

# Collaborative Restoration Workshop

## National Forest Foundation | April 2016

---

### Science & Action | What's Working, What's Not: Integrating Science and Action

---

#### Speakers

- **Daniel Williams**, Research Social Scientist, Rocky Mountain Research Station, USFS
- **Courtney Schultz**, Assistant Professor, Forest & Rangeland Stewardship, Colorado State University
- **Anne Carlson**, Climate Associate, The Wilderness Society

#### Overview

This session reviewed multiple issues surrounding integrating science into action. Presenters discussed theoretical issues about the social learning involved in collaboration, reviewed current research topics in collaborative management, and highlighted examples of collaborative use of science in planning and implementation.

#### Daniel Williams – Place-Based Collaborative Learning

Place has emerged as a significant topic within conservation research and practice. In particular, Place-oriented inquiry and practice from the social sciences can help us understand and overcome persistent gaps between science and practice.

##### *The Problem – An inadequate idea of science and knowledge*

The pursuit of integrated science often starts with poor assumptions about the nature of science. One is that scientific knowledge is “universally” true regardless of time, place, and the position (e.g., cultural background, world-view) of the knower. In other words, it is assumed that people can, in principle, objectively observe the world. If this were the case, then scientific knowledge would come to us like pieces of a puzzle, where results from different disciplines could be collected and pieced together cleanly. Collaborative conservation, then, would simply be a matter of stakeholders collecting the appropriate data to put together the puzzle.

In reality, knowledge of a place is far more complicated than this. People know a place from multiple viewpoints and through the lens of differing values. This diversity in how a landscape is known leads to complex problems and deep disagreements.

##### *A Way Forward – Place-based collaborative social learning*

The challenge is to create the social conditions for social learning. Collaborative tools try to structure dialogue in a way that brings people together on the basis of their shared interest in the place, even if they share little else. Recognizing the positionality of human knowing helps bring legitimacy to the different viewpoints, ideally fostering mutual learning.

In such contexts, the governance of complex adaptive systems depends on bringing together the partial knowledge and combined actions of many practitioners and stakeholders, each familiar with and responsible for various parts of the overall system. In sum, place-based social learning addresses the inherent uncertainty and complexity of knowledge, bridges the epistemological divide between local and generalizable scientific knowledge, and validates knowledge-creation among stakeholders.



Explore more: [nationalforests.org/crw](http://nationalforests.org/crw)

Two pieces of advice from social science:

1. Be sensitive to the view from somewhere – that is what is subjective, actor-oriented research brings to light.
2. Different domains of knowledge (e.g., social, ecological, moral, experiential) are not easily integrated. A governance system which takes this into account will benefit from the involvement of diverse stakeholders.

### **Courtney Schultz – Social Science Research of CFLRP**

A network of researchers studying the implementation of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) formed in 2012 to coordinate research efforts, reduce overlaps and identify possible synergies. CFLRP is interesting to researchers as a national movement towards collaborative and adaptive forms of governance. Moreover, the program provides a ready-made set of cases on similar timelines. Studying how each project site manages to address the task of collaborative planning and monitoring offers great insight into what produces successful collaboration.

Current research is still evaluating if the promise of CFLRP has come to fruition and if the program should be extended. Social science research helps to identify the issues encountered in various forms of collaboration and governance structures. More than just monitoring outcomes on the forest, much can be gained from better understanding the dynamics of the collaborative process. Topics for future social science research include:

- How do we define collaboration and do we need to?
- How do we sustain collaboration and build trust?
- How do we create an organization capable of learning, sharing lessons learned, and supporting new forms of governance?
- How can we capture and diffuse lessons learned about collaborating, using science, building effective monitoring programs, creating restoration objectives, and defining desired conditions to other contexts, like forest planning?

### **Anne Carlson – Crown Adaptation Partnership – Crown of the Continent (Montana/Canada)**

'Taking action on climate change' is a strategic initiative of the Crown Adaptation Partnership (CAP), led by the Crown Managers Partnership, Crown Conservation Initiative, the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Rockies Adaptation Partnership, and The Wilderness Society. CAP brings together the expertise of a broad suite of government and conservation representatives, tribes and First Nations, universities, and community stakeholders to implement coordinated climate change adaptation strategies across the Crown of the Continent ecosystem based on the best available science.

In late 2013, CAP began working to identify a 'Big Tent' framework for collaboratively addressing climate change across the Crown of the Continent. The group agreed that components of the new 'Big Tent' model included: (1) working at the landscape-scale, (2) using the best available science, (3) diverse and inclusive collaboration, but with (4) a solid understanding of the priorities and directives of each jurisdiction in the Crown, (5) sharing effective management actions across the landscape, (6) establishment of adaptive management frameworks, and (7) engaging a mixture of senior-level managers, middle managers, and on-the-ground biologists and partners. By the end of the first workshop, participants had identified multiple opportunities for collaboration, including: aquatic invasive species; five needle pine restoration; cold-adapted native salmonids; terrestrial invasive plants; and prescribed fire in mixed severity fire regimes. A final category of mesocarnivores was added after follow-up meetings with Forest Service staff and additional partners.



Explore more: [nationalforests.org/crw](http://nationalforests.org/crw)

## Lessons

- Science can sometimes act as a conflict-mitigator, but it can also add to conflict.
- Differing values and perspectives toward wildlife species can be a challenge.
- There is no magical, “right” scale.
- Tracking CFLRP ecological impact is slow. Progress on social science is out in front of other reporting.
- Need to recognize that there are impacts on non-federal land managers and non CFLRPs.

## Resources

- [Daniel Williams' academic papers of Place-Based Conservation](#)
- [CFLRP Research and Resources compiled by the National Forest Foundation](#)
- [Pinchot Institute Meta-Analysis of Research on CFLRP](#)
- [Crown Managers Partnership](#)

