

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION - AN OVERVIEW



The Continental Divide literally forms the spine of an eight state region that we refer to at Colorado College as “the Rockies.” Containing 863,242 square miles and 24% of the landmass and 6.5% of the 2000 population in the United States, it is a region of spectacular natural beauty, harsh climate and soil conditions, huge tracts of sparsely settled lands juxtaposed next to rapidly growing urban areas. These vast open spaces continue to capture the imagination of residents and visitors alike: a suggested promise of rugged individualism, the reality of recreation and solitude that appears endless but in fact is limited and fragile, challenges to extract vital natural resources without damaging the land and thus diminishing its heritage to the future, the responsibility to form patterns of human habitation and resource management to match the grandeur of the scenery.

At first glance perhaps, the view millions receive as they fly “over” the Rockies region on their way to other destinations, the region appears to be a huge empty quarter. Clusters of dense population make the region 1.4% developed (urban or built-up land, including rural transportation corridors), confirming what our eyes tell us from afar. Looking more closely, patterns emerge of dense agricultural activity, roads, and clusters of people in towns, cities and large metropolitan areas. Water defines life in the region, historically along streams and in the rich river bottom areas, and increasingly today in areas where water has been pumped from the ground and diverted on the surface to feed agricultural, municipal and industrial demands. Equally defining of the Rockies is the 46% of its land publicly owned and managed in a stunning array of types, from BLM grazing lands, to forests controlled by the Forest Service, to the “crown jewels” of nature and culture under National Park Service and to formal or informal wilderness designation. Some chafe under “absentee” management from Washington D.C., while others look to this same management to preserve the public domain and its health for current and future generations.

So we have a region that is vast, rugged, and at the same time fragile, varied in the density and pattern of population and economic activ-

by Walter Hecox and F. Patrick Holmes

What's your perception of the Rockies?

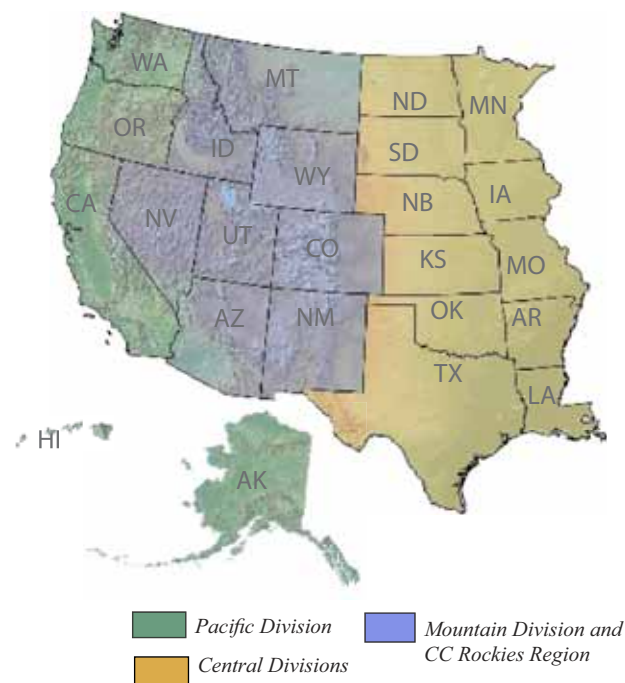
Myth	Reality
Rural	Only 3 percent of the population lived in completely rural counties in 1970 and only 1.7 percent did in 2000.
Agricultural and Natural Resource-Based	Only 4.2 percent of the employment base of the region was in these industries.
Less Educated	25 percent of the region holds a bachelor's degree or higher. That's a percent higher than the U.S.
Caucasian	Roughly 20 percent of the population in the Rockies is of Latino ethnic background.
Large Number of Government Workers	In actuality, only 16 percent of the population works for the government in the region and only a fraction of that works in matters concerning the public domain. Most government employees work for the military.

ity, alluring to waves of tourists and migrants wishing to partake of its openness and beauty. For over a century boom-bust cycles of human habitation and economic activity have alternated to make life in the Rockies challenging and uncertain. A review of how the Rockies have changed over past decades, when joined to a snapshot of the entire region as it looks today, helps us understand why it has integrity as a physiographic region connected by its Continental Divide spine running along the crest of the Rockies from the Canadian Border

in the north to Mexico in the south.

The eight state Rockies region can be viewed through three primary lenses; its people, employment, and income/earnings. Variations within the region by state help provide a glimpse of the similarities and differences across the region's political boundaries. What stands out are the similarities the region has among the states and when contrasted with its neighboring multi-state Pacific Coast and central Midwest regions (shown in Map 1.)

Map 1: Census Divisions of the Western United States



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION - AN OVERVIEW



Over the past 30 years, the Rockies has grown by 119% in total population, when compared to the U.S. growth rate of 39% as well as to the Midwest Region of 42%; not even the Pacific Census Division, growing at a rate of 70%, has grown faster. People have been flooding into the Rockies in search of the region's allure, but their location defies the image of a rural Rockies. Urbanization has accompanied this rapid growth, with the Rockies rural population (those living in counties with an aggregate urban population of less than 2,500 people) shrinking from 3.0% in 1970 to 1.7% in 2001! In the face of this rapid growth, not all portions of the Rockies have shared in this population boom; Map 2 shows counties whose population has increased, stayed steady, and shrunk from 1970 to 2000. This is a stark reminder that dramatic changes in the structure of economic activity and in the demographic profile of the region's population reinforce the boom-bust nature of regional change.

Table 1 profiles demographic indicators for the Rocky Mountains and the

comparison regions of the Western U.S. We see that people now living in the Rockies are relatively young (median age 33.6 years) but with a significant and growing portion above age 65 (11.2%), diverse in racial-ethnic origin (80% Caucasian, 20% Latino of any race, 3% Native American and 3% African-American), while 20% speak a language other than English at home. They are largely born in the U.S. (90%), with 46% living in the same house in both 1995 and 2000, while another 8% lived in the same state over this five-year period. One quarter of those age 25+ have a high school degree as their highest educational achievement and another 25% with a bachelor's degree or higher. The Rockies serves many who are part-time residents: 5% of housing units are for seasonal or recreational use, significantly above neighboring regions and the U.S. Poverty is present among individuals (12%) at rates near the national average, and in families with related children age 0-17 (7%) at levels below other regions and the U.S.

Map 2: Population Growth in the Rocky Mountains, 1970-2000

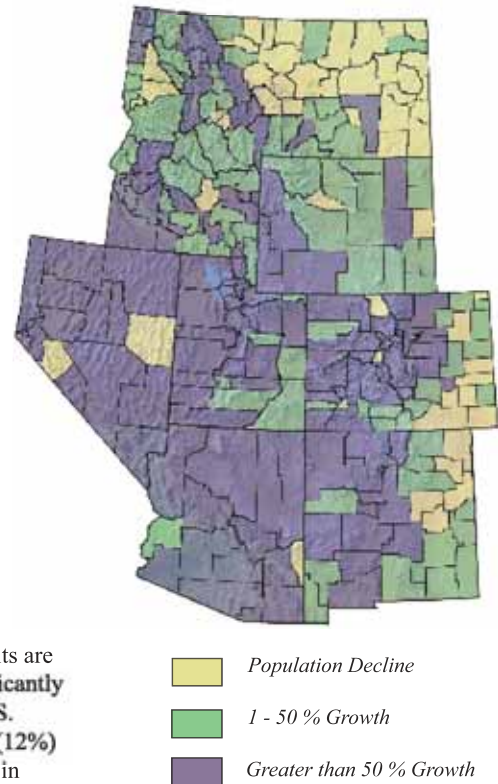


Table 1 - The People: Census 2000 Indicators	The Rocky Mountains	Percent of Total	Pacific Division	Percent of Total	Central Divisions	Percent of Total	The United States	Percent of Total
Total Population	18,172,295	100%	45,025,637	100%	64,392,776	100%	281,421,906	100%
Median Age (years)	33.6		33.8		35.6		35.3	
Population Age 65+	2,029,846	11.2%	4,892,283	10.9%	8,259,075	12.8%	34,991,753	12.4%
Caucasian Population	14,591,933	80.3%	28,682,141	63.7%	53,833,631	83.6%	211,460,626	75.1%
Latino (of any Race) Population	3,543,573	19.5%	11,796,930	26.2%	3,124,532	4.9%	35,305,818	12.6%
African-American Population	523,283	2.9%	2,553,601	5.7%	6,499,733	10.1%	34,658,190	12.3%
Native-American Population	614,553	3.4%	573,436	1.3%	399,490	0.6%	2,475,956	0.9%
Housing Units for Seasonal or Recreational Use	356,509	4.7%	381,120	2.3%	714,853	2.7%	3,578,718	3.1%
Pop. 25+, High School Graduate (Highest Attainment)	2,922,222	25.7%	6,167,869	21.6%	13,451,035	32.4%	52,168,981	28.6%
Pop. 25+, Bachelor's Degree or Higher	2,873,692	25%	7,599,805	27%	9,516,347	23%	44,462,605	24%
Pop. 5+, Living in Same House in 1995	7,768,896	46.2%	20,841,755	49.8%	33,804,543	56.3%	142,027,478	54.1%
Pop. 5+, Living in Same State in 1995	1,343,464	8%	4,032,707	9.6%	6,208,379	10.3%	25,327,355	9.7%
Population Born in the United States	16,232,413	89.3%	34,479,585	76.6%	60,457,291	93.9%	246,786,466	87.7%
Pop. 5+, Speak a Language Other than English at Home	3,317,136	19.7%	13,946,194	33.3%	5,623,538	9.4%	46,951,595	17.9%
Families in Poverty with Related Children age 0-17	318,822	6.9%	868,922	14.3%	943,409	10.9%	5,155,866	7.1%
Individuals in Poverty	2,160,431	12.1%	5,890,996	13.4%	6,360,113	10.2%	33,899,812	12.4%

Source: Census 2000

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION - AN OVERVIEW



The spread of jobs among economic sectors in the Rockies has changed in tandem with population growth and decline as well as major structural changes in the nature of technology, changing characteristics of new goods and services, and global trade flows. Table 2 shows proportions of employment broken into three major sectors in 1970 and 2000 for the Rockies and each "member" state as well as for comparison regions. Several fundamental trends are clear: farming and resource-based employment has shrunk everywhere over 30 years, and vary substantially among the Rockies' states, with Wyoming having the highest remaining jobs in this sector in 2000 (11.5%) and Nevada having the lowest (2.5%). Manufacturing has dwindled nation-wide, falling from 21% to 11% in the US and 10% to 7% in the Rockies 1970-2000. Services' based employment has risen throughout the US over 30 years (73% to 85%) while similar trends exist in the Rockies (81% to 89%) and each of the region's states.

These sectoral trends can be explored further by looking at a U.S. Census profile of jobs in the Rockies as recorded in the 2000 U.S. Census (Table 3). Current patterns of employment

Table 2 - Employment: 1970 -2000 Profile	1970 Resource-Based Employ.	2000 Resource-Based Employ	1970 Manufacturing-Based Employ	2000 Manufacturing-Based Employ	1970 Service-Based Employ	2000 Service-Based Employ
The United States	5.7%	3.6%	21.6%	11.4%	72.7%	85.0%
The Rocky Mountains	9.3%	4.2%	10.2%	7.2%	80.5%	88.6%
Arizona	7.5%	2.8%	13.5%	8.0%	78.9%	89.2%
Colorado	6.8%	3.6%	11.7%	7.3%	81.5%	89.0%
Idaho	16.0%	8.1%	13.0%	10.5%	71.0%	81.4%
Montana	15.5%	8.9%	8.4%	5.2%	76.0%	85.9%
Nevada	3.9%	2.5%	3.5%	3.7%	92.7%	93.8%
New Mexico	10.5%	5.6%	5.5%	5.0%	84%	89.4%
Utah	7.8%	3.0%	12.3%	9.8%	79.9%	87.2%
Wyoming	17.8%	11.5%	4.9%	4.1%	77.3%	84.4%
The Pacific Division	4.7%	4.1%	17.0%	10.3%	78.2%	85.7%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis ' Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

reflect the profound changes mentioned above that have swept through the region: exploding service-based jobs alongside smaller proportions of workers involved in farming and resource extraction. Technology and environmental concerns about how natural resources are managed, alongside a global economy of open borders and easy access to world-sourcing of goods and services combine to reshape the regional economy and move it closer to neighboring regions' and the U.S.'s mix of

employment where service-based jobs account for more than 4 in 5 jobs while the remaining 20% are largely oriented towards manufacturing. Only 77% of jobs are private wage and salary based, while 16% are government workers and 7% are self-employed. So much for the "myth" that in the "rugged" Rockies people live close to the land in rural settings, wresting their sustenance from the bounty of the land, with more than its share of government workers to manage the public domain!

Table 3 - Employment: 2000 Profile	The Rocky Mountains	Percent of Total	Pacific Division	Percent of Total	Central Divisions	Percent of Total	The United States	Percent of Total
Total Employment	8,445,441	100%	19,959,860	100%	31,185,231	100%	129,721,512	100%
Agriculture,forestry,fishing and hunting,and mining	237,015	2.8%	429,655	2.2%	638,824	2.0%	2,426,053	1.9%
Construction	727,514	8.6%	1,275,334	6.4%	1,907,781	6.1%	8,801,507	6.8%
Manufacturing	767,368	9.1%	2,540,839	12.7%	5,779,367	18.5%	18,286,005	14.1%
Wholesale trade	272,308	3.2%	800,255	4.0%	1,099,737	3.5%	4,666,757	3.6%
Retail Trade	1,023,508	12.1%	2,281,044	11.4%	3,649,977	11.7%	15,221,716	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing,and utilities	420,249	5.0%	976,096	4.9%	1,602,296	5.1%	6,740,102	5.2%
Information	274,240	3.2%	733,538	3.7%	791,739	2.5%	3,996,564	3.1%
Finance,insurance,real estate, rental, and leasing	582,828	6.9%	1,338,227	6.7%	2,040,480	6.5%	8,934,972	6.9%
Professional,scientific,managemt,admin,waste mgt svcs	828,953	9.8%	2,200,688	11%	2,474,157	7.9%	12,061,865	9.3%
Educational, health, and social services	1,522,141	18%	3,742,445	18.7%	6,273,292	20.1%	25,843,029	19.9%
Arts,entertainment,recreation,accommodation,food svcs	943,355	11.2%	1,670,249	8.4%	2,291,953	7.3%	10,210,295	7.9%
Other services (except public administration)	391,532	4.6%	1,016,403	5.1%	1,434,675	4.6%	6,320,632	4.9%
Public administration	454,430	5.4%	955,087	4.8%	1,200,953	3.9%	6,212,015	4.8%
Private wage and salary workers	6,480,493	76.7%	15,188,232	76.1%	25,289,702	81.1%	101,794,361	78.5%
Government workers	1,324,239	15.7%	3,040,735	15.2%	3,886,881	12.5%	18,923,353	14.6%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	610,882	7.2%	1,658,006	8.3%	1,909,838	6.1%	8,603,761	6.6%

Source: Census 2000

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION - AN OVERVIEW



Changes in income for the eight state region mirror the trends in population growth and employment composition affecting the Rockies. Table 4 shows a 2001 profile of income by place of work and by earnings in each sector. Notable aspects of the region's income include the 0.7% of income that comes from farm income and 0.4% that arises from farm proprietors' income, as well as the 0.2% of earnings in the forestry, fishing, and related activities sector alongside the 1.2% of earnings in the mining sector. All confirm the shrunk importance of land and natural resources in the contemporary Rockies economy. Manufacturing earnings in 2001 stood at 6.7%, significantly below neighboring regions and the U.S. average (9.6%). Rockies government earnings at 12.7% are nearly the same proportion as in neighboring regions and the U.S. The sectors

where service-based earnings are above comparison neighboring regions and the U.S. average include: construction (6.4%); retail trade (5.4%); real estate and rental and leasing (1.6%); arts, entertainment and recreation (1.1%); and accommodation and food services (4.0%). In contrast, "lagging" service sectors in the Rockies incorporate: wholesale trade (3.5%); finance and insurance (4.2%); professional and technical services (6.1%); and health care and social assistance (5.6%).

Changing sources of income in the Rockies mirror the demographic trends we have reviewed above, including increasing numbers of people who bring significant sources of income and wealth from outside the region as they seek out "livable" communities for their recreation, relocation, and retirement. Chart 1 shows that there is now a diverse mix of net earnings (69.8%) alongside non-wage sources of income: transfer payments (11.3%) and

dividends, interest and rent (18.8%). This pattern of non-wage income supplementing "earned" wages and salaries dampens the susceptibility of regions to wild boom-bust cycles in wage-based earnings and introduces many "newcomers" and "age-diverse" residents who bring additional lifestyles and values to what has become increasingly an "amenity-based" economy in the Rocky Mountain states.

Chart 1: Personal Income Components in the Rockies, 2001



Table 4 - Income: 2001 Profile (\$000) unless otherwise indicated	The Rocky Mountains	Percent of Total	Pacific Division	Percent of Total	Central Divisions	Percent of Total	The United States	Percent of Total
Total Personal Income	514,535,089	100%	1,474,823,897	100%	1,432,374,436	100%	8,677,490,000	100%
Nonfarm Income	510,697,059	99.3%	1,466,389,082	99.4%	1,421,829,901	99.3%	8,637,420,000	99.5%
Farm Income	3,838,030	0.7%	8,434,815	0.6%	10,544,535	0.7%	40,070,000	0.5%
Per Capita Personal Income (dollars)	\$27,567		\$31,112		\$27,880		\$30,413	
Proprietor's Income	45,901,459	8.9%	140,906,881	9.6%	148,185,969	10.3%	729,092,000	8.4%
Nonfarm Proprietor's Income	43,755,773	8.5%	139,492,190	9.5%	141,511,625	9.9%	708,821,000	8.2%
Farm Proprietor's Income	2,145,686	0.4%	1,414,691	0.1%	6,674,344	0.5%	20,271,000	0.2%
Farm Earnings	3,838,030	0.7%	8,434,815	0.6%	10,544,535	0.7%	40,070,000	0.5%
Nonfarm Earnings	372,510,396	72.4%	1,069,280,441	72.5%	1,044,396,456	72.9%	6,201,907,000	71.5%
Private Earnings	306,925,027	59.7%	892,466,866	60.5%	878,059,171	61.3%	5,207,266,336	60.0%
Forestry, Fishing, and Related Activities	1,024,041	0.2%	6,283,916*	0.4%	2,730,594	0.2%	18,888,221	0.2%
Mining	6,373,675	1.2%	2,490,599*	0.2%	29,636,446	2.1%	52,407,204	0.6%
Construction	32,675,038	6.4%	69,028,949	4.7%	69,861,242	4.9%	392,150,497	4.5%
Manufacturing	34,520,284	6.7%	135,167,764	9.2%	146,966,785	10.3%	830,083,506	9.6%
Wholesale Trade	18,189,586	3.5%	50,891,055	3.5%	61,588,740	4.3%	327,809,947	3.8%
Retail Trade	28,021,507	5.4%	73,189,798	5.0%	74,037,849	5.2%	422,807,313	4.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	11,733,474	2.3%	31,043,602	2.1%	45,715,425	3.2%	206,876,728	2.4%
Information	17,603,516*	3.4%	67,864,671	4.6%	41,743,625	2.9%	282,847,627	3.3%
Finance and Insurance	21,413,207	4.2%	65,062,969	4.4%	63,311,761	4.4%	464,118,251	5.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8,036,793	1.6%	21,591,300	1.5%	18,095,755	1.3%	109,614,193	1.3%
Professional and Technical Services	31,634,885	6.1%	115,494,490	7.8%	77,161,194	5.4%	577,231,982	6.7%
Educational Services	2,880,971	0.6%	10,370,922	0.7%	9,723,306	0.7%	77,348,192	0.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	29,059,469	5.6%	80,101,130	5.4%	92,209,739	6.4%	551,332,538	6.4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,554,011	1.1%	15,644,899	1.1%	9,300,147	0.6%	72,611,542	0.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	20,596,052	4.0%	37,542,463	2.5%	5,962,681	0.4%	201,106,073	2.3%
Government and Government Enterprises	65,585,369	12.7%	176,813,575	12.0%	166,337,285	11.6%	994,640,664	11.5%

* Indicates data was withheld to avoid disclosure for either Alaska or Wyoming

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis' Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

THE ROCKIES DIVIDED:



The Rockies Region is NOT homogeneous! We have just looked at overall characteristics of the region, made up by eight states containing 280 counties, and this data helps make the case that socio-economic and demographic similarities bind the region together. However, distinct Rockies zones or sub-regions can be identified by evaluating the differences among clusters of counties within the Rockies Region. It is important to focus here on various parts of the entire Rockies Region as unique groups of counties, for a “one-set-of-policies-fits-all” approach to management of resources, the environment, communities, and their infrastructure in the Rockies is as inappropriate as would be a national set of policies that does not take into account the substantial differences between the Rockies vs. the neighboring Pacific and Central Divisions that have integrity within Congress and the Census Bureau.

The Rockies Region is bound together by the Continental Divide “spine,” and clustered to the east and west of the spectacular Rockies mountain range. Our analysis of the counties within the eight state Rockies Region has identified three distinct sub-regions or zones (Map 1):

- The Continental Divide Spine
- The Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone
- The West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone

Varying topography, as well as defining characteristics of economic activity and demographics, distinguish these three sub-regions. Each of these Rockies clusters of counties shares many common characteristics that bind them together and call for different policies and programs of resource management as well as social and economic health.

Here we provide a view of distinguishing characteristics these sub-regions have that bind them together. A comparison is made to comparable data for the entire Rockies eight state region and the 50 state U.S. data.

by *Walter Hecox and F. Patrick Holmes*

Table 1 - The Land:	West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone	The Continental Divide Spine	Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone	The Rockies	The United States
Total Acres of Forested Land	27,160,320	107,370,844	8,575,989	143,586,893	736,681,000
% of Total Land Area Forested	21.2%	37.0%	7.0%	26.0%	32.6%
Population Per Square Mile	35	22	5	21	80
Acres of Public Lands	84,624,811	146,564,446	20,246,854	252,963,153	699,000,000
% of Total Land Area Publicly Owned	66.0%	50.5%	16.4%	45.8%	30.9%
Total Acres of Designated Wilderness	5,783,689	15,880,594	343,897	22,211,898	105,678,486
% of Total Land Area Wilderness	4.5%	5.5%	0.3%	4.0%	4.7%
Total Acres of National Park Service Lands	3,328,724	6,125,529	437,049	9,972,779	84,000,000
% National Park Service Owned Lands	2.6%	2.1%	0.4%	1.8%	3.7%
Total Acres of Forest Service Lands	14,562,593	73,948,117	5,528,936	95,022,002	191,000,000
% Forest Service Owned Lands	11.4%	25.5%	4.5%	17.2%	8.4%
Total Acres of BLM Lands	62,683,449	64,222,763	12,742,957	140,110,389	261,000,000
% Bureau of Land Management Lands	48.9%	22.1%	10.3%	25.4%	11.5%
Average USDA Natural Amenity Rank	5.3	5.0	4.1	4.9	-

Sources: BLM, USFS, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, and the USDA Economic Research



Topography is THE defining characteristic of the Rockies Region. While all who live in the region, whether in communities or rural settings, share either a view of the Rockies “spine” or are comforted that mountains are close-by for recreation and solitude, there are dramatic differences in the “land base” of the sub-regions. Table 1 makes this abundantly clear. Region-wide 26% of the Rockies is forested, but only 7% of the Eastern Plains Zone has forests vs. 37% of the Continental Divide Spine and 21% of the West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone. Similarly, the presence of public lands vary dramatically, standing at 31% for the U.S., 46% for the Rockies Region, but only 16% for the Eastern Plains as compared to 51% for the Continental Divide Spine and 66% for the West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone. If declared Wilderness and presence of national parks are used as rulers, the Eastern Plains represents a cluster of counties almost totally devoid of these wild lands and their protective designations. Surprisingly, national forests are present even in the Eastern Plains Zone (5%), although substantially below the 8% national level and the 17% Rockies Region proportion, with the Continental Divide Zone understandably having the highest proportion of forest lands

(26%). BLM lands, representing the lower elevation public lands largely suited for grazing, are present in the Eastern Plains Zone at 10%, very close to the U.S. proportion (12%), but again there are higher proportions of these public lands among the Continental Divide Zone (22%) and the Western and Southern Zone (49%). Wide-open spaces are not just a buzzword around the Rockies.

We have seen that only 1.4% of the Rockies region’s land is devoted to urban or built-up uses, and yet this sparseness of population itself is not evenly distributed. The population density in 2000 for the U.S. stood at 80 persons per square mile and in the Rockies Region 21, matching the “empty-quarter” image of the area. But within the Rockies on the Eastern Plains it stood at only 5 persons per square mile, while for the Continental Divide Spine it was 22 persons and for the West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone, a rapidly growing region of retirement and quality of life “seekers,” a substantially higher density of 35 persons.

THREE SUB-REGIONS THAT MAKE SENSE



Patterns of human habitation around the Rockies reinforce trends topography and changing economics establish (Table 2). Over 30 years, 1970 to 2000, the total U.S. population grew 39% while for the Rockies Region it rose 120%. Within the Rockies the West and Southern Mountain Zone grew an astounding 221% and the Continental Divide Spine a buoyant 94%, but the Eastern Plains lagged even the U.S. level at 25% population growth. In 2000 the proportion of people living in metro-designated counties reinforced the Eastern Plains stereotype: with 25%, but for the Continental Divide Spine three-fourths of counties were Metro and for the West and Southern Mountain Zone 92%.

shape available workforces and demands for social services. Nationally 29% of the population is under age 18, while for the Rockies there is a younger population with 30% below 18; among the Rockies zones the West and Southern Mountains Zone matches the national average at 29%, the Eastern Plains has 30%, and the Continental Divide Spine has 31%. At the other end of the "dependency" distribution, some 12% of the U.S. population is 65+, while for the Rockies it is 11%. Within the Rockies the smallest proportion 65+ reside within the Continental Divide Spine (10%), with the West and Southern Mountain Zone at 13% and the Eastern Plains at 14%. Median ages for these regions reflect these proportions of the elderly.

Racial composition around the Rockies highlights both homogeneity and diversity. The proportion identifying themselves in the

Map 1: Sub-Regions of the Rocky Mountains



- Continental Divide Spine
- West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone
- Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone

Ages of the Rockies residents provide additional insight into the demographics that help

Table 2 - The People: Census 2000 Indicators	The West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone	Percent	The Continental Divide Spine	Percent	The Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone	Percent	The Rocky Mountains	Percent	The United States	Percent
Population Growth 1970-2000	4,768,084	221.0%	4,921,312	94.3%	236,514	24.5%	9,925,910	119.9%	78,425,626	38.5%
Population Living in Metro Counties	6,375,768	91.9%	7,803,953	77.0%	291,447	24.2%	14,471,168	79.2%	na	na
Population Living in Non-Metro Counties	557,980	8.1%	2,337,366	23.0%	908,610	75.7%	3,803,956	20.8%	na	na
Population under Age 18	1,987,773	29.0%	3,180,016	31.2%	307,606	30.3%	5,496,844	30.2%	80,473,265	28.6%
Population Age 65+	859,535	12.5%	1,019,496	9.9%	141,536	13.9%	2,029,846	11.2%	34,991,753	12.4%
Median age (years)	38	37.6%	36	35.6%	39	39.1%	34	33.6%	35	35.3%
One race White	5,265,755	76.6%	8,406,372	82.4%	850,561	83.8%	14,591,933	80.3%	211,460,626	75.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,638,073	23.8%	1,741,761	17.1%	160,357	15.8%	3,543,573	19.5%	35,305,818	12.5%
Not Hispanic or Latino	5,239,060	76.2%	8,465,317	82.9%	854,413	84.2%	14,628,722	80.5%	246,116,088	87.5%
Occupied housing units	2,572,915	88.7%	3,720,040	89.5%	389,400	87.5%	6,711,902	89.0%	105,480,101	91.0%
Housing Units For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	137,124	4.7%	205,745	4.9%	11,765	2.6%	356,509	4.7%	3,578,718	3.1%
Housing Structures Built between 1995 and March 2000	609,461	21.0%	645,663	15.6%	32,764	7.4%	1,289,777	17.1%	11,234,050	9.7%
Pop 25+, Pct high school graduate or higher	79	78.8%	84	83.9%	81	80.9%	84	83.7%	80	80.4%
Pop 25+, Pct bachelor's degree or higher	15	15.4%	22	22.3%	17	16.5%	25	25.3%	24	24.4%
Pop 5+, Different house in the US in 1995	3,461,328	54.3%	4,628,743	49.0%	412,407	43.6%	8,535,218	50.7%	112,851,828	43.0%
Pop 5+, Different state	1,235,606	19.4%	1,368,836	14.5%	108,815	11.5%	2,721,112	16.2%	22,089,460	8.4%
Pop 5+ Born in United States	5,838,706	84.9%	9,357,206	91.7%	964,923	95.1%	16,232,413	89.3%	246,786,466	87.7%
Pop 5+ speak in home, English only	4,824,728	75.7%	7,811,670	82.7%	814,679	86.0%	13,516,343	80.3%	215,423,557	82.1%
Pop 5+ speak Spanish	1,193,641	18.7%	1,096,789	11.6%	104,286	11.0%	2,396,737	14.2%	28,101,052	10.7%
Pop 16+ In labor force	3,305,416	62.7%	5,191,440	67.5%	483,018	62.6%	9,018,595	65.4%	138,820,935	63.9%
Families in Poverty	151,876	8.7%	214,826	8.3%	32,280	11.9%	400,676	8.7%	6,620,945	9.2%
Families in Poverty with related children 0-17	121,280	13.5%	170,788	12.0%	25,337	17.9%	318,822	6.9%	5,155,866	7.1%
Individuals in Poverty 18+	536,848	10.8%	763,882	10.6%	95,302	13.4%	1,401,352	7.9%	22,152,954	8.1%
Individuals in Poverty 65+	64,676	7.7%	83,229	8.5%	15,026	11.3%	163,575	0.9%	3,287,774	1.2%

Source: Census 2000

THE ROCKIES DIVIDED:

2000 Census as White (one race) stood at three-fourths for the US, 80% for the Rockies, and 84% for the Eastern Plains Zone, with the Continental Divide Spine at 82% and the West and Southern Mountains Zone at 77%. Hispanic or Latino identification for the Rockies and each of its sub-regions stood above the US average of 13%, with the West and Southern Mountain Zone understandably highest with 24%.

An “amenity” region is often identified as one where tourism and recreation register strongly among types of housing units. The Rockies fit this stereotype, with 4.7% of housing units in 2000 designated for seasonal, recreational or occasional use, compared to the US total of 3.1%. But within the Rockies again the nature of topography dictates even this pattern of human habitation: for the Eastern Plains Zone non-permanent housing stood at 2.6%, but for the West and South Mountain Amenity Zone 4.7% and for the Rockies Spine 4.9%. New housing accommodates new people! While some 10% of the national housing stock was built between 1995 and 2000, for the fast-growing Rockies 17% was new in that 5 year period, and 22% for the West and Southern Mountain Zone as compared to 16% for the Rockies Spine and only 7% for the Eastern Plains.

Mobility likewise reflects the economic and demographic buoyancy of areas. For all parts of the Rockies in 2000 a larger proportion of people age 5+ moved to a different house over 1995, when compared to the national average of 43%; for the Rockies this figure was 51%, while for the Eastern Plains it was 44%, for the Continental Divide Spine it was 49%, and for the West and South Mountain Amenity Zone 54%. Consistent with national trends, a large proportion of the “moving” between houses occurs within the same state. Only 8% of the US population age 5+ moved to another state 1995 to 2000, but in the Rockies some 16% crossed state borders, and 20% did so within the West and Southern Mountain zone, 15% in the Continental Divide Spine, and 12% on the Eastern Plains.

Nativity trends are mixed for the Rockies. At the national level in 2000, 88% of the population 5+ were born in the US, while comparable data for the Rockies was 90%, for the Eastern Plains 95%, and for the Continental Divide 92%; only for the West and Southern

Mountain Zone did native-born dip below the national average at 85%. These newcomers to the nation register in another way- those age 5+ speaking English only in the home: for the US 82% did in 2000, while for the Rockies 80% spoke English only at home, 86% for the Eastern Plains, and as would be expected these proportions drop off for fast growing counties in areas close to the southwest, with 83% speaking English along the Continental Divide Spine and 76% within the West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone. Predictably 19% above the age 5 spoke Spanish in the West and Southern Mountain Zone, 11% in the Continental Divide Spine, and 11% on the Eastern Plains.

How educated are the populations within and around the Rockies? When we look at the proportion of the population age 25+ with at least a high school diploma, the Rockies at 84% exceeds the US level of 80%, but within the Rockies the fast growing West and Southern Mountains Zone lagged at 79%, the Eastern Plains registered next at 81%, and the Continental Divide Spine (that includes the major metropolitan areas) exceeds the national average at 84%. Similar results appear for the proportion of the population age 25+ with a 4-year college degree or higher: the US number in 2000 was 24%, the Rockies exceeded that level at 25%, but the Eastern Plains Zone at 15% and the Eastern Plains Zone at 17% are below the national average.

Data on employment and opportunities to earn income around the Rockies send mixed signals. The buoyant population growth outside of the Eastern Plains would be expected to signal more employment and less poverty. This pattern is mitigated by the “dependency” ages (those under age 18 and 65+) since they are outside of the traditional workforce. At the national level in 2000, 63.9% of the population age 16+ were in the labor force, and for the Rockies Region 65.4%, but both the fast-growing West and Southern Mountains Zone at 62.7% and the slow-growing and aging Eastern Plains zone at 62.6% lag the nation; only the fast growing and youth-oriented Continental Divide Spine has a higher labor force participation rate at 68%.

Poverty is distributed unevenly around the Rockies. The entire region in 2000 had a families in poverty level of 8.7% compared to the US level of 9.2%. Within the Rockies

both of the fast growing sub-regions had family poverty levels below the national average and the Eastern Plains Zone registered a high 12%. But poverty strikes different ages groups in complicated ways. The West and Southern Mountain Zone had poverty levels for families with children 0-17, those above 18, and those above 65 exceeding the comparable national averages. Deprivation among families with children at home and for the elderly exists at levels much higher than national and regional levels, signaling areas of urgent concern.



How are workers employed throughout the Rockies? A look at data from the 2000 Census reveals some predictable clusters of employment related to the region’s resource base and demographics, as well as some surprises. Regions like the Rockies with vast proportions of undeveloped land and rich natural, scenic and recreational resources would be expected to have many employed in occupations related to farming, fishing and forestry. But this pattern works only for the Eastern Plains with 2.8% in these occupations, as contrasted with the US level of 0.7% and the Rockies Region surprisingly at almost the same at 0.8%; the West and Southern Mountains Amenity Zone lags even the national level, standing at 0.5%. Thus, in the rugged Rockies workers are employed elsewhere! The occupational categories in the Rockies outpacing the national averages include: services; sales and office work; and construction, extraction and maintenance. Predictably production (manufacturing), transport and material moving occupations lag behind the US level of 14.6%, with the West and Southern Mountains Zone lowest at 10.8%.

The composition of industries that employ Rockies workers provides more detail about what is happening as employment activity. Here are some highlights from Table 3 by the Rockies regions:

Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone: agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining jobs by industry proportion (at 12%) are six times higher than the national level and four times higher than the Rockies average. Manufacturing jobs (4.9%) are far below the national average (14%) and the Rockies average (9%). Information jobs, FIRE employ-

THREE SUB-REGIONS THAT MAKE SENSE

ment (finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing) and work in professional, scientific, management, and administration categories all stand below national and Rockies averages. Jobs in two “social” sectors exist at higher than national averages: education, health and social services as well as arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services.

Continental Divide Spine:

Agriculture and natural resource related jobs as well as construction outpace national levels and match Rockies employment proportions. Manufacturing, while significantly higher than the Eastern Plains Zone, stands at 9.6% vs. 14% for the nation. Information-based employment along the Spine, at 3.7%, exceeds

both the national and Rockies levels, again signaling the highly educated workers inhabiting the string of cities in close proximity to the Continental Divide. Similarly work in professional, scientific, management and administration industries, at 10.2%, outpace both the nation (9.3%) and the Rockies (9.8%).

West and Southern Mountains Amenity Zone:

Defying the seemingly perpetual image of the Rockies as a land of ranching, mining and lumbering, agriculture and natural resource related jobs in this fast growing region are at a minimal level of 1.5% vs. the nation at 1.9% and the Rockies Region at 2.8%. Construction jobs, to provide communities and infrastructure for rapid growth, exceed the national level

of 6.8% and the Rockies Region average of 8.6% and stand in this zone at 8.8%. Manufacturing in this Zone (8.9%) predictably lags the nation (14%) and the Rockies (9%). Jobs in FIRE, at 7.5%, exceed the other parts of the Rockies and the national average. Geographical remoteness no longer appears to hinder “white-collar” employment in professional, scientific, management and administrative work: this Zone has one in ten such jobs, exceeding both the Rockies and national averages. Driven by an abundance of environmental, recreational and cultural “amenities,” this sub-region has nearly double the proportion of jobs as the nation (15% vs. 8%) in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services.

Table 3 - Employment: Census 2000 Data	The West and Southern Amenity Zone	Percent	The Continental Divide Spine	Percent	The Eastern Plains Ag- ricultural Heritage Zone	Percent	The Rockies	Percent	United States	Percent
OCCUPATION										
Employed civilian Pop 16+	3,097,767	100.0%	4,865,510	100.0%	445,489	100.0%	8,445,441	100.0%	129,721,512	100.0%
Management,professional,and related occs	949,047	30.6%	1,696,811	34.9%	137,251	30.8%	2,793,577	33.1%	43,646,731	33.6%
Service occupations	577,999	18.7%	721,434	14.8%	75,677	17.0%	1,380,894	16.4%	19,276,947	14.9%
Sales and office occupations	877,561	28.3%	1,314,494	27.0%	109,573	24.6%	2,312,296	27.4%	34,621,390	26.7%
Farming,fishing,and forestry occupations	17,034	0.5%	41,777	0.9%	12,525	2.8%	71,667	0.8%	951,810	0.7%
Construction,extraction,and maintenance occs	340,900	11.0%	528,144	10.9%	54,237	12.2%	928,328	11.0%	12,256,138	9.4%
Production,transport,material moving occs	335,226	10.8%	562,850	11.6%	56,226	12.6%	958,679	11.4%	18,968,496	14.6%
INDUSTRY										
Agriculture,forestry,fishing and hunting,and mining	45,189	1.5%	135,225	2.8%	53,539	12.0%	237,015	2.8%	2,426,053	1.9%
Construction	272,659	8.8%	420,172	8.6%	31,589	7.1%	727,514	8.6%	8,801,507	6.8%
Manufacturing	274,579	8.9%	468,795	9.6%	21,899	4.9%	767,368	9.1%	18,286,005	14.1%
Wholesale trade	98,560	3.2%	158,655	3.3%	13,588	3.1%	272,308	3.2%	4,666,757	3.6%
Retail trade	370,736	12.0%	592,925	12.2%	54,723	12.3%	1,023,508	12.1%	15,221,716	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing,and utilities	155,394	5.0%	233,946	4.8%	29,061	6.5%	420,249	5.0%	6,740,102	5.2%
Information	82,172	2.7%	182,192	3.7%	9,173	2.1%	274,240	3.2%	3,996,564	3.1%
Finance,insurance,real estate, rental and leasing	233,253	7.5%	325,978	6.7%	21,887	4.9%	582,828	6.9%	8,934,972	6.9%
Professional,scientific,managemt,admin,waste mgt svcs	308,484	10.0%	494,202	10.2%	23,420	5.3%	828,953	9.8%	12,061,865	9.3%
Educational,health and social services	503,334	16.2%	915,263	18.8%	95,979	21.5%	1,522,141	18.0%	25,843,029	19.9%
Arts,entertainment,recreation,accommodation,food svcs	463,760	15.0%	438,984	9.0%	37,503	8.4%	943,355	11.2%	10,210,295	7.9%
Other services (except public administration)	137,096	4.4%	228,613	4.7%	23,783	5.3%	391,532	4.6%	6,320,632	4.9%
Public administration	152,551	4.9%	270,560	5.6%	29,345	6.6%	454,430	5.4%	6,212,015	4.8%
CLASS OF WORKER										
Private wage and salary workers	2,475,987	79.9%	3,670,834	75.4%	306,152	68.7%	6,480,493	76.7%	101,794,361	78.5%
Government workers	428,434	13.8%	803,292	16.5%	86,564	19.4%	1,324,239	15.7%	18,923,353	14.6%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	185,156	6.0%	373,334	7.7%	49,324	11.1%	610,882	7.2%	8,603,761	6.6%
Unpaid family workers	8,190	0.3%	18,050	0.4%	3,449	0.8%	29,827	0.4%	400,037	0.3%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis'
Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

THE ROCKIES DIVIDED:



*W*ages and salaries are driven by availability of jobs. This “earned” portion of personal income, however, is only part of where purchasing power emanates. What can be termed “non-work” sources of income include transfer payments and dividends, interest and rent, with both supplementing a region’s income beyond the employment base. The pattern of income for the Rockies and its sub-regions, shown in Table 4, provides a window into how people and their communities survive and thrive “out-west.”

It is “old” news by now that farming and agriculture represent very low proportions of employment even in the Rockies where only 1.4% of the land is “developed.” But worse news exists! Farming is too often a losing endeavor, as shown by the extremely low levels of total personal income derived from farming: only 0.6% for the U.S. and 0.7% for the Rockies. Only the Eastern Plains defies this reality, standing at 3.5% while the Continental Divide Spine is even below the national and Rockies levels at 0.5% and the West and Southern Mountains Zone a minuscule 0.3%. In general “farm” residents must supplement their earnings (and losses) from agriculture increasingly by working other “day” jobs and through non-work sources of income.

Net earnings can serve as a proxy for the proportion of income generated by jobs. The national proportion in 2000 stood at 68.8% while the Rockies Region was higher at near 70%. Among the Rockies zones the Continental Divide Spine has the highest proportion of net earnings (71.1%) followed by the West and

Southern Mountain Amenity Zone at 68.3% and with the Eastern Plains lagging way behind at only 61.1% of “earned” income.

Focusing for a moment on income from jobs, how high paying are they in the Rockies? Average earnings per job are one overall measure. The Rockies at \$32,401 per average job in 2000 fell below the national average of \$36,316. Within the region, the West and Southern Mountains Zone outpaced the Rockies, standing at \$34,002, while the Continental Divide Spine nearly matched the Rockies level and the Eastern Plains Zone substantially underperformed all other regions at \$25,336.

Transfer payments as well as dividends, interest and rent form the “non-work” sources of

income. Children and the elderly in the dependency portions of the population often receive transfer payments either for retirement and/or due to poverty. Many adults both during their working years and into retirement receive substantial income from returns on their assets. Combined, these supplements to job earnings partly insulate communities, counties and regions from the wildest variations of boom-bust cycles of employment. Transfer payments in the Rockies exceed national and regional levels only for the Eastern Plains, where 16.8% of income is thus generated. In contrast, the income from dividends, interest and rent outpace the national level of 18.3% throughout the Rockies (18.8%) and its sub-regions, with the West and Southern Mountains Zone standing highest at 20.5%.

Map 2: Average Earnings Per Job for the Rocky Mountains, 2001

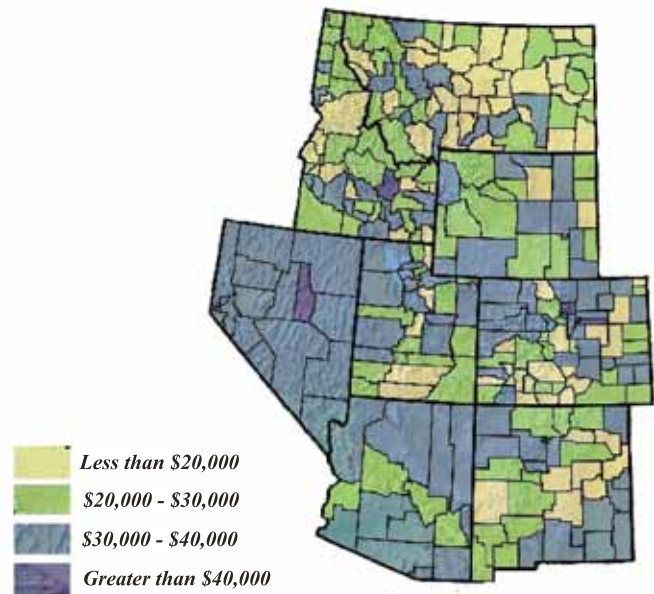


Table 4 - Income: 2000 Profile	West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone	Percent	Continental Divide Spine	Percent	Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone	Percent	The Rockies	Percent	The United States	Percent
Personal income (\$000)	\$181,421,700	100.0%	\$280,780,210	100.0%	\$22,604,475	100.0%	\$486,018,754	100.0%	\$8,314,032,000	100.0%
Nonfarm personal income (\$000)	\$180,868,423	99.7%	\$279,333,472	99.5%	\$21,821,872	96.5%	\$482,463,466	99.3%	\$8,264,187,000	99.4%
Farm income (\$000)	\$553,235	0.3%	\$1,446,761	0.5%	\$782,603	3.5%	\$3,555,288	0.7%	\$49,845,000	0.6%
Net earnings (\$000)	\$123,919,119	68.3%	\$199,544,498	71.1%	\$13,820,865	61.1%	\$339,400,608	69.8%	\$5,723,400,000	68.8%
Transfer payments (\$000)	\$20,316,127	11.2%	\$29,362,989	10.5%	\$3,800,412	16.8%	\$55,040,437	11.3%	\$1,070,231,000	12.9%
Dividends, interest, and rent (\$000)	\$37,186,454	20.5%	\$51,872,723	18.5%	\$4,983,198	22.0%	\$91,577,709	18.8%	\$1,520,401,000	18.3%
Wage and salary disbursements (\$000)	\$106,967,676	81.0%	\$164,521,851	77.8%	\$10,779,828	73.4%	\$285,103,531	79.3%	\$4,835,800,000	79.5%
Average earnings per job (\$)	\$34,002	-	\$32,607	-	\$25,336	-	\$32,401	-	\$36,316	-

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis'
Regional Economic Information System (REIS)

THREE SUB-REGIONS THAT MAKE SENSE



The Rockies, when dissected as we have done here into three sub-regions that each share distinct characteristics and conditions, become more complex than just a “region with a spine.” Certainly some local, state, regional and even national policies are suitable to all of the 280 counties. These include policies that encourage creation of new jobs, that support healthy and vibrant communities, and that provide appropriate “local” participation in resource and environmental management decisions.

But it is clear now that the Eastern Plains Agricultural Heritage Zone is challenged by slow to negative population growth, high dependency levels of the young and elderly, poverty, and diminished prosperity emanating from their shared agricultural land base. In contrast, “boom” conditions exist for the West and Southern Mountain Amenity Zone and, in different patterns, for the Continental Divide Spine. Influxes of newcomers, both seeking jobs and high quality of life in the working and retirement years, generate a different class of challenges: those of rampant growth that often outpace community infrastructure and stress the “traditional” fabric of small communities and even large metro areas.

Future Rockies Report Cards and Conferences will be focused on many of the trends identified here, for the Rockies is more complex than just an agglomeration of counties and states sharing a spectacular mountain chain as their Continental Divide spine. We will explore in depth case studies of communities facing explosive growth vs. dwindling populations and ways to earn a living. We will consider innovative experiments that connect local and regional communities to the management of federal lands and reserves. We will search out those clusters of counties within the Rockies that are taking bold steps to cope with rapid change while retaining the quality of life that acts as the glue holding people to their communities and surrounding lands. In all of this, we welcome suggestions for topics to explore, experts who can enlighten and extend the Rockies Conversation, and ideas for useful Report Card information that is insightful and stimulating.

“We will search out those clusters of counties within the Rockies that are taking bold steps to cope with rapid change while retaining the quality of life that acts as the glue holding people to their communities and surrounding lands.”

