

Chapter 25 Tri-County Community Resource Unit

Section One: Baseline Social and Economic Information

A. Community Description

Geographic Features

The Tri-County CRU includes the communities of Harrisburg, Junction City and Monroe. Each of these communities is located in a different county. Out on the broad floodplain of the Willamette River, and oriented around agriculture and commuting, these communities are linked together by geography, mutual interests, and interlinking social ties.

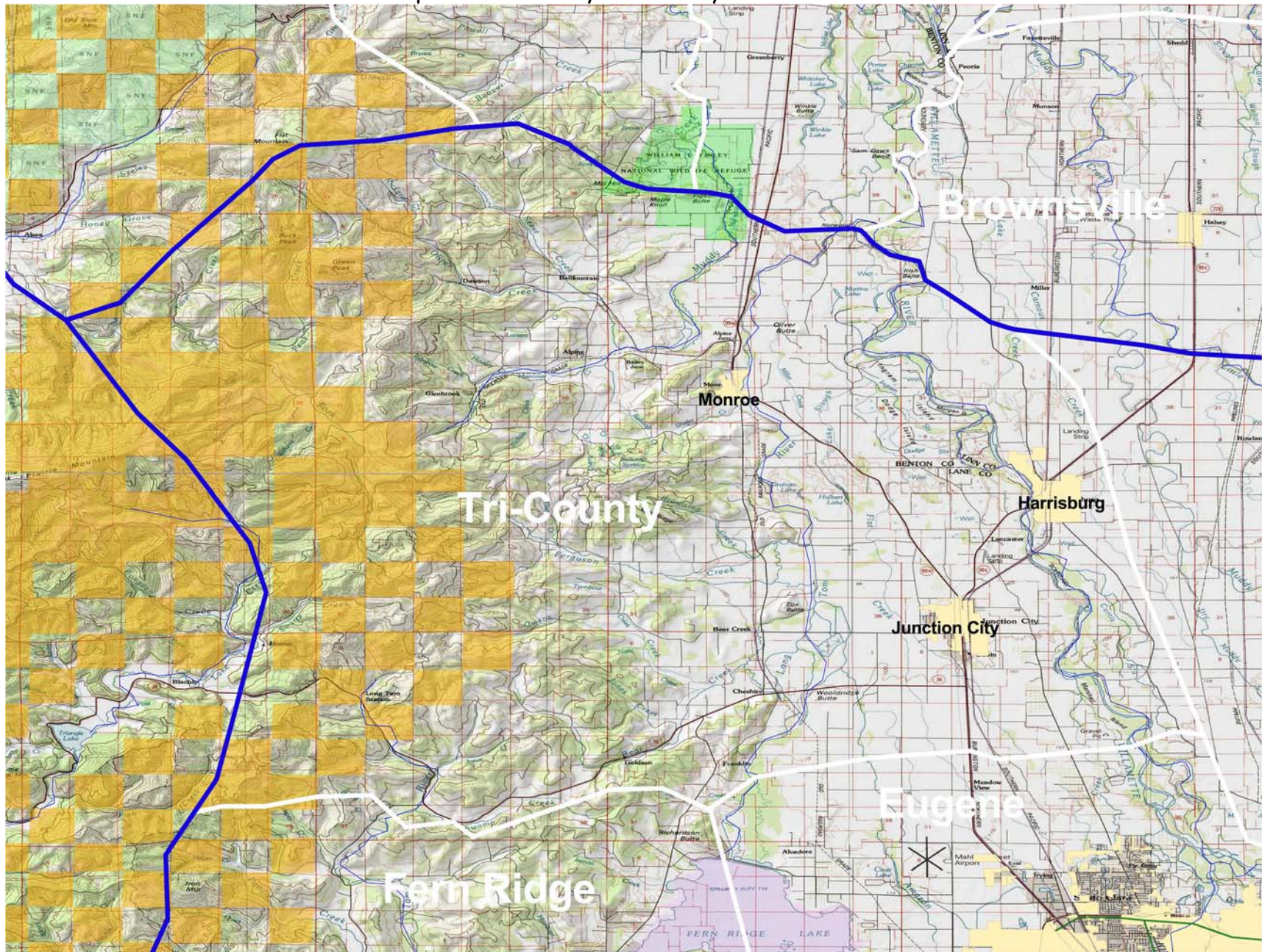
The unit's northern boundary proceeds between Brownsville and Harrisburg through the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge, the western boundary is the ridge of the coastal range, the southern line occurs south of Highway 36 and Swamp Creek, and the eastern line is east of Harrisburg and the Willamette River. The unit includes the very small communities of Lancaster, Bear Creek, Cheshire, Franklin, Goldson, and Bellfountain.

Settlement Patterns

Junction City had 3692 people in 1990 and 4721 in 2000, an increase of nearly 22% (Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, Community Profile, 2000). It is located in northern Lane County.

As discussed in the "2001 Tri-County Business Directory" and "Junction City History and Resources," a small booklet compiled and edited by Junction City Teachers in the late 1950s, there are two phases to the development of modern-day Junction City. In the early phase, a Mr. Woody built wharves on the Willamette riverfront at a site named Woodyville, which is today known as Lancaster, a couple miles north of present-day Junction City. Until 1856,

Figure 75
Map the Tri-County Community Resource Unit



Woodyville was the "head of navigation" from the southern Willamette to Portland. In March of 1856, the "James Clinton," a squat riverboat, traveled up the Willamette as far as Eugene Skinner's cabin (at the foot of what is now called Skinner's Butte in Eugene). However, low waters much of the year caused the Woody wharves to remain the principle docks of the area. Early river trade carried calico, millstones and plowshares to the area, returning grain, lumber and fatted livestock to Portland markets.

Floods in the 1860s destroyed most of Woodyville and changed the course of the Willamette sufficiently that the town slowly disintegrated and many residents of Woodyville moved south to the Junction City area as river traffic was diverted to nearby Harrisburg.

In the second phase of Junction City development, Ben Holladay, a high-rolling entrepreneur, began building the Oregon & California Railroad south from Portland, with plans to spike one line down the east side of the Willamette and another down the west. Holladay's plan was to bring the two lines together in the southern Willamette Valley.

Predicting a "new Chicago," Holladay selected a low-lying, slough-crossed town site and, in 1871, created Junction City as his railroad convergence point. The town sprang up instantly, in part because the folks from the now-riverless Lancaster hitched homes and shops to horses and dragged them to newly platted lots in the infant community.

Rapidly, the town became a full-blown railroad town. Holladay created a roundhouse, depot, shops, freight warehouses, storage buildings bunkhouses and a mess hall for construction crews. The city was chartered by the Oregon legislature in 1872. The City's first ordinance directed the creation of 8' wide sidewalks "downtown." The City's second ordinance prevented swine from wandering at large.

Holladay's railroad junction never came to be. His east-side line became the main route of the Southern Pacific. The west-side line never made it to Junction City.

Despite this, Junction City flourished as a railroad town through the first decades of the 20th century. By the time Southern Pacific moved its shops and offices to Eugene, the community was sustained by a strong agricultural economy, a few sawmills that worked logs from the nearby Coast Range--an indication that this community relates more closely to the Siuslaw National Forest than the Willamette—and a diversified retail and professional community that afforded a large measure of self-sufficiency to the town.

In 1902, A. C. Nielsen, a Danish immigrant from Minnesota, arrived in Junction City to create a western settlement of Danes. He bought 1,600 acres of land, partitioned into 10- and 20-acre farmsteads and began attracting Danish settlers. This in-migration is commonly referred to as the "Danish invasion." An alternate name for JC is "Forbindelestaad". This area in town is now called "Dane Lane" which is identified by a large sign at the beginning of the lane that lists the 20 or so families who live there.

Nielsen wanted to establish a series of Danish Lutheran churches from Tacoma to San Francisco. And the Danish colony soon founded its own Lutheran Church in Junction City and began to grow. They preserved their language and culture for a generation or two, but assimilated into the mainstream culture, at least partly because the agricultural work they pursued made them so much like their neighbors.

In the middle years of the century, Junction City's farms - Danish and otherwise - were diversified "Old McDonald" operations. But agriculture steadily evolved, becoming more specialized. Crops that had been historic mainstays, like hops and flax, disappeared. By the end of World War II, the area's agriculture had settled into two distinct components. Grass seed and wheat were grown on thick clay soils that dominated much of the Willamette Valley floor. And an ever-changing array of orchard, produce and seed crops was cultivated on the richer soils nearest the river.

A handful of wood products operations continued in the area. Downtown contained a solid anchor of shopkeepers that provided basic needs for the population that, for the most part, lived and worked in Junction City.

Some of that structure began to change in the 1960s. Construction of I-5 well east of the town stole much of the traffic from Hwy 99, the city's main

artery. At the same time, the city was becoming home to more and more residents who commuted to jobs in the Eugene/Springfield area. The shift came partly because of a reduction in wood products and partly because advances in education were leading local residents to the sort of high-skill jobs found in metropolitan areas.

At the same time, Junction City was becoming increasingly attractive to those who had come from elsewhere to take Eugene/Springfield jobs, but who preferred small-town life.

The city's population has doubled in the last 30 years and growth in the surrounding rural area has been even greater due to the development of many small home- and farmsteads in the '70s and '80s.

"It's become a community of newcomers, but they don't get involved right away. It takes them awhile to settle before they start to join in. The large apartment complex south of town is more transient. Those people don't tend to stay."

"In the 1950s, this was a strong Danish community, not really accepting of newcomers. Gradually that has changed."

Harrisburg, originally known as Prairie City, was incorporated in 1886. It is located in western Linn County, east of the Willamette River. Its growth impetus came after the great flood of the Willamette River in 1861. The flood destroyed what is now Lancaster and the river came right up to Harrisburg where it has remained ever since. Harrisburg was the farthest reach for commercial river use during the steamboat era (www.ohwy.com/or/h/harrisbu.htm). The Willamette River continues to be important to Harrisburg for fishing and boating. It also provides the backdrop to the Fourth of July fireworks show. Last year was the 50th annual celebration. Harrisburg had a population of 2062 in 1990 and 2795 in 2000, an increase of 26% (Census Data, Table Seven).

One person characterized Harrisburg this way:

"A little farming community being overwhelmed by motor coach manufacturing and the in-migration of bedroomers."

Monroe had 528 people in 1990 and 607 in 2000, an increase of 13% (Census Data, Table Seven). It is in the southern portion of Benton County. It was settled through homesteading, timber production, and as a small river port, dating from the 1840s. Agriculture has been its mainstay from the beginning. The fertile soils along the Willamette and Long Tom Rivers were and are used for row crops, most often for vegetables. The heavier clay soils away from the river are used for grass seeds. Christmas trees are a strong element of local agriculture. November and December is known as a period of high activity in the community, as Christmas trees are cut and sent to market by rail, helicopter, and truck. Although timber mills around Monroe disappeared sometime ago, many people still earn income from the timber industry.

In summary, settlement patterns in the Tri-County CRU in the past have been oriented around river traffic and timber production, and currently around agriculture and commuting. Many residents discussed the changing nature of their countryside due to the settlement of commuters on old farmsteads, rural homes, and new subdivisions. As discussed below, changing settlement patterns and work routines have reduced the local economy and favored out-migration by young people.

"The only kids who come back are tied to family farms or businesses."

Publics

The Tri-County CRU is comprised mainly of people of European descent, with emphasis on Scandinavian countries. In the past, the communities were insular with long standing family and social ties. Many families go back many generations. In recent years, commuters have become an important element of the community. A twenty-minute or so commute puts workers into Corvallis, Albany, or Eugene.

The area has an active community of Mennonites who are active in ongoing community support.

"A group of them [Mennonites] came and donated time to build the Picnic Building [at the Harrisburg Area Museum], a 10,000 square feet area with tables donated by Hull-Oakes [Lumber Company]."

Visitors do not seem to be an important component of the local economy. Neither the Chamber nor businesses are oriented to tourists. The Visitors' Center at the bank had lots of information but it was for other locations.

Monroe residents are mostly commuters to Eugene and Corvallis. In addition, there are a substantial number of seniors and seasonal workers that help out on the Christmas tree farms. One official believed that that 60% of Monroe's population is low income.

Networks

See Section Two.

Work Routines

There was a thriving lumber economy in Junction City, but it disappeared long before the downturn of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Agriculture has been the mainstay of settlement over the years, but its future is uncertain. A number of granges are still scattered in the area.

"The row crops and canneries are all gone. When Agripac left, it really hurt the farmers."

In 1968, a group of business partners began constructing slide-in camper units for pickup trucks. This fledgling operation was to be the seed for a regional recreational vehicle industry that now involves dozens of manufacturers, suppliers, retailers and after-market specialists from Eugene to Harrisburg. The prime Junction City representative of this industry is Country Coach, Inc., as shown in the chart below.

<u>Major employers</u>	<u># employees</u>	<u>Yr established</u>
Country Coach	900-1000	1973
Guaranty Chevrolet	450	1966
Lochmead Farms/Dari-Mart	400	1940
Junction City School Dist.	225	1908
Trus Joist-McMillian	220	1975

Source: "Information Guide to Junction City"

Before Interstate 5 was developed, Junction City boasted a department store, a variety store and women's clothing store. The development of Highway 99 into a four-lane created a "Go to Eugene" mentality. Residents say the community was never the same after these developments—it became less insular and more open, its economy became more tied to the region, and its local businesses are now reduced and struggling.

A substantial number of residents commute to larger towns of Eugene, Albany, and Corvallis for work. Although many residents pointed to the high level of employment for commuting, it is also clear that residents do not want to see themselves as a bedroom community. From its earliest history, Junction City had its own economic base and identity, and the key values of the community are still oriented in this direction.

Junction City has a fair number of home-based businesses. The city does not require business licenses so this activity is hard to track.

Harrisburg, similarly, has seen an increase in commuters to Eugene, Corvallis, and Albany, with city leaders attributing its population growth in 1990s to this factor. Agriculture in Harrisburg remains strong. While wheat and flax were important in the past, today it is vegetables, orchard crops and grass seed operations. It is also has several manufacturing facilities producing motor homes, bridge beams, plywood, bomb disposal trailers and interior materials for airlines. Morse Brothers Inc. had a sizeable sand and gravel operation dating from the 1950s, and now produces pre-stressed concrete products for a Northwest market ("Tri-County Business Directory, 2001).

The Business Directory bills Harrisburg as "a farm town popular with families seeking livability." It is clearly a bedroom community. But as yet it has little more to offer commuters to Corvallis, Albany or Eugene. Downtown is dead or dying. Harrisburg Plaza is a recent development, but five of its seven storefronts remain empty. Many of the wonderful, old houses in the downtown area are being allowed to deteriorate. At the same time the in-migrant growth practically surrounding the core of Harrisburg is remarkable. It is likely that as some threshold is reached, Harrisburg will re-create

downtown with services useful in a commuting economy. For the present, energy in the community seems devoted to new housing developments and the high school.

Recently, the Monaco Coach Corporation acquired Safari Motor Coach in Harrisburg and local people believe the acquisition will give the town a much needed economic boost. About 200 of the 600 employees have been retained, and \$1.5 million has been invested by Monaco in the facility. Many Monroe residents commute to the Hewlett-Packard plant. Nearby Hull-Oakes Lumber employs about 80 people, while Alpine Vineyard employs five (Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, Community Profile, 2000).

Support Services

The Scandinavian Festival in Junction City is all about "community spirit." The famous festival was created in 1961, partly as an economic response to business and transportation changes that were buffeting the community. The heritage of the Danes, still preserved by a few older residents, was the foundation for an event that, over the last 40 years, has become Oregon's premier ethnic celebration, attracting over 150,000 people each year. The festival involves hundreds of locals, including enthusiasts without a drop of Scandinavian blood. Since 1961, it has transformed its downtown for four days into an Old World town, celebrating a variety of arts and crafts, foods, and cultural entertainment from that region.

Junction City is very Internet linked. A wireless system is being established across the city. Residents feel that this capacity has led to the creation of home-based businesses that add to the local economy.

Reportedly, a prison is to be built off of Meadowview Road, with a groundbreaking date of 2003.

"There's a 'wait and see' attitude about the prison. People are worried about effects on schools or the potential for increased development."

"The business community worked really hard to pull things together to make the prison happen. It will be a boon to the community."

Civic organizations in Junction City include Scandanavian Festival Association, Habitat for Humanity, Business and Professional Women, Education Together Foundation, 4-H, Friends of the Library, Lions Club, and a host of service clubs.

Junction City has two museums, the Mary E. Pitney House and the Lee House Museum. Junction City's paper, Tri-County News, covers Lane, Linn and Benton Counties. Residents expressed concerns about the downtown.

"The school system is excellent, but we need a vital downtown. People have to be able to make a good living."

Harrisburg and Junction City share a Chamber of Commerce based in Junction City.

Harrisburg has many community services available. In the 300 block of Smith, for example, is City Hall, a Linn County Sheriff substation, the library, the Family Resource Center and the Senior Citizen Center. Community groups use a big bulletin board here. The Harrisburg Medical Clinic is on the next block of Smith. The Harrisburg Area Museum at Heritage Park operates for locals and visitors, displaying local history and farm antiques (Figure 76). The post office, located at 2nd and Smith in downtown, also has a bulletin board and is a communication spot.

Residents say that Harrisburg has a great school system, due largely to the in-migration and infusion of new money into the system. Housing is said to be cheaper than in Junction City, which is why the population has grown substantially over the last decade. A few people stated that population grew 30%, which is pretty close to the census figures. Harrisburg does not have its own police force but contracts with Linn County Sheriff's Department for services.

Figure 76
The Junction City Historical Museum



For support systems in Harrisburg, Adult and Family Services operates an office. The 7th Day Adventist Church has a clothing bank, and Local Aid provides food boxes. Womenspace, offering services to victims of domestic violence, has one staff person available half a day a week. These facilities are seeing an increase in demand but their staff are not sure why. There has been no discernible immigration of low-income people. The area experiences some seasonal layoffs, with some getting severance pay, and some getting little more than unemployment. These people come for food and services when the benefits are running out.

"Paddle Oregon" is a river event in its 2nd year that originates in Harrisburg. The Willamette River not only is important for this event, but for local fishing and for access by hunters. Local residents value the waterfront park.

Monroe has an active Lion's Club that is well regarded. The South Benton Enhancement Task Force is another active group, focusing on education. It sponsors a bus that brings books to rural towns around the area and has projects for kids in the park during the summer.

The Monroe Telephone Company has been operating since 1956 and serves people in a 50 square mile radius. In addition to telephone it offers cable television and Internet services.

Recreational Activities

See Section Three.

B. Trends, Themes and Citizen Issues Related to Community Life

Trends

Steady to rapid population increase.

An emphasis on commuting to urban jobs as a livelihood strategy.

A decline of local retail and commercial outlets.

Themes

Junction City appears as a self-contained community that is not ready to become a "bedroom" to any place else. There is a belief that, "If you live here, you are part of this community, no matter where you work." Many people still have long familial history in Junction City or are married to someone who does. The local values are that you attend church regularly and you support the school system, especially the High School. You take pride in your community and do not see dichotomies or divisions. And even if you're not Scandanavian, you will be eating "abelskivvers" at the Festival.

"Nice community. We don't want to be classified as a part of Eugene or a part of any place. We are not a bedroom community."

"I like this town. It's small but it has big city amenities because Eugene and Portland are close enough."

Community Issues

Residents in this unit feel like the economy is good, but they'd like to attract a few businesses to fill gaps in what is offered locally, like a Bi-Mart store, clothing stores and a grocery. People do not want to go to Eugene for basic amenities.

"That's the problem with this town. Everyone wants to live here but nobody wants to support the downtown."

Residents in Harrisburg, especially, voiced concern about changes in their community and its uncertain future.

"Zoning laws have made it easy for urbanites to buy cheap land in Harrisburg. It's contributing to the sprawl."

"It's going through an identity crisis."

"It needs to grow, but is unable to bring in new business."

"We need a grocery store badly."

"Harrisburg can't get any participation from the community."

"People have been there a long time. There's a lot of apathy."

"They need some kind of spark. The City Manager is good, but he's kind of laid-back."

"Harrisburg has great potential but no interest. People get enthused about something but then just seem to get bored. They can't get service organizations going."

Section Two: Communication Strategies

A. Informal Networks and Communication

In Junction City, the All-In-One Home Center sells hunting and fishing licenses and gear. It provides information on four wheeling.

Business owners, elected officials and farmers, use the Mirage Body Works as a men's gathering place. This network is a major means of communicating information in the community. Junction City has many informal bridge groups that mobilize people around key issues. Local residents readily bring up names of informal leaders who have a positive reputation.

The Chamber of Commerce representing both communities has been the most successful vehicle for galvanizing people into action. Phone trees happen when "there are petitions to sign."

Junction City gathering places include:

Viking Inn Restaurant Hwy 99 on the north end of town

Holly St Laundromat 8th & Holly

Junction City Historical Museum 655 Holly

Viking Sal Senior Center 245 W 5th

Building Blocks Child Care Center, 575 Greenwood

Loyal Order of the Moose "The Family Fraternity" Women of the Moose, 427 West Front

Kelynski's Sports Pub 1712 Ivy (Hwy 99)

Junction City Café/Acorn Tree Antiques/Community Fax Center/flower shop, 264 W 6th

The Raven, A Pub

All in One Home Center 120 W 6th (sells a little bit of everything, including sporting goods)

Pancake and Steak Depot (used to be the Burlington Depot restaurant)

Kelley's Barbershop next to Junction City Café

Junction City Select Market, with bulletin board

Library corner of Greenwood and W 7th, with Internet access.

In Harrisburg, many residents use the bulletin board on the 300 block of Smith. It is near many local service outlets and City Hall. The Post Office has a well-used bulletin board. The Harrisburg Area Museum involves many people and is a gathering place on occasion.

Serena's Cafe is a family-owned business used by old timers and working men who know each other and share information. The Vault Restaurant is a local hangout not yet discovered by newer residents.

In Monroe, social life revolves around the schools through meetings and sporting events. The Chat and Chew Restaurant is an important gathering place.

B. Formal Groups and Communication

Figure 77
Organizations With Interest in Public Lands in the Tri-County Area

Organization	Contact Information	Mission
Junction City/ Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce	Taryl Perry 235 W 6 th Ave Junction City, OR 97448 (541) 998-6154 www.junctioncity.com	Business development and support
City of Harrisburg	Bruce Cleeton City Administrator	Public Administration

Section Three: The Public Lands Perspective

A. Uses of and Orientation to Public Lands

The communities of the Tri-County Community Resource Unit are oriented to agriculture and commuting. Residents did not express a strong connection to public lands. While there is some interaction going west to BLM land and to the Siuslaw National Forest, no particular perspective emerged with residents and leaders regarding public lands. No stores or clubs focus on public land use as in the larger urban centers. Public land uses are individually centered and are not visible at the group level.

"People here don't feel a part of it [public lands debate]. People are concerned about the environment but there aren't really pressing environmental issues here."

The Coast Range is popular for hunting and the Dunes (the Siuslaw National Forest National Recreation Area) is popular for four-wheeling. These areas are only one and one-half hours' drive. Two to three hours drive gets residents to Hoodoo Ski Bowl, Willamette Pass Ski Resort outside of Oakridge and Mt. Bachelor in Bend. Both Junction City and Harrisburg promote the bicycle path that loops for a hundred miles around them on state highways.

"Men have their special places to go hunt or fish."

"Kids like to go four wheeling on public land that's nearby. They also go out to land owned by Dave Hull and Starker Forest, west of Junction City, where kids and adults take their four-wheel drive trucks."

"Recreation? Most folks go to the coast or the mountains [Cascades]."

There are many family-oriented recreational opportunities available locally. Baseball is very big. Residents reported great support for school athletics. An annual auction and fundraiser supports high school athletics. Junction

City wants to build a community center over by "Dutch's Field" at 15th and Kalmia.

B. Trends and Citizen Issues Related to Natural Resource Management

Trends

As the commuting economy deepens in these communities, we would expect to see similar interests emerge that have developed in other flatland communities—an expressed value for clean air and water, and recreation interests. The upland/lowland connection will be made around environmental qualities and recreation opportunities.

Citizen Issues

"We want clean water. There's a situation with septic tanks in North Eugene. The water comes this way."

"The outdoor education program was canceled due to state wide budget cuts. A lot of people miss that program."

C. Management Opportunities

Outdoor education is an expressed wish of some residents. Educational opportunities in general are present through the schools and the various gathering places reported for these communities.

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