

# Collaborative Restoration Workshop

## National Forest Foundation | April 2016

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### Future of Collaborative Stewardship | Plenary Session: Future of Collaborative Stewardship

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#### Speakers

- **Karen Hardigg**, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
- **Phil Rigdon**, Intertribal Timber Council
- **Martin Blaney**, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- **Lindsay Warness**, Boise Cascade
- **Nils Christoffersen**, Executive Director, Wallowa Resources

#### Overview

Reflecting on the workshop, collaborative conservation leaders shared “aha moments” and observations to carry forward. Leaders also discussed whether we are achieving desired restoration results on the ground and shared ideas about what we need to build collaborative momentum.

#### Summary

Thinking back on “aha” moments, speakers focused on some of the need-based changes that participants could work towards in order to build collaborative momentum. For example, workshop sessions illustrated the need for:

- Investment from Forest Service leadership in collaboration;
- Forest Service leaders with more collaborative experience (and new mechanisms or programs to build the experience);
- Leadership in the Forest Service and partner organizations who are ready to be risk-takers and experiment with new projects, agreements, and other innovations;
- Policy advocacy on behalf of rural communities; and
- Strengthened relationships to each other and the land.

#### Keynote Address from Nils Christoffersen

Nils Christoffersen, Executive Director of Wallowa Resources, delivered the closing keynote address. Nils reflected on the growth of Wallowa Resources in the context of community conservation, and shared his thoughts on structural and regulatory barriers that we must overcome to achieve collaborative goals.

Nils connected the deep historical roots of participatory governance to present-day collaboration. Focusing on the power and opportunities associated with a stewardship economy, Nils spoke of the need to coordinate transformation from the bottom up (grassroots, community approaches) and the top down (policy and regulatory approaches). Though overreliance on legal frameworks can provide a false sense of certainty, adaptation and policy processes will drive the success of such a restoration economy. Sharing examples from Wallowa Resources, Nils illustrated how collaboration enhances democracy and the engagement of local citizens. Adaptive governance is being tested with some success. We've realized benefits to ecosystems through restoration and benefits to social and economic systems as well.



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Place-based collaboratives – where federal, local, state, and tribal governments come together – are driving experimentation, adaptation, and new thinking across the United States. As a community, we need to follow their lead and approach the next decades of natural resource management with the same innovative thinking.

Finally, Nils explained that a strong collaborative provides meaningful returns for each member. The collapse and reorganization of governance has occurred throughout history. Nils characterized our current time as an opportunity for reorganization, noting, “Now is the time to pick up the stones together.” We can prove that, as a society, we are able to create resilient, participatory government.



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