**Poster Abstract for April 27th Collaborative Restoration Workshop**

**Title:** Empowering collaborative forest restoration with locally relevant ecological research

**Authors:** Megan Matonis (USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station) and Dan Binkley (Colorado State University, Dept. of Ecosystem Science & Sustainability, *retired*)

**Abstract (<200 words):** Over the past decade, managers, scientists, and citizens with the Uncompahgre Partnership in Colorado have successfully promoted collaborative learning, built social capital, and incorporated ecological research into forest restoration. Two approaches fundamental to the Partnership’s success are (1) using field trips and data collection to develop a shared understanding of ecological conditions, and (2) defining “undesirable conditions”—rather than desired future conditions—to frame management goals.

**Collaborative learning through citizen science promotes social acceptance for forest restoration and improves the relationship between managers, scientists, and citizens. Collectively gathering and interpreting ecological data can inform management goals and treatment design and serve as a baseline for future monitoring efforts. The Uncompahgre Partnership developed undesirable conditions based on their shared understanding of social perspectives and values and of current and historical forest conditions. Undesirable conditions encourage risk reduction in management practices and help partners recognize the role of ecosystem variability and unforeseeable events in shaping future conditions. Anecdotal evidence from the Uncompahgre Partnership and other collaborative groups suggest that diverse stakeholders can find more common ground around undesirable conditions than desired future conditions, thereby helping to inspire collaborative action around natural resource management.**