

Collaborative Restoration Workshop

National Forest Foundation | April 2016

Collaboration & Engagement | Launching and Nurturing a Collaborative Group – Colorado Front Range Roundtable

Key Topics: Collaborative Process

Speakers

- **Megan Davis**, Policy Analyst, Boulder County
- **Sara Mayben**, Renewable Resources Staff Officer, Region 2, USFS
- **Mike Lester**, State Forester & Director, Colorado State Forest Service
- **Heather Bergman**, Facilitator/President, Peak Facilitation Group

Overview

This session was a panel discussion of the Front Range Roundtable's story. Conversation topics included how the group formed, important considerations made by members while launching and nurturing the effort, the decision-making and governance structure, and thoughts on the group's future.

About the Front Range Roundtable

The Front Range Roundtable (FRR) was established in 2004 with the goal of reducing wildfire risk to forest-based communities and restoring forest health across Colorado's ten Front Range counties. The forerunner to the FRR was the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership, an effort organized by the U.S. Forest Service's Regional Forester to increase coordination of hazardous fuel reduction efforts across state and federal agencies after Colorado's 2002 record wildfire season, which included the 138,000 acre Hayman Fire.

When the FRR began meeting, the group members identified four priority issues - community engagement, ecology, economics and policy - and established working groups to address these issues. These working groups developed the scientific basis and social consensus that led to the 2006 report, *Living with Fire: Protecting Communities and Restoring Forests*. This vision document identified a 1.5 million acre area for treatment on Colorado's Front Range. The Living with Fire document allowed the Front Range Roundtable to focus its efforts on promoting treatments on these identified areas and to pursue additional policy and economic solutions to increase treatments.

The Front Range Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (FR-CFLR) project proposal was one of the first ten in the U.S. to be selected in Fall 2010. The objective of the FR-CFLR project is to reduce risks by focusing forest treatments in areas where community protection, watershed restoration, and habitat improvement goals can be achieved in conjunction with forest restoration objectives. The FR-CFLR project intends to concurrently create socioeconomic benefits through job creation, increased wood utilization, and increased levels of collaboration.

Lessons

Each panelist discussed their involvement in the group and what they've learned along the way. A number of lessons and keys to success emerged in the discussion. More information on group governance and policies can be found on their webpage, listed below under Resources.



Explore more: nationalforests.org/crw

- Develop a detailed mission and vision, including a map of priorities and accomplishments.
- Be bold and ambitious, but realistic.
- Shifts in membership can create chaos; develop protocols to make transitions smoother.
- Collaboration is messy; be prepared for conflict and develop an issue resolution policy.
- In the face of conflicting science and opinions, focus on experimenting and monitoring to create greater consensus on an issue.
- Field trips are a good qualitative evaluation process.
- Take the time to listen. This means working to understand why each member has come to the table. In this process, listen for and identify collective values.
- Build relationships and trust between members and partners.
- Adapt the collaborative for who shows up.
- Hire a facilitator who has the skills you need at the time.
- Focus on where the group has agreement first and then focus on areas of disagreement.

Questions to the Panel

- What kind of facilitator do I need to hire – what are the qualities and skillsets to look for?
 - It depends on what you need at a given time. Ask your group what they think they need.
- What is the distinction between the “members” and the “public” in the FRR?
 - The group is open to all, but to be a member a person must be willing to actively participate.
- How did the Front Range Long Term Stewardship Contract integrate with the CFLRP?
 - The Stewardship Contract was a means for accomplishing the treatments under the CFLRP.
- How do you create a well-balanced collaborative group?
 - Make meetings interesting and exciting.
 - Invite potential members to come speak to the group.
 - Seize opportunities when the time is right.
- How does the Forest Service participate in this process, and does it cause concern re: FACA (Federal Advisory Committee Act)?
 - Compliance with FACA is not difficult. It is good to remember to keep the group open to the public, allow feedback on materials created, keep notes and processes transparent.
 - The Forest Service usually determines where to draw the line on the level of participation on its own. Members do not draw the line for the Forest Service.

Resources

- [Roundtable webpage, including group information and publications](#)



Explore more: nationalforests.org/crw