

The sustained yield forest management act and the roots of environmental conflict in Northern New Mexico

David Correia

University of Maine at Farmington, 270 Main Street, Farmington, ME 04984, United States

Received 7 October 2005; received in revised form 5 February 2007

Abstract

Recent research on environmental conflict in New Mexico has focused on racial and ethnic conflict between environmentalists and Hispanic loggers as a means to explain the trajectory of environmental struggle and the failure of Hispano/environmentalist coalitions opposing Forest Service management policies. This paper seeks to extend this explanation by considering the constraining role of federal legislation, institutional management and commercial resource exploitation that limited opportunities for Hispano/environmental collaborative challenges to federal resource management arrangements. I analyze the foundations of sustained yield forestry on the Carson National Forest in northern New Mexico through a focus on the legal construction of sustained yield policies and the practices of implementing sustained yield on the Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit, a special timber production sub-unit of the Carson. The paper illustrates how the deployment of sustained yield forestry in New Mexico produced not only conditions of production favorable to commercial timber operators, but also established a complex and contradictory regulatory environment that effectively constrained collaborative efforts between environmentalists and small-scale loggers in their efforts to construct alternative futures for resource management in the region.

© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Sustained yield; New Mexico; Environmental conflict; US Forest service

1. Introduction

Over an early August weekend in 1996, the Santa Fe-based environmental organization Forest Guardians held a camp-out in the ponderosa pine forests of the Carson National Forest's Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit (VFSYU or the Unit) in northern New Mexico. Gathering together within the boundaries of the United States Forest Service's unique timber production area (Fig. 1), the group hoped to publicize their opposition to sustained yield timber production on federal land. At the time, opposition to timber sales on the Carson fit into the Forest Guardian's plans for "rewilding" the southern Rockies, a plan that called for a zero-cut, zero-livestock future for public forests (Talberth and Bird, 1998). Local Hispano¹ activists, led by

La Compania Ocho, a locally owned logging operation, set up their own camp adjacent to the Forest Guardians. They sought to publicize their claims that Forest Guardian opposition to the Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit represented a threat to local livelihoods and resource access. As Forest Guardian supporters drove north from Santa Fe toward the remote VFSYU, they snaked slowly along the gravel roads of the El Rito Ranger District. As they approached the Unit, they were greeted by two effigies hanging in the trees. Attached to the effigies were signs declaring "it's not the owl, stupid, it's our way of life and culture that's at stake." Hung in effigy were Sam Hitt and John Talberth, the former and then current director of Forest Guardians, both publicly critical of Forest Service policies and Hispano land use practices.²

E-mail address: david.correia@maine.edu

¹ For a discussion of the regional significance and use of the term see Nostrand (1992).

² In December of 1995, loggers and Hispano activists paraded effigies of Hitt and Talberth through the streets of Santa Fe, this time burning both effigies in a ceremony held in the historic city plaza.



Fig. 1. The study area: the 73,000 acre Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit in northern New Mexico.

As intractable as the conflict appeared during the summer of 1996—a conflict that included bomb threats and claims of racism and discrimination on both sides (Kosek, 2004)—La Compania and the Forest Guardians were, in fact, early collaborators. Between 1991 and 1994, members of Forest Guardians and La Compania publicly combined efforts to challenge USFS timber policies on the VFSYU. As the effigy hangings and burnings illustrate, the collaboration collapsed in spectacular fashion. In the mid-1990s, La Compania and the Forest Guardians pursued separate legal strategies against the USFS. What had been an ongoing cooperative effort turned into a highly contentious, conflict between La Compania and the forest-dependent communities of the north and the Forest Guardians.

Previous efforts to understand environmental conflict in northern New Mexico have focused on racism in resource struggles between Hispano communities and environmental organizations (Wilmsen, 1997; Kosek, 2004; Pulido, 1996; Peña and Mondragon-Valdez, 1998). Hispano social movements in northern New Mexico have challenged both the ecological and economic logic of state-led resource management regimes. As these authors have shown, racialized discourses denying Hispano ecological legitimacy have constrained Hispano social movements. Following the failure of the Hispano/environmentalist coalition, for example, former Forest Guardian's Executive Director Sam Hitt criticized Hispano resource use patterns as "culturally irresponsible" (Matthews, 1996). One member of La Compania dismissed the Forest Guardians entirely arguing that "[they're] racists, basically. You do not find an envi-

ronmental organization in New Mexico that has Indians in it, that has Spanish people in it, that has black people in it. They're all a bunch of trust fund babies."³

Claims of resource unsustainability attached to traditional Hispano resource patterns shaped the legal debates over resource use and effectively closed off efforts by Hispano groups to establish themselves as legitimate resource users (Wilmsen, 2001). As Kosek (2004, 2004b) has argued, racialized arguments such as those by Sam Hitt sought to establish separate spheres of 'nature' and 'culture' that effectively excluded the concerns of resource-dependent communities. Splitting off nature from culture and privileging certain forms of human interactions with nature are powerful legitimizing forces in natural resource management. Those that control these distinctions "[constitute] nature as external to human communities, a rhetorical manoeuvre that authorizes certain 'disinterested' voices—the resource manager, the ecologists, or nature's 'defender'—to speak as nature's 'representatives'" (Willems-Braun, 1997, p. 25)

A historical examination of forest management in New Mexico reveals a history of paternalistic policies that pre-dates the environmental conflict between La Compania and the Forest Guardians. Rather than retracing familiar ground, this analysis offers a case study that illustrates Paul Hirt's conclusion that USFS management "guarantees controversy because it embodies contradictory mandates" (Hirt, 1994, p. xix). By placing racialized environmental conflict in historical perspective, I seek to link the failures of La Compania and Forest Guardian challenges to a powerful institutional legacy of paternalistic resource management in New Mexico. This history of paternalism, articulated in key Forest Service documents, combined with the obfuscating language of "community stability" in the Sustained Yield Forest Management Act (SYFMA) of 1944, produced a resource management framework in Vallecitos that privileged commercial access to forest resources and marginalized local voices, La Compania and Forest Guardians, in forest policy making.

This article begins with a discussion of the legislative context of the VFSYU. I first examine the history of federal sustained yield forest policy surrounding SYFMA. The Act allowed for the creation of special timber production units within the USFS system that would, according to the authors of the Act, produce harvest patterns consistent with local employment needs "*in order to secure the benefits of forests in maintenance of water supply, regulation of stream flow, prevention of soil erosion, amelioration of climate, and preservation of wildlife*"⁴ (emphasis added). As the notion of timber harvesting as being productive of improved ecosystem function suggests, SYFMA was an industry proposal designed to legitimate industrial uses of forest resources, insulate commercial operators from price

³ 5 May 2004 Interview with author.

⁴ 29 March 1944 (58 Stat 132).

fluctuations, and focus regulatory efforts toward commercial interests.

I then examine the history of resource management in New Mexico. This history included frequent efforts to position the USFS as a legitimate resource manager based on claims of local Hispano cultural and ethnic inadequacies. Key policy documents established the status of ecological illegitimacy for Hispano communities and the necessary paternalistic role of the USFS. The administration of the VFSYU marginalized local interests and ultimately led to environmental conflict that engulfed the Unit in the mid-1990s.

2. Methodological and theoretical frameworks for the present study

This case study is based on examination of archival documents and on semi-structured interviews conducted between May 2004 and December 2005. Two archives provided information on the VFSYU. The first is the official USFS archive at the El Rito Ranger District office in El Rito, New Mexico. Following lawsuits in the 1990s, the Forest Service, in response to legal disclosure requirements, built an archive of correspondence, reports, memoranda, maps, tables, and documents related to the Unit. The ten-volume archive, which begins in 1947 and ends in 1993, documents the labor history, harvest levels, and management of the Unit and includes confidential correspondence among environmental organizations, timber operators, and Hispano community leaders. In addition to the official archive, I gained access to an archive constructed by the legal team that represented La Compania in the 1990s. This archive covered 1960s land grant conflicts over the VFSYU, 1980s collaborations with environmental organizations, and the legal struggle in the 1990s.

It would be entirely possible to write a history of the VFSYU solely using the official archive. Documents written by bureaucratic land managers, however, reflect an official view that often excludes the voices of resource users and those challenging establishment policies and practices. The legal archive reflects what Neumann (2003, p. 241) calls the “alternative landscape readings and environmental histories that contest the popular and prevailing narratives.” These are views that are only available outside the ‘official’ archive. Such a method is critical for an analysis of conflict over the VFSYU, because the Forest Service archive, extensive though it is, was constructed in the early 1990s as a means to defend local USFS interpretations of sustained yield from legal challenges.

3. The legislative context of US forest service management

We have gained out of the vast destruction of our natural resources a degree of vigor and power and

efficiency of which every man of us ought to be proud. Gifford Pinchot (1910, p. 75)

The development of Forest Service authority and management owes its form, in large part, to the work of its first Chief, Gifford Pinchot. The quote above summarizes the position many in the conservation movement held: a faith in technological progress, the regulatory role of the state, the commercial focus of forest resources and, coming from a government forester, the central role of professional foresters, unburdened by market imperatives, in the management of natural resources.⁵ The conservation movement within the USFS, however, was far from monolithic. Although Pinchot was a faithful believer in commercial uses of forest resources, he was suspicious of commercial interests. William Greeley, however, the third Chief of the USFS, placed his faith in industry regarding forest management. The Sustained Yield Forest Management Act culminated Greeley’s efforts to reshape USFS timber policies in a manner more conducive to industry needs and away from Pinchot’s focus on strict regulatory authority.

In a 1925 article discussing the economic obstacles to commercial forestry, Greeley suggested that “[i]t is written in the immutable laws of commerce that industries seek their cheapest source of raw materials. Timber stored up in nature’s reservoirs is cheap, while timber produced by man’s labor and patience is dear” (Greeley, 1925, p. 129). Whereas resource exhaustion characterized forestry throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sustained yield promised a regulatory/market-based solution leading to “the last stage in an evolutionary process in which the supply of timber is shifted from a temporary and exhaustible source to a permanent and sustaining one—from the timber mine to the timber crop” (Greeley, 1925, p. 130).

For Greeley timber was the “logical function” of the USFS, and market-based incentives offered a path to “timber culture.”⁶ In resource-dependent industries such as extractive forestry, however, industrial forestry has historically undervalued nature and labor and externalized the costs of resource exhaustion (Prudham, 2005). Confronted by the biophysical limitations trees pose to firms in the forestry sector—what Prudham (2003) has called the “timescape” of capitalist forestry—industrial forestry firms pursued clear-cut practices resulting in ecological degradation and social disruption wherever it was applied (Prudham, 1998; Clary, 1987; Robbins, 1987; Hibbard and Elias, 1993). The proponents of sustained yield forestry suggested market-based regulation as a response to this long-term profitability crisis (the ecological problem was seen only in terms of its economic implications).

⁵ See Williams (1989) for a discussion of Pinchot, the USFS, and the conservation movement.

⁶ Lee Muck, Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, used the phrase “logical function” on 8 December 1943 during congressional hearings on the proposed Sustained Yield Forest Management Act.

Greeley's version of sustained yield relied on industry to respond to incentives rather than regulation. The "[c]ommercial incentive is beginning to cut the Gordian Knot. The industrial quest for the cheapest source of raw material that formerly led to the timber mine is already turning to the timber crop" (Greeley, 1925, 136). Whereas Pinchot sought strict timber harvest limits and controls, Greeley proposed environmental regulations that focused instead on reshaping the social relations of production among timber operators, labor, and the communities dependent on forest resources so as to benefit the interests of the forest products industry.

Former Pacific Northwest Regional Forester Christopher Granger represented the USFS during Congressional hearings on SYFMA. Granger testified that "one of the principal purposes of this legislation is to make it possible to have sustained-yield forestry practices on a considerable area of privately owned timberlands... which without the benefit of the arrangements sought to be authorized by this legislation would probably be cut on a liquidation basis. Within a relatively short time the private timber would be gone and the communities primarily dependent on the operation of that enterprise would be left in a serious condition."⁷ Operators with private timber stands could mix these stands with federal timber. In return for the public timber monopoly, private firms would follow sustained yield standards. In addition, the private operator would be required to meet local hiring standards, and maintain a local sawmill. A second option allowed an operator to access Forest Service lands without contributing private lands.

During the hearings, Granger cautioned Oklahoma Congressman Victor Wickersham, who was concerned that "[s]o much timber has been slaughtered" during the war years, that the real threat was underproduction, not overproduction. While a reduction in production could occur, "[w]e hope not," Granger said, "because that is a bad thing. To me it is better to avoid that slump, even though the forests are suffering somewhat." All of the testimony by USFS staff covered the economic possibilities of sustained yield. Despite the desire to maintain production levels, the arguments to increase and maintain timber production gave pause to members of the Agriculture Committee. When a Utah Representative wondered what effect the bill would have on forest ecology, Christopher Granger replied that "[i]f the timber is cut off, the land may wash away, and it may impair the habitat of wildlife and what not, whereas if it was cut properly there would be benefits in protecting against soil erosion and preserving the habitat of wildlife, and other things that are the benefits of the proper way of cutting timber." The sustained yield logic touted by Granger and Greeley required a faith that the commercial

transformation of forests produced economic benefits and also *improved* nature.

SYFMA promised "community stability" through timber-related employment for local communities. The act allowed for the creation of monopolies in local timber as a solution to the social and ecological contradictions of industrial forestry. In the decade following the passage of SYFMA, timber production more than doubled in federal forests, from 3.5 billion board feet to 8.3 billion board feet. The budget environment and timber revenue generation guaranteed the continued dominance of timber production in the national forests following the Act (Le Master, 1984). Hirt (1994, p. 181) has argued that Forest Service decision makers worked in tandem with timber interests to protect the preferential position of timber production on forest service land while also insuring that sustained yield remained solely an economic term. The 1960 Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (MUSY) was intended to resolve the issue of competing claims to forest resources and elevate to equal status interests other than timber on national forest lands. Yet, as with SYFMA, planning requirements for multiple uses and interests came up against federal and regional budgets that remained tied to timber production targets and thus received the largest portion of funds (Hirt, 1994).

Following the passage of MUSY, controversies over clearcutting practices in National Forests challenged the timber focus of Forest Service management (Le Master, 1984). The 1976 National Forest Management Act, passed in response to the clearcutting controversies of the 1960s, provided legal mechanisms to potentially temper the timber focus in USFS forest planning.

4. Assimilation and Americanization: the USFS in Northern New Mexico

For several years we have followed a policy on managing the National Forests in Northern New Mexico that is different in certain respects from that applied to other National Forests... To some degree or another, unrest and discontent of local native people over their lot in life have been prevalent since 1848 when the United States gained control of the area. This has manifested itself in periodic uprisings. Some have been violent in nature. Others, less spectacular but perhaps more effective, include thrusts made by local people through civil rights organizations, both National and local. Efforts by native people to gain recognition and consideration can be expected. The Spanish Americans are being encouraged to make their feelings known to the rest of America, and they are doing this in many ways. Since many of their objectives are tied to landownership and use, National Forests will continue to be a prime target until the local people are convinced it is in their best interest to live in harmony with public ownership of

⁷ 8 December 1943 testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture regarding the proposed sustained yield forest management act.

much of the area. William Hurst, USFS Southwest Regional Forester⁸

The conservation debates about forest management in the USFS prior to SYFMA only nominally included New Mexico. In practice, forest management in New Mexico differed from the rest of the country. As Hurst described in his memo quoted above, the Forest Service struggled to resolve the timber focus of the USFS with subsistence requirements of land grant communities in New Mexico. Throughout Spanish and Mexican control of the territory, land grants, some private and many communal, were distributed to settlers throughout the region. Despite promises by the US to honor these grants following the Mexican-American War, most community grants were rejected by US courts (Ebright, 1987). The rejections placed locals in conflict with federal land management agencies as millions of acres wound up in the Forest Service system.

Throughout the period of Forest Service management in northern New Mexico, administrators and local foresters relied on paternalistic diagnoses of cultural and ethnic backwardness among Hispano communities to explain local opposition to federal authority. One of the earliest policy documents proposing to transform the subsistence economy of the region was the 1935 Forest Service report titled, “A Dependency study of Northern New Mexico,” authored by Roger Morris, a Forest Service grazing assistant.⁹ In the report Morris claimed, “[Hispanos] are sedentary in character living in the present and with no thought for the future. They accept conditions as they are and make the best of them with no idea of conserving the natural resources much less enhancement of them. They would remain in place to the point of extinction by starvation and disease before they would migrate” (Morris, 1935, pp. 1–2). The study, which relied on surveys of local economic conditions by the Soil and Water Conservation Service, suggested that the Forest Service should limit local resource use to an annual subsistence income for local Hispano families. As Morris reasons, “It is noted... that the diet... is exceedingly plain, and the clothing supply very meager, and also that there has been no provision for medical attention. It is thus felt that the indicated income figure of \$426.25 can very well be raised to an even \$500.00” (Morris, 1935, pp. 32–23). Morris considered acreage needs, herd sizes, and labor requirements to establish a highly regulated subsistence economy in the region. “In the matter of determining the proper relationships between inhabitants and existing natural resources there is a certain ratio of the population such as merchants and laborers deriving their living indirectly from the said resources to those deriving a direct living from them and this ratio

should be determined in all cases” (Morris, 1935, p. 36). Morris suggested that grazing resources could not accommodate pending population pressures. For this reason, Morris suggested that “submarginal cases will not, as a result, be encouraged by the Forest Service to continue in a situation where they will patently never have a chance to become independent” (Morris, 1935, p. 42). Morris recommended grazing reductions in key areas, Vallecitos among them, and suggested “a policy of using the Forest Service’s good offices with forest users of all classes (timber operators, recreationists, dude ranchers and grazing and special use permittees) in an effort to induce them to give first consideration in the matter of employment to the local dependent population” (Morris, 1935, p. 47). The passage of SYFMA in 1944 offered local foresters an opportunity to institutionalize Morris’ recommendations by restricting subsistence use, emphasizing commercial resource use, and requiring local employment in timber harvests.

At a public meeting held in Vallecitos in 1947, local foresters introduced the Morris-influenced VFSYU policies. Over one hundred residents from the area listened to Forest Service plans. One after another, local residents stood up and offered support for Forest Service plans until a local resident named Gavino Alire criticized the Forest Service for their treatment of grazing permittees:

[W]hen the Forest Service was first established around 1905, there were those that had sheep, cattle, horses, burros, mules, etc., to graze on the forest and from there until today every six months you reduce. Those men that have sheep, cattle, and horses have proof of that, and we don’t want to be kept here under such limitations. We have the hope of living a few years more with liberty. We don’t want to be prisoners. We want to have liberty as citizens of the United States.

The VFSYU local foresters described offered monopoly control of all timber sales to an Approved Responsible Operator. In return for the monopoly, the operator was required to mill at least 40% of harvested timber at the local mill, and to maintain an overwhelmingly local workforce. Over 90% of all workers had to reside in one of five local villages within the 73,000-acre Unit boundary. At the public meeting, local forest rangers made no mention of the VFSYU case study conducted by the District. The case study identified Hispano grazing as the cause of local environmental conditions.¹⁰ As Alire suspected the policy changes, proposed through the application of SYFMA, included extensive grazing reductions in the region. Local foresters acknowledged that grazing reductions would produce local hardships, but suggested that employment from the VFSYU would “serve as a vehicle to assist in stabilizing [sic] the communities.”¹¹

⁸ 6 March 1972 Memo from Hurst to Forest Supervisors and District Rangers regarding the “Region 3 Policy on Managing National Forest Land in Northern New Mexico.” University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, collection MSS 459 BC, box 6, folder 3.

⁹ UNM, Center for Southwest Research, collection MSS 289 BC, box 17, folder 8.

¹⁰ 27 March 1947 VFSYU Case Study by Otto Lindh. VFSYU 1: 21.

¹¹ 5 September 1948 press release from Assistant Regional Forester Otto Lindh. VFSYU 1: 3A.

Prior to the VFSYU, New Mexico posed onerous challenges for industrial timber production. The experience of the early years of sustained yield revealed that, even with monopoly control of timber harvests, a series of obstacles confronted commercial timber production. First, the labor standards offered workers initial leverage against commercial operators. For example, the earliest operator on the Unit attempted to force locals into a piece-wage system. Workers, however, opposed this tactic as a means to reduce costs and boost profits by increasing the pace of production. Recognizing the leverage they enjoyed under the labor standards in the Unit, workers established a union in 1955. When the Union went on strike, the Forest Service initially enforced the 90% local labor stipulation and blocked the operator from hiring scab workers.

The labor standards, however, required 90% of “other than supervisory positions.”¹² Skilled positions were made exempt from the labor policy. As a result, locals were hired in the lowest paid positions. In addition, no minimum wage or minimum workforce size standards were established. The commercial operator controlled costs by shedding workers through the application of increased mechanization in woods and mill operations. In the 1955 strike, both the commercial operator and the union sought to restructure these production conditions. A contentious and at times violent labor conflict engulfed the Unit between 1955 and 1957, ending only when arson destroyed the sawmill in Vallecitos. The Unit was without an operator for the next 15 years.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, intense poverty and an equally intense apathy by elected officials and the United States Forest Service regarding the concerns of Hispano villages culminated in a period of fierce resistance by locals (Knowlton, 1968). Frustration boiled over in the mid 1960s when a wave of social protests by land grant activists, including arson in the VFSYU, spread over the Carson National Forest. By the mid-1960s, an organization called La Alianza Federal de Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Land Grants), consolidated land grant activists throughout New Mexico and intensified protests against the Forest Service. In 1966, La Alianza claimed a portion of the Carson National Forest as the rightful property of land grant heirs (Kosek, 2004b). Following a standoff related to this claim, a crackdown on La Alianza activities exacerbated relations between La Alianza members and County officials. In June of 1967, members of La Alianza raided the Rio Arriba County courthouse seeking to make a citizens arrest of the County Attorney, claiming he had violated their rights to peacefully organize (Gardner, 1971). A gun fight left two police officers wounded. La Alianza members scattered into the mountains around Tierra Amarilla, pursued by the F.B.I., the National Guard, and New Mexico State Troopers (Gardner, 1971; Nabokov, 1969).

The Land Grant War of 1967 brought national attention to northern New Mexico and established the Hispano land grant heir as “a political category representing a cross-referencing of tradition, history, and culture in New Mexico” (Gonzalez, 2003, p. 315). La Alianza’s challenges to federal authority in the region gained traction, particularly in Vallecitos, where the rhetoric of “community stability” in SYFMA no longer resonated.

In response to the social upheaval in the region, the key institutions of education and economic development in northern New Mexico re-evaluated their missions of assimilation and Americanization. On June 13, 1967, just five days after the Courthouse Raid, Northern New Mexico College unveiled the second draft of a report titled “An Economic, Social and Educational Survey of Rio Arriba and Taos Counties.”¹³ The authors argued that local unrest was a function of jealousy. “People from outside the area have come in with sufficient capital and initiative to utilize some of this land which is going to waste and have met with resentment and ‘bad luck’ in the form of arson of their houses and barns and shooting of their cattle and horses” (Burma and Williams, 1967, p. 11). The report recommended a renewed process of assimilation based on the observation that a “drawback to adequate education in the area of these two counties is the Spanish cultural tradition and language” (Burma and Williams, 1967, p. 60). The report argued that assimilation strategies had failed in the past because Hispano parents failed to recognize the importance of English-language instruction, a problem considered “a handicap, possibly related in some ways to the subculture of the region” (Burma and Williams, 1967, p. 60). The authors concluded by suggesting that, among other things, students in northern New Mexico needed training “in how to leave the area successfully” (Burma and Williams, 1967, p. 68).

On November 16, 1967, just five months after the Courthouse raid, the Chief of the Forest Service, Edward Cliff, directed Southwest Regional Forester William Hurst to “consider Northern New Mexico as a special situation and to make a considered analysis of land use priorities.” In the memo outlining this policy change, Cliff acknowledged the “great emphasis placed on livestock use by the rural Spanish-American citizenry. [Hurst] will give the grazing situation particularly close attention.”¹⁴ Cliff went so far as to recognize that, “regardless of whether these people obtained this use through lease or trespass, their livelihood depended at least in part on being able to graze their livestock on these lands.” He promised that the Forest Service would “do what we can to enhance the grazing resource for maximum use by the local people.”

On January 29th, 1968, Hurst issued a memo outlining a future policy for resource management that came to be

¹² 19 March 1948 letter from Vallecitos Lumber Company to Carson Forest Supervisor, VFSYU 1: 91.

¹³ See UNM, Center for Southwest Research, collection MSS 93 BC, box 2, folder 31.

¹⁴ 16 November 1967 Memo from Cliff to Hurst. United States Forest Service File 2100 (2200). Author’s files.

known as the Northern New Mexico Policy.¹⁵ Hurst assigned Forest Supervisor M.J. Hassell to prepare “a comprehensive analysis of the Northern New Mexico situation and determine how the resources of the National Forests and our work on the National Forests can most effectively contribute to the needs of the local people.” On May 13th, 1968, Hassell issued his report titled, “The People of Northern New Mexico and the National Forests.” The Hassell Report, as it is commonly known, suggested policy changes designed to contribute to the “entrance of the people of northern New Mexico into the American mainstream of life” (Hassell, 1968, p. 2).

Hassell recommended speeding up decision-making processes and educating personnel on the history of northern New Mexico. Despite promises from Cliff and Hurst that the policy would address substantive issues related to local livelihoods, Hassell’s recommendations to develop the range potential in New Mexico National Forests were partially rejected by Hurst. In a memo, Hurst agreed only to “not deemphasize the need to fully develop the range potential on each allotment.”¹⁶ Even trivial suggestions for increased employment were met with skepticism. In a reply memo to Hassell’s report, Hurst decided further study was necessary related to a series of suggestions designed to increase employment opportunities, recommendations that included simple proposals such as hiring locals to build “toilets which can be prefabricated in northern New Mexico,” or “prefabricate wooden tables for installation in Forest Service Campgrounds throughout the Region” (Hassell, 1968, p. 20).

The Hassell Report differed little from the Morris and Burma reports. In all three reports, assimilation policies were recommended as crucial strategies in reducing poverty. None of these reports considered the possibility that Forest Service practices based on paternalistic policies contributed to rural poverty and conflict. All three reports identified lingering resentment as the underlying cause of unrest. As Hassell argued, “Many of the people believe they still own much of the land in New Mexico including at least parts of the National Forests. Resentment of other Forest users is present. The beliefs and resentments of the poorer, most backward people have been encouraged to the point where they have fought to regain something which they believe is rightfully theirs” (Hassell, 1968, p. 2). The Northern New Mexico Policy based on the Hassell Report sought to diffuse pressure on restrictive Forest Service practices, to enlist Hispanos in the process of their own assimilation, and to help the Forest Service “achieve public understanding and acceptance of Forest Service management goals, policies, and procedures” (Hassell, 1968, p. 3).

5. Institutionalizing conflict: sustained yield forestry in Northern New Mexico

The VFSYU was an obvious vehicle to achieve the assimilation goals of the Northern New Mexico Policy. On paper it appeared to offer unequivocal benefits to locals while remaining within the rubric of strict federal authority. Hassell suggested in his report that a locally owned operator should be found for the VFSYU. The Forest Service, however, rejected a number of local applicants and, eventually, selected Duke City Lumber, a subsidiary of a transnational corporation, to be the Approved Responsible Operator.

Throughout the nearly 20 years Duke City operated in Vallecitos, it rarely maintained a labor force greater than 50% local.¹⁷ Duke attempted to circumvent the labor standard even further by listing jobs as supervisory even when there were no employees to supervise.¹⁸ Despite worker complaints, Duke’s labor violations served to reinforce their position as Forest Service staff took a hands-off approach, fearing that to “declare Duke City in breach of contract would shut down the operation.”¹⁹ In 1974 the District increased Duke City’s annual allowable cut from 3.5 mmbf to 4.0 mmbf, and again in 1980 to 4.2 mmbf.²⁰ By 1985, Duke City’s labor practices and the lack of Forest Service oversight galvanized local workers and residents to organize the VFSYU Association as a vehicle to force the Forest Service to manage the Unit to the benefit of the local community. The Association used the 1985 forest planning process as a venue to air grievances related to the Forest Service’s operation of the Unit—a pattern of management the Association President described as “Economic Terrorism.”²¹

During the 1985 planning process, local residents and the Association linked ecological problems in the Unit and the economic marginalization facing local residents and workers to harvesting practices and Forest Service management. As the President of the Association argued, “[i]ncreased logging and more roads will cause long-term ecological damage to the forest, reduce the sustained yield of the Unit, harm wildlife and adversely affect [livestock] permittees.”²²

The Association was adamantly opposed to Duke City’s proposal to harvest timber along steep slopes and narrow

¹⁷ 4 February 1971 letter from District Ranger Deiter to Duke City Lumber. VFSYU 4: 492; 4 March 1971 letter from District staffer Hutt to Carson Forest Supervisor VFSYU 4: 495.

¹⁸ 8 July 1980 Memo from Ray Brown to Carson Forest Supervisor. VFSYU 6: 607.

¹⁹ 26 June 1980 Memo from District staffer Hakenson to Carson Forest Supervisor. VFSYU 6: 607.

²⁰ Million board feet (mmbf) is a measurement of timber volume. An average stick-built home requires more than 12 thousand board feet of lumber.

²¹ 1 May 1986 letter from Jaramillo to Representative Richardson. VFSYU 6: 658.

²² 4 June 1985 Public Hearing held in Vallecitos, NM. Document VFSYU 6: 648.

¹⁵ 29 January 1968 Memo from Hurst to the Deputy Regional Forester, the Assistant Regional Forester, and the Carson Forest Supervisor. United States Forest Service File 1310. Author’s files.

¹⁶ 13 May 1968 Memo from Hurst to Assistant Regional Foresters and Forest Supervisors Latimore, Proctor, and Seaman. United States Forest Service, File 3610. Author’s files.

canyons in the VFSYU. Proposed cable harvesting systems promised to open up more terrain while also reducing equipment and labor costs. One former logger questioned the appropriateness of such a system at the 1985 forest planning meeting: “If they do this on steep slopes, if they use this system, it will take the trees years to grow back because they are on such steep slopes. All the topsoil will be going down the river, and it just causes a lot of damage.”²³ The intensification of mechanized logging in the Unit also included the use of a feller-buncher, a single-operator tractor that cuts and stacks logs, replacing workers and labor time in the woods. Workers described the machine as “very destructive to the land surface while at the same time displacing many jobs.”²⁴ The District Ranger disagreed, however, describing mechanized logging as “the wave of the future. Feller-bunchers are being used more and more in the Southwest Region because the terrain lends itself to its use. When used skillfully, it is an efficient and cost effective piece of equipment.”²⁵

Forest Service proposals to increase mechanization appeared contrary to the stated purpose of sustained yield units: to promote economic stabilization through rural employment in the timber sector. The irony of the Forest Service touting the benefits of production strategies that reduced labor costs, thus undermining the “community stability” language of the sustained yield units—creating and maintaining high employment levels—was not lost on local workers. As one logger argued to the Forest Service, “In recent years we have witnessed a continuous rise in the amount of timber that is harvested from the Unit, while at the same time the number of jobs provided to the local population by the timber industry continue to decline.”²⁶ In practice SYFMA was a tool to increase output rather than a means to sustain local forests and forest dependent communities. Prudham noted, in his analysis of USFS timber policies in Oregon, that the sustained yield policy focus on guaranteed annual sale quantities of timber reflected a “fundamental misunderstanding of industrial capitalism” (Prudham, 2005, p. 163). In Vallecitos, as elsewhere, sustained yield policies collapsed nature-society relations into a market calculus that allowed for the conversion of local forests and local labor into solely economic categories.

In addition to mechanization, Duke operated using contract arrangements with subcontractors. The arms-length contract arrangements insulated Duke from both price volatility and inconsistent annual sale quantities. In addition, the contract arrangements protected Duke from responsibility for a host of exploitative labor practices. In the woods operation, Duke’s subcontractor Dave Halder fired a worker after the employee suffered an on-the-job injury.

As the former employee recounted at the 1985 public hearing, “See, I worked for Halder for 20 years. And what happened to me was I got out of there deaf on one side, my back all messed up, and they just fired me.”²⁷ Despite Forest Service regulations that required power saw operators to wear hard hats, saw chaps, goggles or glasses and ear plugs, loggers working for Halder were not provided with even basic safety equipment.²⁸ Mill workers received no pay for on-the-job injuries. The policy later was described in a memo by the Forest Supervisor: “Vaughn [the sawmill owner] explained that his policy of not providing a full days pay for workers injured at the mill was used because he felt that there was too much potential for abuse if workers knew that they would get paid if they went home during a work day due to injury.”²⁹ In addition, Vaughn did not provide health benefits, or even access to water during working hours.³⁰

The VFSYU Association threatened to appeal the 1985 Forest Plan unless their concerns regarding labor standards and logging practices were incorporated into the plan. The Forest Service agreed to limit Duke’s annual yield to 5.5 mmbf, and set aside 1.0 mmbf of timber and 1.1 mmbf of small forest products annually for locally owned timber operators. Two locally owned organizations emerged from this agreement. La Compania Ocho, a company comprised of local loggers who had formerly subcontracted for Duke City, pursued the 1 mmbf of sawtimber, and La Madera Forest Products, a non-profit organization, pursued the 1.1 mmbf of firewood and non-timber forest products.

Despite the 1985 plan, The Forest Service rejected La Compania’s initial 1992 request to become an approved operator until La Compania “purchase[d] and set up its own mill.”³¹ Even after La Compania established an agreement to mill at the Vallecitos sawmill, timber sales did not come close to the 1 mmbf target. Between 1986 and 1996, a period during which locally owned operators should have received 10 mmbf, the Forest Service sold a total of only 0.7 mmbf to La Compania and 1.4 mmbf to other local operators (Kauffman et al., 2003).

While La Compania sought to establish itself as a local alternative to Duke City, a group of local and national environmental organizations that included the Forest Guardians cooperated with La Compania in an effort to establish a sustainable forest economy in the region. In November of 1991, the group sent a letter to the Forest Service decrying the fact that “[f]or over 40 years the Unit has been heavily logged resulting in declining forest health

²³ 4 June 1985 Public Hearing held in Vallecitos, NM. Document VFSYU 6: 648.

²⁴ 4 May 1990 letter from Delbert DeVargas to El Rito District Ranger Green. VFSYU 8: 727A.

²⁵ 8 June 1990 letter from Green to Ike DeVargas. VFSYU 8: 730.

²⁶ 9 May 1990 letter from Delbert DeVargas to Green. VFSYU 8: 728A.

²⁷ 4 June 1985 Public Hearing in Vallecitos, NM. VFSYU 6: 648.

²⁸ 5 May 1976 Memo from Wasser to Carson Forest Supervisor. VFSYU 5: 575.

²⁹ 26 January 1990 letter from Carson Forest Supervisor Bedell to Ike DeVargas. VFSYU 8: 721.

³⁰ 26 January 1990 letter from Carson Forest Supervisor Bedell to Ike DeVargas. VFSYU 8: 721.

³¹ See La Compania Ocho Inc. et al. vs. the United States Forest Service et al., No. CIV 94-317 JB/LS. This standard was the same standard the Forest Service waived in 1972 for Duke City Lumber.

and a dwindling supply of sustainable sawtimber. The Unit has never, and does not now provide the community stability nor improved economy intended by the original congressional legislation.”³² The signatories requested that the Forest Service reduce the total planned yield on the upcoming 5.1 mmbf Felipito timber sale promised to Duke City Lumber, and finally meet the obligation to provide the annual 1 mmbf to La Compania. In an August 20th, 1992 letter to La Compania, the USFS acknowledged a growing backlog of timber for locally owned operators but offered La Compania only .8 mmbf of the Felipito sale, reserving the remaining 3.3 for Duke City.³³

In addition to collaboration with the Forest Guardians and other New Mexico environmental organizations, La Compania, through membership in the VFSYU Association, delivered a comprehensive review of all VFSYU policies in April 1992.³⁴ The VFSYU association, headed by Ike DeVargas, suggested expanding the purpose of the Unit beyond sawtimber to also include, “wood fiber products, mineral products, wildlife, fisheries, grazing uses and recreations uses.” They included language that required the Forest Service, despite being exempt from state and local property taxes, to give “to the communities in the Unit 25% of its revenues derived from the Unit to provide general support for schools and roads.” They asked for the establishment of a special entitlement fund to establish “curricula in the fields of forestry and forestry-related skills, business administration, and agricultural sciences for schools serving the unit.”

VFSYU Association changes included language that would have had the Forest Service and the New Mexico Game and Fish Department admit that its policies had “resulted in the establishment of a non-native elk population that competes for forage with livestock that have traditionally been important to the local economy of the Unit.” The Association suggested two alternatives in dealing with the elk problem. Either the Forest Service could collect “a grazing fee for each head of elk” equal to what is charged to livestock permittees, or the Forest Service could retain 25% of hunting and fishing revenue for restoration, herd management and the protection of existing livestock permits in the unit.

The Association sought support for water and sewer systems, playgrounds, and parks for communities in the Unit. They asked, again, for a reduction, rather than an increase, contra Duke City, in the annual sustained yield of sawtimber. They sought to include supervisory positions in the labor standards. They proposed a training requirement to insure that a home-grown cadre of local leaders could emerge. They sought a solution to the problem of low

wages for workers in the Unit by tying the wage scale in the Unit to the prevailing wage offered in New Mexico. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, they changed language in the statement so that the VFSYU Association itself would wield the power necessary to enforce the labor requirements and guarantee that benefits from the Unit accrue to locals rather than to commercial timber firms.

Forest Service staff in El Rito ignored the suggestions despite repeated attempts by the Association to discuss policy changes.³⁵ Meanwhile, the Forest Service scaled back the Felipito sale, making only Duke’s promised 3.3 mmbf available. The Forest Service finally explained that, for budgetary reasons, only the sale portion set aside for Duke City could be released. In an October 1993 letter the District Ranger advised La Compania that “adequate funding may not be available” to release any portion of Felipito to La Compania.³⁶ Ike DeVargas complained to the Forest Service in a letter that “It really seems like the US Forest Service is hell bent on altering our way of life whether we want it or not and that if this alters the complexion of the community in regards to our culture and traditions, so much the better. It was called social engineering in one document, now we could refer to it as ethnic cleansing.”³⁷

On April 15, 1993, the US Fish and Wildlife Service declared the Mexican spotted owl an endangered species. On May 11, 1993 The Forest Service sent a letter to La Compania saying, “[w]ith the listing of the Mexican Spotted Owl, even we, on the Carson, are in a brand new ball game.”³⁸

In the face of a potentially permanent ban on logging in the VFSYU as a result of the owl listing, La Compania returned again to environmental organizations for assistance. In a letter to Bill Richardson, then the congressional representative to northern New Mexico, Ike DeVargas railed against Forest Service hubris. “I can assure you Mr. Congressman,” DeVargas wrote “that there are a great many educated fools employed by the US Forest Service and a whole bunch of uneducated geniuses living in our communities who know that many practices out of text books do not apply to our particular situation.” DeVargas asked Richardson to organize a meeting between the Forest Service, local communities, and environmentalists where La Compania’s demand that “the Sustained Yield Forest Management Act should and must carry as much weight as the National Environmental Policy Act” could be discussed.³⁹

³² La Compania’s lawyer made frequent requests of local Forest Service staff in El Rito regarding policy suggestions (Legal archive, author’s files).

³⁶ 21 October 1993 letter from District Ranger Terrazas to La Compania attorney Richard Rosenstock, VFSYU 9: 859.

³⁷ 5 February 1993 letter from La Compania to Forest Supervisor Lucero. VFSYU 9: 824.

³⁸ 11 May 1993 letter from Forest Supervisor Lucero to Rosenstock. VFSYU 9: 833.

³⁹ 19 April 1993 letter from Ike DeVargas to Representative Richardson. VFSYU 9: 842.

³² 13 November 1991 letter to Regional Forester Jolly. VFSYU 8: 780.

³³ 25 September 1992 letter from Acting Forest Supervisor Moehn to La Compania, VFSYU 9: 814 and November 1992 Carson National Forest Action Plan. VFSYU 9: 820.

³⁴ 17 March 1992 letter to El Rito District Ranger Terrazas from VFSYU Association attorney David Benavides. VFSYU 9:802.

In a widely distributed press release, the resulting coalition agreed once again to support limited, locally controlled timber production on the VFSYU. In the press release, the group encouraged the Forest Service to support an annual sale quantity of 3.5 mmbf of timber for local operators, an amount La Compania required to maintain current employment levels (Clifford, 1995).

The coalition resulted in a 1993 commitment from the Forest Service to finally release portions of the long promised Felipito timber sale to La Compania in 1994.⁴⁰ The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish challenged the harvest, however, because the sale was scheduled for an Elk calving area. When La Compania asserted the authority of SYFMA in governing timber management policies on the Unit, New Mexico Game and Fish Director Bill Montoya suggested that they “lack an understanding of the Carson National Forest Plan process, the role of the Forest Service in this process, or the concept of forest standards and guidelines.”⁴¹

In March of 1994, La Compania sued the Forest Service, seeking relief based on first amendment claims of discrimination related to Forest Service timber sale practices.⁴² On March 13, 1996, United States District Judge John Conway agreed to a settlement and ordered the Forest Service to sell to La Compania 75% of the planned 2.1 mmbf La Manga timber sale, and 80% of sawtimber from the planned 10 mmbf Agua/Caballos sale.

The Forest Service, however, refused to release either sale to La Compania, citing an August 1995 Arizona injunction against all timber harvesting in the Southwest region that resulted from what has become known as the Silver lawsuit, a suit filed in Arizona by a host of environmental groups, including Forest Guardians.⁴³ The Forest Guardians joined the Silver lawsuit after collaborative efforts with La Compania began to contradict their larger goals. As Sam Hitt described,

We made this deal with [La Compania] and others, we got a lot of publicity over it, that we wouldn't challenge Felipito, even though Felipito canyon is very, very rich—that's actually where the spotted owl is—in exchange for them not going after La Manga. They logged Felipito and then the forest service put up La Manga, completely ignoring the agreement. So, the Forest Service wasn't part of the agreement, so they

didn't feel bound by it. Looking in hindsight, we were too trusting, a bit naïve in terms of our different aims.⁴⁴

The Forest Guardians believed that La Compania had violated a verbal agreement in which the two groups agreed that La Compania would not bid on the La Manga timber sale. While La Compania did log portions of Felipito, it did so as a Duke City subcontractor. The contract nearly bankrupted La Compania. An analysis of the cost structure of the Felipito timber sale conducted by the non-profit organization Forest Trust (now known as the Forest Guild) showed that, as Forest Trust director Henry Carey wrote, “The Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit was established to improve the economic well-being of the residents of the Unit. It would seem that when the lumber market creates a windfall profit, the residents who harvest the timber should be paid a fair price for this work.”⁴⁵

The Forest Guardians, unaware of the circumstances regarding the Felipito timber sale, joined the Silver lawsuit as a means stop the La Manga timber sale. The subsequent Silver injunction lasted 16 months and called for the suspension of all timber sales throughout the Southwest region. During this period, the Arizona injunction overrode, according to the Forest Service, Conway's order to release timber to La Compania. On October 1, 1996, after La Compania returned to court to get the Conway order enforced, Senior United States Judge Mecham found the Silver injunction unrelated to either the La Manga or Agua/Caballos timber sale and reissued the order to release these sales to La Compania. The Forest Service once again refused.

In addition to timber sales, the Arizona injunction included a ban on fuelwood harvesting in portions of the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests. The ban caused enormous controversy in New Mexico. Sam Hitt claimed that “[m]ountain homes that take many cords of wood to heat have devastated some of these areas. The national forests will not be able to continue providing the 30 million board feet or more that it now takes to heat these villages—a figure that's over twice the commercial logging rate for the whole state of New Mexico in 1995” (Mahler, 1996). In the small village of Truchas, firewood stockpiles for nearly 100 households dwindled before even the first snowfall in early December (Clifford, 1995). The firewood ban led to a schism between members of the New Mexico chapter of the Sierra Club and the national organization. In a letter faxed to the Sierra Club Board of Directors and various news outlets, the Santa Fe Group of the Rio Grande (New Mexico) Chapter protested the no-cut policy of the national Sierra Club as “a harsh and unyielding position.” The letter continued by reminding the Board that “[t]o take a position against logging of this nature would be extremely detrimental, if not antithetical, to the

⁴⁰ 11 May 1994 letter from Ike DeVargas to El Rito District staffer Curry. VFSYU 10: 880.

⁴¹ 19 August 1993 letter from NMDGF Director Montoya to Ike DeVargas (Legal archive, author's files).

⁴² La Compania v. US Forest Service. The Complaint listed a host of examples of racially motivated animus on the part of the Forest Service that included different stumpage rates for La Compania versus Duke City. This lawsuit followed a separate lawsuit against Duke City not covered here. The Duke City lawsuit was settled out of court resulting in a financial award that La Compania used to purchase equipment to log Felipito.

⁴³ Silver et al. v. Babbitt et al. CIV 94-337 PHX RGS.

⁴⁴ 5 May 2004 Interview with author.

⁴⁵ 11 August 1993 letter from Forest Trust Director Carey to La Compania Ocho. VFSYU 9: 845.

mission of the Sierra Club here. Resistance to our work would become widespread. Physical violence might become a reality.”⁴⁶

The Endangered Species Act provided the legal foundation through which environment organizations challenged sustained yield forestry and illustrates the contradictory regulatory environmental governing timber harvesting in New Mexico. The Forest Guardians, unsuccessful at changing Forest Service policies through collaborative efforts, exploited the contradictory imperatives of the Sustained Yield Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act. Specifically, by claiming that management practices related to timber production *possibly* could threaten listed, endangered species (or in the case of the VFSYU, *potential* habitat), environmental organizations forced the Forest Service into the impossible position of providing economic returns to local residents (as required by SYFMA) while at the same time excluding economic factors (as required by the ESA) in project planning.

Collaborative efforts between La Compania and the Forest Guardians sought to marry economic and ecological issues. Unfortunately, the only effective routes open to La Compania and the Forest Guardians in challenging USFS policies required that economic and ecological concerns be divorced. Rather than constructing alternative possibilities for federal management of forest ecosystems, the legal approach of the environmental lawsuits, combined with the timing of the lawsuits corresponding with La Compania's fights with Duke City and the Forest Service, reinforced sustained yield policies.

6. Conclusion

Throughout the 1990s, resource struggles in northern New Mexico were presented as a clash between environmental activists and local Hispano communities (Clifford, 1995). As the case study illustrates, a focus solely on racial politics and environmental/Hispano conflict elides the troubled institutional and regulatory history of resource management in New Mexico. Management priorities for the VFSYU have shifted back and forth between community stability versus multiple use as District Rangers have struggled to resolve the conflicting obligations in federal legislation that govern their management objectives for the VFSYU. The region witnessed a spatial reordering of production in the timber sector, with the VFSYU characterized by constantly increased timber sale quantities, increased mechanization in the application of harvest technologies, and contradictory legislative mandates in the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the National Forest Management Act of 1976, neither of which acknowledges the existence of SYFMA. This scalar contradiction between federal forest policy and local management

produced a set of constantly shifting administrative processes.

Sustained yield forest regulation in New Mexico reinforced the inequitable resource distribution patterns first established following the Mexican-American War. With the loss of resource access following adjudication procedures, land grant heirs were forced to negotiate bureaucratic management arrangements that relied on views of traditional subsistence practices and land tenure patterns as cultural and ecological liabilities.

The Morris (1935), Burma and Williams (1967), and Hassell (1968) reports served as bedrock policy documents rationalizing these practices in northern New Mexico. All three concluded that Hispano cultural inadequacies explained environmental problems and went on to suggest institutional solutions to forest management problems. Similarly, all three, just as with SYFMA, privileged economic uses of forest resources as benefiting communities and local ecologies. Forest Service paternalism in New Mexico combined with the timber focus driving national Forest Service policy produced an institutional framework in Vallecitos that limited collaborative efforts to challenge regulatory policies.

The reordering of nature-society relations in Vallecitos following the establishment of the VFSYU reflected a system-wide approach to natural resource management that strengthened the position of commercial actors. According to Hirt, “pursuing intensive management allowed the Forest Service to avoid making tough choices and to dodge responsibility for the accumulating deterioration of forest ecosystems” (Hirt, 1994, p. xxi). To this analysis I would add that the contradictions in sustained yield forestry in New Mexico contributed also to an “accumulating deterioration” of local efforts to oppose sustained yield. As Wilson has argued, failed efforts to challenge the logic of bureaucratic land management in federal forests can be understood through an analysis of the institutional incongruities build into a Forest Service regulatory framework in which can be found “the persistence of neocolonial real- itions in the institutions and practices of public land management in the United States” (Wilson, 1999, p. 20).

The institutional tensions in contradictory forest management policies in New Mexico opened a space for the commercial exploitation of human and natural resources. Karl Polanyi, described these contradictions as a “scheme of destruction” in which regulatory interference served to strengthen commercial actors. “To separate labor from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one” (Polanyi, 1957). Sustained yield market liberalization policies served to isolate various interests into either community-based interests or environmental interests, thus making collaborative, community-based opposition difficult to establish and impossible to maintain. As Ike DeVargas suggested “They [the Forest Service] put you in a little slot and they don't deal

⁴⁶ 3 May 1996 letter from Don Goldman, President, Santa Fe Group of the New Mexico Sierra Club to the Sierra Club Board of Directors. Author's files.

with you in a whole. They cubbyhole you into an identity. As long as the water is murky, you can't see what's going on, no?"⁴⁷

References

- Burma, J., Williams, D., 1967. An Economic, Social and Educational Survey of Rio Arriba and Taos Counties. Northern New Mexico College, Española.
- Clary, D., 1987. What price sustained yield? The forest service, community stability, and timber monopoly under the 1944 Sustained-Yield Act. *Journal of Forest History* 31 (1), 4–18.
- Clifford, F., 1995. Firewood issue fuels battle in New Mexico Mountains. *Los Angeles Times*, Friday, December 1, 1995.
- Ebright, M., 1987. New Mexican land grants: the legal background. In: Briggs, C., Van Ness, J. (Eds.), *Land, Water, and Culture: New Perspectives on Hispanic Land Grants*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- Gardner, R., 1971. Grito!: Reies Tijerina and the New Mexico Land Grant War of 1967. Harper & Row Publishers, New York.
- Gonzalez, P., 2003. Struggle for survival: the Hispanic land grants of New Mexico, 1848–2001. *Agricultural History* 77 (2), 293–324.
- Greeley, W., 1925. Economic aspects of forestry. *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics* 1, 129–132.
- Hassell, M., 1968. The People of Northern New Mexico and the National Forests. United States Forest Service, Taos, NM.
- Hibbard, M., Elias, J., 1993. The failure of sustained-yield forestry and the decline of the flannel-shirt frontier. In: Lyson, T., Falk, W. (Eds.), *Forgotten Places*. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence.
- Hirt, P., 1994. A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of the National Forests Since World War Two. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Kauffman, M., Fitzpatrick, K., Moseley, C., 2003. A review of the Vallecitos Federal Sustained Yield Unit, Carson National Forest, 1986–2002. On File at the El Rito Ranger District, Carson National Forest, El Rito.
- Knowlton, C., 1968. The New Mexican land war. *The Nation* 17 (June), 1968.
- Kosek, J., 2004. Purity and pollution: racial degradation and environmental anxieties. In: Peet, D., Watts, M. (Eds.), *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*. Routledge, New York.
- Kosek, J., 2004b. Deep roots and long shadows: the cultural politics of memory and longing in northern New Mexico. *Society and Space* 22, 329–354.
- Le Master, D., 1984. *Decade of Change: The Remaking of Forest Service Statutory Authority during the 1970s*. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT.
- Mahler, R., 1996. New Mexican town tussles-and compromises-with environmentalists over wood-cutting practices. *Christian Science Monitor* 19 (September), 10.
- Matthews, K., 1996. What's happening in the rest of New Mexico: environmentalists and Norteños clash again. *La Jicarita News* 1 (7).
- Morris, R., 1935. *A Dependency Study of Northern New Mexico*. United States Forest Service, Taos, NM.
- Nabokov, P., 1969. *Tijerina and the Courthouse Raid*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- Neumann, R., 2003. The production of nature: colonial recasting of the african landscape in Serengeti National Park. In: Zimmerer, K., Bassett, T. (Eds.), *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies*. Guilford Press, New York.
- Nostrand, R., 1992. *The Hispano Homeland*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Peña, D., Mondragon-Valdez, M., 1998. The 'Brown' and the 'Green' revisited: Chicanos and environmental politics in the Upper Rio Grande. In: Faber, D. (Ed.), *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Environmental Justice Movements in the United States*. Guilford, New York.
- Pinchot, G., 1910. *The Fight for Conservation*. Doubleday, New York.
- Polanyi, K., 1957. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press, Boston.
- Prudham, W.S., 2005. *Knock on Wood: Nature as Commodity in Douglas-Fir Country*. Routledge, New York.
- Prudham, W.S., 2003. Taming trees: capital, science, and nature in Pacific slope tree improvement. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (3), 636.
- Prudham, W.S., 1998. Timber and town: post-war federal forest policy, industrial organization, and rural change in Oregon's Illinois Valley. *Antipode* 30 (2), 177.
- Pulido, L., 1996. Ecological Legitimacy and Cultural Essentialism: Hispano Grazing in the Southwest. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 7 (4), 37–58.
- Robbins, W.G., 1987. Lumber Production and Community Stability. *Journal of Forest History* 31 (4), 187–196.
- Talberth, J., Bird, B., 1998. *State of the Southern Rockies: Greater San Juan-Sangre de Cristo Bioregion*. Forest Guardians, Santa Fe.
- Willems-Braun, B., 1997. Buried epistemologies: the politics of nature in (post) Colonial British Columbia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87 (1), 3–31.
- Williams, M., 1989. *Americans and their Forests: A Historical Geography*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Wilmsen, C., 1997. *Fighting for the forest: sustainability and social justice in Vallecitos, New Mexico*. Clark University, Worcester.
- Wilmsen, C., 2001. Sustained yield recast: the politics of sustainability in Vallecitos, New Mexico. *Society and Natural Resources* 14, 193–207.
- Wilson, R., 1999. 'Placing Nature': the politics of collaboration and representation in the struggle for La Sierra in San Luis, Colorado. *Ecumene* 6 (1), 1–28.

⁴⁷ 5 May 2004 Interview with author.