

Vital Wallowa Indicator Project 2009 Baseline Assessment Report

A Product of the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project

A collaboration of:

Wallowa Resources, Northeast Oregon Economic Development District, Wallowa County residents, The Ford Institute for Community Building, and Oregon State University Extension Service & Rural Studies Program



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ford Institute for Community Building

The Ford Institute for Community Building, an initiative of The Ford Family Foundation of Roseburg, Oregon, provided funding to Wallowa Resources and Oregon State University for this project. The results of the project will help the Ford Institute better understand the impact of its programs on rural communities. In addition, the community vitality indicator project is one way in which the Ford Institute continues to support communities that have been part of the Ford Institute Leadership Program. The indicator project is designed to help rural communities build their capacity for positive and proactive development by creating indicators of vitality that clearly identify community goals, can be used in strategic community planning, and can reveal community change in key areas.

Wallowa Resources

Wallowa Resources is a local non-profit organization in northeast Oregon whose mission is to develop, promote, and implement innovative solutions to help the people of Wallowa County and the Intermountain West sustain and improve their communities and their lands. Wallowa Resources served as the community partner to Oregon State University on the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project. The organization provided key guidance and local insight for the project and served as the local coordinator for indicator development, data collection, and synthesis. To learn more about Wallowa Resources, visit www.wallowaresources.org.

Oregon State University (OSU) Rural Studies Program & Extension Service

OSU Rural Studies Program (www.ruralstudies.oregonstate.edu) is a statewide, multi-disciplinary program whose mission it is to provide educational opportunities, conduct applied and fundamental research, and provide outreach, in order to address the needs of rural communities. The OSU Extension Service (www.extension.oregonstate.edu) engages the people of Oregon with research-based knowledge and education that focus on strengthening communities and economies, sustaining natural resources, and promoting healthy families and individuals. OSU Rural Studies Program and Extension Service served as the lead coordinator for the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project. University faculty members provided guidance in project development and research expertise in the development of community indicators, the collection of data, and the synthesis of findings. In addition, OSU faculty trained community members in data collection and provided the infrastructure for online communication of indicator findings.

Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD)

The mission of NEOEDD is to provide resources and facilitate quality decision making for the benefit of entrepreneurs, businesses and communities in Northeast Oregon (Baker, Union and Wallowa counties). NEOEDD is proud to support community-based development efforts in Wallowa County. As a lead partner in the community visioning and strategic planning processes, NEOEDD staff have contributed countless hours helping plan, finance, and implement project activities. "Wallowa County's community vision describes where we are trying to go. The Vital Wallowa Indicators will help us see if we're getting there. We hope everyone will celebrate what is working and roll up their sleeves to improve what isn't," says Sara Miller, NEOEDD Economic Development Specialist. To learn more about NEOEDD, visit www.neoedd.org and sign up for the newsletter.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Members of the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Advisory Committee

- ❖ Ben Boswell, Former Wallowa County Commissioner
- ❖ Cory Carmen, Carman Ranch and Wallowa Land Services
- ❖ Nils Christoffersen, Wallowa Resources
- ❖ Mindy Crandall, Oregon State University
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- ❖ Chris Geyer, Lower Valley Economic Development Team
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- ❖ Jim Henson, Wallowa Resources
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Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Overview

Vital communities are those in which residents work together and achieve a balance of positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes. As rural communities today face various economic, ecological, and population changes it is important that they pay close attention to their vitality. Such focus can illuminate the targets for coordinated community action and strategic planning during challenging times. That said, within this broad notion of community vitality, for which specific goals should rural communities aim? And once the goals are set, how will the community know if those goals are being met?

In 2008 and 2009, Oregon State University (Extension Service and Rural Studies Program), along with Wallowa Resources (a Wallowa County non-profit organization) received funding from the Ford Institute for Community Building to partner in an effort to answer the questions posed above. The purpose of the project was to work together to define community vitality in Wallowa County in such a way that reflects the goals and values held by residents. In addition, the project focused on working together to measure vitality by constructing indicators and gathering data, as well as assessing the vitality of Wallowa County with indicator data and community input. With a set of goals and a clear way of gauging the attainment of those goals in hand, the county can initiate or continue to support policies or programs designed to bolster vitality. With regular and continual tracking of indicator data it will be possible to observe changes in the vitality of Wallowa County; providing residents and decision-makers some insight into how community decisions affect the county's vitality.

While the focus of the project in Wallowa County was to understand community vitality from the local perspective, the project is part of a larger effort to better understand rural community vitality at large. Oregon State University's Rural Studies Program and the Ford Institute for Community Building are engaged in an effort to work with rural communities across the state to learn how they conceptualize vitality and how the university and communities can effectively partner in applied research on vitality. The purpose of this larger effort is three-fold. For one, the aim is to advance social scientific understanding of rural communities in the modern context. In addition, as a family foundation that works closely to build leadership capacity in rural communities, the Ford Institute for Community Building can use the findings of this research to guide and inform its efforts in rural Oregon and northern California. Finally, the aim is to help rural communities understand their economy, environment, and social context so they can proactively plan for and realize a vital future. Community participation in the process of defining indicators can build a community's capacity and help foster many of the characteristics that are seen in successful rural communities. Involving community stakeholders also creates a sense of ownership of the indicators, increasing the likelihood that they will be accepted and used to guide community decision-making.¹

In order to build a working collaborative between Oregon State University and Wallowa County on this project, a partnership between three Oregon State University faculty members and Wallowa Resources was formally established with a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, the project team relied on input from additional members of the community, individuals who joined the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project (VWIP) Advisory Committee.

¹ Martinrodgers, Nicole, Ela Rausch, ad Paul Mattessich. 2009. Communities That Don't Bowl in the Fog. *Contexts* 8(1): 26-31.

The VWIP Advisory Committee, OSU, and Wallowa Resources jointly decided to use the 2006 Wallowa County Vision as the framework from which to develop indicators of community vitality (See Box 1). The 2006 Wallowa County Vision was established as part of the Rural Development Assistance Team (RDAT) process, facilitated by faculty at North Carolina State University and guided by the Wallowa County Economic Action Team. In addition to the 2006 County vision, a series of community forums provided additional input from residents to guide the development of vitality indicators. The VWIP team facilitated community forums in four Wallowa County towns (Troy, Wallowa, Enterprise, and Joseph) in June 2008. Resident input was solicited in the forums by means of breakout sessions in the areas of the environment, the economy, social issues, and community capacity.

Box 1

2006 WALLOWA COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

Heritage and culture are a strong presence in Wallowa County where people enjoy and celebrate a rural way of life. We share our healthy environment and unique natural landscapes with newcomers with similar values. Together we value wide-open spaces and intact ranchlands. We create opportunities to carry agriculture and ranching forward into the next generation. We intentionally nurture and connect year-round residents, including young people and families, through new community-building and leadership opportunities. Our small towns, local businesses and active volunteers collaborate to create a shared future.

Wallowa County cultivates a balance of compatible locally-owned small businesses which add to our diverse and innovative economy. We strongly support local entrepreneurship and opportunities that add value to our natural, cultural and agricultural resources. We capture the value of local businesses and high quality agriculture through new products and niche markets serving residents, visitors and customers outside the area. A vibrant and entrepreneurial environment fosters businesses enjoyed by residents throughout the year in a County with no mega anything.

Relying on the input from the community forums and the 2006 vision statement, OSU faculty members developed a list of 26 indicators of Wallowa County Vitality (See Table 1). The VWIP Advisory Committee approved this list on July 31, 2008.

Table 1

Indicators of Wallowa County Vitality	
SOCIAL	
1. Population by age	2. Migration by age
3. Health Care Satisfaction	4. Health Care Affordability
5. Youth Engagement	6. Availability of childcare
7. Lifelong Learning	8. School Enrollment
9. Workforce Housing	10. Farm and ranch ownership patterns
11. Seasonal homeownership	

ECONOMY	
12. Living Wage Jobs	13. Employment Stability
14. Balance of Trade	15. Small & Large Business Health
16. Employers by size	17. Employment in Industries Targeted by County Economic Development Strategy
ENVIRONMENT	
18. Telecommunications	19. Working Landscapes
20. Land Access for hunting, fishing, & rec.	21. Water Quality
22. Noxious Weeds	
COMMUNITY CAPACITY	
23. Civic Involvement & Representation	24. County Government Revenues
25. Public Gatherings & Spaces	26. Community Capacity & Trust

Once the Wallowa County indicators of community vitality were finalized and measures were constructed, data were collected from three types of sources:

1. *External secondary sources*
e.g., US Census Bureau, OR Department of Human Services, OR Department of Agriculture
2. *Local secondary sources*
e.g., Wallowa County Commissioners, School Districts, Watershed Councils,
3. *Primary sources*
Primarily the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Survey; for collection methods and margin of error estimates, see Appendix

After compiling all data, indicator targets were set with the input of the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Advisory Committee, Oregon State University faculty members, experts in particular fields, and any standards set by agencies or organizations. Targets were articulated in various ways. In some instances they were expressed simply as percentages, rates, or amounts equal to, higher, or lower than those observed in 2009. In other instances goals were expressed as specific percentages, rates, or amounts. In yet other instances targets were stated as being equal to the rate or amount observed in the state. These targets set the basis for the assessment of each indicator. Though the target values may change with further community conversation, the 2009 targets provide a preliminary lens through which to view the vitality of the county.

The remainder of this report describes how each indicator was measured, the target or goal associated with each indicator, and a baseline assessment of the attainment of the goal. In order for a community to be fully vital, all observed indicator levels must meet the targets. Future data collection efforts and assessments will be needed to see change in the vitality of Wallowa County.

SOCIAL INDICATORS

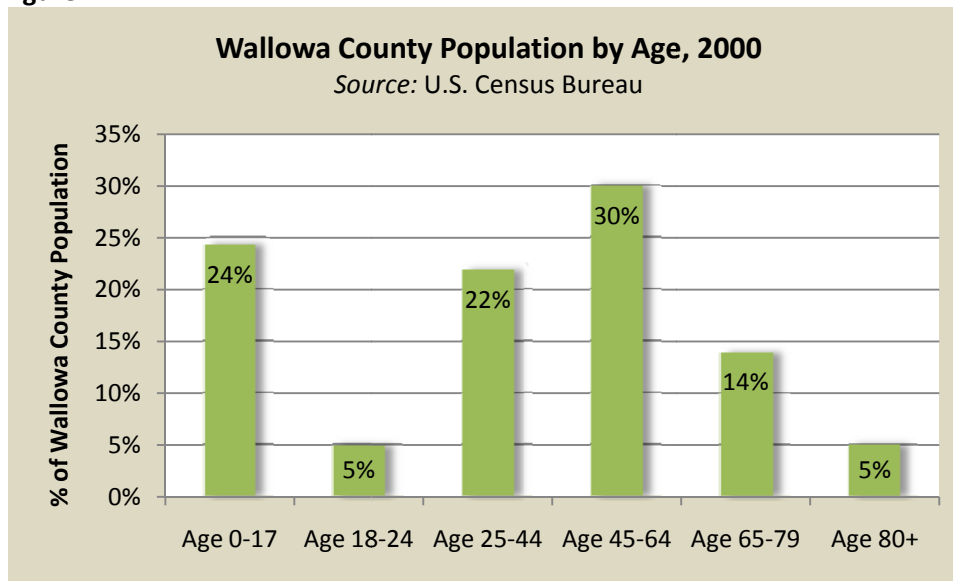
1. Population by Age

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Population by age	Ratio of Wallowa County % of population age 25-44 to % of non-metropolitan OR population age 25-44	0.86	2000	US Census Bureau
	Ratio of Wallowa County % of population age 45-64 to % of non-metropolitan OR population age 45-64	1.17	2000	US Census Bureau

One area of concern for Wallowa County residents that is alluded to in the vision and was often voiced in community forum conversations is the age structure of the population. While most rural communities do not have large proportions of residents age 18 to 24, Wallowa County hopes to have proportions of adults in their “prime working ages” (25-44) and those who are in their later working ages that are close to the average proportions observed in other non-metropolitan counties. In order to assess this goal we relied on data from the 2000 decennial census about the age composition of the county population.

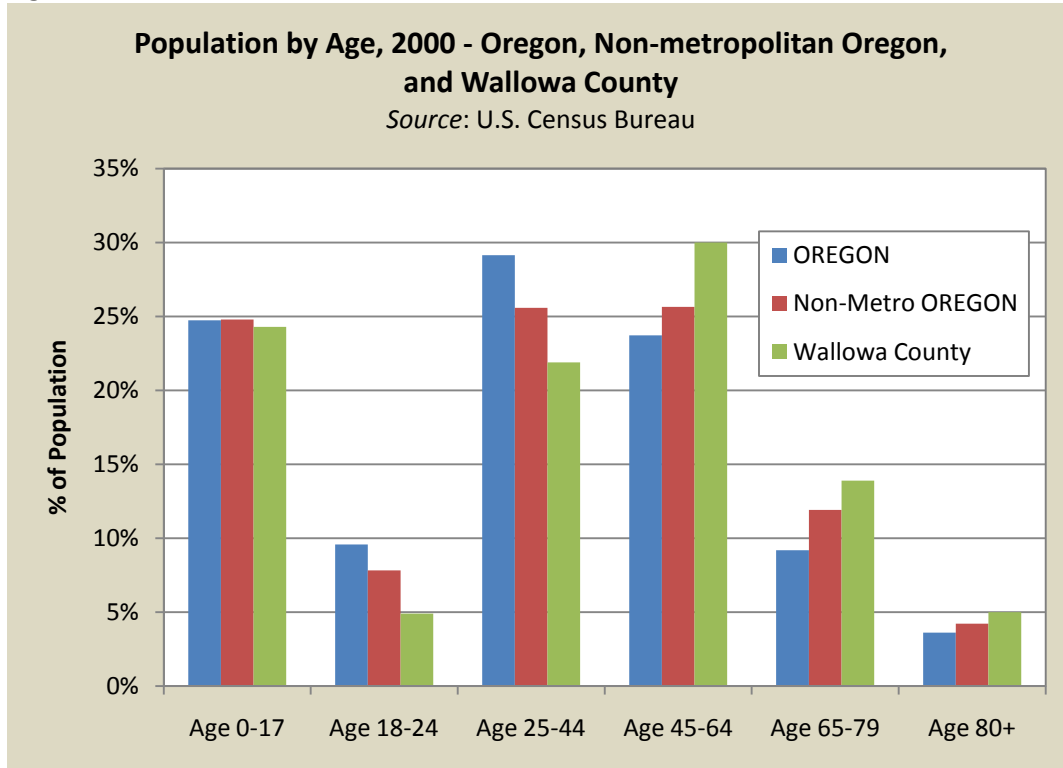
According to data from the 2000 decennial census, displayed in figure 1, youth age zero to 17 were fairly well represented in the county, making up almost 25% of the population, while young adults (age 18-24) were not as prevalent. People in this age group (18 to 24) are likely pursuing higher education and beginning careers in other locales, as is common in rural areas. The population age 25 to 44 made up nearly one quarter of the population while those age 45 to 64 made up nearly a third of the population.

Figure 1



In comparison to the age distribution of the non-metropolitan Oregon and Oregon populations, displayed in figure 2, the population of Wallowa County is on par with these other areas only for ages 0-17 and 80+. Wallowa County has smaller proportions of people age 18 to 24 and 25 to 44, and greater proportions of people age 45 to 64 and 65 to 79 than observed in non-metro Oregon or in Oregon.

Figure 2



As the age groups 25-44 and 45-64 are the focus of the county, as expressed in the county vision and through community forums, the way we have chosen to gauge this indicator is by constructing a ratio of Wallowa County percentages in these age groups to non-metropolitan Oregon percentages. Specifically, we calculated a ratio of the percent of Wallowa County residents age 25-44 to the percentage of non-metropolitan Oregon residents age 25-44. The same was done for populations between age 45 and 65. Calculating these ratios yielded values of 0.86 and 1.17, respectively, indicating that the proportion of Wallowa County residents age 25-44 is 86% of the percentage observed in non-metropolitan Oregon at large, and that the proportion of residents age 45 to 64 is approximately 17% higher than the proportion in non-metropolitan Oregon.

Indicator Target

The goal for Wallowa County is to have proportions of 25 to 44 year olds and 45 to 64 year olds on par with non-metro Oregon.

Assessment

In 2000, Wallowa County had a smaller proportion of 25-44 year olds than both non-metropolitan Oregon and Oregon as a whole. With respect to the proportion of the population age 45 to 64, Wallowa County had greater proportions of this population than non-metro Oregon and Oregon at large. Therefore it appears that in 2000, Wallowa County was below target with respect to the age composition of its population.

2. Migration by Age

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Migration by age	Net migration rates 1990-2000 in Wallowa County by age:			
	Net migration rate age: 0-4	0.17	1990-2000	U.S. Census Bureau, National Center for Health Statistics (Johnson, Voss, Hammer, Fuguitt, & McNiven 2005)
	Net migration rate age: 5-9	0.24	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 10-14	0.24	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 15-19	-0.12	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 20-24	-0.61	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 25-29	-0.32	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 30-34	0.10	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 35-39	0.19	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 40-44	0.16	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 45-49	0.18	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 50-54	0.25	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 55-59	0.19	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 60-64	0.24	1990-2000	
	Net migration rate age: 65-69	0.15	1990-2000	
Net migration rate age: 70-74	0.13	1990-2000		
Net migration rate age: 75+	-0.05	1990-2000		

Tracking the in- and out-migration of population by age was an important priority for the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project, particularly in light of the age composition information presented in indicator #1. Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to get exact statistics of in- and out-migration by age for any county in the U.S. because no organization reports or collects this information. Estimates are the best that can be produced, and are therefore less than ideal.

In this report, net migration (the balance of in- and out-migration) estimates by age for Wallowa County were obtained from a group of demographic researchers who estimated age-specific net migration rates for all counties in the U.S. for 1950 through 2000. The details of the method are outlined in Johnson, Voss, Hammer, Fuguitt, and McNiven (2005), in the journal *Demography*. In short, the method involves reconciling the difference between the expected population at the end of a decade and the exact observed population at the end of the same decade. The expected population is calculated by adding the number of births and subtracting the number of deaths (by age) observed in a decade from the official census count of the population at the beginning of the decade. This expected population value is then subtracted from the population reported by the U.S. Census Bureau from the decennial census at the end of the decade. The difference between the expected and observed populations is the net number of migrants by

age in the area. The net migration rate is simply the number of net migrants (positive or negative) divided by the expected population for the end of the decade.

Figure 3 depicts the age-specific net migration rates estimated for Wallowa County in the 1950s through the 1990s, using data analyzed and provided by Voss, McNiven, Hammer, Johnson, and Fuguitt.

Figure 3

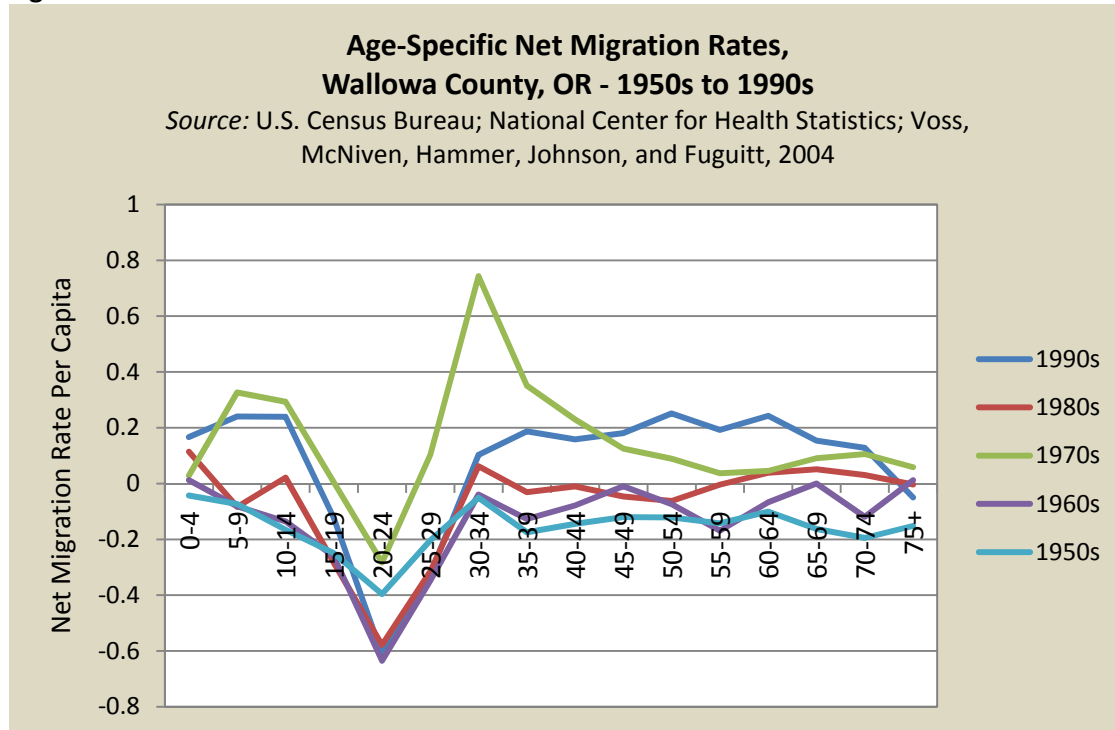


Figure 3 reveals that in all five decades, net out-migration occurred among Wallowa County residents in the age groups 15-19 and 20-24. In addition, among residents between the ages of 25 and 29, typically, net out-migration occurs, but in the 1970s there was a net in-migration of people this age. Only in the 1990s and the 1970s did marked net in-migration occur for residents between the ages of 5 and 14 and between the ages of 30 and 74. Generally, zero net migration or net out-migration occurs in Wallowa County for all other age groups.

The net out-migration rates observed for young adults (15-29) are consistent with the finding in indicator #1, that young adults do not make up a large proportion of the population. Indeed, the migration figures further clarify that youth leave the county en masse when the time comes to pursue higher education or job opportunities.

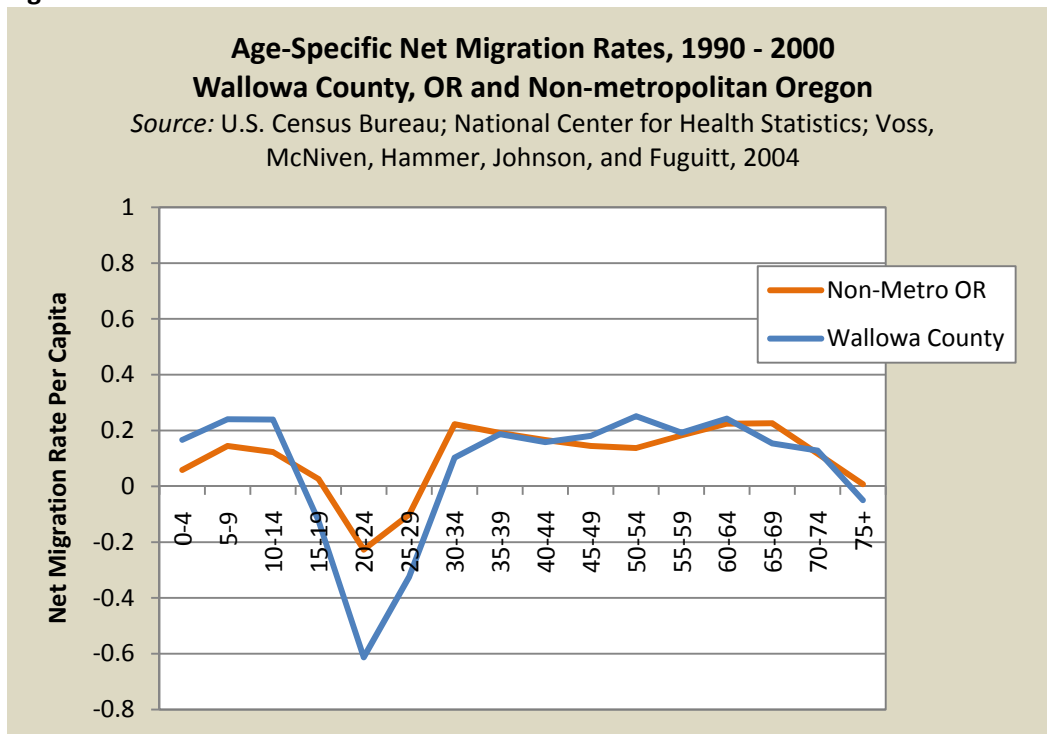
Figure 3 also reveals that the 1950s and the 1960s stand out as decades in which there was zero to negative net migration in all age categories. By contrast, the 1970s stand out as a decade in which net in-migration occurred for almost all ages, and net out-migration rates among those age 15-19 and 20-24 were the lowest observed in the county between 1950 and 2000. After the 1970s, these high rates of net in-migration dwindled. In the 1980s there were only small rates of net in-migration observed for some age groups, and high rates of net out-migration resumed

among those in the age groups 15-19 and 25-29. In the 1990s we see a 1970s-like marked uptick in net in-migration, but in contrast to the 70s, which favored in-migration among young adults, the 90s were characterized by distinct rates of in-migration among those between the ages of 30 and 74 and 0 to 14.

The rates of net migration among all age groups observed in Wallowa County in both the 1970s and the 1990s reflect trends observed throughout the rural U.S. Indeed, the 1970s has been termed “the rural turnaround” by demographers, as young families moved to the country-side in large numbers.² Though the 1980s experienced a resurgent out-migration from rural areas, rural communities throughout the U.S. again experienced a revival in the 1990s as urban and suburban Americans sought reprieve from city-life.³ The net in-migration of adults in these age groups in the 1990s is likely due to the increased ability of individuals to work remotely using web-based communication tools and an increased positive image of livability in rural areas in contrast to that in urban areas. Clearly, Wallowa County has not escaped these national trends in rural migration.

Looking specifically at the net migration rates observed in the 1990s in Wallowa County, figure 4 contrasts county net migration rates with rates observed in non-metropolitan Oregon at large.

Figure 4



² Johnson, Kenneth and John Cromartie. 2006. The Rural Rebound and its Aftermath: Changing Demographic Dynamics and Regional Contrasts. In W.A. Kandel and D.L. Brown (eds.), *Population Change and Rural Society* (25-49). Netherlands: Springer.

³ Ibid.

From figure 4 we see that both Wallowa County and non-metropolitan Oregon experienced roughly the same age-specific migration trends: net in-migration of children, those in their middle-ages, and older adults up to age 74, and net out-migration of young adults and the elderly. Non-metropolitan Oregon differs from Wallowa County most noticeably, however, in the net migration rates observed for those between 15 and 29. In non-metropolitan Oregon, the net migration rate among 15 to 19 year olds was positive (indicating net in-migration), while in Wallowa County it was negative (net out-migration). Then among those age 20-24 and 25-29, non-metropolitan Oregon had lower rates of net out-migration than Wallowa County.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for Wallowa County net migration rates to mirror those observed in non-metropolitan Oregon among residents age 25 to 44. This age group corresponds to the prime working-age population, which was also the target of indicator #1.

Assessment

In the 1990s, Wallowa County was slightly below the net migration rates of residents age 25 to 44 observed in non-metro Oregon. In particular, ages 25-29 and 30-34 were most distinctly below the non-metro Oregon average. Therefore, according to data from 1990 to 2000, Wallowa County was below target rates of net migration among those age 25 to 44.

3. Health Care Satisfaction

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Health Care Satisfaction	<u>Satisfaction w/ quality of care:</u>			
	% satisfied with quality of care obtained anywhere	84%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% satisfied with quality of care obtained inside Wallowa County	86%	2009	VWIP Survey
	<u>Satisfaction w/ options in Wallowa County:</u>			
	% that delayed care because they were dissatisfied with local provider choices	16%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% who are satisfied with the number of General Practitioners	55%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% who are satisfied with the number of Alternative Medicine Practitioners	39%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% who are satisfied with the number of Dentists, OB/GYNs, Optometrists, & Podiatrists	50%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% who are satisfied with the number of Mental Health Therapists	20%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% who are satisfied with the number of other specialists	11%	2009	VWIP Survey
	<u>Satisfaction w/ access:</u>			
	% using Wallowa County providers for all their health care needs in the last 12 months	58%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% satisfied with distance traveled for care	85%	2009	VWIP Survey

The Wallowa County vision reveals a desire among residents for the county to be a place in which people are nurtured and cared for as a whole. This concept is therefore part of the local notion of a vital community. One way in which residents are cared for and nurtured is through the health care system. Resident perceptions about their satisfaction with health care is thus a key method of gauging the extent to which residents feel they are cared for in the county. Satisfaction with health care is a complex concept to measure on its own; therefore we separated satisfaction into three types:

- Satisfaction with quality of health care
- Satisfaction with health care options
- Satisfaction with access to health care

In order to measure the satisfaction of Wallowa County residents with health care, the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey asked adult respondents a series of questions about their satisfaction with health care quality, provider options, and access to health care (See the Appendix for an overview of the survey methodology and margins of error).

Quality

With respect to resident satisfaction with health care quality, the VWIP survey asked respondents who had seen certain health care providers to rate their satisfaction with the quality of the care they received. According to the survey results, an estimated 84% of adult residents who saw a health care provider in the last year were mostly to completely satisfied, on average, with the quality of health care they obtained, regardless of provider location (inside or outside the county) or the type of health care provider they saw. Among adult residents who visited health care providers in Wallowa County in the previous 12 months, 86% were mostly to completely satisfied, on average, with the quality of care they received, regardless of the type of provider.

Clearly, the survey results indicate that on average, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of health care among county residents. In addition, the vast majority of residents who used health care within Wallowa County were satisfied with the quality of their practitioners.

Options

With respect to the extent to which Wallowa County residents are satisfied with the health care options available to them, the VWIP survey was able to capture information in a variety of ways. Using one gauge, the results of the survey indicate that an estimated 18% of residents delayed getting health care in the previous 12 months because they were dissatisfied with the provider choices available locally. This statistic is an indication of extreme dissatisfaction with health care, which may lead to negative health outcomes for Wallowa County residents. To verbally express dissatisfaction with the provider options is one matter, as someone who vocalizes dissatisfaction may still indeed get treatment, but to delay necessary care due to this perception is potentially dangerous. It is important to note that individuals who delayed care because they were dissatisfied with the local provider choices could have been dissatisfied for a variety of reasons including quality, cost, distance, or type. Also, we do not know how long adults in the county delayed seeking the care they needed. For some, this delay could have been a matter of days, while for others the delay may have been a matter of months or years.

Using another gauge of satisfaction with provider options, the VWIP survey data provide estimates of the perceived match between the need for particular types of health care providers and their availability. With respect to this match for General Practitioners, the survey data reveal that an estimated 56% of adult residents feel that there are enough General Practitioners to meet their current health care needs and those of their families. 14% of adult residents did not know if the number of practitioners matches the needs of their families and 30% felt that there were either too few or too many General Practitioners in Wallowa County relative to their needs.

Regarding the number of Alternative Medicine Practitioners available in the county, 40% of adult residents felt that there were enough to meet their current health care needs and the needs of their families. By contrast, 42% of residents did not know how the number of practitioners matches the needs of their families.

An estimated 52% of adult residents feel that there are enough Dentists, Gynecologists, Optometrists, and Podiatrists to meet the current health care needs of their families. Only 14% of adults do not know if the number of these practitioners matches the needs of their families, thus 34% of adults feel that there are either too many or too few of these practitioners in Wallowa County.

Twenty-one percent (21%) of adult residents feel that there are enough Mental Health Therapists to meet their own current needs and the needs of their families. The majority of adults (58%), however, do not know if the number of mental health practitioners matches the needs of their families.

With respect to specialist providers other than those listed explicitly above, only 13% of adult residents feel that there are enough in the county to meet their current health care needs and those of their families. By contrast, 52% of adults do not know if the number of other specialists matches the needs of their families.

Figure 5 graphically presents the findings discussed above.

Figure 5

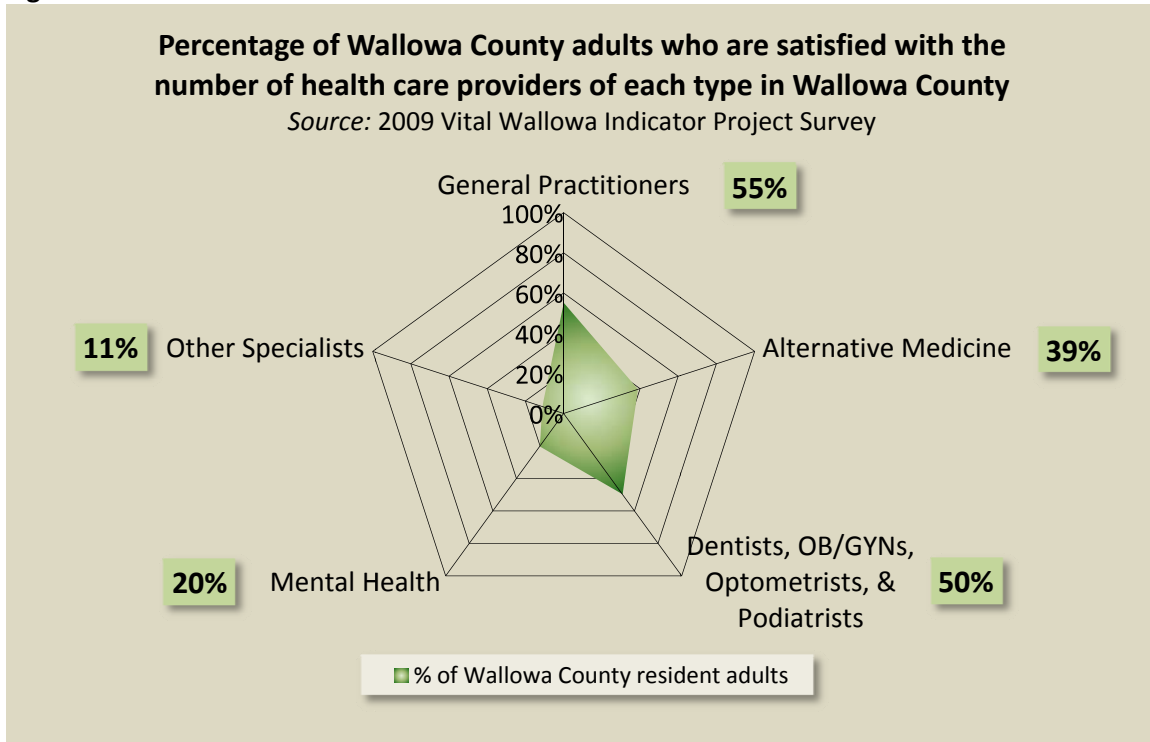


Figure 5 illustrates that the majority of adult residents feel satisfied with the options available to them for two out of five provider types, namely General Practitioners and Dentists, OB/GYNs, Optometrists, and Podiatrists. In all other arenas of health care, however, very few Wallowa County residents perceive that there are enough providers to meet their needs.

It is very important to note, however, that in the majority of the cases where only a small percentage of adults perceive that there are enough providers of a particular type that typically around 50% of adults do not know if the number of providers matches their needs. This finding points to a lack of information about available health care in the county.

In sum, satisfaction with health care provider options varies by type in Wallowa County, and only moderate proportions of adults feel that local options do not meet their needs. In addition, a minority of residents, approximately two out of ten residents, put off seeing a health care provider between 2008 and 2009 because they were not happy with the options available to them in the county.

Access

Resident satisfaction with health care access was measured in a variety of ways. First, we considered access as a function of using care inside Wallowa County versus outside the county, and second as a function of distance travelled for care.

In county access

According to the 2009 VWIP survey, an estimated 58% of adult residents who saw one or more health care providers in the last 12 months used Wallowa County providers exclusively. These individuals did not go outside the county at all to visit a health care provider. By provider type,

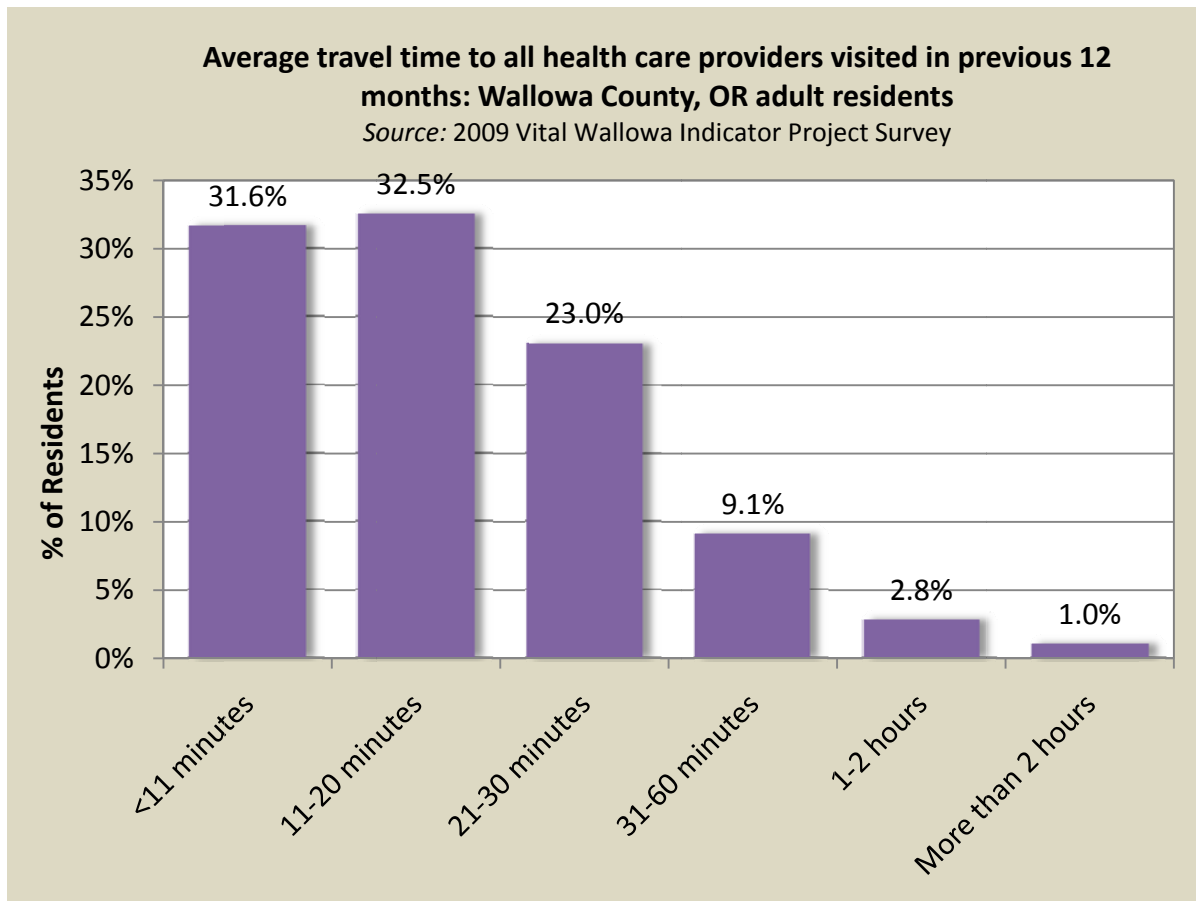
the survey revealed that 95% of residents who saw a General Practitioner in the previous 12 months saw this person in Wallowa County, and 76% of residents who visited a dentist, gynecologist, optometrist, or podiatrist saw one in Wallowa County. For routine medical visits, it appears that Wallowa County has the medical providers it needs to serve local residents. Residents appear to travel outside the county for care if the care needed falls into specialty areas.

Distance

According to the 2009 VWIP survey, an estimated 85% of adult residents were satisfied, on average, with the distance they travelled to receive care in the previous 12 months, regardless of the actual distance travelled, the location of the provider inside or outside the county, or the type of provider they visited.

In order to look more closely at the distance residents travelled for care, for each survey respondent we averaged the distance travelled (one-way travel time) to all types of health care provider visits over the previous 12 months. Based on this calculation, an estimated 64% of Wallowa County adults travelled less than 21 minutes one-way to obtain health care. Chart 3 shows the percentage of residents who travelled various distances for care, on average, regardless of the type of provider visit.

Chart 1



Along with gauging the distances Wallowa County residents traveled to see a health care provider in the past 12 months, the VWIP survey also asked residents about how travel issues affected their access to health care. Specifically, the survey asked respondents if they had delayed seeing a health care provider in the past 12 months because “the type of health care provider you needed was located too far away” or because “you didn’t have transportation.” An estimated 16% of adult Wallowa County residents delayed care in the past 12 months because the provider was too far away, and 4% delayed care due to lack of transportation.

Overall, the majority of Wallowa County residents do not travel far for health care, and the majority of residents see providers in the county. In addition, regardless of the distance they travel, the vast majority of adults are satisfied with their access to health care. An indicator to keep an eye on, however, is the percentage of adults who delay getting health care due to distance. A moderately-sized proportion of adults appear to be deterred from seeking care due to their distance from providers.

Indicator Target

Regarding Wallowa County resident satisfaction with health care, the goals for this indicator are three-fold, reflecting the three dimensions that were measured.

1. Satisfaction with Health Care Quality

The goal for this dimension is for at least 85% of Wallowa County adults who see providers within the county to be satisfied with the quality of care they receive.

2. Satisfaction with Health Care Options

The goal for this dimension is for 50% or more of residents to be satisfied with the number of general practitioners, dentists, OB/GYNs, optometrists, and podiatrists, mental health practitioners, alternative medicine providers, and other specialists in the county. In addition, the goal for this indicator is for fewer than 16% of residents to delay care because they are dissatisfied with local provider choices.

3. Satisfaction with Health Care Access

The goal for this indicator is for the majority of adult residents (at least 51%) to use health care providers in the county for all of their health care needs, and for 85% or more of residents to be satisfied with the distance they travel for care.

Assessment

Overall, according to data collected in 2009, Wallowa County met its goals for health care satisfaction, though the number of health care provider options could be improved.

4. Health Care Affordability

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Health Care Affordability	Ratio of Wallowa County rate of population under 65 without Health Insurance to Oregon rate of uninsured	1.37	2006	US Census Bureau SAHIE
	% of Wallowa County adults delaying care due to cost	29%	2009	VWIP Survey

In order to better understand the aspect of the Wallowa County vision that emphasizes a desire among residents for the county to be a place in which residents care for and nurture one another, we again focus on health care. This time, however, we focus on health care affordability as our indicator. The health care affordability indicator for Wallowa County is comprised of two measures; one that estimates how prevalent the lack of health insurance coverage is within the population and one that reveals the consequences of unaffordable health care costs.

Among individuals under the age of 65 in Wallowa County, 26% did not have health insurance coverage in 2006, according to data from the US Census Bureau.⁴ The Bureau estimates that in 2006, 19% of Oregonians under the age 65 did not have health insurance. Combining those two figures in a ratio reveals that the Wallowa County rate was 37% higher than the rate of uninsured in Oregon in 2006. Therefore, with respect to health insurance coverage, Wallowa County fared worse than the state overall in 2006.

The second measure of health care affordability gauges the extent to which adults in Wallowa County have limited their use of health care services due to the cost. Specifically, respondents to the 2009 VWIP survey were asked if they had delayed getting health care in the last 12 months because they “couldn’t afford the care [they] needed.” According to the results of the survey, an estimated 29% of adult residents delayed getting medical care in the previous 12 months because they could not afford the care they needed. This statistic reveals that regardless of being covered by health insurance or not, a sizeable percentage of adults found the cost of health care prohibitive and did not see a practitioner when they should have. We do not know, however, how long adults in the county delayed seeking the care they needed. For some, this delay could have been a matter of days, while for others the delay may have been a matter of months or years.

In sum, a sizeable minority of Wallowa County adult residents struggle to afford health care. Many do not have health insurance coverage and many put off trips to the doctor or other health practitioners because the out-of-pocket expense is too great.

⁴ The U.S. Census Bureau’s Small Area Health Insurance Estimates program created this estimate for the county using a statistical modeling technique that incorporates the following data:

- The Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) of the Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates of the proportion of people with health insurance for county by demographic and income-to-poverty ratio (IPR) groups
- The number of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) participants in each county, for groups defined by age and sex

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the percentage of residents under the age of 65 who do not have insurance in Wallowa County to be equal to or less than the percentage observed for the state. In other words, the ratio of the two rates of the uninsured population should be equal to or less than one.

With respect to the percentage of Wallowa County residents who delay care due to cost, the goal for the county is for there to be less than 29%.

Assessment

According to 2006 data from the US Census Bureau, Wallowa County was over its targeted percentage of the population without health insurance. In addition, the county had a larger than desired percentage of the population that delayed seeking care from a health care provider due to the cost. In sum, as of 2009, Wallowa County had not met its goals for health care affordability.

5. Youth Engagement

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Youth Engagement	% of youth who participate in:			
	School sports	69%	2007	Looking toward the future: Examining aspirations among rural youth (Shamah, 2007)
	Sports outside of School	49%	2007	
	School Activities (student government, drama, clubs)	46%	2007	
	Activities Outside of School (Fishtrap, outdoor rec., scouts)	17%	2007	
	Future Farmers of America	26%	2007	
	4-H (OSU Extension)	17%	2007	
	Church	35%	2007	
Work for Pay	79%	2007		

A clear element of the Wallowa County vision is a focus on youth. The vision speaks of a goal to find ways for youth to connect with opportunities in the county and to have a positive community experience. Community forum participants often articulated this as a goal for the county as well. One way of gauging this goal is to focus on the extent to which youth participate in structured activities in the county. Recreational and work activities provide an environment for youth to socialize with their peers and other community residents, learn important social values, and develop intellectually and physically. In order to measure the extent of youth involvement in these activities we relied on data collected by an OSU PhD student in 2007, as part of a special study in Wallowa County.

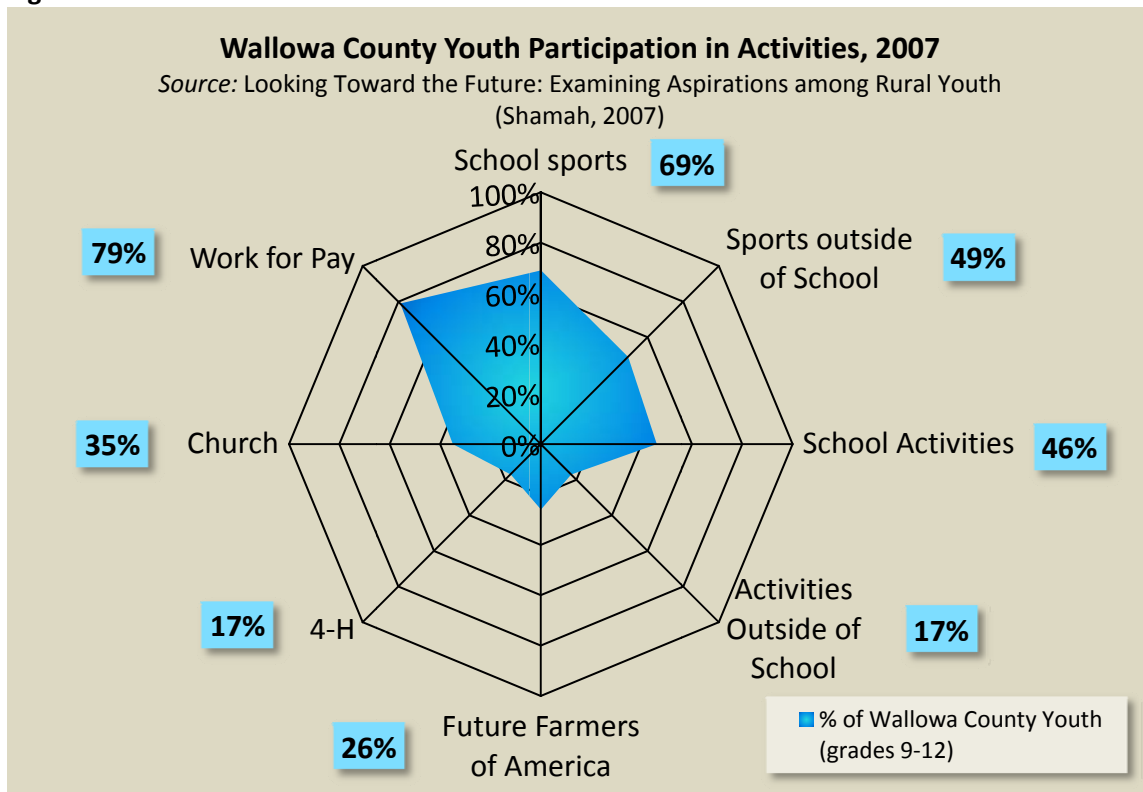
In 2007, Oregon State University PhD student, Devora Shamah, conducted a survey of Wallowa County high school students as part of her dissertation research. Surveys were administered in September, 2007 during school hours in all three Wallowa County high schools (Joseph, Wallowa, and Enterprise). Out of 314 total students in grades 9 to 12, 278 completed the survey

for a response rate of 87%. Seven surveys were not included in the final sample as they either belonged to exchange students (thus were not part of the target population) or were incomplete. Student respondents ranged in age from 13 years old to 19 years old and 46% were females. 87% of students identified as white, 4% as Hispanic, and the other 7% identified as being some other race/ethnicity.

According to this survey of high school students, in 2007 many Wallowa County youth participated in recreational activities inside and outside of school. Figure 6 reveals the percentage of students that participated in recreational sports, along with the percentage of students who participated in other types of activities in 2007. Approximately 70% of youth, in grades 9 to 12, participated in sports run by the school. According to Shamah (2009), these school sports included cross-country track, football, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, baseball, softball, track, and golf.

Sports played outside of school included: soccer, snowboarding, tennis, rodeo, motor-cross, horse-back riding, dance, and outdoor recreation. About half (49%) of all student respondents participated in sport activities outside of school. Based on the analysis of in-depth interviews with a sample of students, Shamah also found that some youth go to sports camps or play on club teams based in Portland in the summers to gain more practice in their favorite sports.

Figure 6



Almost half (46%) of students in grades 9 to 12 in Wallowa County participated in other activities at school including student government, TADA (Teens against drinking alcohol), band,

choir, cheerleading, dance team, drama, National Honor Society, photo club, yearbook, and Spanish club.

Activities that youth reported participating in outside of school included: acting troupe, scouts, drama, Duck Unlimited, music lessons, horse clubs, photo club, Wallowa symphony, Fishtrap writers group, dog club, and ski club among others. These activities were engaged in by 17% of high school youth, in 2007. With respect to the types of non-sport or school related activities, 26% participated in Future Farmers of America, 17% participated in 4-H programming offered by OSU Extension Service, 35% indicated they attended a religious institution (church, temple, mosque), and a full 79% reported they worked for pay, either during the summer only or during the school year.

According to Shamah (2009), during in-depth interviews youth reported spending a lot of time just “hanging out” at a house, the lake, or other outdoor spaces such as Minam or the trail heading up Hurricane Creek. The 20 youth who were interviewed did not generally complain of a lack of activities. Most of the activities they participated in were related to school.

Overall, a large proportion of Wallowa County youth are engaged in activities outside of school hours that give them the opportunity to participate in their communities, learn or hone skills, and be active. In particular, participating in school-sponsored sports and working for pay are the most common ways youth are active outside school hours.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for large proportions of Wallowa County youth to participate in a diversity of activities outside of school hours.

Assessment

In 2009, Wallowa County was on target with respect to the proportion of youth who participate in activities outside of school hours. It is clear, however, that youth tend to be concentrated in two activities, namely working for pay and school sports.

6. Availability of Childcare

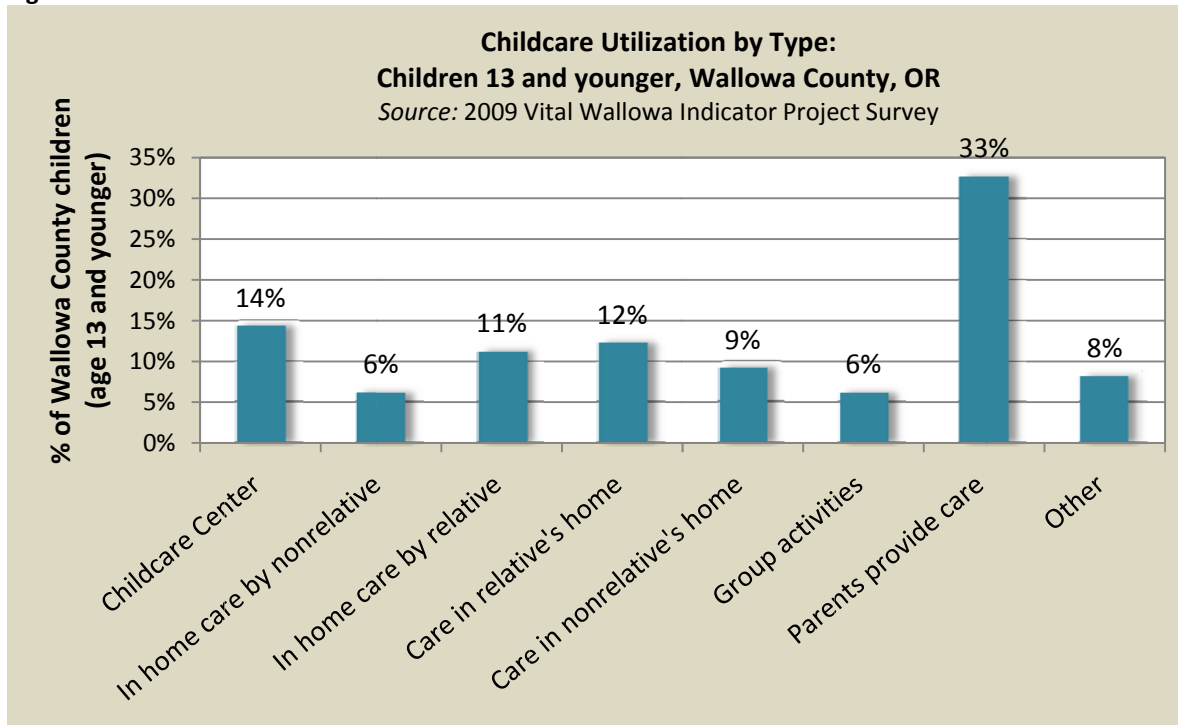
Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Availability of Childcare	% of Wallowa County children using:			
	Child care center, e.g. pre-school, Head Start, etc.	14%	2009	VWIP Survey, n = 98
	In home care by non-relative	6%	2009	
	In home care by relative	11%	2009	
	Care in relatives home	12%	2009	
	Care in nonrelatives home	9%	2009	
	Group activities	6%	2009	
	No care	33%	2009	
Other	8%	2009		

Another way to measure the extent to which the element of the vision that speaks to youth outcomes is being attained in the county is by examining childcare. In particular, this indicator speaks to the extent to which young families are supported by services in the county that allow them to combine paid work and child-rearing.

In 2009, the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey was able to shed some light on the type of childcare used by Wallowa County parents for their children by asking a sample of adults with children about the type of care they use for each child. Unfortunately, only 57 parents with children 13 years old and younger responded. From these 57 families, the survey gathered information about 98 of their children age 13 and younger. While this sample size is not adequate to make generalizations about the population of youth in the county it can begin to illuminate some areas to investigate deeper in the future.

Among the youth age 13 and younger included in the VWIP sample, in 2009, the most often cited form of care was actually no care from someone other than their parents. These youth either take care of themselves while parents are not at home or are cared for by parents. Some of these parent caretakers may not work outside the home, while others may work jobs with hours that allow them to be home when their children are. Figure 7 provides more detail about the type of childcare utilized by children sampled in the VWIP survey.

Figure 7



As Figure 7 indicates, the use of childcare centers, care in relatives' homes, and in-home care by relatives were the second, third, and fourth most often utilized forms of childcare by the sampled children. Following closely behind were care in the homes of non-relatives (9%), other forms of care (8%), and both group activities (6%) and care in the child's home by non-relatives (e.g., babysitter or nanny) (6%).

Certainly, the utilization of particular types of care is dependent on the actual availability of that type of childcare in Wallowa County, but also the price, convenience of hours and location, the needs of the child based on age and level of development, and other factors figure into utilization trends. Though limited in its ability to shed light on the entire population of families in Wallowa County (due to the small sample size), the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey revealed that a sizeable proportion of sampled parents felt that their childcare needs did not match the availability in the county. According to the survey results, 39% of the 57 sampled parents with children under the age of 13 reported that they had trouble finding childcare for their children in the previous 12 months. Only 3% reported that they did not know if their family had trouble finding childcare. Due to the small number of families with young children that answered the VWIP survey, more research is needed to reveal the true nature of the mismatch between need for childcare and availability as well as the particular reasons for trends in childcare utilization by Wallowa County families.

Access to and use of different types of childcare has implications for families, one of which is the labor force productivity of families. One way of gauging that impact is to measure the extent to which parents have limited the number of hours they worked outside the home in the past 12 months, to provide care for their children. Indeed, the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey posed this question to parents with children under the age of 13. According to the survey, 38% of the 57 sampled parents with children under the age of 13 in Wallowa County reported that they or another member of the household limited the number of hours they worked outside the home to provide childcare for their children. While 3% of parents reported that they did not know if anyone in the household had limited their work hours to provide care, this figure of 38% implies that the labor force productivity of many parents is negatively influenced by the need, at times, to provide childcare.

Unfortunately, the 2009 VWIP survey data were unable to provide a generalizable picture of childcare utilization among youth in Wallowa County, due to the small sample size obtained. Future research in this area should target families with young children at a higher rate than the 2009 survey did. The findings of the 2009 VWIP survey, though limited in their ability to be generalized to the total population, revealed that a minority of the children included in the sample used non-parental childcare. In addition, the survey data indicated that a sizeable proportion of the sampled Wallowa County families struggle to find childcare when they need it, where they need it, and of the type they prefer.

In future years, more data will be necessary to fully gauge the extent to which Wallowa County is meeting its goals with respect to providing access to quality childcare for young families.

7. Educational Opportunities

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Educational Opportunities	<u>% of Wallowa County Adults who:</u>			
	Received mentoring	19%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Took a class through: Fishtrap, WR, NEOEDD, Extension	10%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Took a class through: BMCC, EOU, or distance education	9%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Took a class through another organization	31%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Attended a lecture or educational demonstration	46%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Gave or received mentoring	51%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Took a class or attended a lecture anywhere	57%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Offered a class through any organization	11%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Took or offered a class in Wallowa County	10%	2009	VWIP Survey
Participated in at least one type of educational opportunity	73%	2009	VWIP Survey	

Having a population of Wallowa County residents who engage in learning throughout the life-course was another goal expressed for the county through the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project. Indicator #5 sheds some light on the extent to which youth in the county participate in educational opportunities, outside their formal schooling. In addition, indicator #7 illuminates the ways in which adults participate in educational opportunities by relying on data from the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey. Specifically, the survey captured information about participation in educational opportunities as a recipient/learner, or as a provider/teacher. Figure 8 graphically illustrates the proportions of Wallowa County adults that participated as learners, while figure 9 illustrates the proportions of adults that participated in different educational opportunities as teachers. The third chart (figure 10) illustrates the percentage of adults in Wallowa County that participated more broadly in educational opportunities, with particular attention to the type of opportunity and its location inside or outside the county.

Figure 8

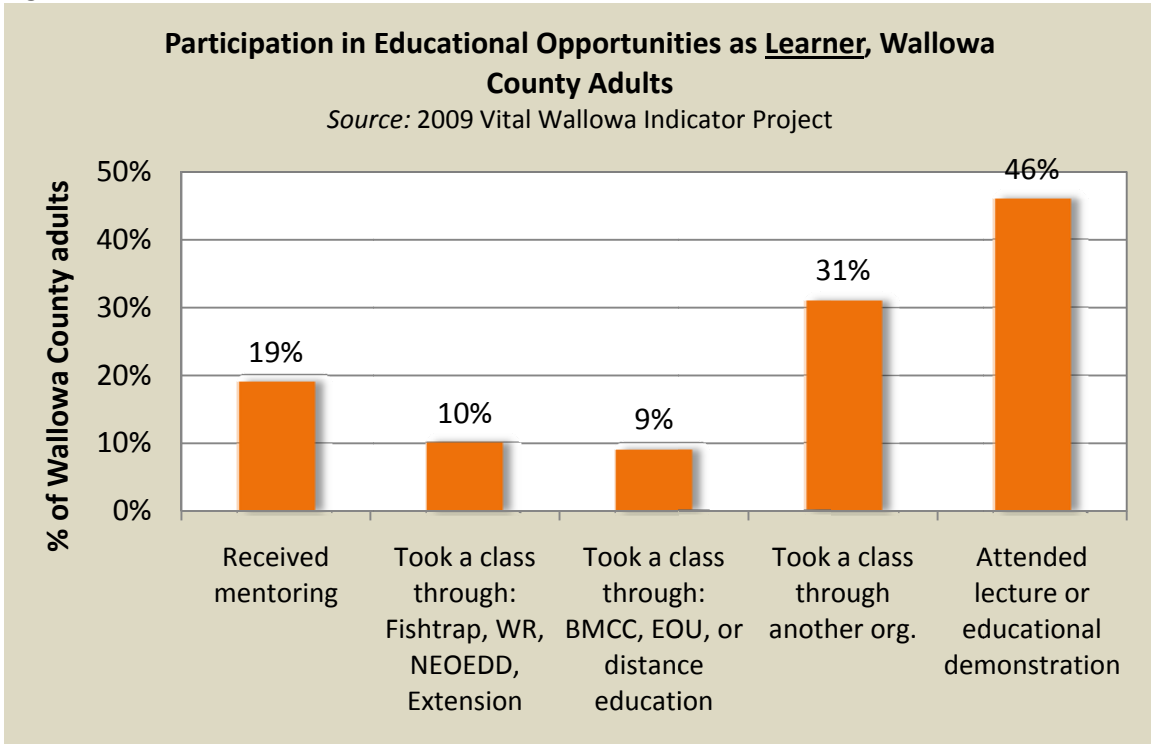


Figure 9

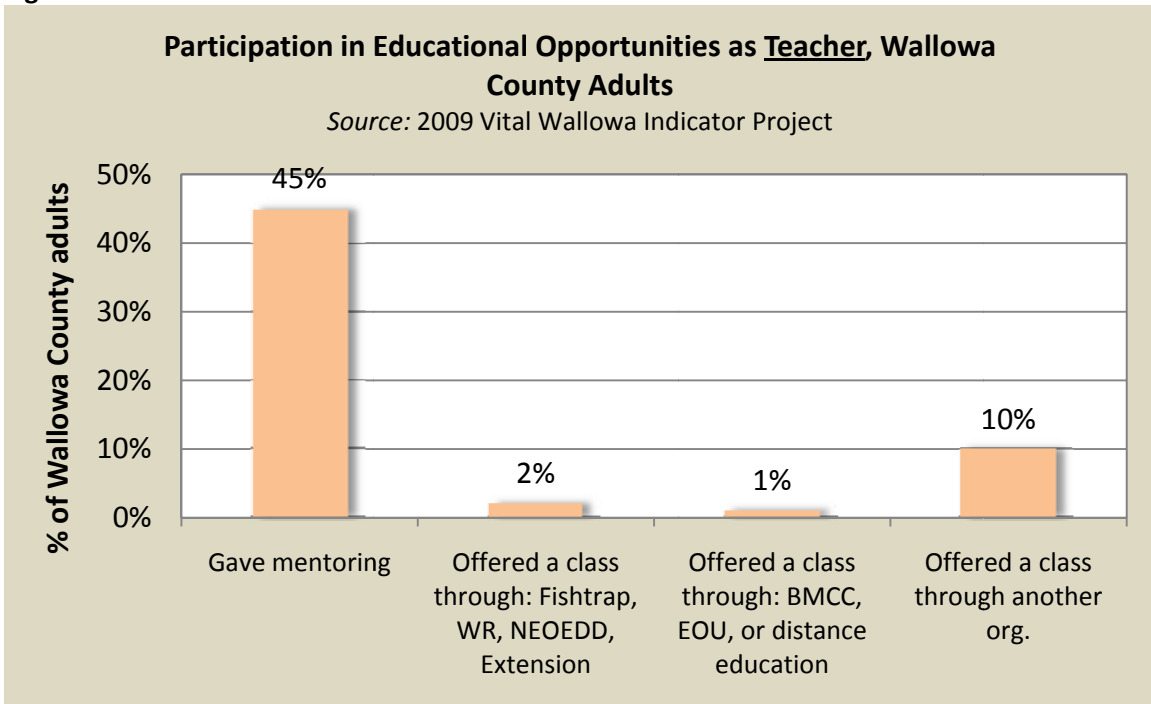
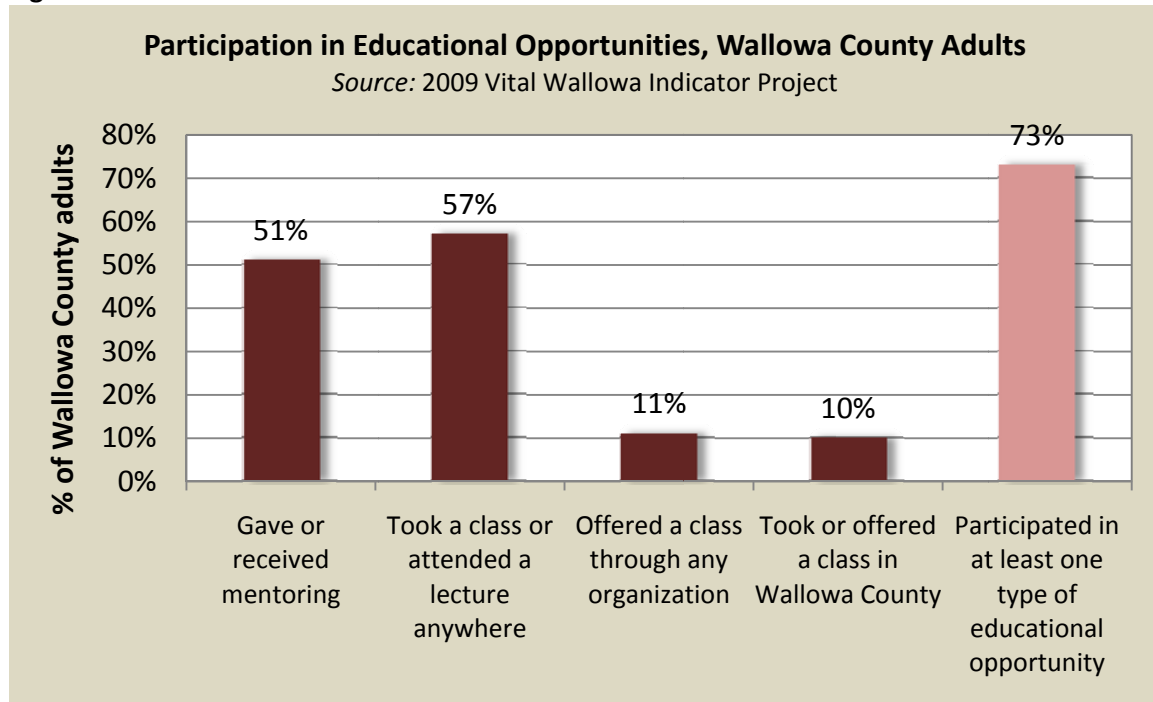


Figure 10



According to the survey results, in 2009, greater proportions of adult Wallowa County residents participated in various educational opportunities as learners than they did as teachers, with the exception of mentoring.

With respect to mentoring, almost half of Wallowa County adults have been mentors in the past 12 months, compared to approximately 19% who received mentoring during that same time period. This mismatch between adults who receive mentoring and those who provide it may be due to many adults providing mentoring to young people or people outside the county, or it may be because often multiple adults in the county provide mentorship to one particular adult resident (perhaps in different subject areas). What is clear from the data, however, is that many Wallowa County adults actively share their knowledge, expertise, and guidance with others in formal or informal mentoring relationships.

Participating in other types of educational opportunities was more popular among residents as learning activities than they were as teaching activities. An estimated 57% of Wallowa County adults took a class, attended a lecture, or attended an education demonstration through some organization between 2008 and 2009 (See Figure 10). As Figure 8 illustrates, of these different types of learning opportunities, attending lectures or educational demonstrations anywhere were the most popular, as about half of the Wallowa County adult population (46%) did so in the past 12 months. Figure 8 also reveals that the second most utilized learning opportunity among Wallowa County adults between 2008 and 2009 was taking a class through an organization other than Fishtrap, Wallowa Resources (WR), the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD), OSU Extension Service, Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Eastern Oregon University (EOU), or a distance education provider. The third and fourth most popular avenues for learning pursued by Wallowa County adults between 2008 and 2009 were taking a class through a Wallowa County organization (10%) or through an organization

outside the county (9%), namely Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Eastern Oregon University (EOU), or a distance education provider.

With respect to participation as a learner or teacher in Wallowa County educational opportunities, Figure 10 shows that according to the VWIP survey only an estimated 10% of adults offered or attended a class through an organization in Wallowa County. Many adults are clearly interested in pursuing educational opportunities, but they seem to rely more on opportunities to do so outside the county.

Overall, the results of the VWIP survey indicate that participating in educational opportunities is popular among Wallowa County adult residents. More than 70% of adults either offered or received some form of formal or informal education in the 12 months prior to the survey. Clearly, the majority of Wallowa County's adults are interested in and pursuing educational opportunities.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for at least 70% of adults in Wallowa County to either offer or receive some form of formal or informal education. In addition, the goal is for at least 25% of adults to participate in classes offered in Wallowa County as learners or teachers.

Assessment

According to data collected with the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey, Wallowa County was slightly below targeted levels of lifelong learning. While the proportion of adult residents who participate in some form of lifelong learning is on target (70%), the proportion of adult residents who participate in lifelong learning opportunities offered within the county is below the goal.

8. School Enrollment

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
School Enrollment	# of Students Enrolled:			
	Wallowa Elementary (K-6)	123	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Wallowa High School (7-12)	111	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Troy Elementary (K-8)	4	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Imnaha Elementary (K-8)	5	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Joseph Elementary (K-4)	85	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Joseph Middle School (5-8)	60	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Joseph High School (9-12)	83	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Enterprise Elementary (K-6)	187	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Enterprise High School (7-12)	208	2008-2009	OR Department of Educ.
	Alternative School	15*	2008-2009	Education Service District ¹
	Homeschooled Students	100	2008-2009	Education Service District ¹
	Private: Providence Academy, Lostine	n/a	2008-2009	(Unknown)
	Private: Montessori, Joseph (K only)	0	2008-2009	Joseph Montessori School ¹
Private: Seventh-Day Adventist, Enterprise	24	2008-2009	Seventh-Day Adventist School ¹	

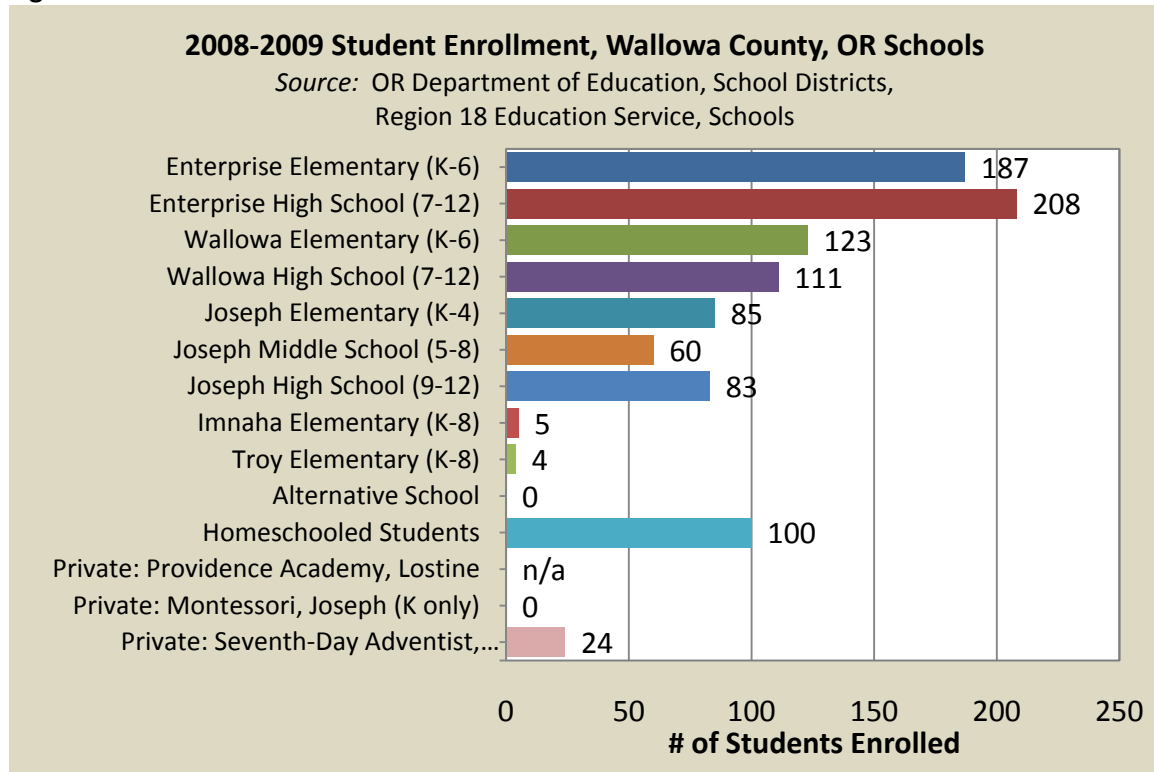
¹ Information obtained through personal communication with administrator

*Note: These students are also counted as enrolled in their original school, which means that some of the other school enrollment figures are inflated by unknown proportions of these Alternative School enrollees

In order to gain further insight into the extent to which educational opportunities are cultivated in Wallowa County, as expressed in the vision and in community forums, we turn our examination to school enrollment figures.

For each school in Wallowa County, data about the number of students enrolled for the academic year 2008-2009 was obtained from the Oregon Department of Education or by way of personally communicating with appropriate School District, Region 18 Education Service District, or school administrative personnel. Figure 11 illustrates the enrollment figures for each school in Wallowa County during the 2008-2009 school year.

Figure 11



According to the school enrollment statistics for the 2008-2009 academic year from the Oregon Department of Education, each school in the Enterprise and Wallowa school districts had over 100 students. Within the Joseph School District, however, school enrollment ranged from 5 to 85 in the four schools. Though schools within the Joseph District were smaller, the total enrollment for the district (233 total students) was on par with enrollment in the Wallowa School District (234 students). The Troy School District was the smallest, however, with only one school that enrolled four students in the 2008-2009 academic year.

According to information obtained from the Region 18 Education Service District (ESD), which serves Wallowa County, 15 students were enrolled in the Alternative School located in Enterprise. Of note, is that these students were also counted as enrolled in their original school, which means that some of the other school enrollment figures are inflated by an unknown proportion of these Alternative School enrollees.

Region 18 ESD also collects some data about homeschooling in Wallowa County. According to their records, 100 youth were homeschooled throughout the county in the 2008-2009 academic year. The actual number of homeschooled youth may be greater than 100, however, as this figure represents the number of homeschoolers who are registered with the ESD.

Limited information about the enrollments at the three private schools in Wallowa County was available for this project. OSU faculty members were able to make contact with only the Joseph Montessori School and the Seventh-Day Adventist School in Enterprise. According to the Montessori School administrator, the school enrolled zero students for the academic year, 2008-2009. That same year, there were 24 students enrolled at the Seventh-Day Adventist School.

In sum, these school enrollment figures are representative of a rural American county. The size of enrollment depends on the area, with more sparsely populated areas having fewer students.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for 2008-2009 school year enrollment figures to serve as the baseline for future tracking.

Assessment

At this point (2009), it is not possible to make an assessment of the extent to which school enrollment is meeting resident expectations or goals. 2009 serves as the baseline year of the indicator assessment.

9. Workforce Housing

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Workforce Housing	Rate of housing cost burden among low-income Wallowa County renters	64.8%	2000	OHCS Affordable Housing Needs Assessment

In the Wallowa County vision and in each of the community forums the VWIP team facilitated, the importance of having a community in which housing was available and affordable to working families in the county was emphasized. In order to measure the prevalence of workforce housing, or housing that is affordable to working-class families, we relied on the rate of housing cost burden. This rate is commonly used to assess area housing affordability.

In 2000, approximately 65% of low-income renters in Wallowa County were housing cost burdened. These were renters whose incomes were between 30% and 60% of the county median income (low-income) and who paid housing costs equal to 30% or more of their own income (housing cost burdened). In other words, the majority of Wallowa County renters who earned \$9,639 - \$19,227 in 1999 spent 30% or more of their income on housing. Federal agencies, such as the Department of Housing & Urban Development and the Census Bureau, use this threshold of 30% of income spent on housing costs as the housing affordability threshold. It is then possible to apply this threshold to different income populations, to gauge the affordability of housing to each group such as low-income, middle-income, or high-income. Specifically, individuals earning 30 to 60 percent of the county median income are considered members of the working poor, a vulnerable population. Thus, the housing burden rate used here reveals the extent to which working-class residents of the county have access to and are living in housing that is affordable to them.

According to these 2000 data, the majority of Wallowa County’s working-class families live in housing that is unaffordable to them, given their income. In comparison to Oregon’s rate of housing cost burden, Wallowa County has a slightly greater proportion of working-class individuals living in housing that is not affordable to them. The percentage of Oregon’s working poor who paid 30% of more of their income on housing in 2000, was 61%.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the prevalence of housing cost burden among Wallowa County working-class renters to be equal to or less than the prevalence observed at the state level. In 2000, this rate was 61% for the state.

Assessment

According to data from the 2000 census, and analyzed by Oregon Housing and Community Services, Wallowa County’s rate of housing cost burden among low-income renters was greater than 61%, the rate observed across the state. Therefore, Wallowa County did not meet its targeted level of housing cost burden in 2000.

10. Farm, Forest, and Ranch Ownership Patterns

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Farm, forest, and ranch land ownership patterns	% of 40+ acre parcel owners who are year-round County residents	56%	2009	Wallowa County

Farming, forestry, and ranching are important parts of both the economic base and the culture of Wallowa County. In addition, ownership of farm, forest, or ranch land by residents or non-residents has implications for the county economy and the local culture. If land is owned by individuals who do not live in Wallowa County, any earnings they make from the land are not likely to be spent within the county as the owners have no consistent physical contact with the broader county economy. In addition, if land is owned by individuals who live outside Wallowa County the local county residents do not have ownership rights and any of the capital accumulation potential associated with such ownership. Instead, resident ranchers, foresters, and farmers face the sole prospect of managing or working the property on behalf of, or leasing the property from, absentee (non-resident) owners. While the residents who work the land in these ways earn money for their labor, the local economy still never sees the profit revenues earned by the absentee landowner. In addition, the community shifts from one in which land-laborers coexisted with landowners in one place to one in which resident landowners are rare. In such a place, the local community has little control over the wealth of the local natural resources. A community whose land is owned by non-residents is also one in which later generations of residents must have enough money to buy back the land from outside owners, instead of being able to rely on local intergenerational transfer of land via inheritance. These concerns are reflected in the Wallowa County vision and were often referred to in the community forums held in 2008.

In order to gauge the extent to which Wallowa County farm, forest, and ranchlands are owned by residents and absentee owners we relied on 2009 tax lot data from the county Assessor’s office and analyzed by Jesse Abrams (OSU PhD student in the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society). Specifically, Abrams identified all of the unique owners of 40 acre or larger parcels that were zoned either Exclusive Farm Use (EFU), Timber/Grazing (T/G), Commercial Timber (T-C), Mixed Use (Mix), or did not have zoning information associated with them (19 properties did not have zoning information) in 2009. Public (Federal, state, county, and city) land was removed from the database. There may have been some people in the original database who owned

more than 40 acres in total in 2009, but did not own at least one parcel of at least 40 acres. These individuals were not included in the final database of farm, forest, or ranch land owners.

The final list of farm, forest, or ranch land owners of 40 acre or larger parcels in Wallowa County was then divided into two parts; one of landowners who had in-county mailing addresses and another of landowners who had out-of-county mailing addresses. Though it is possible that some individuals with out-of-county addresses actually live in Wallowa County year-round, and that some individuals with in-county addresses actually live outside the county, this method of delineating resident and absentee landowners provides us a low-cost way of estimating ownership patterns in the county. Please note that this is just an estimate, however, with an unknown margin of error.

Applying this estimation method to the tax lot data provided by the county Assessor's office revealed that there were 389 farm, ranch, or forest land owners who had mailing addresses inside Wallowa County in 2009 and there were 300 landowners with mailing addresses outside Wallowa County. Resident landowners therefore made up 56% of farm, ranch, or forest land owners, while absentee owners made up 44% in 2009.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the 2009 proportion of farm, forest, or ranch land owners who are permanent Wallowa County residents to serve as the baseline measurement of this indicator. In future years, a target may be set by residents based on a richer history of data.

Assessment

At this point (2009), it is not possible to make an assessment of the extent to which permanent resident ownership of ranch, forest, and farm land is meeting resident expectations or goals. 2009 serves as the baseline year of the indicator assessment.

11. Seasonal Homeownership

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Seasonal homeownership	% of housing units vacant for seasonal use			
	Wallowa County	12.6%	2000	US Census Bureau
	ZIP code 97828	11.1%	2000	US Census Bureau
	ZIP code 97842	31.2%	2000	US Census Bureau
	ZIP code 97846	16.1%	2000	US Census Bureau
	ZIP code 97857	7.6%	2000	US Census Bureau
	ZIP code 97885	3.6%	2000	US Census Bureau
	Census Tract 9601 – East (Joseph, the eastern side of Wallowa Lake, and Imnaha)	15.4%	2000	US Census Bureau
	Census Tract 9602 – West (Wallowa, Lostine, and Troy)	10.9%	2000	US Census Bureau
	Census Tract 9603 – Central (Enterprise and the western side of Wallowa Lake)	11.6%	2000	US Census Bureau

With respect to housing in Wallowa County, residents have a desire to balance the use of housing stock for seasonal use and the use of housing stock for permanent residents. Thus seasonal homeownership is part of the Wallowa County vision for a vital future.

Seasonal homeownership was measured using data from the 2000 U.S. census. Specifically, the census provides counts of the number of houses in Wallowa County that were not occupied when the census was administered in April, 2000. The Census Bureau also counts the number of vacant houses that were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use in 2000. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the “vacancy status and other characteristics of vacant units were determined by enumerators obtaining information from property owners and managers, neighbors, rental agents, and others.”⁵

In Wallowa County, approximately 13% of all housing units in 2000 were vacant for seasonal use. Examining the seasonal vacancy rate in specific areas of the county reveals some variation, however. ZIP code 97842 had the highest percentage of seasonally vacant housing units, at nearly 3 out of ten. ZIP code 97846 also had a fair share of seasonal housing, at 16%. By contrast, ZIP codes 97857 and 97885 had far less seasonal housing than that observed for the county at large (7.6% and 3.6% respectively). By census tracts (CT), or region of the county, we see less extreme variation in seasonal housing rates. The eastern census tract (9601), which contains Joseph, the eastern side of Wallowa Lake, and Imnaha, had only slightly higher seasonal housing rates than the central or western census tracts.

In sum, the data indicate that seasonal vacancy is widespread in Wallowa County, though it varies by area of the county. Some areas of the county experience low levels of seasonal

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-13.pdf>

population turnover, while other areas' populations ebb and flow dramatically throughout the year. Economically, these areas with high rates of seasonal housing are likely to be highly dependent on tourist income, which can be both negative and positive. In addition, these areas must contend with high levels of population fluctuation, which can have a negative effect on social cohesion and trust.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the proportion of homes that are occupied only seasonally to be close to 13%.

Assessment

According to census data from 2000, as of 2009 Wallowa County was on target with respect to the percentage of homes that are for seasonal use only.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

12. Living Wage Jobs

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Living Wage Jobs	Ratio of county average earnings to county basic family budget for families of:			
	1 parent with 1 child (one wage-earner)	1.01	2007	OHCS
	2 parents with 1 child (one wage-earner)	0.74	2007	OHCS
	Average Earnings per job	\$25,523.00	2007	BEA

Though not explicitly mentioned in the Wallowa County vision, residents of Wallowa County place a high importance on the ability to make ends meet in the county. In all of the community forums that OSU faculty facilitated, county residents talked about the need for jobs in the county to provide a living wage, or a wage that matches the cost of living in the county. In order to measure the extent to which jobs in Wallowa County provide a living wage, two factors must be considered. First, it is necessary to determine the cost of living within the county, then that cost of living amount must be compared to prevailing wages in the county.

Cost of living data were obtained from the Oregon Housing and Community Services department (OHCS). OHCS calculated for each county in Oregon, in 2007, a basic family budget for different size families, which is equivalent to the cost of living. The agency calculated the basic family budget for each county by using information about costs of housing, food, childcare, transportation, health care, other necessities (31% of housing and food costs), and taxes in each area. Table 2 presents the basic family budgets, or cost of living, estimated by OHCS for Wallowa County families of various types.

Table 2

2007 Cost of living (Basic Family Budget) for Wallowa County families of various compositions:	
1 parent with 1 child	\$25,236
1 parent with 3 children	\$41,556
2 parents with 1 child	\$34,368
2 parents with 3 children	\$47,004

Source: OR Housing & Community Services

As Table 2 illustrates, according to OHCS, in 2007 the cost of living in Wallowa County varied greatly by family type; at the low-end, for a family of one parent and one child the basic family budget was about \$25,000, and at the high end, for a family of two parents and three children the basic family budget was about \$47,000.

The second piece of information needed to understand the extent to which jobs in the county pay a living wage is prevailing wage information. This information comes from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), and is obtained primarily from quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) reports that are filed with the state by employers in industries that are covered by, and subject to, state unemployment insurance (UI) laws. For industries not completely covered by state UI programs (such as agricultural services, private education, and religious membership

organizations) and for industries not covered by UI programs, wages and salaries are estimated using a number of different procedures, detailed on the BEA website.⁶ According to the BEA, the average earnings per job in Wallowa County in 2007 was \$25,523, which includes wages, salary, pension, insurance, and social security contributions by the employer. These jobs include full-time and part-time appointments.

In order to compare the average earnings per job to the basic family budget amounts we calculated a ratio of earnings to the cost of living for families of one parent and one child (assuming that the one parent works for pay) and for families of two parents and one child (assuming that only one parent works for pay). These ratios reveal that the average earnings in Wallowa County just barely meets the needs of families of one parent and one child, and falls far short of meeting the needs of families comprised of two parents (one of whom works for pay) and one child. For families of one working parent and one child, average earnings in Wallowa County covers 101% of this family's basic budget, meaning that the family has a very small amount of money left for savings after paying for basic needs. For families of one wage-earning parent, one non-wage earning parent, and one child, however, the average county earnings only covers 74% of this family's cost of living.

If we assume, however, that in two-parent families both parents work outside the home and earn the average wage in the county, we see that for families of two working adults with three children average-earning jobs provide just enough to cover basic needs (with a bit left over for savings), while for families of two working adults and one child the average job provides more than enough, with quite a bit left for savings. For other types of families, namely, those with one working adult and one child or more, the average job will not provide enough to make ends meet.

Overall, the comparison of the basic family budget for various family types and the average earnings in Wallowa County reveals that only families of one child and one adult can pay for housing, health care, food, and other needs if the adult works for pay and if he or she earns the average observed for the county. All other family types, in which only one adult works for pay, will not be able to afford the cost of living in Wallowa County earning the average county wage. In addition, we note that among two parent families, if both adults make the prevailing earnings, some family types will be better off than others.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the ratio of average earnings per job and the cost of living for families of one parent and one child and for families of two parents and one child, with one wage-earning adult to be greater than or equal to one.

Assessment

According to 2007 data, Wallowa County was below target for living wage jobs.

⁶ See <http://www.bea.gov/regional/pdf/lapi2007/wagsal.pdf> for more information

13. Stability of Employment

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Stability of Employment	% of jobs that are year-round	n/a		Personal communication with OR Employment Dept.
	% of jobs that are full time	n/a		

Unfortunately, at the current time, no information is available on this indicator.

14. Balance of Trade

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Balance of Trade	Ratio of Wallowa County Export \$s to Wallowa County Import \$s	0.66	2007	IMPLAN

In order to assess the extent to which Wallowa County is meeting its goal related to local businesses and agriculture serving residents and customers outside the county, we rely on a measure that gauges the balance of economic trade. To calculate the balance of trade, the value of exports is compared to the value of imports using IMPLAN data and analytic tools.

According to IMPLAN data provided by Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. and analyzed by Bruce Sorte (Oregon State University, Extension Community Economist), in 2007 \$250 million were spent on services or goods purchased outside Wallowa County by Wallowa County residents and businesses. In 2007, \$165 million worth of goods were sold by Wallowa County residents and businesses to people and businesses outside the county. Thus in 2007 there were \$165 million brought into the county through export, and \$250 million that left the county through import.

In order to compare import and export values for Wallowa County, a ratio was calculated. The value of exports was divided by the value of imports to yield a value of .66. A ratio value less than one indicates that imports were greater than exports, and a value greater than one means that exports were higher than imports. Thus, a ratio of .66 means that in 2007 imports exceeded exports in Wallowa County and the county faced a trade deficit. According to Sorte (personal communication, 2009), "Oregon and the United States also import more than they export. The difference can be more pronounced in relatively smaller economies as consumers can pursue so many options on the Web and often at large retailers in nearby cities."

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the balance of trade in Wallowa County to be equal to or greater than one, indicating that the value of exports is equal to or greater than the value of imports. Realistically, it is far more likely that the balance of trade will only improve from its 2007 value, as most geopolitical entities face a trade deficit of some proportion.

Assessment

According to data from 2007, Wallowa County had not met its goal of having a trade balance ratio of exports to imports that approached one.

15. Small & Large Business Health

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Small & Large Business Health	Rate of change in # of small businesses (with 0-4 employees)	+ 6%	2008 to 2009	OR Employment Department
	Rate of change in # of large businesses (with 20+ employees)	- 16%	2008 to 2009	OR Employment Department

Tracking the health of small and large businesses is another important aspect of tracking the vitality of the Wallowa County economy, according to residents. In order to measure this indicator we relied upon data from the Oregon Employment Department.

According to data from the Oregon Employment Department, in the first quarter of 2009 there were 277 small businesses in Wallowa County (firms with zero to four employees) while in the first quarter of 2008 there were 261 firms of the same size. These data illustrate that between 2008 and 2009 there was an increase in the number of small businesses in Wallowa County, by approximately 6% (an additional 16 businesses). On the surface, this figure implies moderate health within the county economy for small businesses. It is important to note, however, that growth in the number of firms that employed 0-4 people could be due to the emergence of brand new small businesses in Wallowa County or due to the reclassification of firms from a larger size class to this smaller one because they laid off workers between first quarter 2008 and first quarter 2009. The emergence of new small businesses in the county would signify small business health, while the contraction of employment in larger firms would signal an unhealthy medium to large business environment. From the data supplied by the Employment Department it is impossible to determine the prevalence of either phenomenon.

With respect to large businesses, data from the OR Employment Department indicate that the number of large businesses (those that employed 20 workers or more) declined slightly between 2008 and 2009 in Wallowa County. In the first quarter of 2008 there were 12 large firms operating in Wallowa County and by the first quarter of 2009 there were 10. This decrease represents a 16% decline in the number of large businesses in the county. This decline could be due to existing firms in the county decreasing the number of workers they employed in the year, or to firms of this size completely exiting the county.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for growth rates of small firms to be 5% or greater and for growth rates of large firms to be positive (greater than or equal to zero).

Assessment

According to data from first quarter 2008 to first quarter 2009, Wallowa County met targeted growth rates for small businesses, but fell short of targeted growth rates of large businesses.

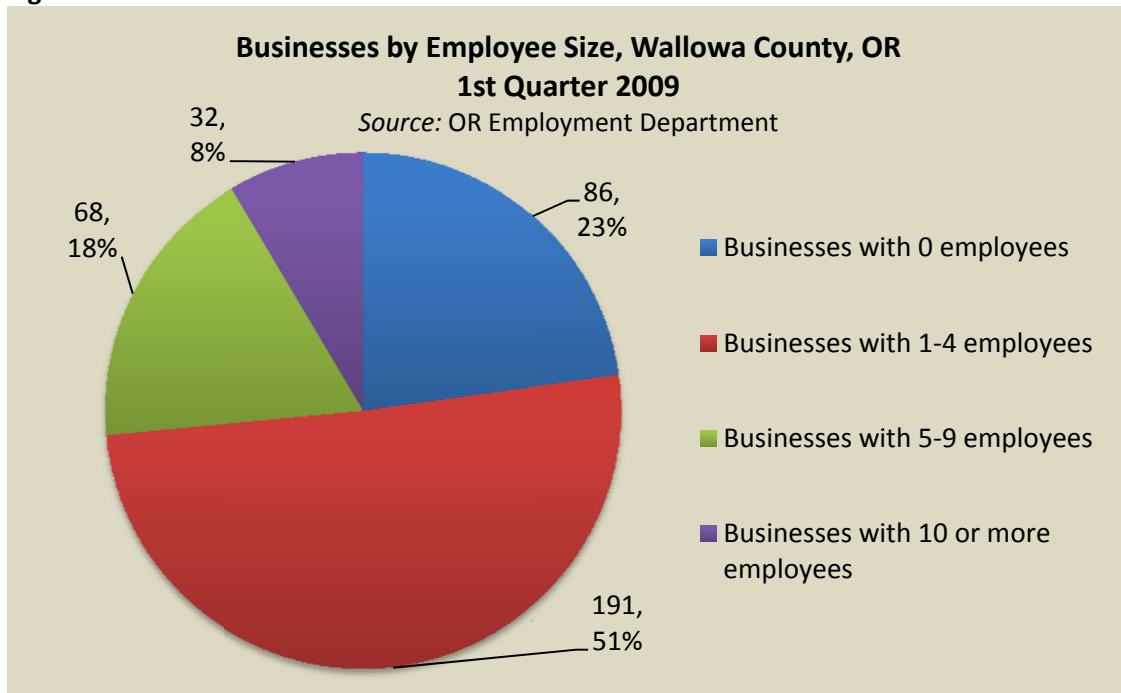
16. Employers by size

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Employers by size	Number of businesses with 0 employees	86	2009	OR Employment Department
	Number of businesses with 1-4 employees	191	2009	
	Number of businesses with 5-9 employees	68	2009	
	Number of businesses with 10 or more employees	32	2009	

Tracking the number of employers of various sizes is another aspect of tracking the vitality of the Wallowa County economy, as expressed by residents through the 2006 County Vision and in the community forums in 2008. In particular, the county vision makes mention of cultivating a balance of small businesses in the community. In order to measure this indicator we relied upon data from the Oregon Employment Department.

Figure 12 illustrates that in 2009, 23% of businesses (86) in Wallowa County had no employees, while 191 of businesses in county employ one to four people. Businesses with 1 to 4 employees made up the majority of all businesses in the county in 2009, at 51%. Businesses with five to nine employees made up nearly 20% of all businesses in the county, representing 68 firms. And finally, with respect to larger employers in the county, there were 32 businesses that employed 10 or more employees in Wallowa County in 2008, making up only eight percent of all firms.

Figure 12



Clearly, small businesses, or firms with fewer than five employees, are the most prevalent in the county. While small businesses provide many benefits to the county with respect to local goods, services, and employment, they are also more vulnerable to market shifts as they do not enjoy

the economies of scale experienced by larger businesses. Small businesses also tend not to be as able to provide high wages and benefits that larger firms tend to. Small businesses do, however, have the potential to become larger and when they do grow, if they have a close tie to the community, they will likely remain in the community and employ greater numbers of local workers.

Unclear from the data provided by the OR Employment Department is the location of these business owners. Some may live outside the county while others live inside the county. In order to truly measure the attainment of the Wallowa County goal about having abundant locally-owned small businesses, information about owner location is necessary.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the number of firms in each employee size class to grow from 2009 levels, but for the proportions of firms in each class to remain close to those observed in 2009.

Assessment

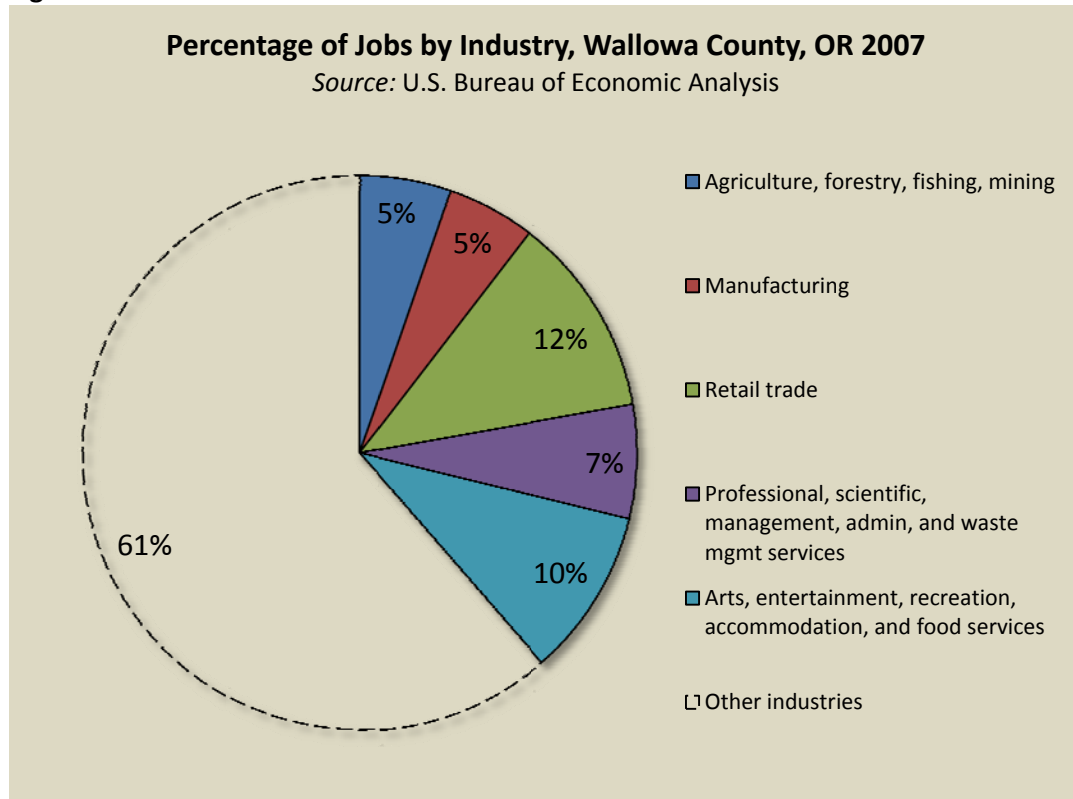
In 2009, Wallowa County was below targeted numbers of firms in each employee size class, but with respect to the percentage of businesses in the county of each size class, the county was on target.

17. Employment in Industries Targeted by County Economic Development Strategy

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Employment in targeted industries	% of jobs in:			
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	5.3%	2007	US Bureau of Economic Analysis
	Manufacturing	5.1%	2007	US Bureau of Economic Analysis
	Retail trade	11.8%	2007	US Bureau of Economic Analysis
	Professional, scientific, management, admin, and waste mgmt services	6.6%	2007	US Bureau of Economic Analysis
	Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	9.8%	2007	US Bureau of Economic Analysis

The Wallowa County economic development strategy encompasses many aspects of the economy, one of which is employment. The employment element of the strategy targets five specific industries as the focus of county-wide efforts, namely agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining, manufacturing, retail trade, professional services, and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services. As these industries are the target of strategic economic development it follows that tracking employment in these industries be part of the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project. Figure 13 displays the proportion of jobs in the county in each of these targeted industries for 2007.

Figure 13



In 2007, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis displayed in Figure 13, of the five industries targeted by the Wallowa County economic development strategy, retail trade and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services had the highest shares of employment, with 11.8% and 9.8% respectively. The third highest share of jobs was in professional services, at 6.6% of jobs. Finally, agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining along with manufacturing had the lowest proportion of jobs, approximately 5% in each industry in 2007. In total, the five targeted industries were responsible for about 40% of all jobs in the county.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for there to be no net loss in the proportion of jobs in these five industries, both individually and as a group.

Assessment

In 2009, according to employment data from 2007, Wallowa County was on target with respect to the proportion of jobs in the county that are in the five industries targeted by the Wallowa County economic development strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

18. Telecommunications

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Tele-communications	% of Households with phone	n/a	n/a	Not Available
	# of high-speed internet accounts	757	2008	Eastern OR Network Inc.

Telecommunications infrastructure is an important part of rural community life, as it facilitates access to emergency care in remote areas and to export markets for goods and services. Though not mentioned in the 2006 vision statement, access to telecommunications infrastructure was an often mentioned desire among residents in the 2008 community forums. In Wallowa County, this indicator was to be measured with data concerning the prevalence of land-line phone access of households and the prevalence of high-speed internet among households and businesses.

In order to gather data for this indicator, personal communication between OSU faculty and telecommunications providers was needed. Indeed, faculty members contacted the telephone and internet providers for the county on many occasions. Unfortunately, most of these providers refused to provide the requested information. Verizon failed to provide the information necessary to determine the land-line telephone coverage of Wallowa County households, and of the two main internet service providers only Eastern OR Network Incorporated (EONI) provided their figures.

In 2008, within the EONI service area, there were 757 high-speed internet accounts, which include households and businesses. It is unclear the total number of potential accounts within this area, however, so it is hard to estimate the coverage rate.

At this point, the data for this indicator are not sufficient to provide a baseline assessment for Wallowa County.

19. Working Landscapes

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Working landscapes	% of Wallowa County land available for or in productive use (grazing, timber, farming, hunting, fishing, etc.)	50%	2009	USDA Ag. Census, US Forest Service
	<u>Landscape within Private Land Holdings:</u>			
	% of irrigated land, farmed/ranched	90.5%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% of non-irrigated land, farmed/ranched	72.8%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% of forestland, available for active management	73.1%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% of all forest, farm, or pastureland conserved	7.3%	2009	VWIP Survey

As a rural county with a long tradition of working the land for farming, ranching, forestry, and other natural resource uses, Wallowa County residents place a high value on maintaining that rural land use pattern. This goal is expressed in the county vision statement and was often mentioned in the community forums as important to community vitality. In order to measure the extent to which land in the county is being used for natural resource production, we developed an indicator of working landscape. With this indicator it is possible to see the extent to which land in the county is actively managed or being used for grazing, timber, farming, hunting, fishing, or other productive uses. By contrast, land that is not counted as productive is land that is set aside, preserved from use, or zoned for residential or commercial use. Table 3 displays the statistics that were calculated to tabulate this indicator.

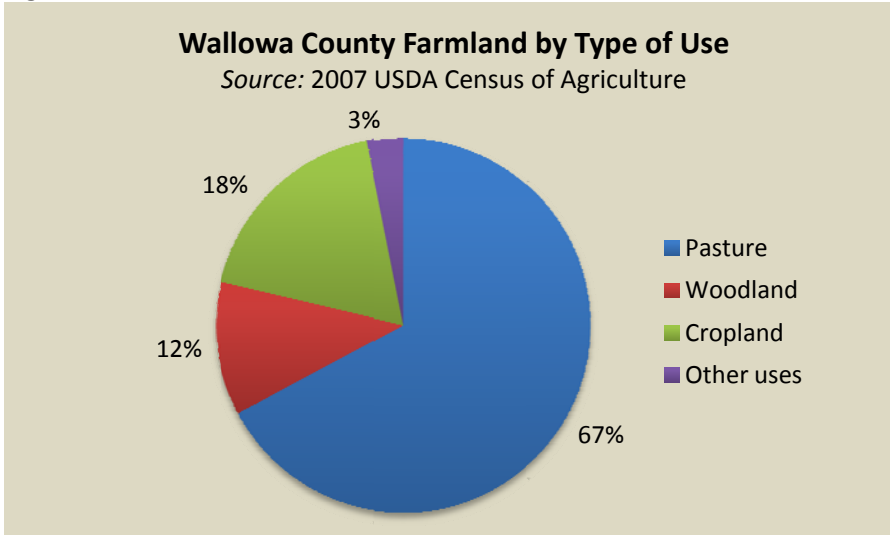
Table 3

Measure	Data	Year	Source
Total # of acres in Wallowa County	2,013,017	2000	US Census Bureau
Total # of acres in farmland (woodland, cropland, pasture/rangeland)	527,957	2007	Agricultural Census
<u>Landscape within National Forest Ownership:</u>			
Total # of acres in National Forest Ownership	1,144,593	2009	USFS communication with Alicia Glassford
# of wilderness acres	423,748	2009	US Forest Service
# of grazing permittee acres	548,978	2009	US Forest Service
# of Wallowa-Whitman National Forest acres in timber sales (commercial thinning)	507	2008	US Forest Service
<u>Landscape within Private Land Holdings:</u>			
% of irrigated land farmed/ ranched	90.5%	2009	VWIP Survey
% of non-irrigated land farmed/ ranched	72.8%	2009	VWIP Survey
% of forestland forested	73.1%	2009	VWIP Survey
% of all forest, farm, or pastureland conserved	7.3%	2009	VWIP Survey

In order to measure this land use indicator, data from a variety of sources was used. Data about total land area were obtained from the US Census Bureau, and data about the amount of land area in farmland came from the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) 2007 census of

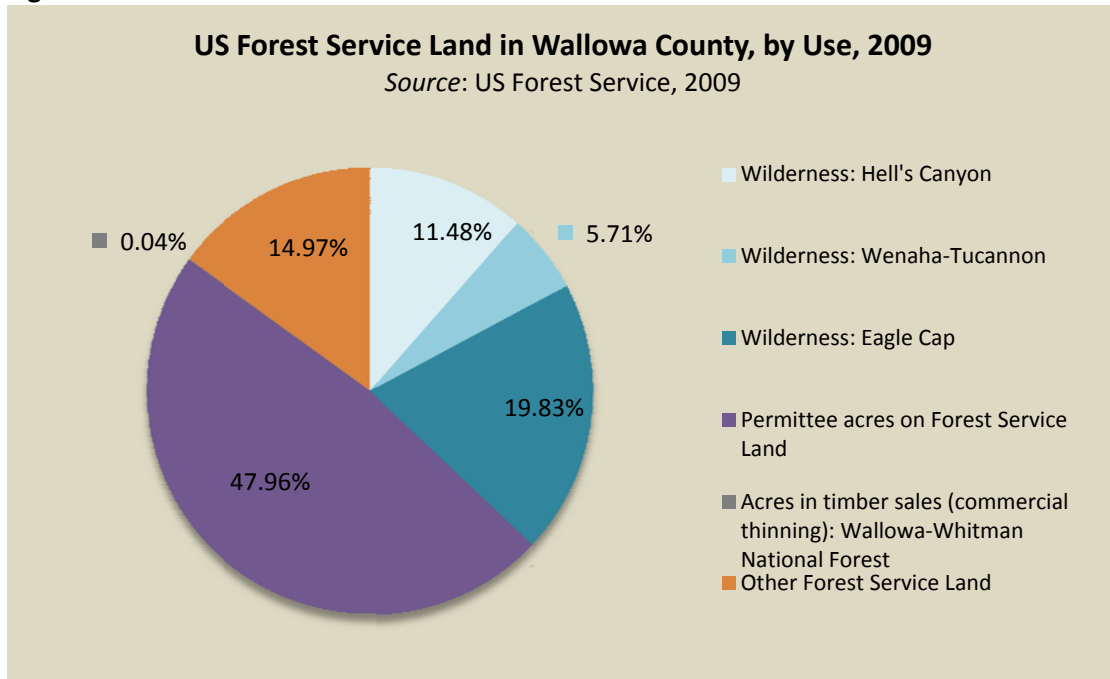
agriculture. Dividing the total number of farmland acres (527,957) by the total number of acres in Wallowa County (2,013,017) yielded an estimate that approximately one quarter of land in the county was farmland acreage in 2007. According to USDA data, the majority of farmland in the county was permanent pasture or rangeland (67%), and much smaller proportions were cropland (18%) or woodland (12%). Figure 14 charts the proportion of farmland in the county in various uses.

Figure 14



Turning now to National Forest land in Wallowa County, according to data from the US Forest Service, approximately 56% of all land in Wallowa County was owned by the National Forest in 2009. Of that land, 423,748 acres were designated wilderness areas (Hell’s Canyon, Wenaha-Tucannon, and Eagle Cap). Commercial forestry is not permitted on these lands, but hunting, recreation, fishing, and some livestock grazing are allowed. Outside of wilderness areas, about 550,000 acres of National Forest land were actively managed for forestry or rangeland purposes in 2009, 48% of land in the national forest areas were actively managed for livestock and timber economic activities. Figure 15 graphically depicts the proportions of US Forest Service lands in Wallowa County which fall into the various land use categories.

Figure 15



With respect to the use of lands owned by private individuals, this measure is a bit more difficult to track, but the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey was able to shed some light on how landowners are using their farm-, ranch-, or forestland. According to the survey, in 2009, about 90% of the privately-owned irrigated farm land in Wallowa County was actively farmed or ranched. Slightly lower proportions of non-irrigated land and forestland were in production at the time of the survey, however. Specifically, approximately 73% of non-irrigated farm land in the county was actively farmed or ranched and 73% of privately owned forestland was actively managed for timber. According to the survey data, about seven percent of all privately owned farm or forest land was reserved from production use in 2009. Specifically, respondents indicated that these lands were reserved from use in such ways as being in the Conservation Reserve Program or under a conservation easement.

According to the combined data from the US Forest Service and the USDA census of agriculture, an estimated 1,009,621 acres were actively managed for farming, ranching, and forestry activities in Wallowa County in 2007 and 2009. These acres make up 50% of all the land in Wallowa County.

In sum, exactly half of Wallowa County land was in production, regardless of ownership, in 2009. Not surprisingly, a greater proportion of private land was in production in 2009 than there was on federal lands during the same period.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for there to be 50% or more of the land in Wallowa County in productive use.

Assessment

In 2009, Wallowa County was on target, with respect to the percentage of land in Wallowa County that is being actively managed for ranching, forestry, or farming.

20. Land Access for Hunting, Fishing, and Recreation

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Land Access for hunting, fishing, and recreation	% of Wallowa County landowners who allow the general public access to land for hunting	34%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% of Wallowa County landowners who allow the general public access to land for fishing	30%	2009	VWIP Survey
	% of Wallowa County landowners who allow the general public access to land for other recreation	13%	2009	VWIP Survey
	# of Wallowa County, Forest Service acres available for public hunting, recreation, and fishing	423,748	2009	US Forest Service

Another aspect of land use that has implications for the community is the extent to which landowners and land managers allow residents access to land for hunting, fishing, and recreation. These activities are a major part of the Wallowa County identity, and oftentimes crossing ownership property boundaries is necessary. Given the significance of this activity in the culture of Wallowa County, it is not surprising that residents would include access to land for hunting, fishing, and recreation as indicator of vitality. In order to assess this issue in the county we relied on data from the 2009 Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey about activities permitted by private landowners and from the US Forest Service about activities permitted in Wilderness areas.

According to the 2009 VWIP survey, a minority of landowners allow members of the general public access to their land for hunting, fishing, or recreation activities, though more landowners allow access for hunting (34%) and fishing (30%) than allow access for other recreational purposes (13%). Private landowners are much more likely to provide friends and family access to their land for these activities, according to survey results.

With respect to land in public ownership, according to the US Forest Service, all of the 423,748 acres that are designated wilderness areas (Hell’s Canyon, Wenaha-Tucannon, and Eagle Cap) in Wallowa County can be used for hunting, recreation, fishing, and some livestock grazing by the public.

With regard to public access to hunting, fishing, or other recreation throughout Wallowa County, while we found that among private landowners only a minority allows this type of access, federal wilderness land provides abundant access for these activities to the public.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the number of acres available for hunting, fishing, and recreation within public land to be equal to levels observed in 2009. In addition, the goal is for

equal or greater proportions of private landowners to allow public access to land for these activities as those observed in 2009.

Assessment

In 2009, Wallowa County was on target, with respect to the amount of land in Wallowa County available to the public for hunting, fishing, or recreation and the proportion of landowners who allow public hunting, fishing, or recreation on their land.

21. Water Quality

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Water Quality	<u>Miles of stream not meeting 303d standards:</u>			
	Imnaha watershed	177.2	2004-2006	OR Dept. of Environmental Quality
	Lower Grande Ronde watershed	201.9	2004-2006	
Wallowa watershed	143.4	2004-2006		

Through the Wallowa County Vision statement and in community forums residents made clear a desire for the county to have a healthy environment, and water quality was an often cited as a relevant indicator.

According to data from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), approximately 522 miles of stream in Wallowa County were considered water quality limited (303d listed) for the 2004-2006 assessment. “Water quality limited” is a general set of parameters set by the EPA as part of the Clean Water Act. Specific assessment parameters set by Oregon DEQ for this assessment included water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen levels, turbidity, conductivity, and bacteria levels. Stream reaches may fail to meet standards for one or more criteria. It is not clear, however, the proportion of all stream reaches in the county that these particular reaches represent.

Indicator Target

At this point (2009) it is not possible to determine a goal for the number of stream miles 303d listed in Wallowa County. More data about the proportion of total stream miles that are 303d listed is needed. In addition, according to local water quality experts, alternative measures of water quality may be necessary to truly gauge the quality of Wallowa County waterways. As of 2009 there had been no large-scale alternative water quality assessments in Wallowa County.

Assessment

As of the 2009 Wallowa County community vitality report, it was not possible to make an assessment of the extent to which water quality in the county meets resident expectations or goals.

22. Noxious Weeds

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Noxious Weeds	# Acres treated for invasive plant species	2,591	2009	Wallowa County Weed District Partners

Another important indicator of environmental health Wallowa County residents voiced in community forums was the prevalence of noxious weeds, or invasive plant species. Data and information for this indicator were provided to the VWIP team by the Wallowa County Weed District Partners.

According to the Wallowa County Weed District Partners, the noxious weed situation in Wallowa County is very complex and difficult to gauge on a broad scale. The vast and rugged landscapes of Wallowa County, the number and types of landownership, the number of weedy species, their priority as problems, the differing perceptions of the problems they cause, their levels of infestations and their seasonal visibility all make quantifying the prevalence of noxious weeds difficult.

In order to gain some understanding of the prevalence of noxious weeds in the county we relied on information about noxious weed management from the Wallowa County Weed District Partners. These partners constitute Wallowa County programs with noxious weed management as their primary duty, namely the:

- Wallowa County Vegetation Department
- Wallowa Zone Wallowa-Whitman National Forest weed program
- Tri-County Cooperative Weed Management Area
- Oregon Department of Agriculture Weed Staff
- The Wallowa Canyonlands Partnership.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) staff track these data very closely as well on TNC lands, and their figures are included in the noxious weed management data presented here. According to the Wallowa County Weed Board, “noxious weed control efforts in Wallowa County are cooperative in nature and there are many other partners, especially private landowners in forestry and agricultural production, who accomplish the same kind of work and make this work happen for the district. To try and represent all of these acres, partners and activities is not possible at this time.” (Personal communication, 2010)

Given the complexities of tracking the prevalence of noxious weeds mentioned above, and the lack of reliable data for the whole county, as of 2009, it was only possible to capture and monitor indicators of noxious weed management presented in Table 4, below. According to the Wallowa County Weed District Partners, “the acres of herbicide treatment are an indicator of the amount of overall weed control activity, but it is important to understand that they vary annually with funding, weather, methods of treatment and many other factors” (personal communication, 2010) In 2009, approximately 2,591 acres of land in Wallowa County were treated with herbicide to destroy weeds, prevent their spread, or reduce their impact.

Table 4

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Source</i>
# Acres treated for invasive plant species	2,591	2009	Wallowa County Weed District Partners
# of acres inventoried for invasive plants	>50,000	2009	
Acres under active restoration	440	2009	

According to Wallowa County Weed District Partners, as shown in Table 4, the number of acres inventoried for invasive plants is easily in excess of 50,000 acres, but it was a figure that was not formally tracked by all partners in 2009. Weed district partners will begin tracking inventoried acres more formally in 2010. The number of acres inventoried is driven by the need to survey for new types of weeds, new sites of known weeds, or to accurately map known infestations. Inventories can be done on the ground or by air.

In 2009, 440 acres were under active restoration to establish productive, resilient perennial plant communities in place of weedy species and non-native annual grasses. According to the Weed District Partners, this is a multi-year process.

Indicator Target

The number of acres treated for noxious weeds should be considered as an indicator of activity and should not have a specific long-term target associated with it. That said, the Wallowa County Weed District Partners suggest that there should be a target minimum of 2,500 acres per year treated in the immediate future. Ideally, the annual number of acres treated will shrink in the long run as efforts to effectively treat new small populations of weeds, treat and restore larger infestations, and introduce appropriate biological controls, sustainable management practices, and effective prevention methods lead to smaller populations of noxious weeds in need of treatment.

According to the Wallowa County Weed District Partners, the target number of acres formally inventoried each year should be at least 50,000 and higher if possible. This number is an indicator of the vigilance of local weed programs on addressing new weeds and new sites of existing weeds. Finding the first small infestations of new invaders or new sites of known species is the most efficient way to manage weeds.

Finally, according to the Wallowa County Weed District Partners, the target number of acres under active restoration should be greater than the number observed in 2009.

Assessment

According to 2009 data provided by the Wallowa County Weed District Partners, Wallowa County was very close to achieving target levels of noxious weed management. The number of acres treated met current year goals, and the number of acres formally inventoried in 2009 met annual goal levels. With respect to the number of acres under active restoration, 2009 was slightly below target, and according to the Weed District Partners, this number “will hopefully increase over time as we begin to convert sites that are dominated by non-native annual grasses to sites dominated by productive perennial vegetation that is weed resistant and productive.”

COMMUNITY CAPACITY INDICATORS

23. Civic Involvement & Representation

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Civic Involvement & Representation	% of Wallowa County adult permanent residents who participated in 2 or more civic activities in last 12 months	79%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Civic involvement by age, gender, and % of life lived in Wallowa County	(see tables 4-9)	2009	VWIP Survey

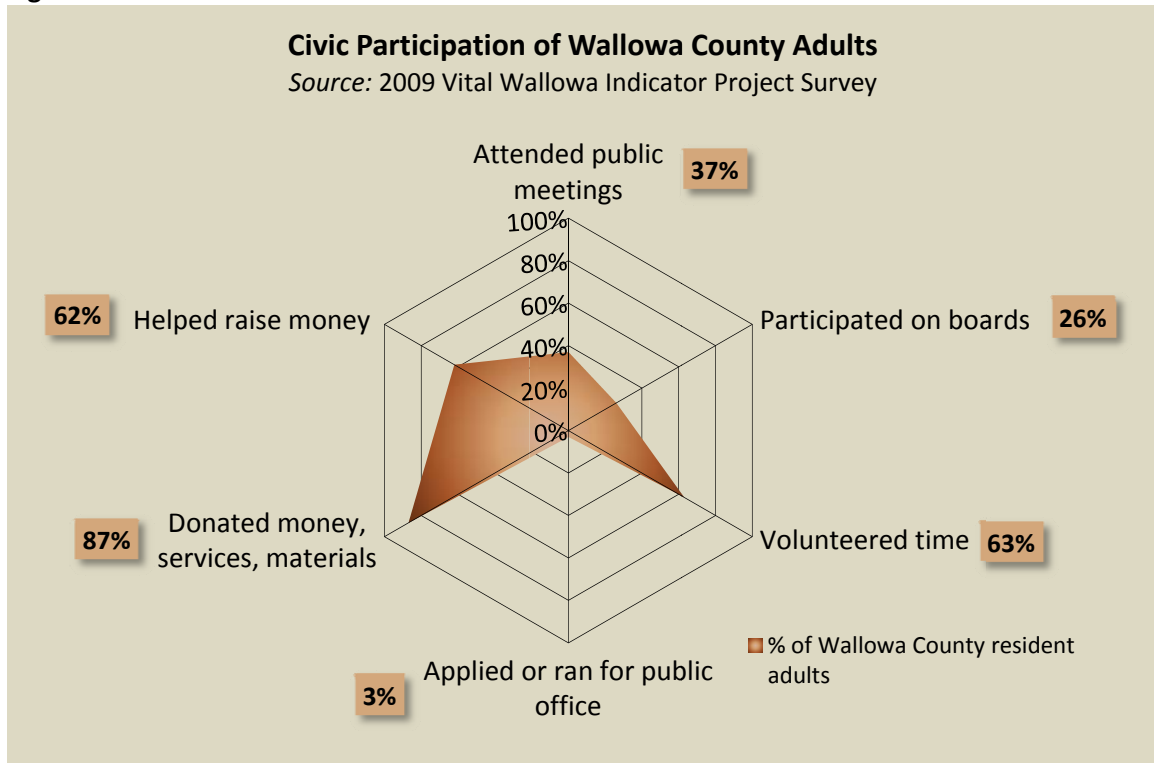
Within Wallowa County, civic involvement was expressed as an important part of realizing vitality in the community during the community forums held in 2008. Using the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey, we were able to measure the extent to which Wallowa County adult residents actively participate in their community in various ways. Specifically, survey respondents were asked if they had done any of six listed civic activities in the last 12 months:

- Attended any public hearings, town hall meetings, community forums, or city council meetings
- Participated on the board of any local service agency or organization
- Volunteered time, in ways other than participating on the board, to any local service agency or organization
- Applied or run for local public office
- Donated money, services, materials, or food to any local charities, groups, or associations
- Helped raise money for local cause

According to the survey, an estimated 79% of adults in the county participated in two or more of the civic activities listed above in the previous year. More than a third of adults in the county attended a public meeting of some sort in the last year. One quarter of adult residents participated on a local agency board, and a full 63% had volunteered in some other way to a local organization or agency in the past 12 months. Only three percent of adult residents applied or ran for local public office in the last 12 months, but it is not likely that this figure will ever be particularly high given the number of public office seats available in any given year. By contrast, many (87%) adult residents donated money, service, materials, or food to local groups during the last year, and many (62%) helped raise money for a local cause.

Figure 16 shows the percentages of adults who participated in these six ways in their local community. When viewed next to one another, we clearly see that making donations, helping raise money, and volunteering are the most popular forms of civic involvement among Wallowa County residents. According to these findings, Wallowa County adults appear engaged with their community, albeit in particular ways.

Figure 16



Another aspect of this civic participation indicator that Wallowa County residents wish to keep track of over time is the representation of particular groups within each area of civic involvement. The following data tables (5 through 10) illuminate the percentages of individuals who participate in these various civic activities by age, gender, and the proportion of their lives they have lived in the county. These participation rates are compared to the overall proportions of the various groups of people observed in the county. The goal is to see if there are certain groups who are over-, under-, or proportionally-represented in particular civic activity areas.

Table 5

Public Meeting Attendees			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	3%	under (-)
29-38	15%	13%	under (-)
39-48	22%	15%	under (-)
49-58	21%	31%	over (+)
59-68	16%	22%	over (+)
69-78	11%	11%	equal (=)
79-88	6%	6%	equal (=)
89+	1%	0%	under (-)
	100%	101%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	45%	under (-)
Male	49%	55%	over (+)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	22%	under (-)
26%-50%	22%	22%	equal (=)
51%-75%	19%	25%	over (+)
76%-100%	34%	31%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

Table 6

Local Board Participants			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	2%	under (-)
29-38	15%	13%	under (-)
39-48	22%	19%	under (-)
49-58	21%	36%	over (+)
59-68	16%	22%	over (+)
69-78	11%	6%	under (-)
79-88	6%	1%	under (-)
89+	1%	0%	under (-)
	100%	99%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	46%	under (-)
Male	49%	54%	over (+)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	16%	under (-)
26%-50%	22%	23%	over (+)
51%-75%	19%	30%	over (+)
76%-100%	34%	31%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

According to table 5, among the Wallowa County adults who attended public meetings in the last 12 months, Baby-Boomers (age 49 to 68), men, and those who have lived between half and three-quarters of their lives in Wallowa County were over-represented. By contrast, adults under the age of 50 or over the age of 89, women, and people who had lived very little of their lives or all their life in the county were under-represented in this civic arena. Only adults between the ages of 69 and 88 and people who had lived a quarter to half of their lives in the county attended public meetings at rates proportional to their representation in the county at large.

Among the adults in Wallowa County who participated on local boards (table 6), we see trends in representation similar to those for public meeting participation. Baby-Boomers, men, and those who have lived half to three-quarters of their lives in Wallowa County are all over-represented, but according to the 2009 VWIP survey we can add adults who have lived one-

quarter to half of their lives in the county to the list of over-represented. The populations that were under-represented on boards in 2009 were new-comers, old-timers, women, and adults younger than or older than the Baby-Boomers. No groups were represented on boards at rates proportional to their population size.

Table 7

Volunteers			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	3%	under (-)
29-38	15%	17%	over (+)
39-48	22%	23%	over (+)
49-58	21%	28%	over (+)
59-68	16%	18%	over (+)
69-78	11%	7%	under (-)
79-88	6%	4%	under (-)
89+	1%	0%	under (-)
	100%	100%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	50%	under (-)
Male	49%	50%	over (+)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	29%	over (+)
26%-50%	22%	25%	over (+)
51%-75%	19%	21%	over (+)
76%-100%	34%	25%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

Table 8

Adults who Ran or Applied for Public Office			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	0%	under (-)
29-38	15%	55%	over (+)
39-48	22%	0%	under (-)
49-58	21%	28%	over (+)
59-68	16%	17%	over (+)
69-78	11%	0%	under (-)
79-88	6%	0%	under (-)
89+	1%	0%	under (-)
	100%	100%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	37%	under (-)
Male	49%	63%	over (+)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	22%	under (-)
26%-50%	22%	0%	under (-)
51%-75%	19%	62%	over (+)
76%-100%	34%	16%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

With respect to volunteering in Wallowa County, Table 7 presents the relationship between population and participating percentages that were observed in the VWIP survey data. According to the data, volunteering appears to be dominated by adults between the ages of 29 and 68, with young adults and older adults only comprising 14% of the total volunteer population. Men are over-represented as volunteers, thus women are under-represented, but we can see that equal proportions of men and women volunteer in the county. With respect to the proportion of life lived in the county, old-timers are under-represented and all others are over-represented.

There were very few adults who ran or applied for public office in 2009 (table 8), according to the VWIP survey. Therefore, understanding the representation by age, gender, and relative amount of time lived in the county for this arena of civic engagement is likely best done with pooled data over time. At this point, however, the data give us some insight on the proportional representation of various population groups. In particular, adults between the ages of 29 and 38 (born 1971 to 1980), adults between the ages of 49 and 68 (born 1941 to 1960), men, and adults who have spent between half and three-quarters of their lives in Wallowa County were over-represented candidates or applicants to public office in 2009. All other groups were under-represented, and in some cases drastically under-represented, such as adults 39 to 48, women, and individuals who had lived one-quarter to half or 75% to 100% of their lives in the county.

Table 9

Adults who Donated Money, Service, Material, or Food			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	4%	under (-)
29-38	15%	17%	over (+)
39-48	22%	19%	under (-)
49-58	21%	23%	over (+)
59-68	16%	17%	over (+)
69-78	11%	11%	equal (=)
79-88	6%	7%	over (+)
89+	1%	1%	equal (=)
	100%	99%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	53%	over (+)
Male	49%	47%	under (-)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	27%	over (+)
26%-50%	22%	24%	over (+)
51%-75%	19%	20%	over (+)
76%-100%	34%	29%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

Table 10

Adults who helped raise money for local charities			
Age			
Age Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
18-28	8%	5%	under (-)
29-38	15%	16%	over (+)
39-48	22%	22%	equal (=)
49-58	21%	26%	over (+)
59-68	16%	16%	equal (=)
69-78	11%	11%	equal (=)
79-88	6%	4%	under (-)
89+	1%	0%	under (-)
	100%	100%	
Gender			
Gender	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
Female	51%	56%	over (+)
Male	49%	44%	under (-)
	100%	100%	
Percentage of Life Lived in Wallowa County			
% of Life Categories	Population Percentage	Participating Percentage	Representation
<25%	25%	30%	over (+)
26%-50%	22%	22%	equal (=)
51%-75%	19%	19%	equal (=)
76%-100%	34%	29%	under (-)
	100%	100%	

According to Table 9, among adults who donated money, services, materials, or food to local charities or organizations adults age 18 to 28 and 39 to 48, men, and county old-timers were under-represented participants, though in some cases quite close to the population percentage. Only adults who were 69 to 78 or over the age of 88 donated money or in other ways at a rate proportional to their population. All other groups were over-represented in this civic activity, though on average only by about two percentage points.

Table 10 presents the representation statistics among adults who helped raise money for local charities. Again in this activity, most groups of adults are close to equal representation, with the greatest difference between population and participating percentages observed at five percent. In this civic arena, however, we note that young adults (18-28) and older adults (79+), men, and old-timers are under-represented.

Overall, when we examine each type of civic activity, certain groups of Wallowa County adults consistently emerge as over- or under-represented. With respect to under-representation, old-timers, women, young adults (18-28), and older adults (79+) consistently participated at rates lower than would be expected, given their overall population representation. By contrast, adults who have lived half to three-quarters of their life in Wallowa County, men, adults age 29-38, and Baby-Boomers (age 49-68) tend to participate at rates greater than their overall population rates across almost all areas of civic engagement.

In sum, civic participation among Wallowa County residents is a complex arena. Using a summary measure, county residents appeared highly engaged in their community in 2009, as nearly 80% participated in at least two types of civic activities. But upon closer examination, certain activities were highly engaged in by residents while others were not and there were certain segments of society who participated more than would be expected given their relative size in the population. In 2009, making donations, helping raise money, and volunteering were the most popular forms of civic involvement among Wallowa County residents. In addition, adults who have lived half to three-quarters of their life in Wallowa County, men, adults age 29-38, and Baby-Boomers (age 49-68) tended to be over-represented in almost all areas of civic engagement in 2009.

Indicator Target

The goals for this indicator mirror the complexities of civic participation in Wallowa County. The first goal is for at least 75% of the adult population to participate in two or more types of civic activities in a given year. Second, with respect to participation in specific civic activities, the goal is for greater proportions of residents to participate in all forms of civic life. In particular, the goals are for 50% or more of adults to attend public meetings, 30% or more to participate on boards, 70% or more to volunteer, 10% or more to apply or run for public office, 90% or more to make donations, and 70% or more to help raise money for local causes. Finally, the goal for the county is for representation in each type of civic activity by gender, age, and percentage of life lived in the county to be equal to the percentages observed in the population.

Assessment

According to 2009 survey data, Wallowa County was close to meeting its targets with respect to civic participation, but failed to do so in some important aspects. Specific areas of deficiency that emerged were the percentage of adults who attended public meetings and the percentage

of adults who applied or ran for public office. In addition, with respect to the representation of adult residents by age, gender, and the percentage of life they have lived inside the county key areas to pay attention to are: gender representation among those who apply or run for office, attend public meetings, and serve on boards, and the representation of young adults (age 18 to 28) in all types of civic activities. In terms of the percentage of adults who participated in at least two types of civic activities, however, Wallowa County exceeded its targeted 75%.

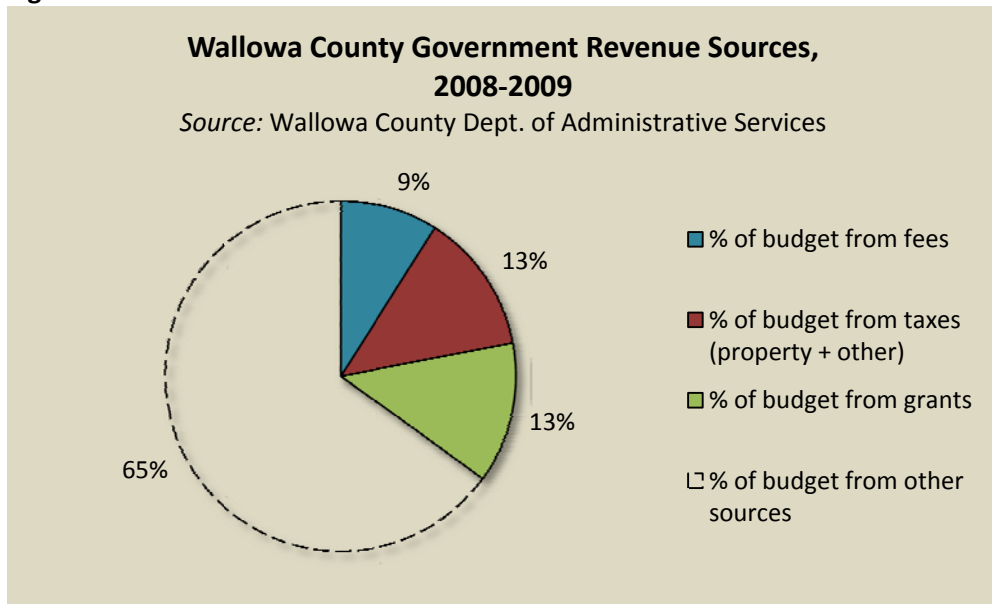
24. County Government Revenues

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
County Government Revenues	Annual County spending per capita	\$1,994.49	2008-2009	Wallowa County
	% of budget from fees	9%	2008-2009	Wallowa County
	% of budget from property & other taxes	13%	2008-2009	Wallowa County
	% of budget from grants	13%	2008-2009	Wallowa County

Community capacity, or the ability of the community to work productively together is a difficult concept to measure, but Wallowa County residents identified county government revenue as a key aspect of local capacity they wish to track over time. County government revenues have serious implications for both the extent of services the county can offer its residents as well as the pressure placed on officials to raise revenues from other sources.

According to budget data from the County Department of Administrative Services, in the fiscal year 2008-2009, Wallowa County government spent almost \$2,000 per Wallowa County resident on public projects of various types.

Figure 17



In the fiscal year 2008-2009, nine percent of the county budget revenues came from fees, such as permits or use fees according to the Wallowa County Department of Administrative Services. A little more than a quarter of budget revenues came from property or other taxes and grants

that the county received from various sources. As figure 17 illustrates, 35% of the county government budget came from these three sources during fiscal year 2008-2009. Thus, 65 percent of county revenues came from other sources, including contracts, state and federal revenues, and the beginning fund balance.

While no county budget revenue source is guaranteed to remain constant over time, some sources are more volatile than others. One source in particular, namely Secure Rural Schools Act payments by the Federal Government to Wallowa County, are slated to be reduced to zero by the end of the Federal fiscal year 2011. This revenue source is captured in the 65% of revenues that does not come from fees, taxes, or grants. Before 2007, over 30 percent of the Wallowa County Road Fund came from Secure Rural Schools Act payments. According to the 2010 Governor's Task Force Report, the county has been identified as a "crisis" county that will face an "unmanageable fiscal crisis with two to four years after cessation of federal forest payments," because it will not have adequate funding for roads.⁷ This crisis could be averted with increased revenues generated from other sources or with decreased spending on roads. According to a 2009 case study by Dawn Marie Gaid, in anticipation of the reduction of revenues from this federal source, between 2006 and 2009 Wallowa County decreased road department spending by reducing employment by 8% and by reducing road maintenance and snow removal.⁸ These unspent dollars are being placed into a reserve account so there is money for the road department after the federal payments end.

This example illustrates the importance of having a diverse county revenue portfolio, in order to survive large changes to the size of any one source. In addition, according to Bruce Weber an economist at Oregon State University, "with the loss of federal forest revenues, per capita spending may decrease and the share of spending from fees and taxes may increase even if the absolute amounts do not increase." Changes in government revenues have serious implications for both the extent of services the county can offer its residents as well as the pressure placed on officials to raise revenues from other sources.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for at least 35% of the county government budget revenues to come from fees, taxes, and grants and for there to be no net loss in county spending per capita.

Assessment

According to data from the county 2008-2009 fiscal year, Wallowa County was on target with its goals for the source of county government revenues.

⁷ To download a copy of this report, go to:

http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/docs/federal_forest_payments_062008.pdf

⁸ Gaid, Dawn Marie. 2009. Changing Federal County Payments and Rural Oregon Counties: Analysis of Policy Impacts and Responses from Loss of Secure Rural School Funding in Selected Oregon Counties. October. RSP 09-04. (<http://ruralstudies.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/pub/pdf/RSP09-04.pdf>)

25. Public Gatherings & Spaces

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Public Gatherings and Spaces	Number of restaurants & cafes	24	2009	Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
	Number of public school buildings	9	2009	Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
	Number of community centers and granges	5 +	2009	Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
	Number of community forums, festivals, and events	54	2009	Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce
	% of adults who often or always meet with friends at private residences	63%	2009	VWIP Survey

The extent to which there are opportunities within Wallowa County for residents to come together in public, so new relationships can be openly forged, old relationships can be strengthened, and for community issues to be publicly discussed is another indicator of vitality which county residents expressed. Indeed, the ability of community residents to work together well and trust one another is directly related to the amount of time they spend together socially. Having public spaces and opportunities for this type of exchange is very important to the development of community capacity.

According to data obtained from the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce, there were approximately 38 physical spaces throughout the county for people to meet. Given the population of Wallowa County (about 7,000 people), there was approximately one meeting space for every 200 residents in 2009.

With respect to explicit opportunities throughout the county for people to meet with friends, and fellow county residents, in 2009 the Chamber of Commerce reported 54 community forums, festivals, and events occurred. In relation to county population, there was approximately one community event for every 140 residents in 2009.

An additional measure of the extent to which Wallowa County has opportunities for residents, new and old, to meet in public settings is the popularity of meeting in such public venues. In 2009, the VWIP survey was used to gauge this behavior among residents. According to the survey results, an estimated 63% of adult residents who got together with friends or neighbors in Wallowa County, in the last 12 months, did so often or always at someone’s private home. This figure implies that the social culture of Wallowa County favors private social gatherings. Of note is the large minority of adults in the county (37%) who rarely or never met with friends in private, presumably preferring to meet in public settings. Among the public settings in which residents often or always met with their friends, cafes and restaurants were the most popular hangouts followed by churches, pubs, and other public spaces.

These indicator measures suggest that public venues for socializing are relatively abundant, but that the majority of residents prefer to socialize in private. This suggests two things: 1) people

who have friends in the county likely enjoy rather deep relationships (as private settings tend to facilitate this type of intimacy) and 2) people who are new to the county may find it difficult to meet a diversity of county residents in public venues.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for the prevalence of gathering spaces and community events in Wallowa County, as well as the proportion of residents who prefer to meet with friends in private settings to remain close to levels observed in 2009.

Assessment

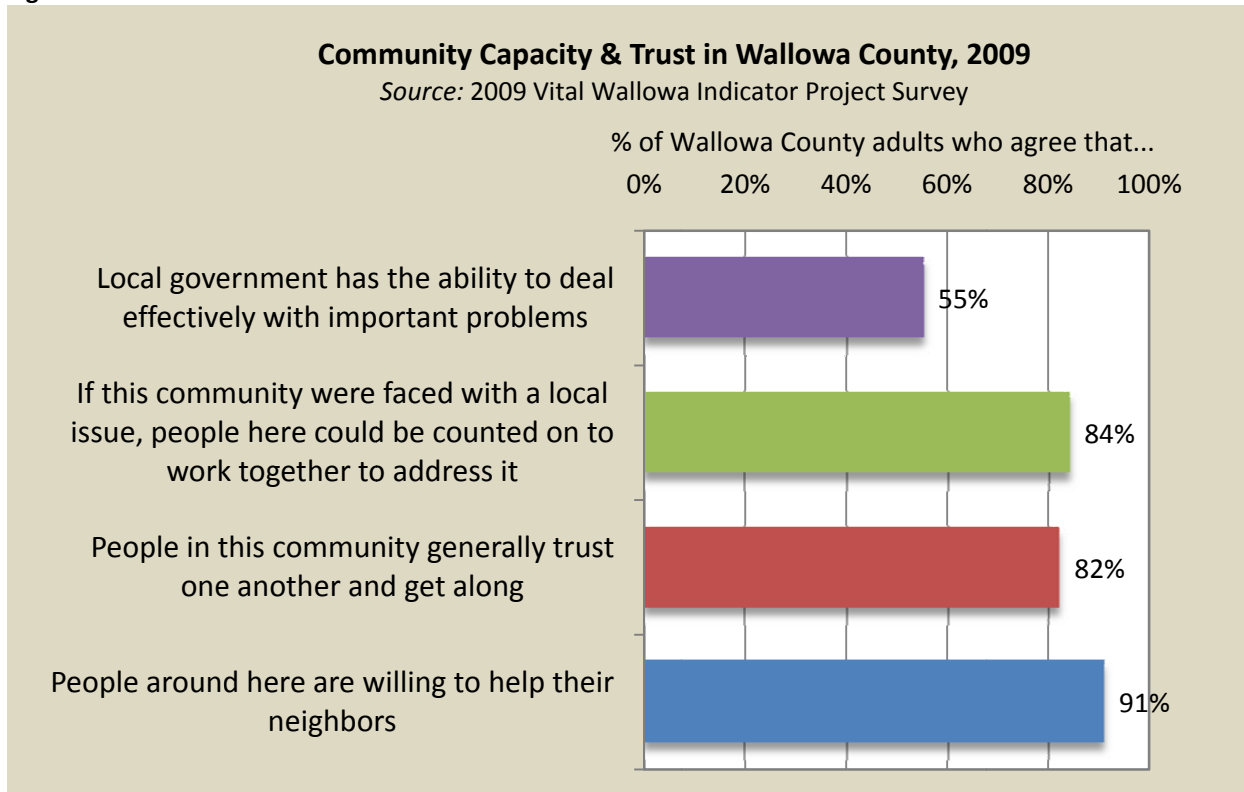
According to 2009 data, Wallowa County met its goals with respect to public gatherings and spaces.

26. Community Trust

Indicator	Measure	Data	Year	Source
Community Trust	<u>% of residents who perceive that:</u>			
	People in the community are willing to help their neighbors	91%	2009	VWIP Survey
	People in the community are trustworthy and get along with each other	82%	2009	VWIP Survey
	People in the community can be counted on to work together to address community issues	84%	2009	VWIP Survey
	Local government has the ability to deal effectively with important problems	55%	2009	VWIP Survey

The extent to which Wallowa County residents can work together to get important tasks done in their community is an important part of having a functional community environment. Indeed, the residents of Wallowa County identified community capacity and trust as important indicators of their community’s vitality. In order to measure these indicators, the 2009 VWIP survey asked adult respondents to indicate how much they agreed with four statements about the Wallowa County community that, together, measure community capacity. Figure 18 illustrates the percentages of residents who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the four statements.

Figure 18



As Figure 18 illustrates, community capacity in Wallowa County is high. Along three out of four dimensions of capacity, the vast majority of adults in the county feel that members of the Wallowa County community can work together well and accomplish their goals. The only dimension of community capacity that is lower than others is the faith residents put in their local government. This is often found among rural communities, and may be due to the limited extent to which the majority of residents are involved with local government, or due truly to the perception that rural community issues are too complex for the local government.

Indicator Target

The goal for this indicator is for there to be no net decline in the percentage of Wallowa County adults who agree with the statements about community capacity, and for there to be an increase in the percentage of residents who agree that local government has the ability to deal effectively with important problems. Specifically, for this aspect of community capacity, the goal for Wallow County is to have more than 55% of residents agree with this statement about the capacity of local government.

Assessment

In 2009, according to data gathered from the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project survey, Wallowa County was largely on target with this indicator, but had some room for improvement with respect to the proportion of residents who felt that local government has the ability to deal effectively with important problems.

Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Summary

In 2008 and 2009, the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project team gathered community input to create a set of community vitality indicators specific to Wallowa County. Project team members then gathered indicator data, and in conjunction with community-set targets, were able to provide a baseline assessment of Wallowa County vitality in 2009/2010. It will be important to update this assessment on a regular basis in future years in order to see if and how Wallowa County's vitality changes from the 2009 baseline. In addition, it may be necessary to modify the indicator target levels as time progresses and resident's values change. The utility of the indicators for Wallowa County rests entirely on the extent to which the community accepts them as representative of their needs and desires as a whole. Only then will residents be willing to work together to craft creative approaches to maintain or improve their community in particular ways. That said it is important that residents be made aware of the findings of this assessment through community forums, public meetings, and the like. Community conversations in which the assessment is discussed should spark continued discussions among residents about how vitality can be improved in particular dimensions.

Based on this 2009 assessment of Wallowa County vitality, it is clear that within each of the four areas of community vitality (Social, Economy, Environment, and Community Capacity) some indicator goals have been met while others have not yet.

- **In the area of positive social outcomes**, in 2009, Wallowa County failed to meet targets in eight out of the 17 indicator measures (47%), met targets in six out of the 17 (35%), and had neutral judgments for three out of the 17 (18%).
- **In the area of positive economic outcomes**, in 2009, Wallowa County met targets in four out of the seven indicator measures (57%) and failed to meet targets in three (43%).
- **In the area of positive environmental outcomes**, in 2009, the county met targets in six out of the eight indicator measures (75%), failed to meet none, but had neutral judgments for two of the eight indicators (25%).
- **Finally, in the area of community capacity**, in 2009, Wallowa County met targets in seven out of the nine indicator measures (78%), while failing to meet only two out of the nine (22%).

These figures reveal that the county is doing well in three areas, namely community capacity the environment, and the economy, as the majority of the indicator measures in these areas met targets in 2009. In the area of positive social outcomes, however, there is room for improvement. Viewed as a whole, based on the number of areas of vitality that met community expectations, it appears that as of 2009 Wallowa County was roughly three-quarters vital, with some clear work to do in order to become fully vital.

In the area of social outcomes, the 2009 baseline assessment found that demographic issues, related to age structure and migration, and housing affordability are in need of attention if county goals are to be met. In addition, some aspects of health care infrastructure were lacking in the county at the time of this report, namely abundant provider types and affordable care. Other issues that emerged in this area were the need for better indicator data and time to assess change in the county as 2009 served as the reference point for judgment. There were instances in which Wallowa County did meet its social goals, and these should be consciously

maintained in the future by the community. Overall health care satisfaction was on target in 2009, as was youth engagement, and participation in lifelong learning by adult residents.

Turning to the three areas of community vitality that performed well in 2009, the specific points of strength that emerged were: the health of the employer population, land use, environmental health, civic life, and the sense of community in the county. The county should be proud of its accomplishments here, as they provide a foundation for the attainment of greater vitality in the future. It will also be important for these areas to be consciously maintained into the future of the county. The weakest indicators that emerged in the three vitality areas were related to economic trade and job quality. In addition, it was clear that for some indicators in these three areas more data will be needed to determine if Wallowa County is meeting resident expectations. Future indicator updates should pay close attention to these issues.

As the county moves forward and considers ways in which to improve or maintain outcomes in these areas of vitality, it is important to bear in mind that for many of these issues county-wide concerted efforts will be necessary. No one agency, institution, organization, or individual can be expected to realize community-wide change in any of the indicator areas. In addition, it is important to recognize that local outcomes are often structured by larger economic, political, social, and environmental forces. Local efforts to address problems are certainly a necessary step, but they may not be enough to truly tackle an issue. Again, it is the intention of this project to provide a guiding hand in helping Wallowa County begin or continue focused conversations about how to become a vital rural community. Once the goals have been articulated, the truly important community work can begin.

Vital Wallowa Indicator Project Survey Methods

In spring 2009, Oregon State University (OSU), the Vital Wallowa Indicator Project (VWIP) team, and Wallowa County residents administered a survey to a sample of Wallowa County adult residents. In order to be 95% confident that, with repeated sample draws from the population, the (true) population statistic falls within a range of plus or minus 4 percentage points of the sample estimates, a sample of 541 Wallowa County adults was needed. Based on the way in which the survey was to be administered, a 63% response rate was expected.⁹ Therefore, in order to get 541 completed surveys the team elected to use a stratified, equal probability, cluster sampling strategy to select approximately 950 households and then a clustered, random sub-sampling strategy for selecting one individual within each household to receive the survey. The sample was first stratified by location (West, Central, and East County) to select properties, then on each property households and finally individuals were chosen.

The surveys were administered using a participatory approach that involved community members. Oregon State University Extension faculty members developed scientifically valid and reliable survey instruments that were distributed by Wallowa County High School students and adult volunteers to households across the county.¹⁰ The adults chosen to respond to the survey were asked to fill out the survey, at their leisure, and return it to Oregon State University via mail.

Between March and June of 2009, Joseph High School Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Wallowa High School Family Career Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and Enterprise High School FBLA club members, along with adult volunteers graciously took on the job of delivering surveys to sampled households. These survey distributors visited 816 of the 951 sampled properties in Wallowa County. Distributors made face-to-face contact with a respondent or an informant at 436 of these properties. Two-hundred fifty-two (252) of the visited properties contained houses at which no one answered the door. These houses could have been seasonally vacant (vacation rentals and the like), or could have been home to year-round householders who refused to answer the door or were simply not home at the times the distributors visited. Finally, 128 of the 816 properties were ineligible for the study, as they either did not have a structure on them or contained a business.

By the end of June 2009, OSU received 276 surveys from Wallowa County residents, to yield a final response rate of 63% (276/436). Given this sample size, we can be 95% confident that the population values lie somewhere within + or - 5.8% of the survey estimates. In other words, we can be fairly confident that the margin of error will be no greater than 6% for the statistics produced using the VWIP survey data, and less for statistics generated from survey questions that had especially high response.

⁹ Dillman, Don. (2007). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailed Design Method*. 2nd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

¹⁰ The survey instruments were pre-tested by OSU with five Wallowa County residents. Based on the feedback from these hour-long, one-on-one, and face-to-face sessions the instrument was modified to its final version.

As with all sample surveys, the VWIP survey data suffers, to some degree, from sampling error. Some members of the adult, Wallowa County, resident population may not have been included in the final list of properties we used to draw our sample, which would result in sample bias. Other members of the target population may have been given a chance to participate, but simply chose not to, and they may differ in important ways from those people who did participate. Due to this potential error in the VWIP survey, statistics that are calculated using these data may not give us an accurate estimate of the true population statistics. For these reasons, it was important and necessary for the analysis of these survey data to include the application of sampling weights.¹¹ Sampling weights can account for the under-representation of certain elements of the population due to these errors in the sample. OSU constructed and applied the weights to individual respondents to make each represent a targeted number of adult Wallowa County residents and thus bring the sample in line with the true population.

The full description of the methods used to weight and analyze the VWIP survey data is included in the VWIP Survey Methods Report. To request a copy of this full methodology report, please contact Lena Etuk at Oregon State University (lena.etuk@oregonstate.edu) or Nils Christoffersen at Wallowa Resources (nils@wallowaresources.org).

¹¹ Groves, Robert M., Floyd Fowler Jr., Mick Couper, James Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. (2004). *Survey Methodology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Levy, Paul S. and Stanley Lemeshow. (2008). *Sampling of Populations: Methods and Applications*. 4th Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.