

Collaborative Restoration Workshop

National Forest Foundation | April 2016

Implementation | Cross Boundary Implementation: All Lands Approaches

Key Topics: Cross-Boundary Partnership

Speakers

- **Alan Clark**, Watershed Program Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources
- **Karl Welch**, Timber Program Manager, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

Overview

This session reviewed two examples of cross-boundary, interagency projects. Working across boundaries in ways that involve multiple parties can greatly increase project capacity and better achieve ecological goals across a landscape.

Alan Clark – Working Across Boundaries in Utah – Watershed Restoration Initiative

Landscape-level restoration, including watershed improvement and post-fire rehabilitation, often requires projects that cross boundaries between state, federal, tribal, and private land. The Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI) was created to build partnerships, leverage funding, and unify restoration efforts across the state.

WRI achieves cross-boundary implementation by involving partners from the very beginning. WRI is a bottom-up initiative where project planning occurs at a local level. Five regional teams elect their own leaders, establish focus areas, score and rank project proposals, and assist their members in implementing projects.

Besides working across boundaries, these partnerships allow for increased funding for projects. The core funding for WRI comes from an appropriation by the Utah Legislature to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but this is matched many times over by contributions by partners. Since its inception, WRI partners (now 122 partners) have completed over 1,450 projects, treating over 1.22 million acres of watersheds with an investment by all partners of over \$169 million. Many projects completed by the partnership are cross-ownership boundary, particularly when it comes to fire rehabilitation. The Forest Service has been involved in 178 completed projects through WRI as a funder, landowner, or project manager through 2015.

Karl Welch – Good Neighbor Agreement between Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF)

The Good Neighbor Authority provides the opportunity to work across jurisdictional boundaries and manage forestlands in a mixed ownership setting. It can leverage state resources to increase capacity for work on national forest lands.

Before signing a Good Neighbor agreement the CNNF was short of stated objectives and desired future conditions in its 2004 forest plan. As of October, 2015 the forest had National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis completed for approximately 320 MMBF of volume ready for implementation, but with little prospect of increasing implementation schedules. The Good Neighbor agreement with Wisconsin's



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DNR allowed the CNNF to greatly increase capacity to fulfill its forest plan objectives while also offering great benefits to the state agency and the local economy.

Lessons from Panel Discussion

- All parties need to be empowered by their agency to make decisions.
- Be prepared to clearly communicate, be willing to listen, and negotiate in good faith to achieve mutually desired outcomes.
- Internal communications describing what is expected and why (as well as what is NOT expected) need to occur early and often to avoid confusion and the spread of misinformation.
- Large cross-boundary partnerships can create an incredible amount of administrative work. Here are some ways to streamline this work:
 - Determine which partners are best at different tasks, i.e. federal agencies may be able to more quickly leverage funding; state agencies may be skilled at writing contracts, etc.
 - Keep NEPA simpler (possibly) by reviewing large-area projects all at once, rather than repeating the NEPA process on very similar smaller projects throughout the forest.
 - When possible, empower local and regional authorities to make decisions.

Resources

- [Watershed Restoration Initiative](#)
- [Good Neighbor Authority introduction](#)
- [Good Neighbor Authority peer learning session recordings](#)

