

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP): Looking Back, Looking Forward

April 28, 2016

8am-5pm, History Colorado, Colorado Room

This session focused on CFLRP took advantage of the unique opportunity to bring Forest Service staff, partners, and community members involved in CFLRP projects across the country together in-person. This venue provided an opportunity to forge stronger national connections and shared learning opportunities as well as create a space for deep discussion on what's needed and what's next to improve and communicate CFLR successes throughout the CFLR community and beyond. The session was attended by about 50 Forest Service staff and partners and was hosted by the U.S. Forest Service with generous in-kind support for facilitation and notetaking provided by The Meridian Institute.

- For additional workshop materials, including agenda, visit the National Forest Foundation Collaborative Restoration Workshop website: <https://www.nationalforests.org/collaboration-resources/collaborative-restoration-workshop>.



Opening Remarks: John Crockett, USFS Forest Management

- The intent of CFLRP is outcomes, not just outputs.
- To reap the rewards of the program, the effort and work contributed by individuals has been and is crucial.
- CFLRP has achieved positive results overall and has potential for expanding its impact to promote collaborative work. The purpose of the workshop and an objective going forward is to think about and bring forth ideas on improvements and what the program will look like for the future.

Opening Remarks: Dylan Kruse, Sustainable Northwest, CFLR Coalition

- The CFLR Coalition is an advocacy coalition of program partners and supporters working to secure full funding for the program and ensure its successful implementation.
- Goal to rejuvenate the efforts and have more consistent engagement with each of the regions' efforts.
- We are here to discuss how to successfully implement the program - what's working, what is not? This is an opportunity to frame the future of the program and determine how to communicate with the public and the media. This program is the embodiment of the values that we are advocating for - the work you do is proof of concept.
- Considerations for the future: Should we be able to use the appropriated dollars for planning? Should we extend the program in time and geography?

Learning Together for Better Results: Building a Community of Practice

Panel: Dr Will Butler, Assistant Professor, Florida State University; Karen DiBari, Director of Conservation Connect, National Forest Foundation; Andrew Spaeth, Forest Program Director, Sustainable Northwest; Moderator: Lindsay Buchanan, CFLRP Coordinator, USFS Washington Office.

Communities of practice are invaluable tools for shared learning and synergized strategies. Sharing information, tools, capacity, and learning is beneficial to the success of individual collaboratives and promotes dissemination of lessons learned to benefit practitioners broadly for improved outcomes. Through exploration of theory, case studies, and examples, this session provided a foundation for discussing current communication, information exchange, and learning in CFLRP and beyond.

- **Translate shared learning into action.** Identifying common challenges and building (and sharing) solutions and sharing capacity creates synergies, increases capacity, and helps avoid “reinventing the wheel.”
- **Take learning from small successes and apply it incrementally at larger scales.**
- **Interacting and support across multiple scales is valuable.** Sharing between local-level groups, support for cross-collaborative exchange and capturing of ideas through regional communities of practice, and national teams in place to gather and disseminate lessons learned and spread ideas.
- **A variety of tools and approaches can support learning together,** from in-person workshops, to virtual peer learning sessions, website resources, and cross-collaborative technical assistance. (See National Forest Foundation resource page below).
- **While informal communities of practice exist widely, and have been effective, formalizing these networks could provide added benefits** including: broadened access to information and tools, added accountability, and access to more resources or ways to improve efficient use of existing resources.
 - o Many needs for collaboration yet unmet. A key gap is related to communication and adequately reaching people with information on tools and resources for collaboratives.
 - o Structured sharing/learning networks can be very productive, but require funds for upkeep.
- **CFLRP learning and networks have expanded beyond CFLR to other collaborative efforts.**

Resources Referenced

- NFF collaboration [resource webpage](#)
- Various works by X. Briggs (see for example <http://www.businessofgovernment.org/sites/default/files/Communities%20of%20Practices.odf> .pdf)
- Various works by Goldstein and Butler (see for example Goldstein, B. E., & Butler, W. H. (2010). *Expanding the Scope and Impact of Collaborative Planning: Combining Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and Communities of Practice in a Learning Network*. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 76(2), pp. 238-249.)

Telling Our Story: Coming Together for Communication and Action

Panel: Mark Martin, Colorado Front Range CFLR Partnership Coordinator, USFS R2 (Arapaho and Roosevelt NFs); Susan Jane Brown, Staff Attorney, Western Environmental Law Center; Lisa Jennings, Grandfather Project CFLR Coordinator, USFS R8 (Pisgah NF); Jon Schwedler, Associate Director, Restoring America’s Forests, The Nature Conservancy; Moderator: Chris Topik, Director, Restoring America’s Forests, The Nature Conservancy

How do we tell our story with our partners, with local communities, and share with national audiences and stakeholders? What is the value of communications efforts? This panel provided practical examples, tools, and consideration in communicating our successes to a variety of key audiences for CFLRP.

- Through **effective and consistent communication with partners and the community**, projects benefit from people showing up to make work happen on the ground and learn from each other.

- **Monitoring projects and joint shared learning can be a great approach to collaborative learning** and communicating together for action.
- A project may be successful in telling their story to certain audiences (national decision-makers and officials) but not others (communicating successes to local community members). **Effectively communicating to the local community what we have been able to accomplish together can help bring awareness of the project, support for the project, and even further engagement** in the project.
- Need to **identify the right messengers, the right messages, and the right approaches.**
 - o Messages
 - **Make it fun and personal** – use videos, tell the story with faces, have a main character.
 - Connect with people on issues they care about (e.g. wildland urban interface). Be relevant and look for a hook – focus on trends or something “new.”
 - **Reporters want proof** – hard numbers, and before and after photos are good.
 - **The “strange bedfellows” story works well** – former adversaries working together
 - **The language and “key words” we use is important.** Words like *safety, people, healthy, cheap, pilot projects* and superlatives (e.g., biggest, smallest, oldest, newest) resonate well.
 - A **member of the community** can say, "this is how it helped me" to express vulnerability, without the person responsible "bragging."
 - Consider **branding ourselves as working in the "radical center"** – we work between the extremes of stark and provocative images – e.g., taking up arms vs. tree-sitters.
 - **Local stories can connect to national audiences.**
 - o Approaches
 - Many people get their news from **social media** – also an opportunity to have “live” conversations on issues using platforms.
 - **Images** (high res!) are very compelling.
 - Put the **information where people are** (trails, kiosks, trips in the field).
 - Use **local papers in small communities.**
 - **Develop relationships with the local media** so they are comfortable with asking questions and following up.
 - **Involve and educate Public Affairs Office(ers).**
 - o Messenger
 - Identify someone who **illustrates/embodies your story.**
 - Research shows that **people who “wear a hat”** (rangers, firefighters, etc.) are more trusted by the public.

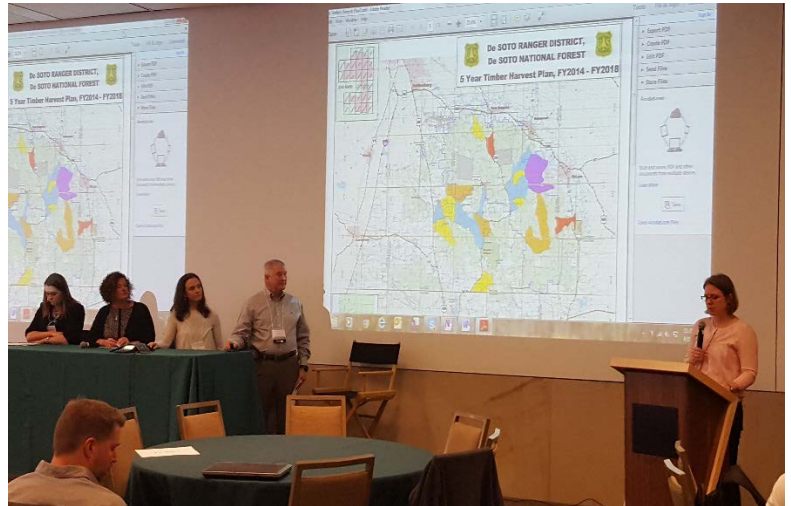
Resources Referenced

- Two page fact sheets for each CFLRP project: Available for download at <http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/forests/collaborative-forest-landscape-restoration-q-a.xml> (lower right-hand of screen)
- Grandfather Restoration Project Blog (TNC-run, multiple authors from TNC, USFS, and guest posts): <https://grandfatherrestorationproject.wordpress.com/>
- Many publications from the Roundtable: http://www.frontrangeroundtable.org/Published_Documents.php

Implementation Innovations, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

Panel: Jimmy Mordica, Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction CFLR Coordinator, USFS R8 (DeSoto NF); Kim Pierson and Amie Anderton, District Ranger and Weiser Little Salmon Headwaters CFLR Coordinator, USFS R4 (Payette NF); Rebecca Barnard, National Forestry Programs Manager, National Wild Turkey Federation; Moderator: Jessica Robertson, National Restoration Planning Team Lead, USFS Washington Office

Increasing the pace and scale of project implementation is not easy. What have some of our CFLR projects learned about project implementation through CFLR over the last few years? Our panelists shared what they have struggled with, where they succeeded, and what they learned.



- **Recognize and leverage human capital.**
 - o **Get everyone on the same page.** Schedule meetings when partners are available and provide them with all the necessary information.
 - o **Use all programs and tools available.** Use detailers, AmeriCorps programs, etc. – be creative in how you enhance capacity to get the work done. Engage youth.
 - o **Choose the right people to do the work and to engage.** Everyone has different skills and personalities.
 - o **Define the roles of the collaborative** and collaborative members, and be mindful of partners' strengths/niche/needs.
 - o **Role of line officer is not just attendance,** but providing support and leadership as well.
- **Effective stakeholder engagement is key to success: pursue full engagement of parties from the very beginning and have transparent communication.**
 - o **Work with partners, tribes, regulatory agency from the beginning** and throughout the planning process. Hold field trips at every step and be transparent.
 - o Clearly **communicate sideboards early and explain rationale often.**
 - o **Use subcommittees** to do work outside of the main group.
- **Communicate.** Do partners and community members know a project is part of CFLRP? They can only be advocates and help spread key messages for the program if they are familiar with CFLRP and can make the connection with their project.
 - o Use all tools, social media, TV, newsletters, local newspapers.
 - o Provide local counties with educational information – “restoration 101”
- **Plan.** Look to the future and develop long-term project plans to work towards.
- **Make the science applicable.** Strategically target the use of science/research to make implementation possible within time and resource constraints.
- **Take intelligent risks.**
- **Use the right tools.** Think beyond Farm Bill authorities. Understand what tools are out there and the right situations to use them in.

Community Café

Workshop attendees participated in small group breakout sessions to brainstorm and generate feedback on four overarching questions. The summaries below are not exhaustive, but provide an idea of the feedback and themes the groups discussed.

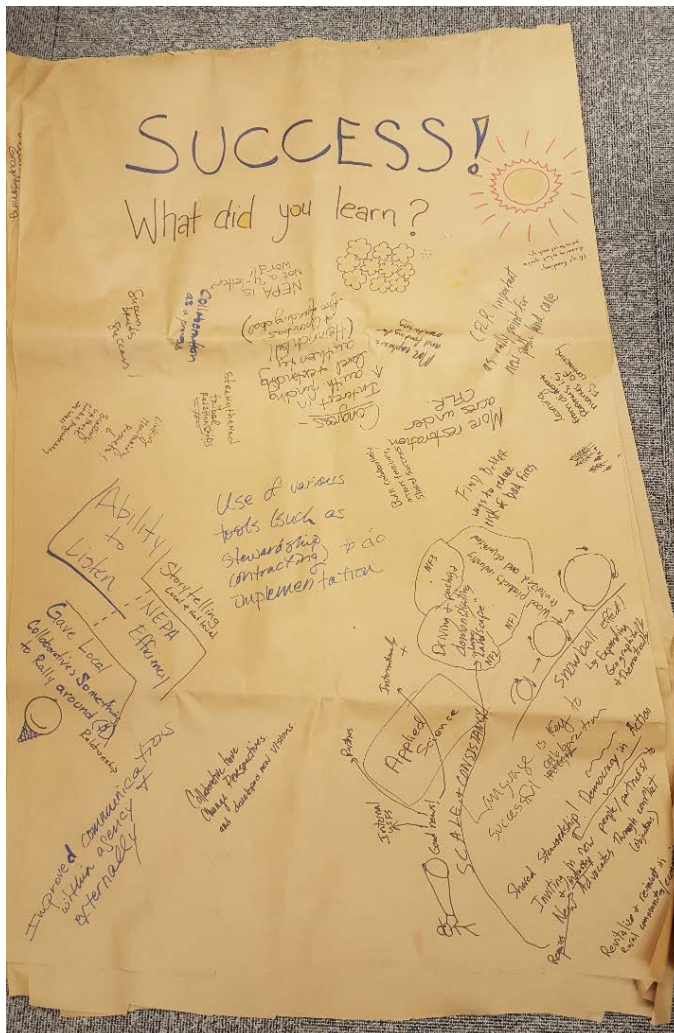
CFLRP Successes: What Have We Learned?

Collaboration and Community Engagement: "Relationships primed to take action"

- The Agency is a better communicator, both internally and externally.
- Collaboration has brought different perspectives together, helped overcome hurdles, changed perspectives, developed new visions, and promoted group learning.
- CFLRP has helped to strengthen previously difficult relationships.
- CFLRP has served as a rallying point for collaborative action.
- Collaboratives have become agency advocates and ambassadors to support project success and push the envelope.
- Partners have an increased understanding of how the Forest Service works and what it does.
- Citizens are more involved than ever before in managing National Forests. This is democracy in action.

"CFLR as Learning Laboratory:" The right tools, and the rights scale, for tangible results

- CFLRP has increased the scale, scope, and pace of restoration.
- CFLRP forces people to look at landscapes instead of the forest boundary.
- Focusing on large landscapes matches the scale of the problem.
- CFLRP led to ability to burn collaboratively across fence lines, which has in turn led to more successful prescribed burning.
- CFLRP sparked leadership and risk taking that has led to NEPA efficiencies.
- CFLRP led to increased use of stewardship and other tools to increase work, and expanded use of the right tool for right job.



Investing in Multi-Party, Applied Monitoring

- Support for multi-party monitoring has generated important information and informed adaptive management.

Snowball Effects: Proof of concept for an expanding model

- Success breeds success. CFLRP has served as a catalyst for many other initiatives and is becoming a model around the world.
- When Forest Service staff and partners involved in a successful CFLR move to new areas or projects, they become advocates for this way of doing business and share learning.
- CFLR is a proof of concept that collaborative restoration works.

Investing in Place: Connecting restoration with local communities

- CFLRP interjects social and economic values and connects the public to their public lands.
- CFLRP promotes investment in local contracting.
- The program enhances social and civic capacity to respond to challenges, including engaging youth.
- CFLRP encourages investment in social capacity (including working with youth).
- The program is also revitalizing rural communities and promoting/establishing forest industry with promise of consistency.
- The wood products industry has been revitalized and diversified through CFLRP.

Investments to Do the Work Needed

- National attention leads to increased capacity.
- The funding associated with the program allows needed work to get done, and the timeline allows for longer-term planning.

CFLR Challenges: What Have We Learned?

Getting (and Keeping) the Right People at the Table

- It can be hard to get all voices at the table.
- Partners and community members may have limited capacity, especially in rural areas.
- Collaborative fatigue and burnout is a challenge, as well as continually bringing in new people.
- Collaboration takes time, patience, tenacity – and doesn't solve everything.
- Support may be more reactive than proactive.
- It's important to define the purpose of the collaborative.
- There are still instances of FS employees not understanding collaboration and wanting to do it "the old way."
- It is hard to retain Forest Service staff throughout the duration of the project, and it takes time to build relationships and learn the program. We need more capacity, training, and skills oriented towards CFLRP (e.g. partnerships, agreements, etc.)

Telling Our Story: Communicating for Results

- Communications – need to get better at telling stories and using pictures and engaging the public affairs office.

Understanding and Using the Whole Toolbox

- It can be difficult to know what tools are available – and develop skills and knowledge to determine which tools are most effective and use them efficiently, both for the Agency and partners.
- Internal agency inertia is preventing use of all tools.

Adaptive Monitoring for the Long Term

- Short term monitoring for long term results: the results we expect from our work will take longer to see on the ground than the timeframe for monitoring
- How do we incorporate adaptive management monitoring?

New Approaches: Integration, Education, and Maximizing the Investment

- CFLR does not talk about maintaining the investment. Many ecosystems will need maintenance treatments.
- There is a limited ability to be adaptive (engrained in NEPA) within project decision-making.
- In some cases, there's been a lack of imagination on forests to truly take advantage of the opportunity – to go beyond what we normally do.
- There can be lack of alignment between districts on approaches to pursue.
- Need to better integrate across sectors and address a multitude of ecosystem services.

- National attention and money is perceived as a suck from other areas and programs.

FY2019: Uncertainty of What Happens Next

- What will happen post 2019 with appropriations? Uncertainty makes it difficult to plan and prepare.
- FS leadership won't staff up because it's only 10 years.

Making the Money Work

- 50% match requirement is tough to attain, especially in context of the recession.
- Not being able to use CFLR funds off of NFS lands is a limitation, as is not being able to spend those funds on planning.
- We need to recognize that restoration may cost money rather than creating a profit.

Project Implementation in a Changing Context

- Conditions change over time, from biomass markets to catastrophic fires within the CFLR landscape. How can we adapt and still meet performance expectations?

Sustaining Our Efforts Over Time

CFLR Reauthorization and Funding

- Extend program authorization and funding.
- Keep with it – perfect it as a business model before moving on to the next initiative.

Sharing the Story, Demonstrating Successes

- Demonstrate success – tell the story locally and nationally to show that the projects are worth the investment.

Explore Other Approaches to Support the Work

- Need to build in sustainability in case funds are gone in 2019. Look for new sources of money/capacity, build retained receipts, explore Payment for Ecosystem Services and conservation finance approaches

Sustaining and Building Relationships

- Pull in new partners with new perspectives and establish expectations with new partners.

Planning and Systems for Transitions

- Plan for succession: including transition documentation, having overlap between staff, and making introductions to key people.

Learning and Documenting

- Promote cross-regional learning and invest in consolidation of information and documents.

Make CFLR Principles How We Do Business – and Expand Them

- Normalize CFLR principles and concepts where it's appropriate to do so.
- Look across boundaries to new landscapes, and integrate broader components of ecological restoration and ecosystem services.

Get the Support Needed and be Adaptive and Resilient

- Assign tasks.
- Do external reviews
- Ask for help.
- Identify and adapt to challenges.

Invest in Agency Personnel and Capacity

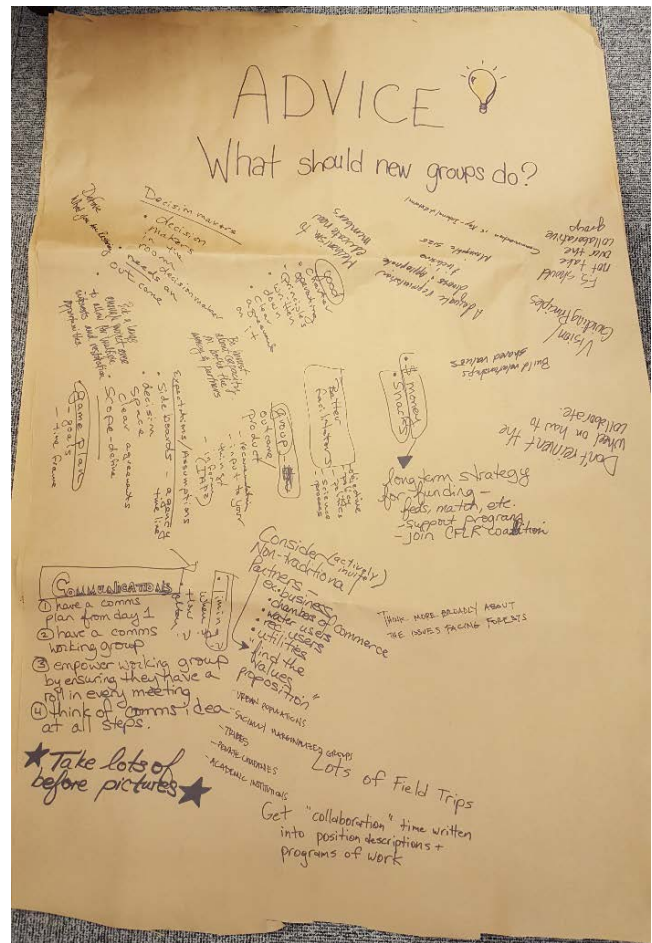
- Support Forest Service staff in CFLR roles – incentives to stay in-place.
- Hire a designated CFLR coordinator to enhance capacity.
- Hire and train agency personnel in collaboration skills.

Planning and Implementing for the Future

- Keep up with trends and conditions and bring in outside science to inform deliberations and decision-making.

Have a Long Term Plan

- Create a business plan with intentionality – build the infrastructure that will support the transition of people over time.
- Tie in planning to outcomes in the community to stay relevant to the public.
- Be transparent about the costs of restoration and prioritize funding.
- In planning, take into account supporting partner participation over time.



Advice for Collaborative Restoration Efforts

Building a Collaborative: Spend Time Setting the Stage

- Establish norms and ground rules for the collaborative process upfront, including areas of agreement, and codify them. There is no “one way” to collaborate, but those involved need to agree on an approach and a structure.
- Clarify sidebars, expectations, and assumptions for decision-space, timelines, and scope of work.
- If consensus is the objective, have a fallback option.
- Revisit objectives and zones of agreement often.

Bringing People to the Table

- Early on, actively and collaboratively find a way to determine who is missing to represent diverse and inclusive interests, and continuously reexamine this question.
- Be strategic and creative about partners and actively invite non-traditional partners.
- Use an interest-based versus position-based approach to dialogue.
- Engage youth, including colleges and universities.
- Be proactive in seeking out litigators and finding solutions to their issues.
- Choose the right people to participate (Agency).
- Decision makers should be in the room.

- Get “collaboration” time written into position descriptions and programs of work.

Working Together: Multiple Options for Multiple Objectives

- Network with other collaboratives early on to share approaches and lessons learned – don’t reinvent the wheel.
- Use spectrum of collaboration options depending on context and adapt or change approach as needed over time. Provide people with many options for participation (meetings, website, videoconferencing) – otherwise it can decrease or preclude participation.
- Keep in mind that one size does not fit all – while many collaboratives noted the benefits of a neutral, third party facilitator, others are successfully using a “rotating” facilitator role, for example.
- Strategically planned field trips with a specific focus are a good component throughout the project cycle – and think beyond the field trip too.
- Find the right time and spacing for the group to meet.
- Use working groups to tackle specific issues, and specialize.
- Use joint fact-finding and science forums.
- Have a mechanism to educate new members.
- Break bread together.

Celebrate and Share Successes for Outreach, Education, and Action

- Make writing about (and sharing) your success a habit – through words, stories, and photos.
- Have a communications plan in place and have a working group of person focused on communications.

Project Planning: Balancing Capacity and the Need

- Have a strategic/business plan for operations and funding in place.
- Define what you are restoring.
- Think broadly about the issues facing forests.
- Some participants emphasized setting goals based on the scale and scope of the project (size, timeline, funding, etc) whereas others encouraged projects to “think big” and the funding will follow (basing the plan on what is needed to restore the land).

Opportunities of Working at a Landscape Scale

- Pick a large enough project area to allow for multiple interests and restoration opportunities.
- Think about landscape-scale NEPA to open up opportunities.
- Implement and plan (NEPA) cycles concurrently to keep work moving forward.

Multi-Party Monitoring: Start Early and Make Use of All Tools Available

- Early on, clearly define ecological and socioeconomic monitoring questions in collaboration with multi-party monitoring team. Establish a baseline early.
- Frame questions around desired outcomes rather than concerns.
- Provide opportunities for annual monitoring meetings to share and discuss results.
- Find ways to get the information needed (using whatever approach/means needed – from remote sensing to stand exams).

Connecting People to the Land: Socio-Economic Objectives

- Include socio-economic outcomes as a project objective.
- Include recreation components to connect people to the land and give them ownership.



CFLRP: Regional Breakout Discussions

Regions 8 & 9

Participants from Regions 8 and 9 discussed current efforts to share positions, integrate monitoring, and host joint meetings with shared partners. The group discussed opportunities to improve shared learning and capacity building through regular R8/R9 conference calls, enhancing partnership support with the regional office, conducting region-wide socioeconomic monitoring, and creating opportunities for projects in the region to visit one another.

Region 6

Participants from Region 6 discussed current cross-collaborative networking and learning opportunities, including the annual meeting hosted by Sustainable Northwest, coordinating monitoring plans, and hosting shared meetings on specific topics. The group agreed that sharing information helps improve outcomes and consistency and helps make collaborative ways of doing business a more mainstream approach. Opportunities to enhance sharing centered on monitoring consistency, building in opportunities for neighboring projects to connect more, pursuing regional economic synthesis, and having more “check ins.” There may also be a need to share more on the national-level tools available.

Region 5

The Region promotes learning and networking across the three projects through SCALE. Sharing science and resources has been helpful for the projects. However, there are opportunities to do more to support learning about new tools, NEPA approaches, bring in regulatory agencies, and pursue regular communication through approaches like quarterly calls with CFLR projects. A communication plan could be helpful to increase media outreach and public awareness. Synthesizing lessons learned at the regional level would be helpful, as would bringing in a range of staff areas, from recreation, to public affairs, to fire.

Regions 2 & 3

Projects are not currently interacting or sharing information with one another often. Pursuing field trips involving multiple CFLR projects would be valuable, as the group recognized that challenges and constraints are similar within and across regions. Region-level meetings would be welcome, and there is particular interest in multi-party monitoring and adaptive management topics, innovative communication techniques, and enhanced partnership support.

Region 1

Projects share information informally with one another, and through National Forest Foundation workshops and webinars. A variety of sharing tools are helpful, from the webinars to informal networking and topic-specific workshops. Attending more meetings can be overwhelming.

Next Steps

- Initial ideas on Washington Office commitments to support next steps:
 - Next steps: pull together information and feedback from the workshop to share and discuss.
 - Communication has been a major theme of the day – providing relevant resources is something the WO can work with partners to do.
 - Support on partnerships and building community(ies) of practice.
 - Commitment to focus on FY 2019 and what is coming next, and staying in communication.
 - “Onboarding” guidance and documentation for new coordinators and project participants.