

# Partnerships on Every Forest

Wayne National Forest

November 15, 2023



**National Forest Foundation**

*“Partnership is a term that gets thrown around- what is a partner? There is a danger in throwing that term around. A partner is a different entity working for a common goal and having a symbiotic relationship. Partnerships need to be honest, straightforward, and look for middle ground. They need to be able to have difficult conversations.”*

# Outline

- ❖ Intro to the NFF
- ❖ Partnerships on Every Forest
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Results
- ❖ Conclusions
- ❖ Questions



***We work on behalf of the American public to inspire personal and meaningful connections to our National Forests, the centerpiece of America's public lands.***



**National Forest Foundation**

# Partnerships on Every Forest

- Jointly managed between the NFF and the NPO
- Initiated in 2019
- 4 assessments completed
- 3 ongoing
- Opening new application cycle January 2024



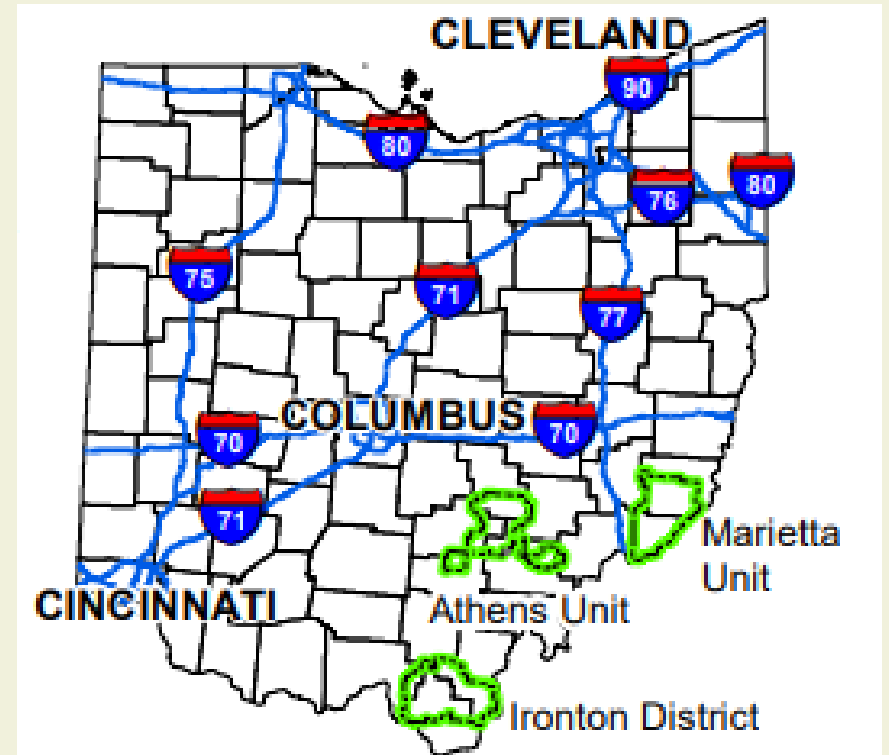
# PEF Methodology

1. Application process
2. Focus group conversations
3. Semi-structured interviews and snowball sampling
4. Qualitative interview coding
5. Results analysis
6. Share out
7. Other deliverables?



# Working with Wayne National Forest

- Initial conversations were held in early 2023
  - Goal to compare to Collaboration Cadres assessment in 2015
- Interviews conducted July-October 2023
- Analysis October 2023
- Present results to FLT and RLT November 2023
- Present results to partners: TBD



Source: USFS

# Interview Questions

1. To start, can you share your **position title and your role with your organization**?
2. When you think of the Wayne National Forest, what are some **values** that come to mind?
3. What is your **favorite thing** about the Wayne National Forest?
4. What **types of partnership work** are you involved with on the Wayne National Forest? What kinds of projects or agreements do you participate in?
5. In your partnership with the Wayne National Forest, **what is working well**?
6. **What challenges do you face** in your partnership with the Wayne National Forest? Is there anything you are **particularly concerned** about?
7. What are **barriers** to partnering with the Wayne National Forest?
8. Do you feel that there are **opportunities to improve your partnership** with the Wayne National Forest?
9. **Are there any gaps** in who the Wayne National Forest is partnering with? Any groups or stakeholders that you feel should be included that are not currently? If so, who?
10. **Is there anything else** you would like to share about the Wayne National Forest and partnerships?
11. We are trying to speak with as many existing and potential partners as possible. **Can you recommend other individuals or groups we should speak with** about partnerships on the Wayne National Forest?
12. Are you comfortable with me **sharing your name and/or organization** on a list of interview participants? Your identifying information will not be tied to anything in the report other than listing you as a participant.
13. Do you have any questions for me?
14. Clarifying follow up: we will hold a meeting around [date] with all participants to share results and ensure that we accurately captured your voice. Following that we will work with the Wayne National Forest to strategically build partnership capacity and address challenges in their partnership program. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think of any further questions or comments.



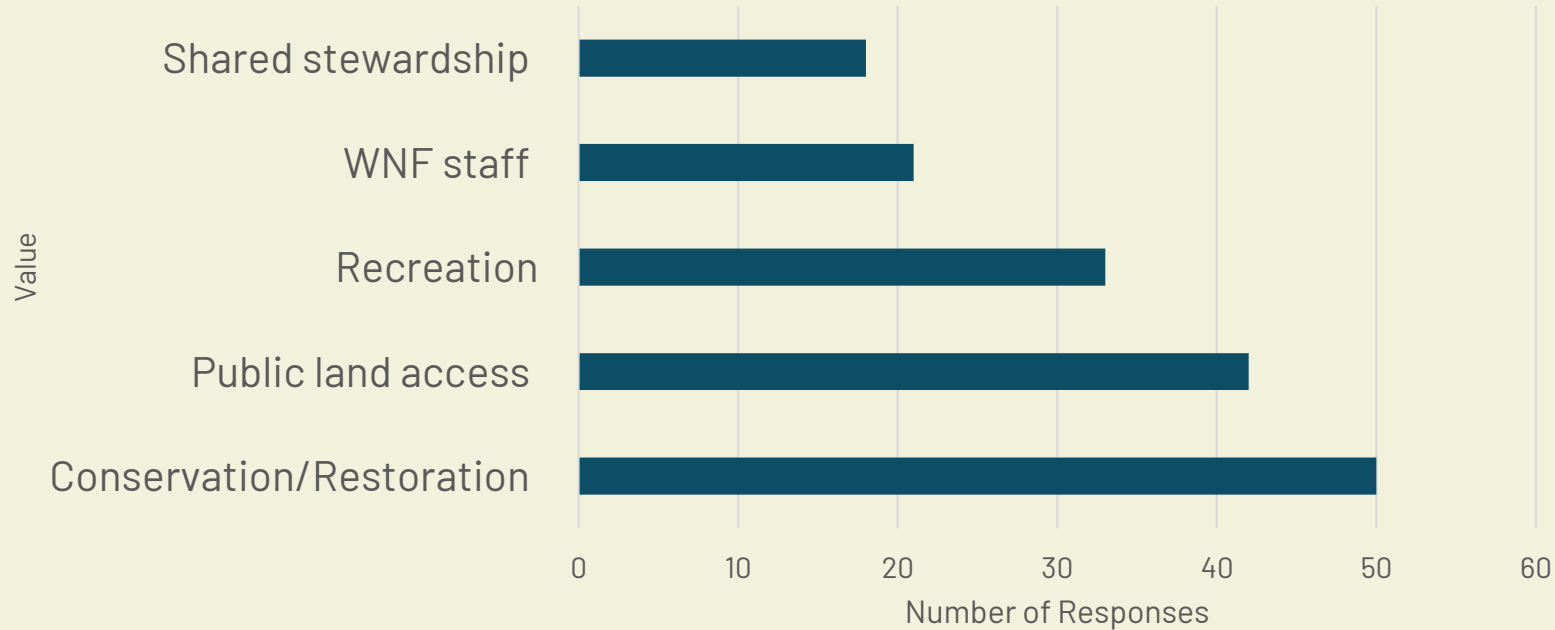
# Results!

- 55 interviews conducted
  - 10 WNF staff
  - 8 environmental (nonprofit/business/consultant)
  - 8 economic development
  - 7 local government
  - 6 university
  - 6 Federal Agency
  - 6 recreation (business/volunteer/consultant)
  - 5 State Agency
  - 4 community group (nonprofit/development)
  - 1 law enforcement agency





# Values/Favorite Thing



*“People from all circumstances can access [the Wayne]. We have a high poverty rate, so having access to thousands of acres of public land is valued.”*

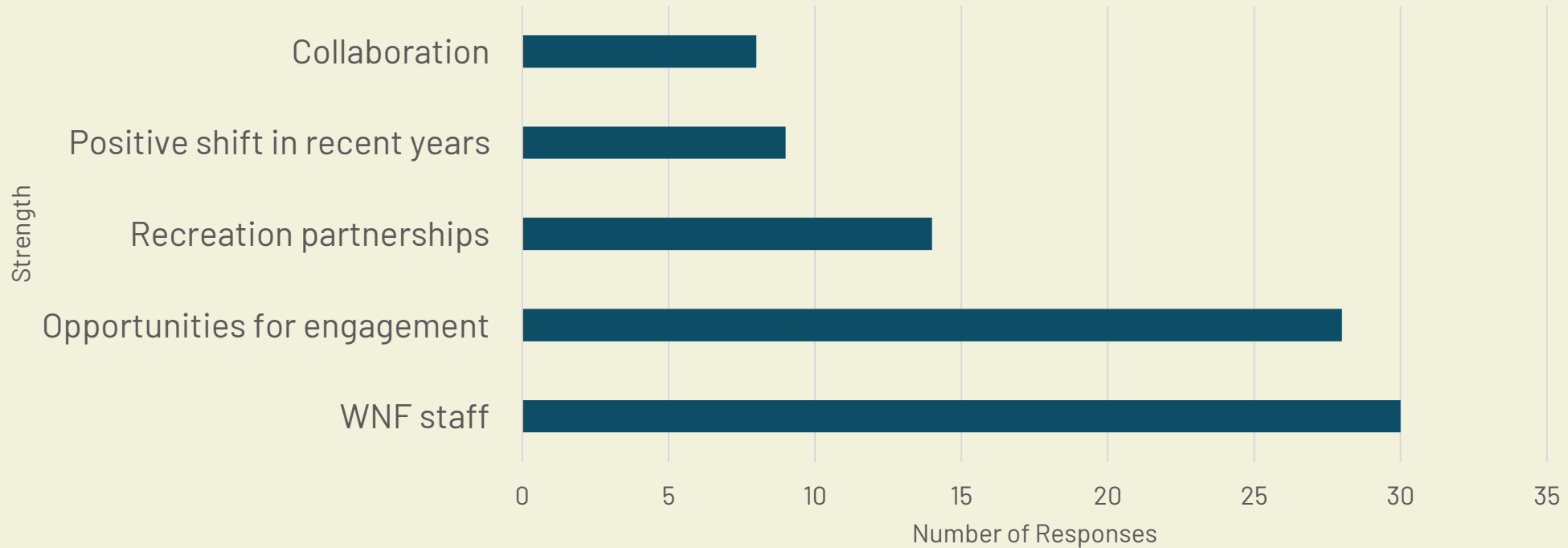
*“Our forest offers rich biodiversity, having dedicated space for our natural areas to allow biodiversity to flourish in an undisturbed way.”*

*“My favorite thing is the staff we have gotten to work with on these projects.”*

*“I see value in the ecological value of watersheds and striving to be a good partner and good neighbor.”*



# Strengths



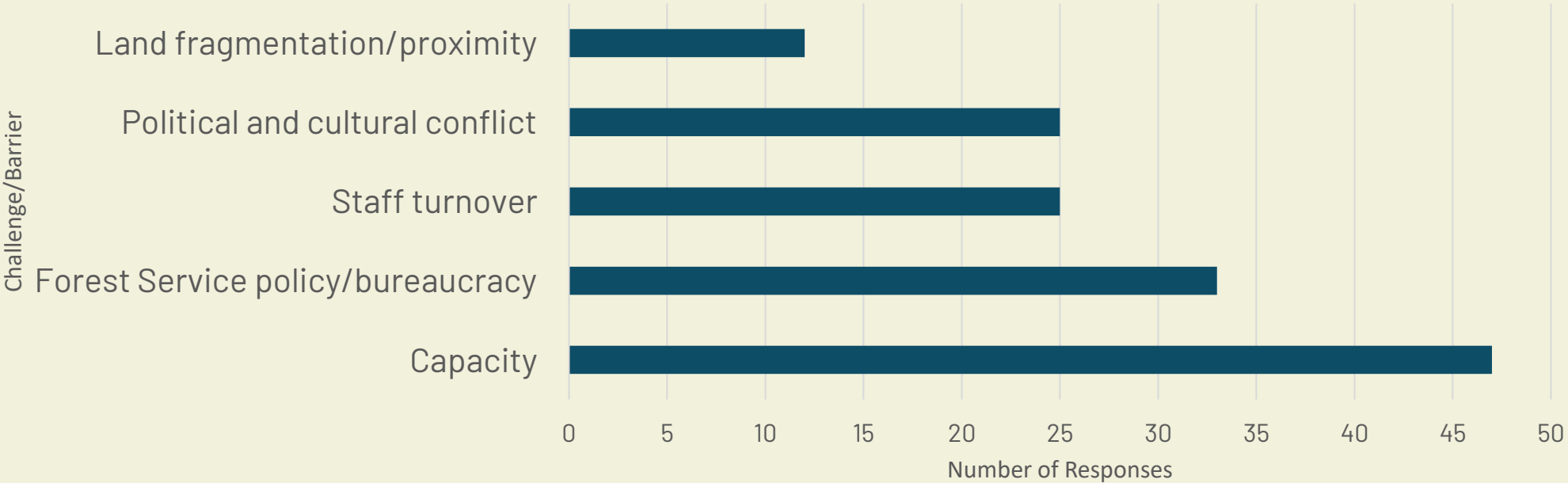
*“All staff at the WNF are friendly and direct and clear in communication. I have appreciated how well they can articulate their needs and priorities and how we can best be a partner with them.”*

*“There is good ongoing communication, the work feels very collaborative.”*

*“Forest Service staff help us with building capacity.”*



# Challenges/Barriers

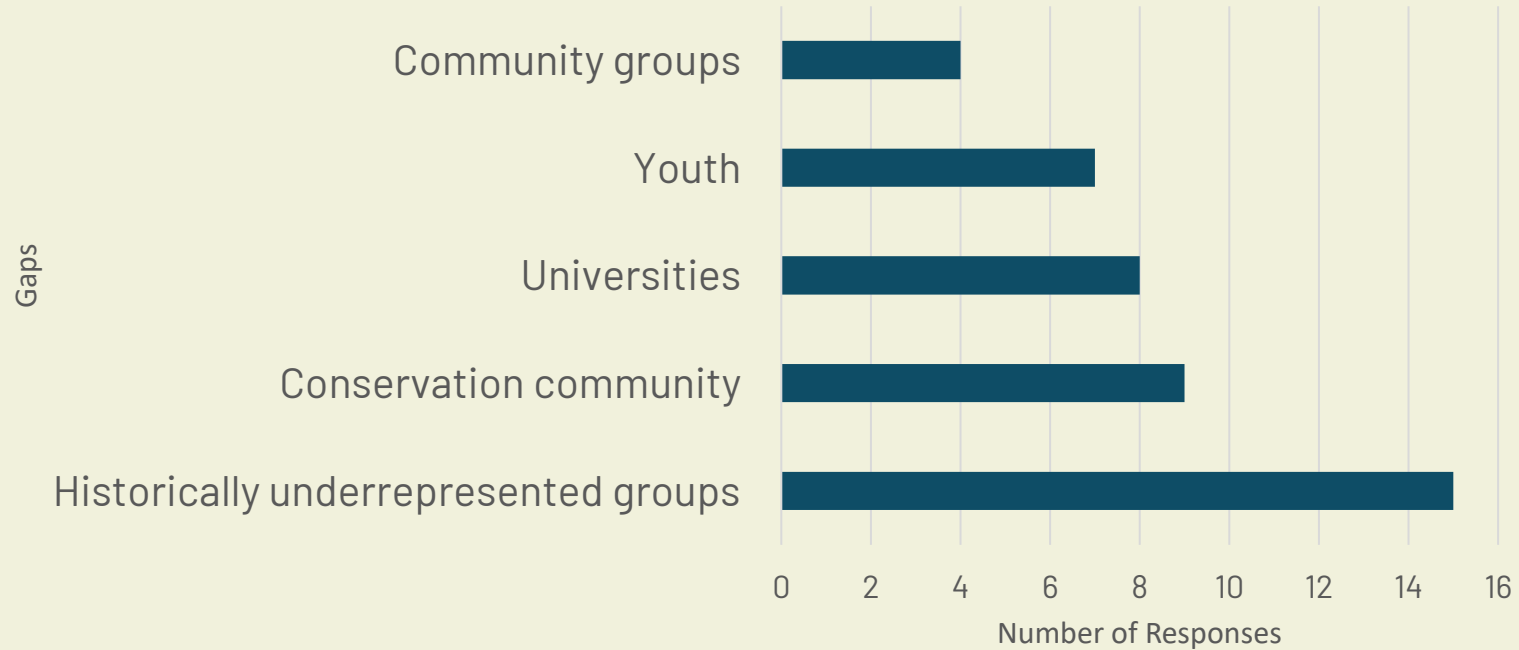


*“It’s just the nature of Federal government, but things move really slowly. It’s a frustration on the side of our volunteers. People get excited about a project, and then it can be years before we can actually do anything. It’s getting better though.”*

*“Staff turnover makes it challenging because they are constantly onboarding new people. It’s hard to build relationships.”*



# Gaps

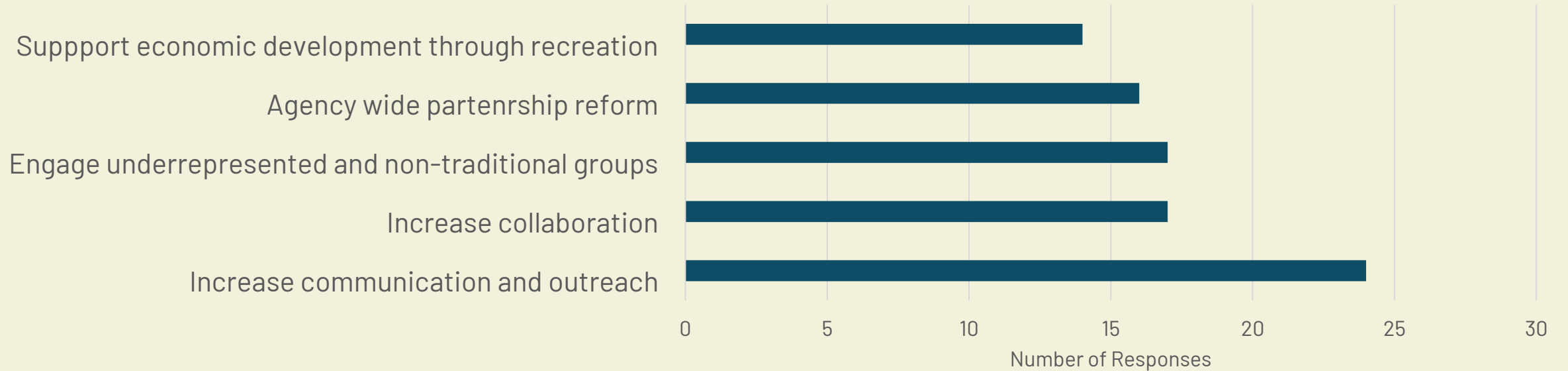


*"Finding other underserved populations in our urban area and black communities in rural southern Ohio."*

*"We are underdeveloped in water quality and restoration."*



# Opportunities



*“They could be more successful telling a story through visual or audio information to help people connect to the Forest.”*

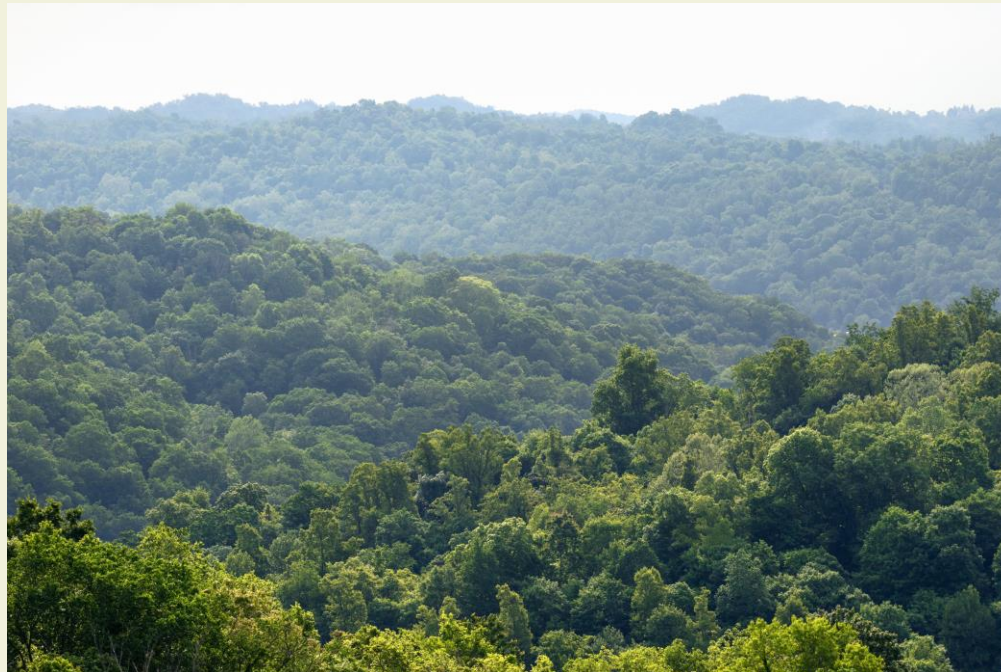
*“Having conversations about what their needs are, we hear about when they need someone at an event but not their overarching plans or long-term goals.”*

*“It would be nice to have more opportunities for conversation, they are so short staffed it’s hard to set a time to talk.”*



# Collaboration Cadres Report Summary

- Fragmented land base
- Illegal OHV use
- Dumping
- FS staff not seen as approachable
- FS not following up with communications with partners and community members
- Internal staff conflict
- Unclear mission and values (recreation, community health, ecological health, economic sustainability, etc.)



# Suggestions

## Public Engagement:

- Create more outreach and engagement opportunities such as regular email/website updates and regular public meeting
- Empower WNF staff to attend more community events
- Educate the public on restoration and active forest management
- Develop recreation-based development in all units

## Staffing:

- Hire more dedicated partnership and engagement staff
- Create a transition plan for staff that are leaving or going on detail

## Partnership Strategy:

- Create a partnership strategy that clarifies internal partnership roles
- Create inclusive and representative partner networks
- Identify underrepresented groups and invite them in



# Thank You

Please contact Emily Jochem with questions  
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