

**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions**  
**Final Report LF-506**  
**September 30, 2014**

**I. Background on YSS and Purpose of Research**

The Yosemite-Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) collaborative group is a highly diverse coalition of interests who share a common goal of restoring and maintaining healthy forests and watersheds, fire-safe communities, and sustainable local economies using a science-based approach.

In spring 2010, U.S. Forest Service staff and interested stakeholders participated in a joint field trip to view previously burned areas with restoration needs within the Stanislaus National Forest. As a result of that field session and subsequent discussions, nearly 30 stakeholders agreed that forming a collaborative under the guidance of the Forest Service would aid the potential for increasing the pace and scale of restoration efforts within the southern portion of the Stanislaus Forest and on adjacent Park Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and private lands. Throughout 2012 and 2013, YSS continued their work holding field trips and resource discussions to promote restoration treatments across the region. Membership expanded, and common goals and concerns of the member agencies led to further coordination with county leaders, resource user representatives, businesses, and other interested parties to support expanded forest management and restoration treatments.

Last summer's devastating Rim Fire severely damaged a vast portion of YSS's focus landscape. Due to the massive amount of restoration planning that is needed, the value of collaborative support became even more evident. With so much national attention being given to Rim Fire recovery planning and actions, YSS members agreed it was time for YSS to become fully independent. In 2014, YSS approved governance agreements, finalized a new charter, and launched outreach efforts to look for funding to respond to the massive recovery needs of the Rim Fire. YSS members and committees are currently interacting with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and with foundations to pursue Rim Fire recovery grant funding to be applied on both public and private lands.

At a time when national, regional, and local resource management discussions are often highly polarized and contentious, the YSS collaborative group has effectively brought together representatives of the timber industry, grazing interests, local government, environmental organizations, business interests, motorized recreation groups, state and federal agencies, and other diverse interests. YSS is using the collaborative process to promote balanced, highly informed recommendations to agencies that are determining which actions to implement in the 402 square miles of the Rim Fire area. The goal of YSS is to build on fire recovery successes and expand the scope of YSS efforts over time in order to increase management actions within the unburned, still-green forest areas of the local region.

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As part of the NFF Grant, the YSS was authorized to identify and analyze innovative, community based programs that foster and support needed restoration work in their local watersheds. The Trust has researched and analyze existing models, where interests as diverse as local logging firms, conservationists and restoration cooperatives have joined together to form an entity capable of identifying watershed restoration needs, determining how to technically and financially address them and marshal the necessary expertise to do the work.

### **II. Research Methodology**

Research took several forms, from web searches and reviewing websites to an email survey of relevant collaboratives and phone interviews. Detailed information on each of these methods is found below.

#### **Web Searches**

Initially, web searches were completed to identify community collaboratives engaged in restoration work on public lands.

The first web searches used simple wording, such as:

- “community restoration”
- “community restoration public land”
- “community collaborative restoration”

These initial searches led to the websites of various groups and organizations which were reviewed (see next section) as well as topics for further web searches.

Further searches included:

- “community restoration funding”
- “national forest foundation”, “community based forest and public lands restoration act”
- “community based forest restoration”.

#### **Website Review**

After identifying community collaborative groups engaged in restoration work through web searches, we reviewed the websites of promising collaboratives and recorded key findings.

Website review focused primarily on:

- Mission and goals of the group
- History
- Current work

Partnerships with local agencies, groups, government agencies, etc.

- Funding sources
- Contact information for key individuals

Websites reviewed included:

- Salmon River Restoration Council ([www.srrc.org](http://www.srrc.org))
- Mid Klamath Watershed Council ([www.mkwc.org](http://www.mkwc.org))
- Klamath Watershed Partnership ([www.klamathpartnership.org](http://www.klamathpartnership.org))
- Global Restoration Network
- Digging In: A Guide to Community-Based Habitat Restoration
- Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project ([www.UPLandscape.org](http://www.UPLandscape.org))
- Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/restoration/CFLRP/overview.shtml>

### **Email Survey**

After reviewing relevant websites and completing initial research on collaborative restoration groups, we developed a survey to gather further information and insights from existing groups engaged in community restoration work. We identified key collaborative groups and individuals and reached out via email to distribute the survey in addition to some brief background information on the YSS. A copy of the email survey is included in the Appendix.

We sent the survey to key individuals including:

John Sheehan, retired Executive Director of the Plumas Corporation; currently serves on the Quincy Library Group and Plumas Community Foundation boards  
Sharon Timko, Contact Coordinator of the Forest Service National Collaboration Cadre  
Dr. Tony Cheng, Director of the Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University  
Dr. Steve Daniels, Professor at Utah State University  
Carol Ekarius, Coalition for the Upper South Platte  
Howard Hallman, Forest Health Task Force  
Gali Beh, Front Range Roundtable  
Aaron Kimple, Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group  
Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative  
Karuna Greenberg, Primary Coordinator of the Salmon River Restoration Council  
Luna Latimer, Associate Director of the Mid Klamath Watershed Council

### **Phone Interviews**

We conducted three extensive interviews with Gary Severson, who has advised the YSS under contract with the Stanislaus National Forest, as well as advised a number of Forest Collaboratives throughout the west. Gary was exceedingly generous with his time, and our Report extensively utilizes his experience and insights. We are including in the Appendix a survey of seven Colorado Collaboratives prepared by Gary Severson for the Governor of Colorado in 2010.

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We were also fortunate to interview John Sheehan of the Quincy Library Group, though the timing of that interview did not allow its substance to be incorporated into this Report. It will be included in the Report to the YSS in October.

**III. Key Findings**

As we learned, Collaboratives are each quite unique, reflecting a variety of factors, principally including the issues they seek to address, the composition and values of the local community, the distribution of land ownership, the range of legally responsible entities as well as the spectrum of community interests. Every collaborative is different.

This point is well expressed by Gary Severson in an email to us:

“Each one is unique because they are made up of unique individual personalities focused on unique geographic areas addressing unique issues with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. It is safe to say that there is not a single collaboration model that is replicated; all are uniquely different, yet there are common threads that run through all of them.”

A key finding is that it is unlikely and would probably be counter-productive for any collaborative to try to replicate another. Consequently, our findings will need to be carefully considered to determine their relevance and applicability to the purposes and variables of the YSS.

Most of the information reflected in this report came from review of websites and direct conversations with several key leaders at both the place-based collaboratives and those who have experience with multiple collaboratives. We did not receive the response to our written survey that we had sought. This probably reflects two factors: First, the timing in late summer would be during their busiest time of the year; Second, and likely more significant, is that most collaboratives lack the time or staff to participate in such surveys.

**1. Funding**

Collaborative groups we researched obtain funding from a range of sources and vary depending on location.

In general, the collaboratives we researched relied heavily on grant funding; however, funding was also obtained from other sources:

- The Salmon River Restoration Council obtained private funding from the Bella Vista Foundation to restore riparian habitat in the Klamath National Forest
- The Mid Klamath Watershed Council utilizes state, federal, county, tribal, foundation and tribal grants and other donations to support their restoration work

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-Uncompahgre Plateau Collaborative Restoration Project obtained a 10-year, \$8.5 million grant through the USDA's Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project in 2010

-Uncompahgre was successful in developing bi-partisan relations with local elected officials, Forest Service leaders and a spectrum of engaged interests. Gaining the support of an annual delegation sent to Denver and Washington, D.C. resulted in securing state and federal funding

-Uncompahgre also managed to leverage limited public funds with private sector funding. The Governor's Office and State Forest Service created a new grant program for new forestry projects.

Millions of dollars have come to Colorado through federal and state appropriations and public and private grants.

Consistent, multi-year federal, state and private grant funding is a challenge and the collaboratives we researched have not successfully overcome this issue. While such funding may be available, it is highly competitive and the chances of obtaining the funding are slim.

Generally, grants awarded to the collaborative groups we studied cannot be used for administrative or operational purposes. \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year is normally all it takes for administration and operations. The collaboratives raise this money through donations of those involved, including governmental agencies, civic organizations, and individuals. Although they have successfully funded administrative and operational costs with this method, it is very time consuming and not sustainable in the long term. In Colorado, administrative and operational funding has primarily come from local governments and counties as well as water providers. Water providers are not associated with local or state government and operate as their own entity.

Denver water/Platte water drainage experienced several large fires. Costs incurred to protect reservoirs have been huge, they spend a lot in watersheds because they know firsthand the importance of fire safety and fire safe communities. The more they can do upfront, the more they can save in the long run. Denver water board doesn't own or control the land, but they support work on forest land.

CBBC and Front Range Roundtable reached out to public utility agencies and worked with them - those companies have money too. Working with FS and BLM through NEPA has been a challenge. Utility agencies need the help to expedite NEPA process, and in exchange they bring money to the table.

Major watersheds were heavily impacted by bark beetle infestation; bonding authority was provided to water providers for mitigation in major watersheds. Several million

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allowed for on the ground actions. Clearly it is important to reach out to those not usually involved in forest activities, but affected them nonetheless.

CFLR projects. Some are 100% on the ground, such as the Coalition for the Upper South Platte. They perform restoration work on both public and private lands, secure lots of funding including from local governments, and have a good track record. Money attracts money.

For a time in the 1990s, foundations provided travel funds for local collaboration groups in Northern CA to meet and share activities. These efforts at regionalism are now mainly funded by USFS or by the counties and private public (SFAC).

Owners of public infrastructure became a key focus --- a challenging issue as 100' right-of-way was not working practically on the ground. Instead they applied fire science to their right of ways. They also secured funding from the Department of Energy, as well as NEPA relief from DOI and DOE. Local government reviewed and adapted building codes, such as planning new subdivisions to accommodate fire equipment and not requiring shake roofs.

## 2. Involvement of Private Sector

The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative involved the timber industry in their work. Notably, they worked with state legislature and the Governor's Office - they went to them suggesting possible bills, worked with drafters to write and support more than 16 pieces of legislation over 5 years. By way of example, they secured legislation for tax abatement for timber harvested and purchased in Colorado, saving a contractor about \$3,000 for framing material for an average home- a significant incentive to buy timber harvested in Colorado rather than continuing to buy from Oregon and Washington, where the timber was not affected by the beetles.

Beetles killed most of the timber, reducing its value, but they were able to get the number of timber sales reevaluated and sold as salvage sales and the money returned to the operator. They helped revive a moribund forestry industry, including establishment of two new wood pellet plants.

California has a comparatively big timber industry, though, certainly not what it was in previous decades. The Colorado experience suggests the importance of providing incentives and assistance to enable the private sector to profit in being part of the solution. In Colorado, the Governor's office stepped to the forefront, and the State Forest Service also established a grant program. Private forest land owners, mill owners and forestry workers participated and were a key to progress and local credibility.

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Under the Quincy Library Group, a good portion of the circa 300,000 acres of thinning treatments (since 1994) on the approximately 2.5 million acres of USFS lands involved in their Plan were complimentary to strategic private land forestry treatments. Since 2002 or so, the treatments done by the respective local fire safe councils (particularly in the WUI) are documented. [Plumasfiresafe.org](http://Plumasfiresafe.org) has a full mapping of all public and private thinning projects carried out in this cooperative project for reference. The map is essentially the report card, done annually and available to public.

Most of the Quincy Library Group counties have developed Coordination Councils to regularly have open meetings with federal agencies as well as state agencies. The individual fire safe councils have been helpful in carrying out thinning on private and industrial lands and, at least in Plumas, overlaying actual thinning onto the GIS fire safe council map discussed above. Private industry and owners coordinate their thinning project development work with the fire safe council.

### **3. Barriers to Restoration Work**

The primary challenge of every collaborative interviewed is to achieve consistent and sustainable funding for administration and operations of the collaborative. Although millions of dollars have come to Collaboratives through federal and state appropriations and public and private grants, little if any of the funding can be utilized for administration and operations of the collaboratives.

While private landowners can act more quickly, some forest service requirements impeded actions on private lands. For example, timely removal of hazard trees on special use permit land for ski resorts was impeded.

A refrain from both California and Colorado collaboratives was the need for greater communication and coordination among the collaboratives. At one time, Colorado has a Forest Health Advisory Committee (FHAC) serving this role. The new governor has dissolved this entity and replaced with an industry committee that oversees research and development for new forestry markets and products. While that adds value to the overall effort, it eliminated valuable coordination between collaboratives or opportunity for continued, meaningful peer to peer learning or sharing of best practices. This clearly remains a missing link in California.

The fuel of place-based collaboratives is passion for specific geographic areas and the ecological, social, cultural and economic values associated with that area. Although the place-based collaboratives usually have many interested participants, there are only a few who step forward into uncompensated formal or informal leadership positions. People are very busy with full-time jobs, families, and civic duties and do not have the time to assume the additional responsibilities of leadership. Often, the collaborative is

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dependent on one or two leaders and when those leaders move on for whatever reason, the collaborative flounders. A lengthy transition of leadership can cause a loss of focus on the vision and mission, lethargy and diminished energy towards achieving objectives, and reduced interest among the participants. Many of the place-based collaboratives have experienced this shift at some point in their history and discussed the ramifications. There is a need for training, peer to peer learning, and mentoring for existing and prospective collaboration leadership to share leadership responsibilities by broadening leadership capacities and deepening the roster of leaders.

Many National Forests say they don't have the capacity, money, or personnel to do what is being asked of them. This is both an honest admission on their part and perceived by many as a plea for help in securing more funding. Other National Forests don't seem to want help from collaboratives because they don't want to lose control; other places are really looking for help. This all largely depends on who is in charge.

There is an opportunity to work with the Forest Service regarding their personnel system. Of particular concern is the inability of the Forest Service to fill key positions in a timely manner. We have to date been very fortunate on the Stanislaus where they filled several key jobs immediately with no gap, but that appears to be very rare; filling a job often takes 6 months to 1 year.

A collaborative could also be helpful with updating the Forest Service's personnel performance criteria. Forest Service personnel are only held accountable for performance covered in their Rules and Standards guidelines. Currently, no standards or guidelines exist for collaborative work; district rangers and forest supervisors may see value in it and invest personal time, but there is no process to evaluate this work.

The Forest Service needs permission from congress to do anything new or different. The Quincy Library Group provided them with direction in the Congressional Quincy Library Group Act.

Responses also state that in California the regional water boards need specific outreach as does the EPA. Both can be unfriendly and ignorant of the role of collaboratives and the importance relevance of their mission to the governmental agencies. State air boards also need education to provide assistance in approving biomass generators and in more usefully quantifying wildfire emissions under different management scenarios. The PUC has been uninvolved and is an obstacle due to their tepid support of biomass electric. Local and distant water purveyors should be brought into the group directly. Similarly, utilities, if they utilize hydropower from your rivers, should be solicited. The previous two 'forest' users have to be brought into project financing to get away from reliance on federal appropriations only.

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It is important to recognize that citizen collaborative groups contain many moving parts and are subject to constant change, both internal and external. Maintaining relevance is one of the biggest challenges facing citizen collaborative groups.

#### **3. Community Outreach and Involvement**

As one would expect, all of the researched Collaboratives strive to inform and engage their community, as well as expand their sphere of educational and policy influence. Public understanding of the issue and the relevance to their well-being is essential to secure broad-based public support for the collaborative's program. In turn, public support is essential to persuade decision-makers at the local, state and federal levels to adopt appropriate policies and allocate sufficient funds to restore the health of forest and watersheds.

The largest yet limited window of opportunity to inform and educate the public occurs in the immediate aftermath of the fire. As YSS is already witnessing, the media attention fades as new events, such as the King fire, occur. Still, the Rim Fire is now part of the public discourse on fires, as well as both the health of our national forests and the local communities dependent upon them.

We learned of some creative and value-added ways to increase community involvement, including:

The Colorado Public Lands Partnership, reached out to universities and engaged them in helping to focus on the means and benefits to "democratizing science." This takes the concept of "best science" and make it available and participatory for citizens. The Science Forums sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Forest Service incorporates some of this approach. The difference is seemingly that Colorado State University took greater ownership of the process and has made an on-going commitment to remain involved. This may offer a model to supplement the research being performed at the Pacific Southwest Research Station in California.

Both of the CLRA funded collaboratives in Colorado have successfully reached out to public utility agencies, educating them on the relevance and risk that wildfires pose to their far-flung and valuable infrastructure. Their approach is detailed in the section on funding. Relevant here is that the public utilities, which have substantial revenue streams, now understand the relevance to their customers and are actively participating or at least with community-based collaboratives. This represents an area of opportunity for the YSS to find common ground with the SFPUC and other public utilities with infrastructure within the Stanislaus National Forest. And, of course, it cannot be overstated that these utilities have money.

Another example from Colorado is their success in engaging the Colorado tourism industry. While it would seem self-evident that tourism is substantially based on the

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health of their natural resources and recreational opportunities, communities blessed with some of the most prestigious ski resorts were surprised by results of a public poll . By a significant margin, more of the public was visiting their communities and spending more of their money drawn by the natural beauty of the area than by skiing opportunities. This motivated formation of a coalition of Public Information Officers helped to devise and implement an ongoing program of public education and engagement. In essence, the collaboratives received the benefit of pro-bono professional marketing expertise to formulate and conduct invaluable public outreach and education.

The Quincy Library Group shared this useful insight on their approach to public outreach and engagement:

“The website, although moribund of late, contains all the critical documents and is our most enduring library ([qlg.org](http://qlg.org)). We relied greatly on the local newspapers to take our opinion pieces and to report on frequent public discussions with boards of supervisors (8 counties) or other open forums. QLG tried to move around meeting places to educate public. Part of the QLG Act was annual and final USFS reports to congress and separate science forum each year. We had irregular town meetings to discuss changes or breakthroughs.... Whenever we made any kind of public presentation we were careful to be non-partisan and to have the presenters represent local government, local environmentalists and the forestry industry (including forestry workers). The QLG vision (all age, multi-story, fire-resilient forest approximating pre-settlement conditions) proved to be a useful mantra to explain.”

All of the collaborative groups we interviewed wanted a more meaningful, coordinated relationship. While a formal state entity, such as the now dissolved FHAC in Colorado, may not politically achievable, assistance in hosting an annual forest health summit may be feasible. Certainly, we can seek out existing conferences hosted by water resource, local governments, business and industry and environmental organizations to include Workshops on forest health and ways to participate in the restoration efforts.

#### **5. Maintaining the Organizational Health of a Collaborative:**

All collaboratives are challenged with keeping itself relevant, in ever changing public and political landscape, including fickleness of news/media attention. Also, success on their original purposes can require them to a shift in mission or approach. once epidemic was declared over in 2011, all of the priorities and attention changed, money went away. As Gary Severson shared with us:

“Perhaps the biggest thing I have learned from working with citizen collaborative groups for many years in many locations is that they are dynamic, living organisms that ebb and flow in their efficiencies and effectiveness. Some of the citizen collaboratives that were at their zenith a few years ago are struggling to reinvent themselves today or have completely vanished from the scene. Citizen collaborative groups such as the Ponderosa Pine Partnership, the Quincy Library Group,

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and even my old Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative fall into this category. All citizen collaborative groups are different, but experience many of the same cycles of group and organizational dynamics, including the waxing of power, effective advocacy, and the waning of influence.

There are at least three areas of dynamic flux directly affecting citizen collaboratives:

Purpose - Most citizen collaborative groups organize because of a pressing need (insects and disease, wildfire, fuel loadings, decreasing fish and wildlife populations, proposed NEPA actions, etc.) Often however, purpose changes over time. Has the citizen collaborative group remained aligned with their purpose or have they drifted from it in something known as “mission creep”, or have the external circumstances changed significantly enough to cause the purpose to change?

Process – Most citizen collaborative groups develop processes for working together and governing themselves based on the purpose that brought them together in the first place. YSS had to significantly modify its process and governance model (charter) because of the Rim Fire which changed much of the very purpose of the original group. Had YSS not modified its process as a result of the change of purpose, it would be irrelevant today. Alignment of the process with the purpose is essential. There is a direct correlation between where the bulk of the collaborative group’s resources (time, energy, financial) are expended and how relevant and effective the group is. Often, the difference between the group’s ascendancy and descendancy rests on the fulcrum point of the expenditure of resources – advocacy for change or preservation of past achievements and organizational structures. The death knell for many citizen collaborative groups is when they evolve from being advocates for change to simply sharing information.

People – The human dynamics of citizen collaborative groups are in a constant state of flux as individuals come and go. The depth and breadth of leadership is one of the most crucial assets of citizen collaborative groups and leadership will change over time. YSS is fortunate to have Mike and John in key leadership positions, but that will change over time due to a variety of human conditions, i.e. professional retirement, physical moves, career changes, illness, family needs, levels of energy and interest, etc. Leadership transitional planning is important, but is seldom done. Citizen Collaborative Groups can become too narrow in their breadth of stakeholders and personalities. They can also become too broad, losing their focus in the name of diversity. Finding the right balance and mix of people and leadership directly affects the effectiveness of the group.

Additionally, over time they will all encounter the challenge of leadership succession. Given how extended collaboratives are, with participants doing this in addition to their full-time jobs and personal lives, it is not surprising that no real transition planning or leadership development occurs in any of the collaboratives we researched.

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**IV. Follow-up**

The connections developed in the course of doing the research will continue to be assets for the YSS. Indeed, they open up opportunities for sharing best practices, coordinating on common areas of needs, as well as potentially participating in joint public and media education efforts and outreach to our elected representatives.

Additionally, there is still value for the YSS to connect with organizations and leaders we have not heard back from as part of our development of a comprehensive Restoration Plan of Action.

## Appendix

### Community-Based Restoration Survey

- 1.** What kind of public outreach did/do you engage in regarding your work? What have you determined to be most effective and efficient: example, maintaining a website, occasional community meetings or distributing materials in the community?
- 2.** While most of the restoration work we are pursuing is on National Forest land, there are private land as well. If you have encountered the same, how did you involve land-owners in restoration work?
- 3.** What has been your experience with federal and/or state agencies? How have they assisted and/or inhibited your work? Are there administrative barriers that have impeded their ability to work with you? If so, did you identify any remedies or means to lessen or remove those barriers? Are there any specific agencies, offices or people you found particularly helpful?
- 4.** What processes and mechanisms have you developed to both technically assess restoration needs and devise a restoration plan of action?
- 5.** What, if any, organizational and technical capacities have you developed to either directly perform restoration work or effectively administer contracts for other entities to perform restoration work?
- 6.** Are there any community restoration groups or organizations involved in community-based restoration projects that you have found helpful and that you believe have a successful working model?
- 7.** Given your experience, is there anything that else that you might share with us?

If possible, please provide us your answers by September 13th. If you prefer to do this over the phone, please email to arrange a convenient time to talk. Please feel free to provide any attachments or links that you feel would be helpful for us.

Send responses and any request for clarification and further information to:

[jamodio@msn.com](mailto:jamodio@msn.com)  
916-456-0734

Again, thank you for your assistance

On behalf of the Yosemite--Stanislaus Solutions (YSS)

**Community-Based Restoration Survey--- Example of a Valuable Response**

Carol Ekarius  
Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP)  
719-748-0033

**What kind of public outreach did/do you engage in regarding your work? What have you determined to be most effective and efficient: example, maintaining a website, occasional community meetings or distributing materials in the community?**

CUSP currently utilizes a wide-array of outreach efforts, depending on what the project or program is that we are working on. We do have an active Facebook page. We utilize a website, which will be relaunched in a new and much updated version in about a month. We do community meetings that we put on, and our staff attends many other meetings during the year to do presentations. We submit a regular article on some seasonally appropriate topic to a local monthly newspaper/shopper (they really appreciate free content at this point in time) that is delivered for free to all the mail boxes in our region. Now, the part that bites: this all takes staffing time and money. We have an Outreach & Development Director, a Communications Coordinator, and an IT staff person who all spend most of their time on this stuff, and then other staff people are involved in special events (such as "Be Prepared, Be Aware" wildfire fairs, fundraisers, sustainability fairs, etc.), and doing presentations at conferences, meetings, and community gatherings.

**While most of the restoration work we are pursuing is on National Forest land, there are private land as well. If you have encountered the same, how did you involve landowners in restoration work?**

CUSP works across private and public lands. We participate in, and sometimes are lead organization, for planning and implementation of post-fire emergency work (for example, we work with BAER funds on the forest lands, and with NRCS EWP funds on the private side of the fence), pre-fire forest healthy, river restoration projects, weed and invasive species control projects...

**What has been your experience with federal and/or state agencies? How have they assisted and/or inhibited your work? Are there administrative barriers that have impeded their ability to work with you? If so, did you identify any remedies or means to lessen or remove those barriers? Are there any specific agencies, offices or people you found particularly helpful?**

We have remarkably good relationships at this point with all our federal and state partners, though that is based on 16 years of proving ourselves. At this point they lean on us and they know that we won't screw up. We understand all the requirements they have to go through (clearances for example) and we dot the i's and cross the t's, so they give us fairly free rein to get work done. One thing is that you really do need to understand their system and requirements. That means you should read all the guidance documents and regulations and understand them as well as the best-versed agency staffer. (You should especially become extremely well versed in OMB circular 122.) You can successfully argue your point if you do know the regs, and if you do, they start to understand that you won't leave them hanging in the wind. Some of the biggest barriers

ers for us, still, are cash-flow related. Most grants are reimbursable, so spending money and then waiting to get paid back can be extremely painful!

**What processes and mechanisms have you developed to both technically assess restoration needs and devise a restoration plan of action?**

We utilize technology heavily. Our staff all does time keeping and tracking of the “widgets” on cloud-based databases that we developed ourselves. We have two GIS staff, and two highly-trained folks in our two Operations Director positions (one takes lead on forestry, the other on monitoring and habitat, but they work closely together and then manage the field crew and our various contractors). We always try to bring in the best available science and the top experts we can afford on anything we are doing. We developed a strategic plan for the watershed at large (2,600 square miles), but also do project-level planning for each project we undertake. That project-level planning can sometimes take a couple of years in its own right.

**What, if any, organizational and technical capacities have you developed to either directly perform restoration work or effectively administer contracts for other entities to perform restoration work?**

As I already mentioned, we rely heavily on technology. We have a field crew of trained staffers who are red-carded fire fighters, and who run all types of on-the-ground projects. We have two staff who help coordinate and plan volunteer projects (as many as 6,500 in a year), which the field crew actually leads on the ground. I believe that within another year or so we will hire our own in-house engineer with a PE stamp. We have developed a bid form on our website, so we tell contractors to sign up and they automatically get bids by email, which saves a bunch of time over trying to call people to bid.

Are there any community restoration groups or organizations involved in community-based restoration projects that you have found helpful and that you believe have a successful working model?

There are lots of them around the country. I think it would benefit you guys to reach out to the new Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed. They formed after the High Park fire in 2012, and so are going through similar start-up things to what you are doing. Contact is:

Jennifer Kovacs  
Executive Director  
Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed  
PO Box 876  
Fort Collins CO 80522  
[jenk@poudrewatershed.org](mailto:jenk@poudrewatershed.org)  
970-222-5754  
[www.poudrewatershed.org](http://www.poudrewatershed.org)

Also, reach out to Robin Reid at the Center for Collaborative Conservation at Colorado State University. Robin has a found of information on what seems to work and what doesn't... [robin.Reid@ColoState.EDU](mailto:robin.Reid@ColoState.EDU)

The Keystone Center for the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council  
Prepared by Gary Severson - March 17, 2010  
Under Contract for the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Committee

## Introduction

Colorado has a rich environment of grassroots initiative and cooperation that fosters gatherings of people from differing backgrounds and interests coming together to address forest issues in specific geographic locations through collaborative approaches. Although there is a current national trend of citizens organizing collaborative groups to work together to address complex issues facing forests on public and private lands at the local and regional levels, Colorado has a long tradition of successful collaborative problem solving spanning nearly thirty years. There are twenty identified place-based forest collaboratives of all sizes, organizational structures, missions and operational philosophies active in Colorado and at least three new collaboratives are being formed. Each one is unique because they are made up of unique individual personalities focused on unique geographic areas addressing unique issues with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. It is safe to say that there is not a single collaboration model that is replicated; all are uniquely different, yet there are common threads that run through all of them. Because of this rich environment of collaboration, it is not by accident that two highly competitive USDA Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program grants were awarded to collaborative ecological restoration projects in Colorado in 2010; the only state to receive multiple awards.

## Purpose

In January, 2011, The Keystone Center, the contract coordinators of the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC) was asked by the co-chairs of the FHAC to interview several of the place-based forest collaboratives actively working in the State of Colorado. Gary Severson interviewed in person the leadership of seven of the collaboratives:

1. The Mixed Conifer Working Group – Durango
2. The Public Lands Partnership – Montrose
3. The Uncompahgre Partnership – Montrose
4. The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group – Boulder
5. The Front Range Roundtable – Boulder
6. The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative – Silverthorne
7. The Forest Health Taskforce - Dillon

The purpose of the interviews was to identify the primary challenges and needs of the place-based collaboratives and formulate recommendations for how the FHAC and the place-based collaboratives can work better together in a more coordinated manner for greater effectiveness of individual and combined efforts to improve forest health conditions statewide. The interviews were conducted in person with several persons in either formal or informal leadership capacities in the collaborative and usually lasted from an hour and a half to two hours. Although a set of universal questions, which were sent to the collaboratives prior to the interview, guided the interviews, the resulting discussions were candid and free ranging.

Summaries of each of the individual interviews are included in this report, but the following are the repeated themes running through the collaboratives that were interviewed:

## Challenges and Needs

- **Funding.** The primary challenge of every collaborative interviewed is to achieve consistent and sustainable funding for administration and operations of the collaborative. Although millions of dollars have come to Colorado through federal and state appropriations and public and private grants, little if any of the funding can be utilized for administration and operations of the collaboratives. The irony is that many of the dollars received for project implementation are due to the diligent and effective efforts of the place-based collaboratives who struggle financially to remain in operation. Because of the complexity of working with multiple stakeholders and issues and the need for facilitated gatherings of the collaboratives to achieve a level of trust and thereby gain consensus, the place-based collaboratives need to contract with part time coordinators/facilitators. \$10,000 to \$30,000 per year is normally all it takes for administration and operations. The collaboratives raise this money through donations of those involved be they governmental agencies, civic organizations, or individuals, but this is very time consuming and not sustainable in the long term.
- **Leadership Capacity.** The fuel of place-based collaboratives is passion for specific geographic areas and the ecological, social, cultural and economic values associated with that area. Although the place-based collaboratives usually have many interested participants, there are only a few who step forward into uncompensated formal or informal leadership positions. People are very busy with fulltime jobs, families, and civic duties and do not have the time to assume the additional responsibilities of leadership. Often, the collaborative is dependent on one or two leaders and when those leaders move on for whatever reason, the collaborative flounders. A lengthy transition of leadership can cause a loss of focus on the vision and mission, lethargy and diminished energy towards achieving objectives, and reduced interest among the participants. Many of the place-based collaboratives have experienced this shift at some point in their history and discussed the ramifications. There is a need for training, peer to peer learning, and mentoring for existing and prospective collaboration leadership to share leadership responsibilities by broadening leadership capacities and deepening the roster of leaders.

#### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

- **Strengthen the Relationship.** All of the place-based collaboratives interviewed expressed a desire for a stronger, coordinated, and meaningful relationship with the FHAC. However, there was an equally strong desire to have the relationship be one of collaboration, not subservience. As one place-based collaborative said, "To be collaborative we all must be collaborative with one another". All of the collaboratives expressed appreciation for the outreach of the FHAC to them and gratitude for the fact that someone representing the FHAC came to them on their time and turf.
- **Benefits of a Stronger Relationship.** The place-based collaboratives had the following suggestions for the FHAC in moving forward with building a stronger relationship:
  - o Secure some level of consistent and sustainable funding for administration and operations. A competitive grant program geared toward the administration and operation of place-based forest collaboratives with grants in the \$15,000 to \$30,000 range is preferred.
  - o Enable the place-based collaboratives to become more involved with the FHAC either through direct appointments to the Council or through the chartering of a Place-Based Collaboratives Working Group tasked by the Council to achieve specific objectives and/or to provide grassroots counseling and guidance to the FHAC..

- o Convene an annual gathering of the place-based collaboratives working with the FHAC to learn from one another, build cooperative relationships and a “table of trust” among the collaboratives and the FHAC, and develop collaborative statewide strategies from the grassroots up. Although the place-based collaboratives appreciate the past convening’s of the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at CSU (CFRI), they would like to elevate the stature of the convening through the FHAC with CFRI as a participant and partner.
- o Organize delegations of representatives of the place-based collaboratives under the auspices of the Governor’s Office to expand influence for Colorado’s forest health efforts in Denver and Washington, D.C. There is concern among the place-based collaboratives that individual collaboratives who send delegations to the state or national capitals confuse legislators and agency leaders with mixed messages, create an environment of competition among the collaboratives, and thwart rather than advance the cause for improving the conditions of all of Colorado’s forests.
- o Coordinate services that can be shared by all of the place-based collaboratives such as mapping, data management, website development and maintenance, coordination of science, public information and education materials, incubation and mentoring of new and/or reorganizing collaboratives, leadership training and peer learning opportunities, collaborative monitoring of implemented actions, and state and federal legislative tracking.

### Conclusion

The opportunity is ripe, perhaps as never before, to forge an inclusive collaborative relationship between the Governor’s Forest Health Advisory Council and the varied place-based forest collaboratives in the state of Colorado. Funding is and will probably continue to be a challenge, but the openness and willingness of the place-based forest collaboratives is evident. The synergy of ideas, commitment, influence and even financial resources that could be generated from such collaboration was expressed by all of the collaboratives interviewed.

## **Mixed Conifer Working Group**

Interview by Gary Severson, January 31, 2011, Durango, Colorado

### Context

The Mixed Conifer Working Group (MCWG) was formed in 2010 and is less than a year old. It is a citizen-based collaborative that involves the US Forest Service, BLM, the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Wild, and a number of groups and individuals who participated in other previous collaboratives such as the Ponderosa Pine Working Group. There are currently about thirty to forty-five active individuals and the meetings are generally attended by ten to fifteen persons.

The MCWG grew out of the Aspen Workshops of 2003 and 2007 that focused on aspen management in light of sudden aspen decline (SAD) that was affecting the San Juan Public Lands in southwestern Colorado. It was discovered that aspen is a primary species in a larger ecosystem known as mixed conifer. Although previous collaboratives had forged large areas of agreement on the management of Ponderosa pine, pure aspen, and even spruce/fir forest types in southwestern Colorado, it was discovered that there was little science and not much agreement on mixed conifer, which is an important forest type on the eastern side of the San Juan Public Lands. Pagosa Springs is the community in the midst of the mixed conifer ecosystem. Mixed conifer is very unique based on the specific location. In southwestern Colorado it is comprised of mixtures of Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, white fir, Engelmann spruce, sub-alpine fir and aspen.

The forest plan revision for the San Juan National Forest is currently underway and it is a catalyst for the MCWG. In addition the proposal of a five megawatt woody bio-mass gasification electrical generation plant near Pagosa Springs is providing an economic driver for active management in the mixed conifer ecosystem.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

Unlike the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative or the Front Range Round Table that have fairly clear and concise missions primarily focused on hazards mitigation, the MCWG is much more complex, like the ecosystem itself. There are two timeframes the MCWG is focused on:

#### Phase I:

- Identify community issues and forest management issues in the mixed conifer ecosystem.
- Build the science base for mixed conifer.
- Reach agreement on vision, management principles, specific projects and desired outcomes on a landscape scale in the mixed conifer ecosystem.
- Identify sub-areas of the mixed conifer ecosystem for specific planning purposes.

#### Phase II:

- Integrate the zones of agreement into the alternatives for the forest plan revision of the San Juan National Forest that will guide implementation.
- Apply for a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration grant from the USFS in 2012.
- Collaboratively monitor the implementation of actions to determine if desired outcomes are being achieved.

The overall vision of the MCWG is to balance ecological, economic and social aspects of the mixed conifer ecosystem in southwestern Colorado into a sustainable functioning system by providing a framework of agreement for forest management implementation.

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

The biggest need of the MCWG is financial sustainability for long-term coordination. The MCWG was given an initial startup grant from the National Forest Foundation of \$15,000. The NFF grant allowed the MCWG to hire a facilitator/coordinator who keeps the effort focused, organized and moving forward. \$15,000 to \$25,000 per year is necessary for the continuation of the effort. Additional funding could be utilized for:

- Building the science base for mixed conifer.
- Translating technical information regarding mixed conifer into language usable by the general public and decision makers.
- Expanding the public outreach.

Although the MCWG is not a legally recognized entity, the RC&D currently serves as its fiscal agent and can enter into contracts with the state. There are two other organizations that could also fill the role of fiscal agent if needed.

The MCWG will definitely support a competitive grant program administered by the CSFS to support local forest collaboratives.

### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The MCWG desires and supports a closer working relationship with the FHAC. Although the MCWG does not want interference from the FHAC in on the ground activities, they would welcome federal and state policy assistance from the FHAC. The statement was made, "we don't want the FHAC to step on our toes, but we want them to be a strong advocate for us". The MCWG is willing to work with other forest collaboratives to assist the FHAC influence policy and funding that will make it easier for on the ground actions.

The MCWG would like to see a closer link between the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at CSU and the FHAC. Although CFRI has convened place-based collaboratives, the MCWG would like to have the FHAC convene a statewide meeting of place-based collaboratives to better solidify relationships, to learn from one another, and to plan coordinated strategies. The MCWG would be willing to participate in a Colorado delegation of place-based collaboratives and the FHAC to influence both the state legislature and congress.

The meeting concluded with the following remark from the MCWG:

"It is a long way from southwestern Colorado to Denver and Fort Collins and we would like to find a way to be more involved with you guys."

## **Public Lands Partnership**

Interview by Gary Severson, February 8, 2011, Montrose, Colorado

### Context

The Public Lands Partnership (PLP) is one of the oldest forest collaboratives still in operation. The PLP received a Ford Foundation grant to get them started in 1992. The, the PLP received a \$500,000 grant from the Colorado Division of Wildlife to address mule deer habitat issues on the Uncompahgre Plateau. The PLP has evolved to take on larger landscape scale issues and operates as a policy level collaborative. The PLP incubates and spawns project level collaboratives including the Uncompahgre Partnership that was successful in obtaining a Forest Service Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program grant. The PLP is currently helping to establish a Burn Canyon collaborative.

Uncompahgre/Com, Inc., a 501(c)(3) services company headquartered in Delta serves as the fiscal agent for the PLP. Four counties, San Miguel, Ouray, Montrose and Delta help to financially support the PLP, but support has been reduced significantly as the economy has slowed.

The PLP is currently updating its memorandum of understanding with the US Forest Service. The PLP serves as a communications link between the Forest Service and the citizens. The PLP writes grants and provides volunteers for forest related efforts in the area.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

The Public Lands Partnership developed the concept of the "Table of Trust", following bitter controversies surrounding public lands management. Through the Table of Trust, the PLP strives to encourage and support for collaborative decision making for land and resource management agencies, expanding their decision space reducing appeals and litigation. The PLP understands and promotes the concept of healthy forests, viable communities, and vibrant economies interacting with one another for sustainability of the Uncompahgre region.

The desired outcomes of the PLP are improved communication with agencies, bringing more diverse groups to the Table of Trust, more land use decisions with less controversy, increased public awareness through improved outreach. The PLP would also like to bring more science to the Table of Trust and develop a community monitoring program for monitoring the outcomes of actions taken.

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

The biggest challenge for the PLP is sustained funding for administration of the organization. Most grants are tied to on the ground accomplishments and do not allow funds to be utilized for administration. The PLP is currently down to \$9,000 in the bank. Funding is getting so scarce that outreach has diminished. Simply put, "to sustain the PLP operating funds are needed."

If the PLP were to obtain a \$10,000 grant from the FHAC, they would utilize it to bring more people to the Table of Trust through increased outreach and funding for travel to statewide meetings. They would also utilize it as matching funds in grant writing to leverage dollars from the original grant. The PLP believes it could raise \$11,000 in matching dollars, and they would have no problem in raising "in-kind" matches.

### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The PLP appreciates the outreach effort of the FHAC and would like to see closer working relationships between the FHAC and all place-based collaboratives to expand influence. Some of the combined efforts should include:

- Reaching out beyond local areas.
- Lobbying federal agencies and Congress for additional dollars and better working regulations.
- Lobbying the State Legislature for bills that address local forest needs, such as the survival of the sawmill in Montrose and an expanded biomass industry.
- Build stronger relationships between a statewide forest collaborative of collaboratives with existing organizations like Colorado Counties, Inc, Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Association of Regional Organizations, Club 20, National Association of Counties, National Association of Regional Councils, etc.

The PLP would like to see the FHAC host an annual “rendezvous” of the place-based collaboratives for peer learning experiences and building a Table of Trust among the collaboratives. The purpose of the “rendezvous” would be to trade stories and examples of what works and what doesn’t, planning strategy for increasing Colorado’s influence in DC, and getting to know one another, thereby building trust.

The PLP would also like to see the FHAC charter a working group of place-based collaboratives to interact with the FHAC on data collection, problem solving, and policy recommendations. The PLP would like the FHAC to organize an annual visit of representatives of all place-based collaboratives, the FHAC, the Governor’s Office and the Colorado Congressional delegation to lobby federal agencies. The PLP will participate in those delegations. In addition, the PLP will support legislation to create a competitive grants program to support the place-based collaboratives.

The PLP expressed gratitude for the outreach effort of the FHAC by coming to them instead having to travel.

## **Uncompahgre Partnership**

Interview by Gary Severson, February 8, 2011, Montrose, Colorado

### Context

The Uncompahgre Partnership (UP) was formed in 2001 as a project level place-based collaborative of the Public Lands Partnership. Although the UP began as a collaborative focused on improving mule deer habitat, it has evolved and diversified over the past ten years to focus squarely on landscape scale forest restoration. The UP was one of the ten 2010 recipients of a USDA Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) grant. The ten year forest restoration proposal submitted to USDA calls for restoration of plant and animal species as well as the local economy. One of the unique aspects of the CFLRP proposal was broad consensus through collaboration of harvesting green spruce to provide funding necessary to restore other species with lower or no economic value. The strength of the UP collaborative is the factor that earned them the CFLRP grant award.

The Uncompahgre Partnership is an IRS 501 (c)(3) so it can legally enter into contracts with governmental entities and has a successful track record of grant awards and administration. The Colorado Division of Wildlife allocates \$25,000 per year to the UP.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

The mission of the UP is ecological, social, and economic restoration of the Uncompahgre region. The mission is being refined through the re-drafting of the Memorandum of Understanding with the US Forest Service. It includes:

- Successful implementation of the CFLRP project.
- Organizing and facilitating multi-party monitoring efforts.
- Successful control of invasive plant species.
- Support and implementation of the Colorado Plateau Native Plant Initiative.
- Develop markets and value for at least twenty species for commercial production for use in restoration efforts.
- Build collaborative support for a woody biomass industry in the area for economic sustainability and a viable tool for forest management.
- Address new landscape scale restoration projects.
- Continue to provide a forum for necessary scientific studies.
- Be responsive to changes in agency regulations and changing economic environments.

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

Grants cover on the ground projects, but they do not cover administrative costs. The more successful a collaborative is, the more challenging it can be to cover general administration. Successful collaboration takes time, energy, and a "spark plug" person, usually a coordinator, organizer and facilitator, who needs to be compensated. Consistent participation from the members of the collaborative can be a challenge when they have other fulltime jobs. It is unrealistic to think that agency or non-agency people can provide the staffing and leadership necessary to keep the collaborative moving, so it takes a person, who is compensated, to keep it all together. Funding for the administrative costs is absolutely essential to the success of the UP.

If a \$20,000 to \$30,000 grant award was made to the UP through a competitive grant program it would be used for administration, grants matching, and leveraging efforts through new groups such as a Western Landscape Collaborative that would focus on the Grand Mesa. The UP

could come up with matching funds if federal and state funds and in-kind would be allowed for the match.

#### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The Uncompahgre Partnership has learned much about collaboration, partnerships, grants, 501 (c)(3) status, program successes and challenges to share with other place-based collaboratives and we would have much to learn from them. We would like for the FHAC to sponsor and host an annual meeting of the state's place-based forest collaboratives in an environment and format that is conducive to learning from one another and getting to know each other. We would like to see the formation of a place-based forest collaborative council that would work with the FHAC to:

- Plan coordinated statewide strategies for political and economic purposes.
- Organize a place-based forest collaboratives fund in which the state and each member place-based collaborative would contribute for use in grant matching requirements for obtaining larger grants. The fund could also be utilized to provide assistance with travel to statewide meetings.
- Identify issues that need to be addressed by a larger collaborative of collaboratives.
- Increase political influence at federal and state levels.

The UP supports the creation of a competitive place-based forest collaborative grants program and is willing to participate in its passage.

The UP expressed gratitude for the outreach effort by the FHAC and the personal visit to them in Montrose.

**North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group**  
Interview by Gary Severson, March 1, 2011, Boulder, Colorado

Context

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group was formed about three years ago to address the spreading Mountain Pine Bark Beetle outbreak from the Western Slope to the Front Range. As the beetles spread to the Front Range, infesting lodgepole pine, the group was formed to address the possibility of the beetles infecting the Ponderosa pine at lower elevations. The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group is an intergovernmental cooperative comprised of federal, state, county and municipal governments from Gilpin County to Larimer County.

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group does not have legally recognized status and cannot enter into contracts or accept grant funding. However, the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group can request that one of the member governments serve as fiscal agent for the group's activities.

Vision, Mission, and Desired Outcomes

The primary focus areas of the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group are:

- Multi-level governmental interaction with a unified message.
- Public outreach through information and education.
- Utilization of woody biomass.

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group recognizes that woody biomass utilization is one of the primary keys to necessary forest treatments. A vision of the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group is the development of the necessary infrastructure to support the utilization of the wood that is cut and removed from Front Range areas.

Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

Anecdotal information suggests that 10% of mountain area property owners change each year and trying to keep new residents informed and educated is difficult. Although working with people one at a time is effective, it is very time consuming and is not efficient. Developing better ways of informing and educating property owners and visitors is desperately needed. The small area newspapers are not reaching residents so an electronic format will work much better. Perhaps, curriculum development for the schools would be a good approach.

Operational and project money is always a challenge. It seems that the bigger collaboratives get most of the money because they have more resources and the capacity to apply for more grants.

Woody biomass utilization is the biggest challenge. There are two sort yards operated by Boulder County and two biomass heating units for public buildings on-line, but much more is needed to address the volume of material available.

The expansion of leadership capacity is also a need. There are five core people and turnover is always a threat. How do we expand our leadership among people who are interested, but already have fulltime jobs?

## Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group urges the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council to work with the Governor's office of Economic Development to develop more awareness and coordination between forest health and economic development. With Governor Hickenlooper's vision of building economic development from the grassroots, more emphasis on wood products of all kinds can play a vital role. The primary question is how to create a wood products industry sufficient to perform the work on the ground as needed, without creating unsustainable demands for wood supplies. The unanswered question for entrepreneurs and investors is how much available wood is there for how long? Perhaps the Governor's FHAC could task a university to pull together the necessary information on a statewide basis to satisfy that question.

Financial support would be very helpful. If the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group were to receive funding we could use it to:

- Sustain the Peak-to-Peak Wood Initiative
- Partner with the Governor's Office of Economic Development to provide necessary infrastructure for woody biomass utilization and support existing and new industry.
- Develop better ways of informing and educating the public on more of a mass basis.
- Developing comprehensive wood supply and availability data for industry.
- Facilitate creative linkages between agencies, contractors and land owners to drive down per acre treatment costs.
- Identify and work with the "gate keepers" of neighborhoods and interest groups to expand the information and education networks.

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group would welcome a statewide convening of place-based collaboratives and urges the Governor's FHAC to work with a group of CSU professors who conduct an annual convening called the "High Altitude Re-Vegetation Group" to support and enhance their efforts. It would be helpful for the existing place-based collaboratives to work together to develop methodologies for newly forming groups, such as the Indian Peaks Forest Alliance in Nederland, and to learn from one another.

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group would support legislation creating a competitive place-based forest collaborative grants program through their alliance with the Front Range Roundtable. The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group would also welcome the opportunity to join a state-wide collaboratives delegation for efforts in Denver and Washington, D.C.

## **The Front Range Roundtable**

Interview by Gary Severson, March 1, 2011, Boulder, Colorado

### Context

Following the severe 2002 Colorado fire season the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service realigned forest budgets within the five state region to provide additional funding to the Front Range forests to accelerate fuels reduction planning and implementation. The Front Range Roundtable (Roundtable) was formed in 2004 to *serve as a focal point for diverse stakeholder input into efforts to reduce fire risks and improve forest health through sustained fuels treatment along the Colorado Front Range*. The Roundtable is a coalition of individuals from state and federal agencies, local governments, environmental and conservation organizations, the academic and scientific communities, and industry and user groups, all with a commitment to forest health and fire risk mitigation along Colorado's Front Range. The Roundtable's focus area encompasses ten Front Range counties.

The Roundtable has no legally recognized organizational structure, articles of association, by-laws, standard operating principles, or charter and is not eligible to receive public grant funds or enter into contracts. However, The Nature Conservancy and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests & Pawnee National Grasslands Foundation have acted as the fiscal agents for the Roundtable and have an operating budget in excess of \$40,000. The Roundtable contracts with a professional management consulting firm to provide organizational coordination and meetings facilitation services.

The Roundtable is guided by an executive committee comprised of federal and state agency personnel, elected county officials, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wilderness Society. The Roundtable utilizes a variety of working teams, including: Outreach and Policy, Implementation and Mapping, Metrics and Monitoring. The Roundtable was a successful applicant for a USDA Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program grant in 2010 and the Arapaho – Roosevelt and the Pike – San Isabel National Forests received \$1,000,000 in the first year funding of a ten year plan.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

The Front Range Roundtable has reached consensus to 1.5 million acres of Front Range Forests require treatments to restore forests and reduce fire risk. Four hundred thousand acres have been identified for ecological restoration, eight hundred thousand acres have been identified for fires risk mitigation, and four hundred thousand acres have been identified for treatments to achieve combined restoration and fire risk mitigation.

The desired outcomes for ecological restoration are to restore the identified area's natural ecological structures and processes to within the historical range of variability. The desired fire risk mitigation outcomes are to protect human life, property and values such as watersheds, wildlife habitats, and community infrastructure.

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

The primary challenge of the Roundtable is the immensity of the scope of work in ecological restoration and fire risk mitigation needed to be completed and the scarcity of resources necessary to complete it. The challenge is compounded by social, economic, political, and ecological diversity of the Front Range including:

- Multiple governmental jurisdictions
- Complex patterns of mixed land ownership and use
- Critical water production, storage, and delivery for urban and agricultural use
- Ecosystems and forest types ranging from 6,000 to 14,000 feet in elevation

The dense population of the Front Range, the visibility and accessibility of the area, and the high percentage of wildland and urban interface dramatically increases the public concern, scrutiny, and emotions.

The Roundtable is organizationally challenged by:

- A lack of consistent and sufficient financial resources for necessary organizational and administrative capability.
- The need for continual education of visitors, residents and leaders of the dynamics and complexities of the Front Range and to develop and maintain institutional memory.
- The ongoing need to inform and re-inform members of the Colorado Legislature and Congress and the leadership of federal and state agencies.

#### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

A strengthened relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council would provide the following benefits to the Roundtable and to all of the place-based forest collaboratives operating within the state:

1. The creation of a broader level of statewide interest in forest health and utilization.
2. Increased influence in high level advocacy at the federal and state levels.
3. Increasing the amount of available resources.
4. Developing statewide strategies and solutions for biomass utilization.
5. Developing strategic Colorado alliances to pursue and obtain additional USDA Collaborative Forest landscape Restoration Program funding.
6. Convene statewide gatherings of the place-based collaboratives to strengthen relationships and cooperation, learn from one another, and develop strategies for larger landscapes.
7. Create an incubator for new place-based collaboratives and a Center for Collaborative Excellence.

If the Roundtable was to receive an additional \$30,000 per year it would:

1. Establish the administration necessary for project management at local levels for Roundtable projects.
2. Backfill local funding sources for the administration of the Roundtable.
3. Increase the Roundtable's outreach to gain the participation of additional people devoted to collaborative problem solving.

## **Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative**

Interview by Gary Severson, March 11, 2011, Silverthorne, Colorado

### Context

The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative (CBBC) was formed in 2005 as an intergovernmental cooperative between federal and state land management agencies and municipal and county governments to address the impacts of the mountain pine beetle outbreak in Jackson, Routt, Grand, Summit and Eagle Counties. The USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management were the principal federal agencies, the Colorado State Forest Service was the primary state agency, and Northwest Colorado Council of Governments represented municipal and county governments. A steering committee made up of policy level people representing the various governmental entities guided the cooperative's efforts that were implemented by an implementation team comprised of personnel assigned by the cooperating agencies. The primary focus areas of the CBBC were and remain:

1. Remove administrative barriers that inhibit effective efforts.
2. Formulate, promote, and endorse state and federal legislation and funding to enhance effective efforts.
3. Promote public information and education efforts.
4. Support and promote the involvement of the private sector in addressing the effort.
5. Organize pre-disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness efforts.

In 2007 the CBBC's steering committee directed that the cooperative expand from an intergovernmental cooperative to a broad, multi-stakeholder collaborative. That directive was achieved and the CBBC developed by-laws and articles of incorporation and became an Internal Revenue Service designated 501(c)(3) in 2010. The governance of the CBBC is guided by adopted bylaws, policy level steering committee, implementation team, and the general membership for accountability.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

The mission of the CBBC is to educate and support research that informs local citizens and state and federal officials about the impacts and actions necessary to mitigate the impacts of the bark beetle outbreak and plan for future high elevation forest landscapes in the geographic area comprising the counties of Eagle, Garfield, Grand, Jackson, Lake, Park, Pitkin, Routt, and Summit. The CBBC shall promote regional collaboration among and between interested parties regarding the impacts of the bark beetle outbreak in the focused geographic area.

The primary objectives and desired outcomes are:

1. Protect human life
2. Protect public infrastructure
3. Protect critical water supplies
4. Develop community resilience to adapt to disturbance driven ecosystems
5. Develop and promote a vision for short, mid, and long term high elevation forests

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

- The most pressing need of the CBBC is sustainable funding for administration and operation. \$25,000 to \$30,000 is needed annually for the services of a part time coordinator and operational expenses.

- Maintaining a focused and clear vision in light of the dynamic nature of the beetle outbreak and resulting impacts, evolving leadership, competing interests for funding, and overlap and duplication of efforts among multiple groups and organizations involved in forest health efforts in the region and state.
- Tracking state and federal legislative and regulatory efforts and the effectiveness of resulting laws and regulations.
- Improved communications between multiple place-based collaboratives.

#### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The CBBC welcomes a stronger and more coordinated relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC). The CBBC encourages the FHAC to:

1. Be a clearinghouse for science. A detriment to effective efforts is the "ping-pong" of scientists publishing seemingly conflicting studies and conclusions that paralyze decision making. The FHAC, working with the place-based collaboratives should identify the key questions and then commission research to address those questions.
2. Interact more frequently with place-based collaboratives either through direct representation of the collaboratives on the FHAC or the chartering of a working group comprised of representatives of the collaboratives to reduce competition among the collaboratives and develop statewide strategies.
3. Convene an annual gathering of the place-based collaboratives so the collaboratives can learn from one another and develop coordinated strategies. Covering travel and per diem of participants would be greatly appreciated and enhance participation.
4. The FHAC should organize statewide delegations of representatives of place-based collaboratives under the banner of the Governor's Office to better influence federal legislation and funding in a coordinated strategy.
5. The FHAC could organize and coordinate services that could be utilized by all of the place-based collaboratives. The services would include:
  - a. Mapping and other technical services
  - b. Data and information management
  - c. Web site coordination and management
  - d. Public information and education materials
  - e. Collaborative monitoring of actions implemented, including legislation

## **Forest Health Taskforce**

Interview by Gary Severson, March 15, 2011, Dillon, Colorado

### Context

The Forest Health Taskforce (FHT) is a program of the Greenlands Reserve, an IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and all contracts, grants and donations to the FHT pass through the Greenlands Reserve. Based in Dillon, Colorado the FHT was formed in 2006 as a result of the spreading mountain pine beetle outbreak into Summit County. In an effort to inform and educate citizens, the FHT began conducting two informational meetings per month that are open to all who wish to attend. In the ensuing years the FHT has hosted numerous land and resource management specialists and scientists as guest speakers and expanded its information dissemination system to include print and electronic formats. The information network of the FHT has expanded well beyond Summit County into adjacent counties and reaches over 500 people on a consistent basis. Seminars sponsored by the FHT usually attract over fifty persons.

Since its inception the FHT has expanded beyond information collection and dissemination to include on the ground thinning projects, wood utilization studies, the compilation of an electronic Colorado wood products catalog and it is currently forming a Colorado wood products sales and distribution network. In addition, the FHT is working with other groups, including the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative and the Friends of the Dillon Ranger District to organize multi-stakeholder monitoring processes and procedures.

The governance of the FHT is very informal with a small steering group, but all decisions regarding direction and guidance are consensus based within the larger group of participants.

### Vision, Mission and Desired Outcomes

The primary mission of the Forest Health Taskforce is raising public awareness of forest related issues through information and education.

The vision of the FHT is to expand the effectiveness of multiple groups through collaboration on the belief that all groups have specific strengths and by collaborating with one another more of those strengths can be brought together for greater effectiveness. Currently the FHT is reaching out to watershed groups to expand forest health to water quality and quantity concerns.

The FHT believes that wood utilization is the key to improving forest health and is working to organize and promote the marketing, sales, and distribution of Colorado wood products.

### Challenges and Needs of the Collaborative

The primary need of the Forest Health Taskforce is to develop a consistent and sustainable revenue stream to support the day to day administration and operations of the FHT. \$10,000 per year would go a long way to providing funding for meetings coordination and logistics. There is a need to pay someone to organize the meetings, secure a venue, provide refreshments, secure speakers, keep notes, and compile and distribute the meeting summaries.

All viable place-based collaboratives should receive some financial assistance, not just well organized groups who know how to write proposals. It was recommended that each viable place-based collaborative receive a base, non-competitive amount of \$2,000 to \$5,000, then the bal-

ance of the fund could be on a competitive basis. As a result, all collaboratives would feel that they are recognized and a part of a statewide effort.

#### Relationship with the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

The Forest Health Taskforce welcomes a stronger relationship between place-based collaboratives and between place-based collaboratives and the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council. The FHT believes that all policy recommendations being made by the FHAC to the governor need to be built from the grassroots in a bottom-up manner. A stronger relationship with place-based collaboratives would ensure grassroots feedback. The FHT recommends the formation of a place-based collaboratives advisory group to provide advice to the FHAC regarding policy. The group should be open and self-selecting, not appointed by the FHAC.

The FHT believes that to be collaborative all need to practice collaboration, so the FHT recommends and would participate in a FHAC led statewide gathering of place-based collaboratives where the collaboratives could get to know one another, explore ways of collaborating with each other, and develop statewide grassroots strategies. The FHT would also support and participate in a delegation made up of representatives of place-based forest collaboratives to provide a "bigger voice" for all of Colorado, not just specific locations with well financed collaborative groups.