

# Collaborative Restoration Workshop

## National Forest Foundation | April 2016

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### Science & Action | Collaboratively Engaging in Science

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#### Speakers

- **Lee Cerveny**, Research Social Scientist, Pacific Northwest Research Station, USFS
- **Megan Matonis**, Biological Scientist, Rocky Mountain Research Station, USFS
- **Mike Petersen**, Executive Director, The Lands Council

#### Overview

In this session speakers introduced examples of the role of science in collaborative processes. Below are three successful examples, followed by advice for collaboratively engaging in science.

#### **Lee Cerveny – Human Ecology Mapping – Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, WA**

Human ecology mapping was developed as an approach used in public engagement efforts to gather information about forest destinations, special areas, and routes that matter to people. These spatial data are digitized to develop maps that collectively convey a group or community's relationship with a landscape and can be analyzed alongside other geo-spatial data layers for planning purposes.

A recent human ecology mapping project has aided one national forest's planning process for travel management. In the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, citizens and stakeholders shared information about their favorite forest destinations and the forest roads that mattered most to them. These data were gathered in multiple community workshops and an online survey. Resulting data was used in the development of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie's "Sustainable Roads Strategy." The project also served to train a cadre of local stakeholders and citizens in human ecology mapping techniques that expanded local capacity to conduct social science research and to recognize its benefits.

#### **Megan Matonis – Citizen Science Data-Collection – Uncompahgre Plateau, CO**

The Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project (UP CFLRP) was born from relationships and successes established through various partnerships and past collaborative projects between the Uncompahgre Partnership, U.S. Forest Service, local and county governments, interest groups, industry and others. While planning a 10-year restoration project covering over 500,000 acres, the Forest Service initiated a citizen scientists program to train volunteers to collect important data for planning and monitoring restoration efforts.

This citizen scientist program involves stakeholders in collecting data that then informed restoration treatments and monitoring. Researchers from Colorado State University helped the group establish a research methodology for reconstructing pre-European settlement ponderosa pine forests on the plateau. Volunteers mapped the location of old ponderosa stumps burned in historic fires. The data collected in this effort showed a forest that was much less dense than is currently found on the plateau, and has informed current restoration efforts. Ongoing monitoring efforts have then measured the effect of treatments on invasive species, forest density, and native plant establishment.



## **Mike Petersen – Collaboratives Incorporating Science – Colville National Forest, WA**

Timber and conservation interests came together in Northeast Washington nearly 15 years ago and discussed guidelines for silviculture. It was critical to run those guidelines through a model that would show what volume might come off the forest and it was also critical that the guidelines were using the best available science.

Agreeing on the science is a large part of making collaboration work. Instead of debating only as competing interests, various parties can find common ground concerning the science of what conditions and types of intervention foster the most sustainable forests. Once the focus is on the science it becomes clear that there is valuable expertise and forest knowledge on all sides of the table.

### **Lessons from Panel Discussion**

- Citizen-science projects should keep things simple – do not overly complicate information and tasks. Offer clearly defined and easily accessible ways to be involved in the process. Be ready to explain the finer points of a project and the methodology behind it, but offer quick and simple ways for anyone interested to participate.
- Be aware of how often you engage the public. Make sure they are aware of project timelines and when they can expect to hear from you. Delays in communication are detrimental to sustaining public involvement.
- If you are engaging the public, welcome all interest groups that want to be involved. It may seem intuitive that keeping interest groups to a minimum could create a more neutral environment. However, it can often create animosity or give the appearance of bias.
- Take the time to learn the values and history of each member of the collaborative. This helps the whole group expand their understanding of the forest. Moreover, when the group does appeal to scientific research, they can do so in ways most relevant to the values and interests of the other group members.

### **Resources**

- [A Pocket Guide to Pocket Science](#)
- A scholarly introduction to Human Ecology Mapping: [Making sense of human ecology mapping: an overview of approaches to integrating socio-spatial data into environmental planning](#)

