesa Verde National Park was designate by the US Congress.
- The Grand Canyon was designated a national park in 1919.
- In 1946, a peak year in sawmill production in northern Arizona, 66 sawmills were in operation.

Following the period of natural-resource development, highway construction in the Four Corners region increased significantly. Present day US Highway 160 was authorized in 1958 through a \$70 million appropriation by the Kennedy Administration. By 1962, the last

segment was completed, joining northern Arizona and southwestern Colorado (Gomez 1991, 116). With its completion, the spectacular and fragile region was opened to visitation and recreation.

Interior Secretary Stewart Udall, referring to the Four Corners in 1961, said, "Surely, the boundary of this remarkable region is a golden circle, encompassing the greatest concentration of scenic wonders to be found in this country, if not the world" (Gomez 1991, 119).

This circle ultimately would include Zion, Bryce, Natural Bridges, and Arches national parks, and Canyon de Chelly and Wupatki national monuments, in addition to Mesa Verde, Grand Canyon and Canyonlands national parks, and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (see Gomez, 119-120). Within a 31-county area now referred to as the Colorado Plateau, there are 27 National Park Service units, including parks, monuments, recreation areas and historic sites.

Beginning in 1951, led by Conrad Wirth, the then-new director of the National Park Service, an initiative known as "Mission 66" was developed to improve the deteriorating conditions of national parks and monuments by the 50th anniversary of the founding of the National Park Service in 1906. A quarter of a billion dollars was appropriated in the first five years (Gomez 191, 130-131).

This "golden circle," envisioned by Secretary Udall and supported by southwestern governors, is a diverse and scenic natural landscape spanning the expanses between the metropolitan centers of Albuquerque, Denver,

Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City (Gomez 1991, p. 75), that will continue to experience dramatic growth in visitation and recreation. By the late 1990s, significant increases in tourism and recreation use were already in evidence in the Four Corners, but with mixed costs and benefits for various communities and ecological and cultural resources. While the stage had been set for the development of a new economic era, one that created an opportunity for monies to be imported into the region, the notion of a cohesive and integrated process for sustainable tourism within the "golden circle" has not yet been achieved. While substantial benefits have pooled into some communities, with concomitant strains on nearby attractions, other communities have been largely bypassed.

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Description of the Four Corners Tourism Assessment Survey Process

The Four Corners Tourism Assessment originated from a desire to address concerns about tourism and a widespread recognition of the need and potential for building closer working relationships among public-land agencies, the tourism industry, and communities in the region in order to reap the economic benefits of tourism, while making it more ecologically, economically and socially sustainable.

On one hand, public-land agencies, such as the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service increasingly acknowledge a need to address tourism-related impacts on area attractions and demands increased visitation make on resources to care for those attractions. This is a departure in thinking from the historical “balkanized” individual jurisdictions mapped across the Four Corners landscape. It also departs from a practice of inconsistent, autonomous cross-agency and cross-department management.

On the other hand, Four Corners communities evolving from traditional land-based economies, such as logging, ranching, farming, and mining, are seeking ways to diversify their economies while preserving their unique social and historical attributes. As a result, public-land agencies and community leaders are turning to each other to seek ways to meet demands to sustain community social and economic identities and to confront growing interest in the region as a destination.

Although information has been gathered

and ideas recorded about tourism in the Four Corners, clear, results-oriented actions have yet to be articulated and agreed upon to a point of actually implementing projects that reflect regional desires for a sustainable social, economic and ecological future. A major purpose of the assessment survey was to:

- Identify the degree of community desirability and capacity (social and physical) for tourism.
- Identify viable tourism development projects and programs within smaller and/or less-developed tourism communities that are resource capacity sensitive and can make a difference in communities.
- Identify resource sensitive strategies and actions that public-land agencies can take to assist tourism development.
- Identify strategies and actions that the tourism industry can take to assist public-land agencies in managing/sustaining resources.

Many answers to these topics emerged from the Four Corners Tourism Assessment that could help to reshape the role of tourism in the overall development of communities.

In order to get a comprehensive picture of tourism desires, capacities, projects, and relationships in small towns in the Four Corners, the Office of Community Services staff conducted interviews in Colorado and New Mexico and the Four Corners Heritage Council conducted interviews in Utah and

Arizona in conjunction with San Juan County, Utah Community Development, the Little Colorado Resource, Conservation & Development Office (RC&D), and the Navajo Nation Tourism Department. This report focuses primarily on findings from surveys conducted in Colorado and New Mexico. A second report for Utah and Arizona is forthcoming.

Two questionnaires were developed; one for communities and another for public land agency staff (See *Appendix B* for list of questions). Personal interviews were conducted with key informants and opinion leaders, individually and occasionally with groups of two to five individuals. Our choice of face-to-face interaction was based on the assumption that the interview venue allowed interviewers to explain contexts and meanings of questions and to obtain incidental information about the towns and issues indirectly related to tourism.

The survey was a qualitative assessment of the thoughts of key community opinion leaders and public land agency staffs about their towns in general and on tourism specifically. Their remarks reflect a current picture of community, industry and public land capacity, willingness and readiness to work with each other to address tourism sustainably.

The qualitative study has two advantages:

- 1) its ease of building narratives over the long-term that register changes over time in community perspectives, needs, capacities, and resources; and
- 2) it creates an immediate relationship with individuals, which begins to build a foundation for implementing projects.

Questions were grouped by categories with the intention of obtaining correlating information. Community and public land capacity for increased tourism activities was identified in

social, cultural, economic, and physical infrastructure terms on the part of communities and, on the part of agencies, in ecological, social, and managerial and administrative terms.

Both questionnaires contained a section in which interviewees were asked to list projects and programs that they would like developed. In some cases, projects already were underway and respondents wanted them to gain more momentum. In other cases, interviewees brainstormed projects from which the community or a public attraction could benefit.

We also asked all interviewees for their thoughts on relationships between the tourism industry and the public-land agencies. We asked them to state what they could contribute to help each other accommodate tourism-related activities, while protecting the ability of public lands from the dangers of increased use.

In Colorado and New Mexico, we interviewed city, county, and tribal government leaders and departmental staff, such as mayors, chairmen, planners and managers. Occasionally, we talked to local business owners who are active in their community's development. We also talked with chamber of commerce directors and presidents.

For the public land survey, we interviewed staffs from various departments of national forest ranger districts and the supervisor's office, national park and monument staffs and superintendents, and managers from BLM resource areas.

After interviewing more than 90 individuals, brief, detailed *Assessment Summaries* were written to show broad, significant themes that emerged out of each town and public land agency (see *Appendix C*).

Four Corners Gateway Tourism Initiative **ASSESSMENT FINDINGS**

This section provides an overview of:

- *the commonalities among community and public land agency interviewees that emerged from the assessment survey once all the interviews were completed;*
- *highlights of common themes within agencies.*
- *highlights of common themes within communities;*

More details are contained in the individual summaries of each community and agency found in Appendix B.

Common Community-Public Land Themes

Better communication among various interests affected by tourism, better information sharing with visitors, and more resources to market community and public land attractions were the concerns most commonly shared by community and public land agency interviewees. Two types of communication and information were identified:

- networking and communication among agencies, community leadership and the tourism industry; and
- information that each public land agency, community, and the tourism business *provides to visitors.*

One respondent said it's important that all *stakeholders stay involved together in communication and networking*, so "we will know what each other is doing and how we need to modify and increase our effectiveness." More understanding is needed of each other's goals and long-term plans, interviewees said. Counties, towns, and chambers need to understand agency capacity issues better in order to avoid promot-

ing stressed areas. The agency needs to be more visible for public contact by placing visitor centers and agency offices in easy-to-find locations. Agency staffs can become more involved in communities, as well; for example, by attending community meetings. Many said that tourism promoters need to be more responsible for the effect their messages have for luring increased numbers of visitors without informing public land staffs or helping them prepare for the impacts.

Many public land agency interviewees meshed a need to improve their capacity to manage recreation use with the question of how to help improve the experiences people seek on public lands. They often mentioned information and education to describe the kind of projects needed to improve those experiences. They advocated sharing a general message of caring for the land.

The need to provide better informational materials to improve visitor experiences, such as better maps, more accurate information, and effective dissemination methods was often

mentioned, by both agency and community interviewees. Accurate information about winter and summer recreation on public lands needs to be developed and dispersed. Interviewees expressed great desire to coordinate promotional, advertising, or visitor-use publications and information that tourism businesses, community officials, and public land agencies provide to visitors. They particularly tied this need to sharing marketing resources. Meshing these activities where possible and appropriate was commonly desired in order to

reduce costs ensure that accurate information reaches visitors.

In addition, many interviewees said that visitors' experiences can be enhanced by improving information to increase knowledge of people most in contact with visitors and for disseminating information effectively to visitors. This would potentially include any employees and residents interacting with visitors and would tie in with disseminating information about land stewardship and protecting public lands, such as *Leave No Trace*.

Common Public Land Agency Themes

Public land managers and specialists commonly expressed desires for opportunities for greater regional understanding of tourism. These themes are briefly summarized in following subsections, which include specific recommendations made by agency interviewees.

Visitation Impacts

For public-land management agencies, the question is increasingly one of balancing landscape management with the effects of visitation to attractions. Public land managers overwhelmingly say that most public land impacts stem from increased visitation and recreation and that they require financial and human resources to adequately address them. Impacts are compounded by staff and budget limitations, and that agencies generally are unprepared for tourism, making agency planning and management difficult.

Distinct, but Interrelated, Types of Capacities

Agency managers identified three types of capacity needed to address impacts: managerial, physical, and social. Physical capacity is the most commonly recognized. Erosion on a poorly built trail from heavy traffic is a common impact.

Managerial capacity refers to the agency's internal ability to either mitigate visitation impacts, or take the lead and plan for them proactively, perhaps by building relationships with communities and the tourism industry. Budget, personnel, policy, and administrative activities fall within this category of capacity.

Social capacity refers to the quality of visitors' experiences in the presence of other visitors to public lands. Crowds are acceptable for some and not for others, for example. How the attraction is being used, or what tourism niche it fills, is another significant factor. The many existing Four Corners attractions offer different types of experiences, from solitude and pristine landscapes, such as deep within

Colorado's Weminuche Wilderness, to popular, heavily visited attractions, such as Mesa Verde. The unique characteristics of these attractions lure a specific type of visitor possessing unique needs and desires that affect the attraction and its management. User conflicts also fall within this category.

It is difficult to separate the types of capacity when it comes to making management decisions. Identifying and managing for physical, managerial and social capacity depends on the amount and type of use an attraction received and the immediacy (or urgency) of the situation. The choice of managerial focus of individual agency leaders (local and regional) influenced the degree to which issues were undertaken or discussed for addressing future physical and social capacity.

The majority of agency districts and resource areas do little or nothing about establishing levels of sustainability or indicators of capacity. Most implied that having such information would be helpful, but they were not optimistic about being able to do much about it due to lack of staff and funding; and in one or two cases, lack of internal agency recognition of the challenges.

The Where and When of Impacts

Heritage areas, wilderness, and dispersed recreation areas were three often mentioned areas where impacts occur is a significant concern. Times, or seasons, of impacts were also significant factors.

During the few weeks of the hunting season, the most severe impacts are experienced in many areas across the region. Interviewees said that agencies and local governments do not have the resources to

adequately address the increased trash resulting from more visitors to the forest and community, especially during hunting season.

Mitigating Impacts Through Available Management Means

Given the lack of funding and personnel, interviewees sometimes referred to managing access as one available means of limiting impacts. In some cases, this means physically blocking off-road vehicle trails with some sort of barriers in order to protect fragile areas, or placing signs directing visitors to less fragile areas. Various means are utilized especially in dispersed areas, wilderness, and prehistoric and historic heritage sites where visitation and use is the heaviest.

Dispersed Recreation

Most visitor impacts in Colorado, for example, occur in dispersed recreation areas, where it is difficult to control the number of users or types of activities. Agencies try to direct uses and minimize physical impacts through regulations, special orders, signing, "hardening" sites, personal contact and seeking cooperation from users to respect closures that have been implemented, and redirecting users to less-crowded areas.

Wilderness

In order to maintain solitude in wilderness, the US Forest Service is turning to limiting the number of people allowed. As a result, capacity is reached faster than in non-wilderness areas of the forest. The San Juan National Forest has developed a "wilderness capacity analysis," which is used to determine and guide sustain-

able use levels in the Weminuche Wilderness.

Heritage Areas

As with recreation, heritage tourism is increasing on public lands in the Four Corners. Archaeologists, district rangers, and others charged with care of prehistoric and historic areas and sites are reluctant to encourage visitation to archaeological attractions as long as there is little or no protection, and little potential for protection in the foreseeable future.

In the Colorado high country, there is another issue of current concern.

Abandoned mining structures which are privately owned are frequently visited attractions, but visitors are unaware that the majority of such sites are not on public land. This has created a desire to consolidate some private lands with public lands in order to reduce problems stemming from public use of private attractions, such as liability and beneficial management.

The greatest impacts occur to heritage resources scattered across public lands where other resource and recreation activities are occurring, such as grazing and oil and gas extraction, many archaeologists say. There is an increasing desire,

particularly in Colorado, to develop management plans that protect heritage resources, while continuing to allow other uses. Resources are needed to inventory, stabilize, monitor and protect sites, respondents say.

Guiding Use

Related to managing access, land managers talked about guiding visitors to areas where they can find more fulfilling experiences while also reducing impacts. Particular emphasis was given to either dispersing or concentrating use, depending on the area and the uses.

One national forest archaeologist referred to "site marketing," a method of emphasizing or de-emphasizing one cultural site over another. For example, the Anasazi Heritage Center near Dolores, Colorado encourages recreation and visitation to Ancestral Puebloan ruins at the area in part to help reduce the impact of visitation to sites dis-

The interaction that does exist is the result of willing individuals taking the time and devoting resources to cooperatively work together.



THE BLM'S ANASAZI HERITAGE CENTER near Dolores, Colorado provides all types of visitors a variety of experiences in one place, from a museum to hiking and exploring Ancient Puebloan ruins. Such a facility provides two key services: it helps to direct visitors from sites that cannot be protected adequately, and it is a service to those looking for an outdoor recreation experience that is also convenient and educational.

persed across the region where there exists no protective management.

The Heritage Center and other attractions, such as Salmon Ruins in New Mexico, provide a service for a particular type of visitor while directing and concentrating use where it can be better managed for results desirable for all.

In contrast to concentrating visitation to a limited number of cultural sites, dispersing is often applied to popular recreational landscapes where use is already over-concentrated. For example, in the San Juan National Forest, the Weminuche Wilderness contains some of the most visited alpine valleys in Colorado and where concern is high for the physical and social effects. Directing visitors to less-impacted areas seems preferable to a number of managers as a management tool.

Conservation Education

Education is valuable in a number of ways; for example, not only to teach forest users how to use the forest conservatively, but it also can enhance their ability to have more fulfilling, enjoyable experiences. The most common messages that land management agencies want to emphasize to recreation users is how to minimize impacts, how to interact with other

users, how to maintain opportunities and quality experiences, and where certain activities are allowed.

Education, which agency managers were

most optimistic about as a tool for sharing information, is most effective when it is personal, one-on-one contact with individuals. However, although one-on-one contact is the best method for educating visitors, managers stressed the importance of using all types of media and outreach to convey the messages, such as written materials, interpretive signs in the field, web sites, workshops, and so on.

Agency staff recommendations for improving partnerships:

- Improve the coordination of work projects and the delivery of services with community stewardship groups.
- Develop more “adopt a site” programs with stewardship groups to protect cultural resources.
- Increase human resources (staff and volunteers) to contact users and organize the volunteers.
- Allocate more resources for on-the-ground trail improvements, as well as for developing long-term relationships with individuals and groups that can be relied upon to return annually and conduct needed trail work.

Community Stewardship Partnerships

The survey asked interviewees to outline the types of interaction they had with the following entities and how relationships could be improved:

- local town and county governments,
- chambers of commerce and tourism businesses,
- community stewardship organizations or groups,
- public land agencies.

The majority of public land interviewees expressed desires to improve relationships with

others and had specific ideas for doing so if there were more time and resources.

Some partnership interaction between public land agencies and communities is occurring across the region in a variety of ways, although in varying degrees. The interaction that does exist is the result of willing individuals taking the time and devoting resources to cooperatively work together.

The most active amount of interaction is occurring in Colorado, partly because visitor demand is so high compared to other public lands in the Four Corners. It is also partly because of the initiative that several land managers take to not only respond to impacts, but to work cooperatively with communities, other agencies and others to pool resources, expertise, and to use facilities to benefit local quality of life and visitor experiences. Detailed examples of this cooperation can be found in the *Assessment Summaries* in *Appendix C*

In other parts of the Four Corners, public land managers are giving increased attention to the benefits of becoming more visible and participatory in community activities. In New Mexico, although interaction is less obvious, relationships are building out of a strong desire



***MANY PUBLIC LAND SURVEY** respondents said face-to-face interaction is the most effective educational method. Interpretive and directional signage is very important as well to reach many more people.*

to increase and improve interaction. For example, the BLM and San Juan County Museum Association have provided a small grant to a privately practicing archaeologist to establish a cultural site stewardship monitoring program in partnership with Salmon Ruins near Bloomfield. This is the first such program in northwestern New Mexico. A similar program is getting underway in Colorado, as well.

The lack of resources allocated for managing outdoor recreational activities and public land resources, has required managers to partner with, and in some cases rely upon, various volunteer groups, user groups, non-profits, and clubs to maintain recreation opportunities on public lands.

In Colorado, interviewees described volunteer partnerships or non-profits that are able to take the lead on caring for a resource, such as the Jersey Jim Lookout Tower maintained by the San Juan Mountains Foundation, as “optimum situations.” They described the

various services that “third sector” partners provide:

- technical assistance and materials;
- project planning;
- grant writing and administration;
- ability to access other funding sources that are not available to public land managers;
- contact, patrol and provide information to users in the field;
- maintain resources through programs such as the “adopt a trail program,” as well as provide physical labor (picking up trash, cleaning campgrounds and dispersed areas, trail maintenance, parking lot maintenance, trail grooming, signing trails).

Ideas for improving coordination:

- Simplify and coordinate services and information within geographic areas because the public is overwhelmed by agency jurisdictions and policies, and confused when trying to find the right contact person.
- Work towards consistency; for example, when circumstances are the same, uses should be managed the same.
- Planning and marketing could be improved if each agency in the region had a better understanding of the different experiences or niches that each agency is striving to provide.

more funding for projects and staff and encourage them to recognize citizens’ desires and contributions that public lands and agencies make to local communities.

More environmental advocacy is needed from various community and business interests, pressuring not only Congress, but the agencies

themselves, to encourage consistent, long-term sustainability.

Congressional representatives could do more to help the agency to respond to partners more effectively, some respondents suggested.

Sharing the Costs for Stewardship

For a long time, the expectation has been that Congress would fund public land

management. However, some managers increasingly encourage funding from the community and state, rather than Congress. Congress needs to directly fund maintenance, rather than new things, some added.

Cultural sites on BLM land would benefit if local governments, chambers of commerce, and community government offices would contribute funds to stabilize sites. Archeological contractors could also contribute money and be more involved in monitoring and picking up trash.

The Congress Connection

Although interviewees said partnerships are healthy and productive, many stressed that these relationships developed largely because land managers lack adequate resources to manage increased recreation use. They asked whether Congress simply was cognizant that recreation is the new trend in public land use.

Citizens should ask legislators to provide

Public Land Agency Coordination

The degree of collaboration among agencies varies across the region. Although there are examples of resource sharing, joint project planning, consultation, law enforcement, and fire prevention among agencies (federal and state land agencies), there is growing demand to simplify and coordinate services and information within geographic areas.

Both public land and community respondents advocated more cross-jurisdictional interaction among agencies. Uniform land stewardship across jurisdictional boundaries is recognized as a highly desirable, effective management approach. Many would like to see more sharing of available resources.

New ideas are being pursued to coordinate agency activities. For example, in Colorado, the *Service First* initiative between the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, whereby the agencies are merging, is one innovative attempt to maximize agency resources and to enhance visitor experiences and the ease of interacting with the agencies.

Local Governments

Currently, collaboration between towns and nearby public land attractions usually include project planning, information sharing, cooperative agreements, and fieldtrips to discuss issues on the ground.

Beyond the need to be more understanding of each other's goals and long term plans, interviewees said local governments and agencies should develop cooperative funding

projects, form stronger partnerships to improve opportunities for implementing cross-jurisdiction projects, and where desired and applicable, develop comprehensive recreation plans between local governments and adjacent public land agencies.



A Definition of Stewardship

Stewardship in the Four Corners has manifested in a number of ways during recent years. The current popularity of planning and implementing trail systems in and out of towns is one example. Beautification, open space, building relationships and knowledge, taking actions, and achieving goals are all occurring as part of this emphasis on providing trails in communities.

Also being demonstrated is that stewardship is more than building trails. It is a process of preserving land and histories, of strengthening a community's economy and its social relationships. Stewardship is an idea that underlies sharing information across sectors and improving quality of life, sharing resources and responsibility for community and public land sustainability.

Common Themes in Community Interviews

Community Attitudes

Two themes have emerged from the assessment interviews in terms of attitudes towards tourism. Trends show increasing desires for towns to address tourism in their overall development and economy. But, in some communities, that desire is tempered by emphasis on the idea of “tourism” as a threat to small-town life and on preserving traditional ways of life, such as agriculture. Tourism may negatively affect the community’s capacity to preserve farming and ranching as a viable

component of the economy and community character, some say. The agricultural sector of the community, which represents some of the oldest, land-owning families within the counties, are generally less supportive of tourism development.

The majority, whether or not they accept tourism in their economies and in their communities, said they live in small towns for the quality of life that they offer. Too much reliance on tourism, or certain types of tourism, can ruin such a small-town character, many

said, adding that they didn’t want to be “another Telluride,” or “another Moab.” This type of tourism that disrupts the community is a legitimate concern even in the minds of those who believe tourism can help diversify the economy, especially in this time of transition during which many communities are evolving from dependence on natural resource extraction industries.

Interest in integrating sustainable tourism into the



MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK is a representative example of the situation besetting public land attractions in the Four Corners, while also unveiling opportunities. Because Mesa Verde attracts so many visitors to the region, the tourism industry is very interested in its operations and plans. This, some respondents suggest, is a significant incentive for the regional tourism industry to lead efforts to lobby Congress for funding to implement the projects or programs public land managers say will benefit not only communities and attractions, but the industry as well.

town's overall development is clearly prominent. Most interviewees expressed that increased tourism is an inevitable economic force and that not taking advantage of its available benefits, while planning for some control of its impacts, will deprive the community in the long-run of its desired quality of life.

Aside from the ambivalence of whether the community should develop at all for tourism, those who accept tourism as a viable option for their community differ at times on how the town should develop its tourism component. Assuming that interest will increase in a community or nearby public land as tourism attractions, the important question seems to be how to determine what is an acceptable level of tourism in communities that are in a favorable position to benefit from it. The underlying optimism seems to be that conscious, concerted efforts that help preserve the desired identity of the community can influence what shape tourism takes.

None of the communities we visited unanimously rejected tourism development for their communities, despite some complaints that the negative effects of tourism outweigh the positive. When asked about the degree of tourism development they felt their community wanted, almost all interviewees answered either moderate or strong (2% or 5%), or moderate-to-strong (2% to 5% or more). Some respondents modified these percentages to state that slow, steady growth is most desirable, particularly to mitigate social and physical changes that

follow increases in tourism, such as stress on infrastructure, more traffic, and shifts in the social dynamics of the community.

By far, most favored developing small-scale projects that benefit local residents' quality of life; doing something for themselves, rather than exclusively for visitors. Tourism was often viewed as a motivation, among others, to achieve quality of life attributes. River trails,

town beautification and landscaping were often mentioned. As a result of developing small projects that don't demand huge resources, the community can develop its tourism base at a slower pace that is more comfort-

able and manageable, many expressed.

Developing small projects also allows diverse local partners—town leaders and members, tourism businesses, and public land agency staffs—to more feasibly work together to pool energies and resources to implement projects. This would strengthen relationships that could create a long-lasting, unified organization to address future community needs.

During conversations, many interviewees expressed a desire to meet challenges proactively, rather than reactively. Some of the barriers to pursuing tourism as part of its overall community development included lack of knowledge of and support for marketing, leadership, funding and planning, many said. Inadequate infrastructure was also mentioned. Also standing out is a lack of organization, technical resources and assistance.

Most interviewees expressed that increased tourism is an inevitable economic force and that not taking advantage of its benefits, while planning for some control of its impacts, will deprive the community in the long-run of its desired quality of life.

Community Capacity Limitations

Throughout Four Corners, there is a range of ability in infrastructure and supporting infrastructure to capitalize on increased tourism. This ability, the types of limitations in infrastructure, and what and where is the best potential for improving capacity are all questions that emerged from the survey.

Often, gas stations are the most prominent tourist service available in town. Most towns don't have enough retail services to meet basic residential needs, such as clothing. A few mentioned that they had health clinics and search and rescue teams that can provide support for public land recreation activities. A number noted that capacity to develop is determined by the presence and proximity to public lands and their accessibility. For example, local residents of Cuba, New Mexico described the area's natural environment and clean, fresh air as being a major attraction.

The prevalence of public lands in the county was important. In a case or two—Bloomfield, New Mexico, for example, where there is about 75 percent public land (BLM and USFS)—private land development is constrained. On the other hand, others, such as residents in Rico, Colorado, expressed that so much public land surrounding them could restrict unwanted growth and provide unlimited “passive recreation” opportunities for both residents and visitors. Public land was viewed as a potential partner in the type of development residents desired.

Capacity is limited by lodging in most towns. Most rely on older motels. Almost none have any new motels. The types of restaurants, their quality, and price range vary widely.

Activities and places to hold people in town are needed, including campgrounds, RV parks, public restrooms, and swimming pool(s), many said.

Many, but not all, said their town needs

beautification.

Beautification improves the residents' quality of life, some say, while others, often government leaders or department staffs, say the town would benefit economically

Some common community needs

- Marketing and promotion of information for potential visitors;
- Coordination of information and communication among towns, attractions, and agencies;
- Technical assistance to help plan and develop projects and programs;
- Funding to implement projects.

from having better looking entrances, signage, etc. Travelers would be attracted to stop over, eat, or otherwise spend money. Improving the town's physical appearance and entrances builds community pride, some said.

There is some growth in retiree populations, representing diversification of economy in towns, such as Bloomfield, New Mexico, which otherwise is heavily reliant on the oil and gas industry.

Relationships Are Fragmented

Community respondents confirmed that the tourism industry, communities and public land agencies do not have regular, focused interaction amongst themselves where tourism and public lands are concerned. They characterized the state of this relationship in a number of ways, often as a regrettable matter of fact and a wasted opportunity. In a couple of localities,

some interviewees blamed one party or another for not doing more to increase and improve interaction. Often, relationships are characterized by both community and public land interviewees as a lack of resources for communication among the recreation, tourism and public land interests.

The lack of interaction is more evident in some New Mexico communities, but similar situations exist in some Colorado communities. Often, there are no perceived benefits to interaction, so relationships are not pursued. However, in some cases, relationships were described as “more unified than in the past.”

This lack of contact is common between tourism businesses, which promote and profit from Four Corners attractions, and agency staffs, who are charged with mitigating visitation impacts at the attractions. Existing connections are usually local, between individuals who voluntarily and cooperatively share information and plan and carry out projects that enhance tourism opportunities in a beneficial way to the town and the attraction. This is often the case between members of local national-forest ranger districts and members of local organizations or the community where the district is located.

Community Leaders

Government leaders and planning officials were key interviewees whose interest in tourism was embedded in overall community and economic development. They typically viewed tourism as an opportunity for their community to improve its quality of life, most often economically, but also socially.

Some of these interviewees suggested

ideas for improving relationships by taking opportunities now, or as soon as possible, to build relationships in order to prepare for increased use of local attractions. For example, in both Colorado and New Mexico, recreation and heritage tourism will increase and it would be wise to build greater cooperative relationships with public land agency staffs to meet the demand constructively. One interviewee encouraged, “designating or introducing a specific agency representative to interact with the community, whose responsibility it is to educate the community about uses and opportunities.”

Chambers and Tourism Businesses

Some chambers of commerce, not all, lacked either interest or ability to become actively involved. One probable reason, especially in the smallest towns, is that the chambers are run by a single staff member and a lot of volunteer effort. Most chamber directors were involved in some level of promotional marketing, lamenting only that they were limited by small budgets and staffing to pursue more. All said they would do more promotional advertising to lure visitors if they had the resources. No other messages were conveyed, such as *Leave No Trace*, which was a commonly mentioned message that public land interviewees would like the public to know about.

Many chamber and tourism-oriented interviewees did say that services to tourists were not satisfactory. They added that they would like to be offered business-owner and employee training in local history, local and regional attractions, and public land steward-

ship messages, as well as hospitality training. Some interviewees said training should be extended beyond the tourism industry to retail employees, such as grocery store clerks.

In Vallecito Lake, Colorado, where the local economy relies on the adjacent national forest as much as the reservoir, members of the chamber invited more ties with the Forest Service. They suggested holding something as simple as potlucks once or twice a year for residents, business owners and agency staffs to socialize and share information pertinent to that year's tourist season.

One community leader in Aztec said that the local tourism industry needs to incorporate in its efforts the simple awareness of public lands and an ethic to protect them and to realize that they exist for more than "oil and gas development" This was a common message from around the northwestern New Mexico region.

In very small communities, such as Rico, Colorado, tourism business owners are involved

in their town's planning and development. Some noted that their ability to plan for tourism was influenced by the involvement, or lack of involvement, of local public land agency representatives. Some community members/leaders said that they often were not aware of what the public land agency was planning, a situation which affected the effectiveness of their own planning, as well as their relationship with the agency. Most often, the reason believed for this situation, in addition to the lack of resources and personnel needed to stay informed, was that people simply didn't make the effort to inform each other.

Ideas for improving relationships:

- Develop a yearly tourism symposium to provide a forum for different attractions to interact, build relationships, identify each other's niches, and support each other through visitor referrals.
- The more information agencies can provide to chambers of commerce, the better chance of visitors receiving the information, since chambers are primary visitor contacts.
- Agencies should provide accurate information about public land opportunities to the industry, which can package information the way it wants.
- Agencies need better understanding of tourism businesses. The industry and communities need to better understand public land needs, capacity issues, appropriate uses and areas.
- Develop a computer network of regional resources, in which all visitor centers and public land offices could access information about each other.
- Continue to provide land ethics education to visitors through the Internet, especially to people outside the area. Perhaps photos of pristine places, should be accompanied with pictures of trashed sites to expose the range of human impacts.

Four Corners Gateway Tourism Initiative

OVERALL STRATEGY

The perception that little interaction exists among agencies and communities contrasts in some ways with the area's history. Since the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are part of the region's history in many ways, public land staffs have had relationships of one form or another with communities and public land users for a long time.

When people are not overlooking the fact that the environment in which relationships exist has changed, they are at a loss as to what to do about the changing situation. In the past, agency specialists interacted directly with forest users often on a one-to-one basis where the use was direct, such as logging or grazing. In contrast, tourism businesses, whole communities, diverse recreationists and visitors from outside of the region represent a wholly different dynamic for relationships to occur, one which has created fewer opportunities for direct contact.

The questions for public land agency managers increasingly revolve around how to accommodate demand for recreational and traditional resources while also protecting those resources. The questions for many community leaders and, in some cases, tourism representa-

tives, is: how to communicate more effectively with each other and public land agency representatives; how to strengthen promotional marketing of their communities and their relationship with nearby public lands;

how to develop events and attractions that help make communities tourism destinations; what attractions to develop; how to sustain a small town way of life.

The following pages outline an overall strategy for sustainable tourism development

in Southwest Colorado and Northwest New Mexico. The strategy emphasizes more interactive relationships among community leaders, tourism businesses and public land agencies. Such relationships are clearly necessary in order to accomplish projects and integrate stewardship and sustainability messages into tourism-related activities, such as marketing and promotion. Projects are emphasized that reflect opportunities for communities, public-land agencies and tourism businesses to work together on sustainable tourism-related projects or programs.

Second year Gateway Initiative funds granted to the Office of Community Services by the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain

. . . the overall strategy for community and public land tourism development is based on three overarching components: the formation of Tourism-Recreation Advisory Councils, Directly Funding Selected Projects, and Assisting Other Selected Projects.

Region, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service will be used to support some of the recommendations described in the overall strategy. This second phase will also focus upon the completion of assessments by the Four Corners Heritage Council in Utah and Arizona.

The second-year implementation strategy focuses on community projects in New Mexico and Colorado, where assessment work has been completed. Additional community-specific projects in Arizona and Utah will be identified for implementation assistance when those assessments are completed.

From the several interviews held with key tourism, community and public land represen-

tatives, many projects and programs were identified for possible implementation. To narrow this list down to a manageable number, the following criteria were used in selecting projects:

- The project was feasible and affordable.
- The project proposal had good support within the communities, and in some cases was already underway, but needed additional assistance.
- There was an identifiable partnership organization with the capability to undertake the project.
- Gateway funding or development assistance for projects can be leveraged with other funding and assistance.

Key Components of the Strategy

While conducting the assessment survey, key community and public land interviewees addressed the pertinent questions of how to accommodate visitation, create economic benefits for communities, preserve natural, prehistoric and historic attractions, and protect community identities and a sense of place. Within this context, the overall strategy for community and public land tourism development is based on three interrelated, overarching components: *Communication*, conducted through the formation of *Tourism-Recreation Stewardship Councils*, and *Technical Assistance*.

These components were synthesized from what interviewees told researchers they would

like to see occur in their communities and on public lands. The projects and proposed support represent efforts that will address the effects of tourism and recreation that have been the cause of concern, and to more proactively include a tourism component in future community development and public land management. The components also would integrate a strong message of stewardship for community and land. The goal of integrating a message of sustainability with tourism development is the key to the overall strategy of addressing the social, economic, and ecological challenges that tourism so often brings to communities and public lands.

Three Action Steps of the Strategy

Implementing the three components of the overall strategy depends on achieving three main actions. The first is to establish pilot *Tourism-Recreation Advisory Councils* in Northwest New Mexico and Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Formation of the TRACs would entail inviting key individuals in agencies, the tourism industry, and communities to participate in an ongoing communicative environment on tourism issues related to community and public lands. After this, communications links among them would be created in order to build capacity for success in projects and in sharing and disseminating stewardship messages.

The second part of the overall strategy is to directly fund projects that are integrating multi-interest partnering, tourism development, and sustainability. These projects also show

potential for expanding communication among partners and to visitors with stewardship and sustainability messages.

In the third part of the strategy, projects are listed that show potential for progress, but still need more resources and technical assistance. Their greatest need is to continue incorporating and fostering relationship building, information sharing, and

project development among community, tourism and agency interests.

The overall strategy is divided into three action steps

- 1) Establish pilot *Tourism-Recreation Advisory Councils* in Northwest New Mexico and Pagosa Springs, Colorado.
- 2) Select projects for direct partnership funding that are integrating multi-interest partnering, tourism development, and sustainability.
- 3) Identify projects that show potential for progress, but still need more resources and technical assistance.

Action One

Establish Tourism-Recreation Advisory Councils

As described, communication received nearly unanimously support among interviewees who strongly expressed that it would provide cohesion for networking and building relationships. Better sharing of quality information in the marketing of the Four Corners and individual community and public land attractions would result. Better services and products to visitors would occur and the message of caring for the attractions would gain more acceptance.

The form that communication takes and how it would be developed is yet undetermined, but it would emerge out of existing relationships while also creating new ones. A suggestion for addressing this was made to form pilot *Tourism-Recreation Advisory Councils*, which would also address a long-expressed desire for a regional vision and process for addressing tourism in overall community and public land planning and management. The Four Corners Tourism Assessment stimulated a renewed look at this desire.

In order to better accomplish projects that are currently on-going and be more effective with limited available funding, the councils would provide a more coherent mechanism by which partners contribute resources in order to accomplish projects. The “TRACs” would also provide some framework for new, stronger relationships in which individuals share information, expertise, and resources to work towards addressing the issues and projects.

Furthermore, the councils would act as regional and local focal points for incorporating or integrating community and public land stewardship messages among community leaders and citizens, tourism businesses and agency managers and field staffs, and particularly in the information being marketed about the Four Corners to visitors. The underlying impetus for this initiative stems from a shared belief that community and public land sustainability is made more possible by incorporating a message and practice of stewardship in tourism development.

Projects where good opportunities exist to pilot *Tourism-Recreation Stewardship Councils* are located in Pagosa Springs and northwest New Mexico. Each community and region is involved at different stages of developing projects that improve the local quality of life and provide a visitor attraction in sustainable ways.

Projects already occurring in these areas have created new opportunities for diverse partners—community leaders, citizens, tourism businesses, and public land staffs alike—to practice stewardship, build stronger relationships, and share expertise and resources. Through project activities, various interests can share the responsibility and reward of caring for both communities and the public land attractions upon which they depend.

Pilot #1—NW New Mexico

Add land management agencies and smaller communities to northwestern New Mexico travel region, or another organization currently focused on marketing and promotion acceptable to communities and agencies. Work on the following projects/programs:

1. Resource Protection

- a. Specifically work to involve the tourism industry in resource protection management strategies.
- b. Use the Heritage Site Stewardship Program and the Pueblitos as an initial effort to include the tourism industry in site stewardship. Coordinate with the southwest Colorado site stewardship initiative.
- c. Identify areas where visitation should be limited or encouraged.

2. Promotion and Visitor Information Services

- a. Assist smaller communities with tourism promotion efforts.
- b. Improve quality and accuracy of information provided to visitors.
- c. Expand use of resource protection messages in brochures, maps, etc.
- d. Staff visitor centers with joint public land and community people.

3. Tourism Development Projects

- a. Develop plans to secure NM DOT designation of a scenic and historic by-way, linking together the key cultural sites in northwest New Mexico. This initiative can be patterned after the Trail of the Ancients designations in

Colorado and Utah.

- b. Work to increase BLM funding for Navajo Pueblitos and heritage stewardship.
- c. Assist Cuba with accessing state and federal technical and financial resources for community and tourism development assistance.

Pilot #2 —Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Using the current Pagosa Springs-San Juan National Forest Service trail initiative as a foundation, establish a TRAC with the following goals in order to expand this community-public land partnership effort.

1. Resource Protection

- a. Work to get the tourism industry actively involved in additional resource management and protection efforts.
- b. Identify resource areas where visitation is encouraged and where discouraged or limited.

2. Promotion and Visitor Information Services

- a. Improve quality and accuracy of visitor information.
- b. Expand use of resource protection messages in brochures, etc.
- c. Continue to improve working relationships among public lands staff and the Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce/Visitor Center.

3. Tourism Development Projects

- a. Identify additional community-public land projects to pursue.

Action Two

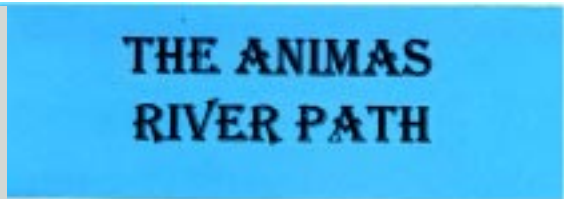
Select Projects for Direct Partnership Funding

Aztec Animas River Trail

In an effort to improve Aztec's recreation infrastructure that would serve both visitors and residents, a hiking and biking trail along the Animas River has been identified as a high priority project. Supported by both the Aztec Chamber of Commerce, City of Aztec, Main Street Association, and the National Park

Service, the trail would extend from the Aztec National Monument on the north to the Riverside and Hartman Parks on the south. Preliminary work completed so far includes the preparation of a conceptual plan, the identification of landowners that the trail would affect, and the preparation of requests for trail and bridge grants.

THE COMMUNITY OF AZTEC has identified a recreation trail along the Animas River through town as a high priority project for development.



Aztec's canals an important historic resource:

By the late 1800's the Aztec area had developed a series canals which supported its growing population and agricultural base. In those days the canal system provided water for everything, from drinking water, and wash water to water for crops and livestock. Until the 1920's water for domestic use was drawn from hand dug cisterns filled twice a year from water flowing through the canal systems. Serious community effort was put towards keeping canals clear of litter and debris, and a respectful attitude for the use and treatment of the water source was fostered in every household. Aztec's canals were not only a means by which to transport water to homes and fields, but they also provided a route for people to move about town. Using the maintenance roads which serviced the canals, people were able to walk, along chatting with neighbors and enjoying the soft ripple of water in the shade of the cottonwoods along their way. Just as canals served as movers of water and people, these routes served as corridors for wild life. Children could spend hours chasing minnows, tadpoles and frogs, or following the tracks of raccoons and deer which followed these "man-made rivers" across the landscape.

Although the days of filling the cistern twice a year are long gone, these canals still channel water to a thirsty community, provide a haven for wildlife, and informally provide pathways for people. As historic features of the Aztec landscape, preservation and use of these canals remains as important today as they were a hundred years ago.



Wildlife:

The thickets of brush found along the banks of the river provide cover for a variety of wildlife. Here a herd of deer can barely be seen in the brush below the "money saving" bridge. Also common to the area are raccoons, skunks, muskrat, beaver, red fox, songbirds, ducks, geese, and numerous amphibians and reptiles.

Recommendation

Of available Gateway funding, \$10,000 should be provided to the City of Aztec to leverage a New Mexico State Trails Grant and a Department of Transportation Enhancement Grant.

Silverton Mining Interpretive Center

Although tourism has played a role in Silverton's economy, even during active mining days, it was

not until the closure of the community's largest employer, the Sunnyside Gold Mine in 1992, that it has had to come to grips with the fact that tourism and recreation would play a more important role. This transition from mining to tourism and recreation has not been easy. It has meant the passing of a way of life for most Silverton residents and the adoption of a new identity.

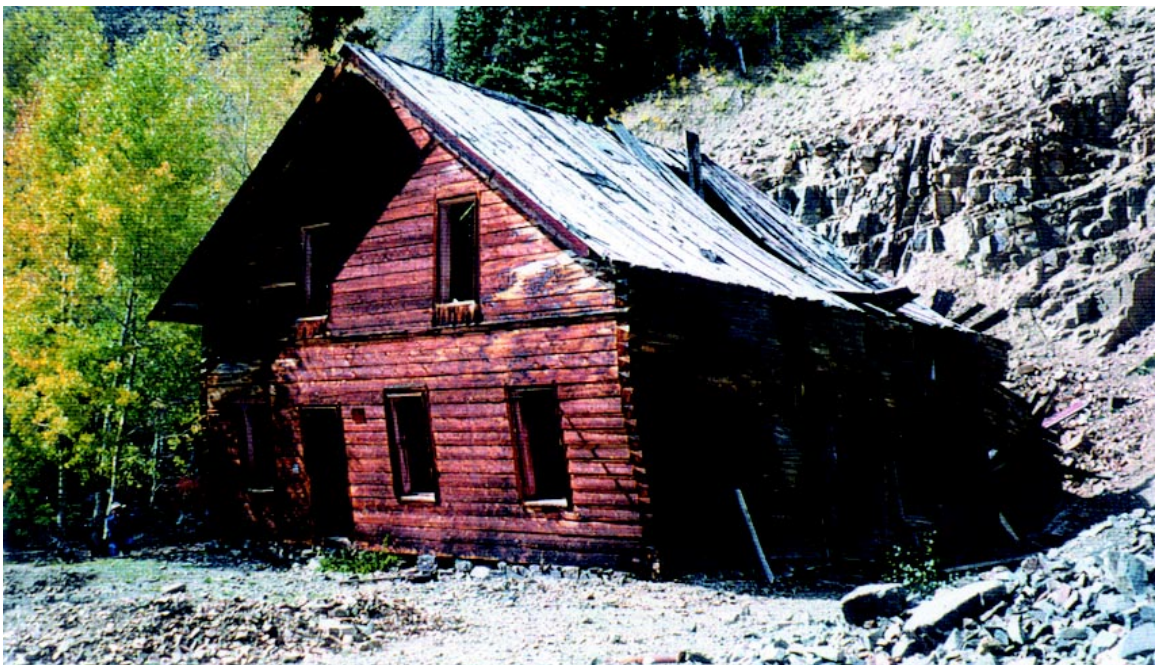
With beautiful scenery, abundant outdoor recreation resources, and an outstanding mining and railroad heritage, the community is blessed with resources that can help them survive economically.

Although the Durango/Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Train delivers 200,000-plus visitors each year to Silverton, the vast majority only spend a couple of hours browsing through town shops until they board the train for the return trip to Durango. Consequently, the community only captures a small part of each visitor's expenditures. Making the community

more attractive to visitors who would spend more time in Silverton is one of the key ingredients of growing their tourism industry.

During recent years, the community has undertaken several projects to preserve their heritage, develop attractions, and make the community more appealing to visitors. The Old Hundred Mine Tour, Mayflower Mill Tour, stabilization of historic structures at Animas Forks, and the development of an attractive, visible visitor center are a few examples.

Through the leadership of the San Juan County Historical Society, plans have been prepared for the construction of the San Juan Mining Heritage Interpretive Center. Using space provided by the county at Courthouse Square, this new facility will house an extensive collection of mining artifacts and complementary displays and interpretive materials. Preliminary plans and designs are complete and the Historical Society plans to start construction this summer if members can raise the remain-



***THE CALEDONIA BOARDING HOUSE**, a well-built, turn-of-the-century structure being crushed by the slow erosion of the hill behind it. The Silverton community is seeking funding to build the Silverton Mining Heritage Interpretive Center, which will include relocating the Caledonia as part of the center.*

ing \$75,000 needed to complete the fund raising for the center.

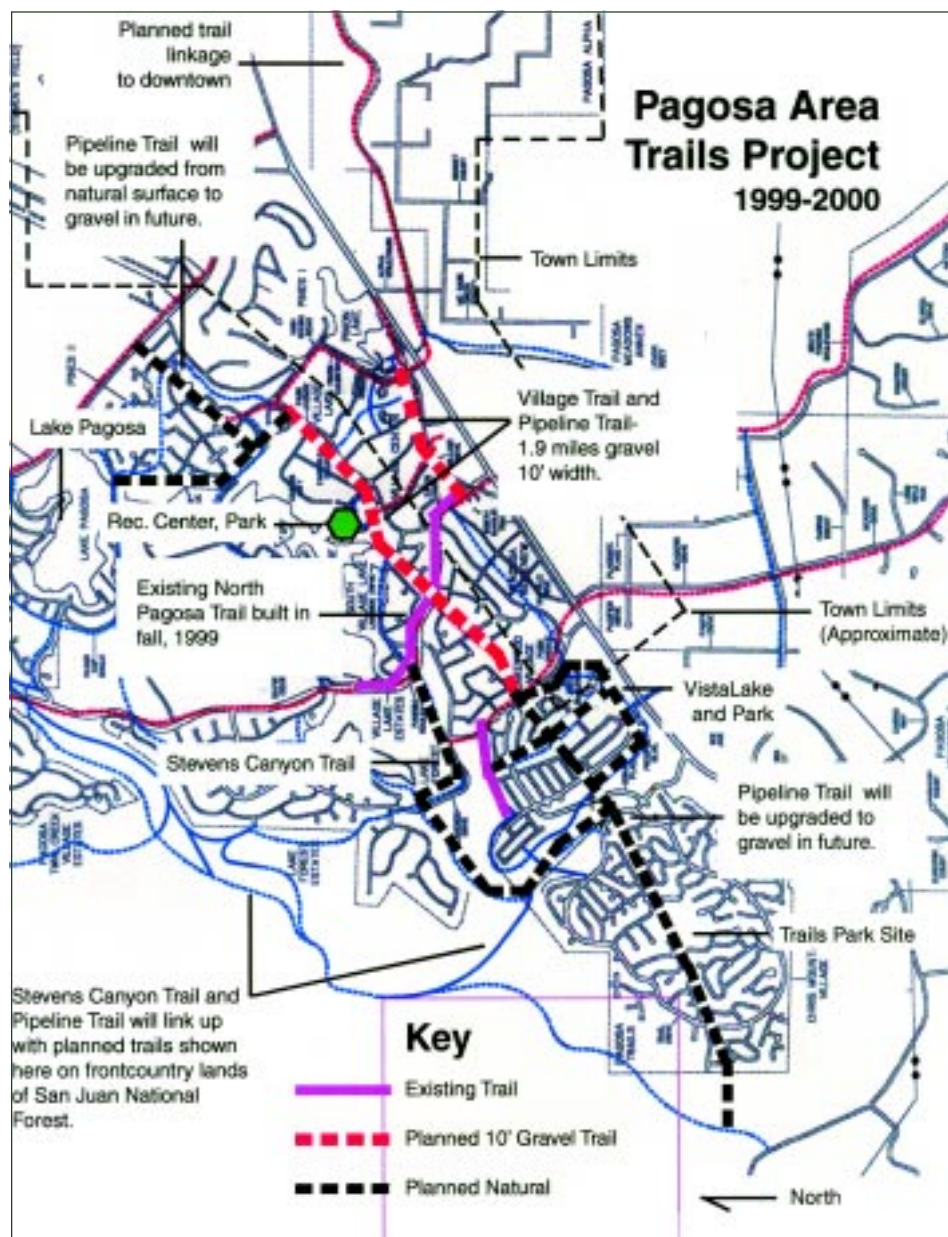
Recommendation

It is recommended that \$10,000 of Gateway funding be budgeted to assist the San Juan County Historical Society, which may have to borrow as much as \$70,000 in order to stay on schedule and begin construction this summer.

Pagosa Springs Area Trail

Like many rural Colorado communities that have experienced a decline in the extractive industries and agriculture, Archuleta County's economy now depends a lot on tourism and recreation. Accompanying this economic transition has been an increase in people relocating due to the area's scenery and quality of life. In fact, Archuleta has been Colorado's second-fastest growing county.

Pagosa Springs, Pagosa Lakes, Archuleta



A **RECREATION TRAILS PLAN** underway in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, is one project recommended for assistance, since it already has support and community agency partners are working collaboratively.

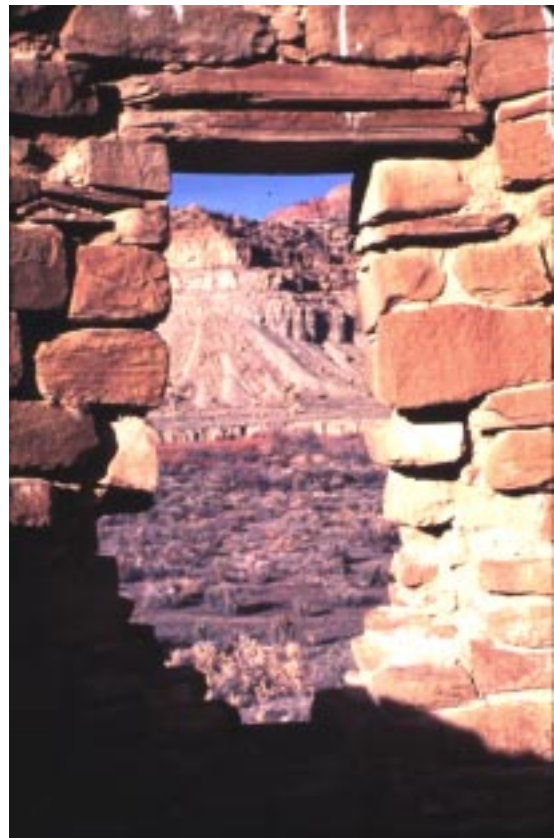
County and the SJNF Pagosa Ranger District have all participated in the development of a trails plan. Its implementation will establish 60 miles of trails linking Pagosa Springs, Pagosa Lakes and the front-country of the national forest. Phase I of the plan, a 1.2 mile trail section is constructed. The community is now pursuing phase II to develop 8.1 miles of new trail, which the community calls their *emerald necklace*, as it will link three lakes, four parks, scenic canyons, a community recreation center, and a future elementary school.

Recommendation

The Pagosa area community has successfully competed for a \$65,000 State Trails Grant in order to finance the phase II work. It is recommended that \$5,000 in Gateway funding be provided in order to supplement the tight budget.

Heritage Site Stewardship in Northwest New Mexico and Southwest Colorado

Two programs have received grant money in Colorado and New Mexico to recruit and train volunteers to maintain, monitor and protect selected Puebloan ruins. These programs offer great potential for multi-party interests to work together towards the practice of stewardship. They also offer opportunities for making tourism more sustainable in regard to protecting attractions on public lands and accommodating visitors who want to experience the region's archaeological wealth. They both plan



UTE MOUNTAIN TRIBAL PARK consists of 125,000 acres immediately south of Mesa Verde National Park. Although it contains Ancestral Puebloan ruins that rival the National Park's, rugged access to the country with tour guides to nearly untouched sites provide to visitors a very different experience.

to actively engage local communities in enhancing their own quality of life while sharing a message of community and public land stewardship and sustainability with each other and visitors.

Recommendation

It is recommended the money in Gateway funding be provided to help sustain these two pilot heritage site-stewardship programs.

Action Three

Provide Development Assistance to Selected Projects

In this third part of the overall strategy, the following projects listed are in need of more development assistance in order to progress and to get ready for direct implementation funding. Dozens of projects were listed by respondents during the Four Corners Tourism Assessment interviews. The following list represents the potentially ready projects.

The Development Assistance component of the three-part strategy involves finding and providing aid in planning and designing various aspects of community and tourism development. These two broad aspects could include services that interviewees said they needed, such as grantwriting, planning and design services, facilitation, hospitality training, and project administration and field coordination. Technical assistance is viewed by the public land agencies and communities as essential services in their tourism- and community-development activities.

Inventory Heritage Resources on the San Juan National Forest and Canyon of the Ancients National Monument

While heritage tourism in the Four Corners has grown significantly, response to growing interest in pre-historic and historic resources has not kept pace with the demand. In order to address this need, it has been suggested to conduct an inventory and assessment of

heritage resources on The San Juan National Forest and on BLM lands, possibly those included in the newly proclaimed Canyon of the Ancients National Monument in southwestern Colorado.

It is recommended that funding earmarked for an ethnographic overview in conjunction with the SJNF plan revision be combined with Gateway dollars to use as a match for requesting a State Historical Fund grant.

Ute Tribal Park Trail Plan

Located within the Mancos Canyon region, the Ute Mountain Tribal Park consists of 125,000 acres, immediately south of Mesa Verde National Park. Like Mesa Verde, the Tribal Park contains thousands of archaeological sites. Due to the controlled access and the rugged and relatively undisturbed terrain, the Tribal Park has the potential to offer many opportunities for exceptional backcountry archaeological and recreational experiences.

In 1989, the tribe developed a general management concept plan for the Tribal Park. The plan contains recommendations for park development, visitor facilities, resource protection, and a road and trail system. Since then, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe has provided visitors with tours of archaeological sites, backpacking trips and overnight camping at a primitive campground within the park.

With the growing popularity for hiking and biking trails, and the tribe's experience over the last several years hosting visitors, the tribe would like to update the trails plan component.

It is recommended that \$7,000 be budgeted to develop a trails plan that will identify and prioritize trail locations, trailheads, design/construction standards, and cost estimates.

Rico/Upper Dolores River Valley Heritage Planning and Visitor Center

The Town of Rico would like assistance with both historic preservation and natural area conservation to be conducted in conjunction with the town's planning and long-term planning for the upper Dolores River Valley. As a historic mining community, the town and the valley are blessed with several significant sites and landscapes. Constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, many structures are in need of repair.

Most recently, open space protection for the valley has become an important issue of concern. An initial proposal has been suggested to create a conservation association to address issues of growth, open space and development in the Upper Dolores River Valley.

In addition to these efforts, a need has arisen to move the Rico Visitor Center from the school, which is slated for reuse as a school. Some community leaders and members are discussing the possibility of remodeling the Masonic building after a lease can be negotiated and dollars can be found to conduct the needed modifications to relocate the visitor center and establish a museum.

Development and direct-funding assistance to the town should be provided during the next several months to:

- provide matching funding to leverage for rehabilitating the historic Masons building in downtown Rico for use as a museum and visitor center.
- create an open space conservation organization;
- inventory of all significant historic sites in the Rico region;
- prepare historic assessments and structural stabilization plans for sites most urgently in need;
- prepare state and/or national register nomination forms;
- prepare design guidelines/regulations for land development and building projects effecting these resources.

Trail of the Ancients & Interpretive Signage (Utah and Colorado)

The Trail of the Ancients provides a designated byway that links together the key scenic, cultural and recreational resources of the Four Corners region. The current sections of this multi-state byway have been officially designated as a scenic and historic byway in Utah and Colorado. Also, a short segment of this byway extends along Highway 163 into Arizona near Monument Valley to Kayenta. There have been preliminary discussions and expressions of support to further designate byways in Arizona and New Mexico in order to establish a Four Corners Heritage Trails system. This system of byways would provide the visitors with a set of distinct, yet complementary, set of touring routes that link together the region's outstanding natural and cultural heritage resources.

The concept for a Trail of the Ancients has



TAPACITO RUIN IS ONE OF THE PUEBLITOS OF DINETAH, located in Largo Wash near Bloomfield, NM. Managed by the BLM, the area receives increased visitation from regional residents. A cooperative BLM-community site stewardship program is underway to care for the Pueblitos, educate visitors, and monitor the sites.

been around for several years, with the first designation in southeast Utah several years ago. Since then, the Trail of the Ancients linking southwest Colorado heritage sites was designated by the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byway Commission in December 1994.

In the mid-1990's the National Park Service prepared preliminary plans for the Masau Trail, a byway in northeast Arizona and northwest New Mexico that linked together the several cultural resource sites in those states. Due to the objections of the Hopi Tribe, this proposed byway was renamed the Pueblo Trail. For a variety of reasons, the Pueblo Trail never became a reality.

In order for the recommended byway additions to be officially recognized, the Arizona and New Mexico State Departments of Transportation will need to designate these byways, as has been done in Colorado and Utah. With these official designations, National Scenic Byway grants can be applied for and used for a variety of purposes, including developing corridor management plans, marketing plans, printing brochures, developing interpretive sites and materials, and constructing recreation improvements along these routes.

Signage

The Utah and Colorado portions of the designated Trail of the Ancients Byway has several cultural and scenic sites that with some interpretive signage would significantly enhance the byway's touring experience.

Funding interpretive facilities on byways has been a priority for the National Scenic Byways Program. This national program also encourages cooperative projects between and among states. The Trail of the Ancients is well positioned to capitalize upon this situation, and the stakeholders should begin the preliminary work for submitting a bi-state application for the 2001 funding cycle.

Pueblitos of Dinetah, New Mexico

Archaeological sites known as the Navajo Pueblitos, or Pueblitos of Dinetah, located in the Gobernador/Largo Canyons near Bloomfield, NM are increasingly popular attractions. Constructed from the 1690s to mid 1700s when the northern Pueblo people fled Spanish control along the Rio Grande and lived with Navajo people, these unique sites, increasingly visited by visitors, offer opportunities for tourism development. However, the BLM lacks

funding to manage them. Directional signage, interpretive signage, trails, road improvements, stabilization, and adequate staffing to patrol and protect them are needed. This resource area offers the opportunity for the tourism industry to proactively work on behalf of the local BLM office to help secure the necessary funding to manage this area.

Aztec Visitor Center

In an effort to encourage more visitors to spend more time in the community, the Aztec Chamber of Commerce seeks to relocate its visitor center to a building next to the Aztec National Monument that was formerly used as a private retail trading post. It is currently owned by the National Park Service. While the chamber's current visitor center is not in a highly visible location, 65,000 annual visitors go to the national monument. An adjacent visitor center could serve more visitors, thus increasing chances to promote other attractions and services. National monument visitors could be referred to the visitor's center for answers and literature about area attractions.

With some additional development assistance, this project could potentially be available for implementation in the near future.

Cuba Community Planning

Cuba's economy has experienced a transition since reductions in logging and mining began occurring this decade. Located 75 miles from Albuquerque, Cuba feels vulnerable to growth as urban residents seek recreational and second-home development. Many residents, though not all, feel growth could help the local economy if managed and does not threaten the community. Also, business growth and sales tax revenue increases are possible if more recreationists and motorists passing through on US Highway 550 are attracted to in-town amenities.

Recreation assets include the 200,000-acre Cuba Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest, the 41,000 San Pedro Wilderness, Chaco Canyon (40 miles east), and the new Jicarilla Apache Casino.

There is considerable interest within the community to plan for their future. The first phase of this plan should focus upon building a broad base of community participation and education, establishing a community vision and identifying important projects for the community to pursue over the next three to five years.

Phase II Gateway Budget Summary

TRAC Development

NW New Mexico	\$7,000
Pagosa Springs, Colorado	5,000
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$12,000</i>

Directly Funded Projects

Aztec Trail	\$10,000
Silverton interpretive Center	10,000
Pagosa Trails System	5,000
Cultural Site Stewardship	12,000
NW New Mexico @ \$6,000	
SW Colorado @ \$6,000	
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$37,000</i>

Development Assistance

Ute Mt. Ute Tribal Park Trails Plan	\$5,000
Rico /Upper Dolores River Heritage Planning	8,000
Arizona/New Mexico Trail of the Ancients	5,000
Aztec Visitor Center	3,000
Cuba Community/Tourism Development	2,000
Dolores Historic Preservation	3,000
Finish Arizona and Utah Assessments	14,000
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>

TOTAL **\$89,000**