

Collaborative Restoration Workshop

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Monitoring | Keys to Success: Integrating Partner and Collaborative Monitoring on Federal Lands

Key Topics: Collaborative Process, Adaptive Management

Speakers

- **Cory Davis**, Monitoring Coordinator, Southwestern Crown Collaborative CFLRP, University of Montana
- **Mary O'Brien**, Utah Forests Program Director, Grand Canyon Trust
- **Judith Dyess**, Assistant Director of Rangeland Management, Region 3, USFS

Overview

This session reviewed successful collaborative monitoring processes, providing advice for initiating and sustaining monitoring work.

Cory Davis – Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative, Montana

The Southwestern Crown of the Continent collaborative (SWCC) set aside 10% of its Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) project funding to support monitoring efforts. They established a monitoring committee organized into four subgroups: Aquatics, Vegetation / Fuels, Wildlife, and Socioeconomics. All monitoring is considered at three scales: local (citizen science), landscape (project area), and larger Northern Rockies region. The citizen science programs engage students, community members, and NGOs in the SWCC's monitoring process. More information and tools about the monitoring program are available in the resources below.

All data collected as part of the SWCC monitoring effort is synthesized in adaptive management reports, and the SWCC convenes meetings to discuss findings and how those findings may affect management. Additionally, the SWCC and partners organize workshops to compare information from the project area with trends across the larger northern Rockies region and discuss strategies to ensure that monitoring informs future management.

SWCC's Monitoring Lessons

- Start locally and then scale up the results of the monitoring to a regional level.
- Be flexible; check egos and expectations.
- Establish clear goals and get all partners to agree before work begins.
- Be as realistic as possible about time commitments and capacity, and build monitoring around capacity.
- Get collaborative work written into position descriptions and programs of work. This reinforces participation.

Mary O'Brien – Monroe Mountain Working Group, Utah

Monroe Mountain Working Group has recently designed five collaborative monitoring projects, each designed to answer specific questions that will provide recommendations for the restoration of beleaguered aspen around the Fishlake National Forest.



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These monitoring projects were planned and implemented by the Monroe Mountain Working Group (MMWG). With its members and partners, the MMWG designed monitoring to be carried out by subgroups, members, community volunteers, and Brigham Young University doctoral students. The projects were funded by organizations and agencies belonging to the MMWG, including members, the U.S. Forest Service, and Utah Partners for Conservation and Development.

The monitoring plans were designed around specific questions the MMWG prioritized, such as, “Who is eating all the aspen sprouts and when?” and “What is happening to seral aspen stands (aspen-conifer) after a fire?”

The MMWG has identified multiple benefits to this collaborative process. Consensus and trust are built by working to answer questions together. Benefits of collaborative monitoring include:

- The process builds a shared understanding of a complex issue across diverse perspectives.
- Monitored information replaces assumptions.
- Seeing how the Forest Service values the information fosters partner support of Forest Service management.
- In-depth monitoring supplements what the Forest Service can do, allowing for research and not just monitoring project implementation.

Judith Dyess – The 10 Commandments for Collaborative Monitoring on Federal Rangelands

Collaborative monitoring can increase the success of planned management as well as lay a foundation for management during a crisis or through changing conditions on the landscape. Collaborative monitoring can also integrate new partners into the process. Judith shared the following “10 commandments” from lessons learned while organizing collaborative monitoring projects.

- 1) Recognize building a program will take time.
- 2) Work with county and state level cooperative extension if possible.
- 3) When at all possible utilize common data elements across jurisdictional boundaries.
- 4) Ensure that everyone owns the data and accepts the data.
- 5) Use technology as a tool for data management *and* communication.
- 6) Bring everyone to the field to collect and review the data together---at least in the beginning.
- 7) Provide training and educational opportunities.
- 8) Let the resources do the talking, not agendas.
- 9) Recognize other’s leadership abilities.
- 10) Be honest, transparent, and open to the ideas of others. Recognize some may be coming to the discussion with anger, fear and trepidation.
- 11) ... and offer food!

Resources

- Guide for Citizen Science Monitoring of vegetation and fuels: [A Citizen Science Approach to Forest Monitoring and Assessment](#)
- [Southwestern Crown Collaborative – Monitoring Webpage](#)



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