

Collaborative Restoration Workshop

National Forest Foundation | April 2016

Planning | Building Momentum and Planning for Restoration Through Five-Year Plans and Other Endeavors

Key Topics: Cross-Boundary Partnership

Speakers

- **Alex Dunn**, Environmental Coordinator, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest
- **Mark Corrao**, Hydrologist, Northwest Management
- **William Carromero**, Invasive Species Specialist, Rangeland Management, U.S. Forest Service

Overview

The panelists described different approaches to determining where and how to select forest projects on the landscape, and shared advice, strategies, and lessons from engaging collaboratively in mid-range planning efforts.

Alex Dunn – Transparency in Forest-Scale Restoration Action Plan Development: Opening the Black Box

Alex shared a case study in Southwest Montana where the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Working Group (Working Group) and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BDNF) are working together to create a multi-year action plan for accelerating restoration projects across the 3.3 million acre BDNF. The existing process for project prioritization was not transparent, internally or externally. This contributed to a low-trust condition and precipitated the need for additional transparency in the project prioritization process. The BDNF worked with the Working Group to develop a new process using agreed-upon criteria to evaluate projects. Once the criteria were identified, the BDNF shared information about each project under consideration in a day-long workshop with the Working Group. Following that, both the BDNF and the Working Group rated projects, resulting in a relative comparison of different project attributes. Finally, the evaluations were used to populate a multi-year restoration action plan for the Forest. Benefits of the process include a shared understanding of specific constraints affecting the pace of restoration, building of trust through transparent processes, and joint ownership of the entire restoration project portfolio across the BDNF.

William Carromero – Ozark Highlands Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Planning

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forests worked with the Oak Working Group through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) project to compare the impact of compartment-level planning with landscape-level planning. They realized that smaller-scale (compartment) planning was not achieving desired conditions on the forest, so they changed the approach to landscape-level. A challenge with working across the landscape is that multiple activities are occurring, often at the same time, so it is very important to be sure your team is well-integrated in order to reduce conflict.

Lessons

- Stakeholders can be extremely helpful in prioritizing where and when to work, and stakeholder involvement is crucial to project success.
- Landscape scale analyses provide more flexibility when determining program of work.



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- Small projects will not get to desired conditions.
- Landscape level planning requires more involvement from program managers to avoid conflict between activities.

Mark Corrao – Anchor Forests: Improving Forest Ecosystem Function through Balanced Social, Economic, and Ecologic Management

The forest crises we now face are too large and complex to be addressed at a local level or by any single ownership. Nationwide we are losing our ability to maintain resilient forests as a result of insects, disease, and wildfire impacts, forestry infrastructure reductions, and economic uncertainties. This is further exacerbated by an increasing urban population culturally removed from the natural environment. In the western U.S. nearly ten percent of the 740 million acres of forest lands are in a hazardous condition resulting from historic wholesale fire suppression and a lack of management. As a result, we are now faced with degraded forest conditions and increasingly severe wildfires that devastate forest ecosystems, burn homes and impact communities. The purpose of the Anchor Forest Project is to evaluate the-state-of-the-industry, successes and challenges of forest collaboratives, stakeholder sentiment, monetized ecosystem services, and available funding for eastern Washington. The results present treatment acres needed to address deteriorating forestland conditions and estimate the benefits these treatment acres would generate in the form of jobs, wages, product-sale revenue, and avoided-costs. The Anchor Forest concept is an innovative framework with the potential to leverage collaborative efforts against the challenges facing landscape-scale forest management.

Lessons

- How do you resolve conflicts when setting priorities? Look for areas of overlap and agreement. If conflict is present, it is important to carefully navigate it so that the conflict is acknowledged but enthusiasm and momentum is supported while figuring out a solution.
- Forest management activities should be implemented at sufficient spatial and temporal scales to significantly impact the landscape.
- Identify direct and indirect impacts of management actions through long-term monitoring.

Resources

- [The Anchor Forests Project](https://www.nationalforests.org/crw)



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