

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT & COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

October 28-30, 2014, Missoula, MT



Description

This workshop was designed to (1) support in-person networking and exchange among community collaborative partners and the Forest Service in Montana, Idaho and eastern Washington and (2) highlight new and innovative approaches as well as lessons learned. The workshop was targeted towards people representing communities, wood products and other private business, conservation, recreation, elected officials, funders, and the Forest Service and other agencies who work to steward the National Forests in Idaho, Montana and eastern Washington.

Sessions highlighted new and innovative approaches to designing, implementing and monitoring projects, working through legal processes such as the National Environmental Policy Act and Federal Advisory Committee Act, and understanding important tools like the stewardship authorities. The workshop also supported the sharing of lessons gained from both positive and negative experiences in collaboration, and explore ways to support continued communication amongst collaborative groups within the region after our time together ends.

Sessions

National Forest Management & Collaboration: Setting the Stage

In the keynote addresses that opened the workshop, speakers framed the next two days in terms of “where we’ve been” (i.e., How has made a difference in the U.S. Forest Service over the past several decades?) and “where we’re going” (i.e., How will collaboration intersect with and influence National Forest management in the future?). The questions were intended to inspire enthusiastic discussion to kick off the workshop.

- Dale Bosworth, US Forest Service, Retired
- Mary Mitsos, National Forest Foundation, Executive Vice President
- Moderator: Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

Before Restoration Was Cool... Perspectives on Restoration Past and Present

Restoration is a term we have all heard used in many different contexts. The speakers explored what is meant by the word restoration, and why it has become important in the today’s forest management environment. In addition, they opened a group discussion about what the future holds, as well as key lessons from the past that can improve the work we all do together in the forest.

- Brian Kahn, Artemis Common Ground and the Montana Forest Restoration Committee
- John Crockett, US Forest Service, Assistant Director, Forest Management
- Moderator: Mary Mitsos, National Forest Foundation

Overcoming Collaborative Fatigue

Speakers discussed common struggles in maintaining energy, momentum, and membership in collaborative groups. Speaking from experience, they discussed strategies to address those struggles and identify tools. Members of the audience were encouraged to share their own strategies and lessons.

- Melody Kreimes, North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative
- Patty Perry, Kootenai Valley Restoration Initiative
- Marcia Hogan, Bitterroot Restoration Committee
- Moderator: Jennifer Boyer, Future West

Branching Out and Digging In: Three Approaches to Collaborative Monitoring

This session highlighted different collaborative monitoring approaches. Strategies and experiences focused on multi-party and implementation monitoring. Presenters started the discussion by sharing how their collaborative group is approaching monitoring, and the advantages/disadvantages of their approach. Participants were also asked to share other multi-party monitoring approaches.

- Cory Davis, University of Montana & Southwest Crown of the Continent
- Matt Arno, Blackfoot Challenge & Montana Forest Restoration Committee
- Dick Dunton, Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition
- Moderator: Emily Olsen, National Forest Foundation

Improving Communication with Agencies, Partners and the Public

Speakers discussed innovative strategies, tools, and best practices that have allowed them to “break the barriers” to communicating effectively with local Forest Service staff. Speakers also addressed how communications allowed their collaborative to make headway during project design, monitoring, NEPA, and other critical times, and communication strategies and best practices for building increased understanding – and credibility – around collaborative work.

- Chad Hudson, US Forest Service, Idaho Panhandle National Forests
- Al Christophersen, Elkhorn Restoration Committee
- Dave Hadden, Headwaters Montana & Whitefish Range Partnership
- Moderator: John Shannon, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region

Collaboration & the National Environmental Policy Act

Topics included economic and timber value issues collaborative groups should consider when designing projects, the new 2014 Farm Bill categorical exclusion on insects and disease and its collaborative requirements, and the tool recently developed by the National Forest Foundation called, *A Roadmap for Collaboration Before, During & After the Collaborative Process*.

- Mike Niccolucci, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region
- Tera Little, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region
- Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation
- Moderator: Emily Olsen, National Forest Foundation

New Models to Accelerate Collaborative Restoration

Speakers discussed the following innovative programs: mapping of restoration needs across the Clearwater Basin, the State of Montana’s new Forests in Focus Initiative, and the Mill Creek A to Z Project on the Colville National Forest.

- Will Whelan, The Nature Conservancy & Clearwater Basin Collaborative
- Tim Baker, State of Montana, Policy Advisor to the Governor for Natural Resources
- Gloria Flora, Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition & Sustainable Obtainable Solutions
- Moderator: Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

Maintaining Collaborative Productivity on Disputed Ground

This panel discussion focused on the growing collaborative challenge of dealing with litigation and legal challenges in the midst of project development, NEPA review, and implementation. Presenters discussed strategies and tactics for developing and implementing projects in a way that allows collaborative productivity to persist.

- Michelle Tucker, Salmon Valley Stewardship & Lemhi County *Forest* Restoration Group
- Scott Brennan, The Wilderness Society & Southwestern Crown Collaborative
- Moderator: Julia Altemus, Montana Wood Products Association

How the Forest Service Responds to Collaboration

Some Forest Service units embrace collaboration; they prioritize collaborative work and help collaborative groups succeed in finding common ground. Others respond differently, challenging the very idea of collaboration. Similarly, many collaborative groups embrace Forest Service line officers, while other collaboratives may be less amicable. Working with Forest Service units – or vice versa, with collaborative groups – who respond differently to collaboration can be frustrating for everyone involved. Speakers shared thoughts on strategies to develop a productive working relationship from the perspective of a collaborative partner, the Forest Service, and a researcher who has studied CFLR projects.

- Mike Petersen, The Lands Council, Panhandle Forest Collaborative & the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition
- Christine Dawe, US Forest Service, Northern Region
- Will Butler, Florida State University

- Moderator: Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

Contracting & Agreements: Lessons Learned and Outcomes

In this session, workshop leaders discussed stewardship contracts, stewardship agreements, and timber contracts. From the perspectives of the Forest Service, a timber buyer, and a collaborative partner, speakers described the process they use to develop, bid on, or implement a contract or agreement. Speakers also shared tips, best practices, and lessons learned for participants to consider when engaging in contracting or forming an agreement.

- Jim Innes, U.S. Forest Service, Forest Management
- Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
- Nate Ulrich, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
- Moderator: Maureen Bookwalter, Montana Department of Natural Resource Conservation

Intersecting Effectively with New Initiatives and Planning Changes

In the final session of the workshop, speakers addressed what the 2012 Planning Rule says about collaboration, sideboards in forest planning, and the roles of collaboratives and the Forest Service in the planning process. They discussed opportunities for effective engagement by collaboratives, recognizing that each collaborative is unique, as well as intersections between the National Forest Management Act, planning, and other initiatives like the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program and the Watershed Condition Framework.

- Mike Anderson, The Wilderness Society and National Advisory Committee on Implementation of the 2012 Forest Planning Rule
- Faye Krueger, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region
- Moderator: Mary Mitsos, National Forest Foundation

Thank you to our advisory committee and sponsors for help in organizing this workshop.

Advisory Committee: Al Christophersen, Cory Davis, Jennifer Boyer, John Shannon, Julia Altemus, Martin Nie, Mike Petersen, and Will Whelan

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