



Memorandum

TO: People Interested in Community-based Collaboration in the Rocky Mountain Region

FROM: Heather Knight, Center for Collaborative Conservation, CSU
Shawn Johnson, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, UM
Matt McKinney, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, UM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Action Plan for Community-based Collaborative Conservation (CBCC) in the Rocky Mountain Region

DATE: July 23rd, 2018

From February 28th, through March 2nd, 2018, Colorado State University's Center for Collaborative Conservation hosted a workshop to create an action plan to build the collaborative capacity of practitioners in the Rocky Mountain Region. Sixty members of community-based collaborative conservation efforts participated in the workshop. At the close of the workshop, participants agreed to create a Community-Based Collaborative Conservation (CBCC) Action Plan based on the findings and conclusions of the workshop.

This *Preliminary Action Plan* builds on the summary report of that workshop and should be read alongside the workshop's summary report. It presents the seven key messages that emerged from the workshop as objectives, followed by a menu of options/strategies to be considered to achieve each objective. The objectives are numbered for ease of reference, and do not imply any type of priority or preference at this point.

Introduction

More and more we see civic leaders, citizens, and organizations stepping forward to convene and facilitate community-based forums to address conservation and other community (social, cultural and economic) objectives. Community-based collaborative conservation (CBCC) is a public process where multiple stakeholders work together to solve a common problem or achieve a common objective. These processes are citizen-driven, place-based, multi-stakeholder, and multi-objective. They vary in terms of purpose and spatial scale given that each process is homegrown, tailored to the particular needs and interests of a community, watershed, or ecosystem.

The conservation community and other stakeholders increasingly recognize that the collaborative approach to conservation leads to more inclusive participation, more complete information, buy-in among diverse stakeholders, and better decisions more likely to be implemented. CBCC efforts generate widely supported and more enduring on-the-ground conservation results, because the solutions also address other community needs.

There is no single model for CBCC because every community and landscape is unique. There is however, an emerging community of CBCC practice and an evolving set of best practices, resources, and learning opportunities to support these efforts.

Given the challenges facing the Rocky Mountain region, along with the success of CBCC to build resilient human communities and natural landscapes, we believe it is time to scale-up, leverage and amplify these efforts. We propose to achieve this by addressing the seven following objectives.

Goal

Promote and support community-based collaborative conservation (CBCC) efforts that strengthen and sustain livable communities, vibrant economies, and healthy landscapes.

Objectives and Strategies

Objective #1: Increase awareness of and support for the CBCC approach.

- Create a clear, consistent, compelling message about the value and impact of CBCC (for example: a communication plan that uses success stories and strategic case studies)
- Reach-out to key agency and organization leaders, community decision-makers and funders
- Communicate with individuals and groups that may not have experienced successful CBCC efforts.
- Build learning of collaboration skills and tools and problem-solving into all professional trainings
- Provide incentives to increase support for participation in collaboration training
- Continue to expand the culture of collaborative conservation by including CBCC into the hiring process and professional development of agency partners, , and through the engagement of currently under-represented segments of communities.
- Develop more effective ways to measure impact of CBCC approach and tell that story

Objective # 2: Advance the practice of CBCC.

- Gather and share collaboration tools, learning opportunities and resources
 - Launch a web-based searchable data base of existing collaboration learning opportunities and resources
 - Share the data base with CBCCs throughout the Rocky Mountain region

- Create an APP
- Use a variety of methods to provide collaboration skills and tools to CBC groups in the region
 - Create a peer-to-peer exchange network
 - Create a mentoring/coaching program
 - Develop collaboration skills and tools trainings to fill gaps
 - Build on existing conferences, workshops, etc.
 - Build on existing networks, including statewide CBCC organizations, extension service, conservation districts, and the like
 - Use technology and social media to provide resources at lower costs, to more diverse audiences, at more places and to more remote locations
 - Tailor the message and method to the needs and interests of the particular audience
 - Create an “opportunity map” to identify existing activities and gaps See <http://www.nmcounties.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-WUI-New-Mexico-Opportunity-Mapping-Project.pdf>
- Create a CBCC toolbox
 - Gather existing curriculum materials, resources, tools together
 - Identify gaps and ways to fill gaps
 - Train a group of credible people (cadre/ strike team, others) to provide learning opportunities and resources as requested

Objective # 3: Create a regional network/community of practice¹.

- Connect CBCC efforts to exchange lessons, engage in peer-to-peer learning and problem-solving, and achieve some of the other objectives presented herein
- Compile a more complete inventory of CBCC initiatives in the seven Rocky Mountain States
- Share the existing data base and workshop report with them (similar to option for Objective # 2)
- Invite CBCC groups and resource people to join this emerging community of practice

¹ As we move forward to consider how best to create a regional network for CBCC – and how it can supplement and complement existing statewide associations of CBCC – it is important to keep in mind that networks are based on self-interest. People usually network together for their own benefit and to develop their own work. Networks tend to have fluid membership; people move in and out of them based on how much they personally benefit from participating. Out of this complex web of interactions, something unexpected often appears. As people exchange ideas, learn together, and develop a common sense of purpose, suddenly and surprisingly a new system emerges at a greater level of scale. This new system can then be used to advance individual and collective interests by working together on one or more of the objectives presented herein. In other words, not everyone needs to agree to every objective or activity of the network. Individuals and groups are welcome to participate as long as they like, and to focus on whatever topics are most relevant and interesting.

Objective # 4: Promote and support existing statewide CBCC networks.

- Connect the dots among CBCC groups and state level coordinating organizations
- Help create state level networks where none exist
- Increase coordination amongst existing state level organizations, train them to teach others, and encourage sharing resources and capacity
- Encourage efforts across state boundaries; strategically leverage capacity, resources and learning opportunities

Objective # 5: Engage, inspire, and prepare future collaborative leaders.

- Build on existing graduate programs
 - Gather existing curriculum materials at universities in the region
 - Compare notes and look for opportunities to share resources
 - Identify gaps and ways to fill gaps
- Provide imbedded and meaningful internships, practicum opportunities, and other hands-on learning opportunities; link students to CBCC practitioners
- Market the region's expertise in community-based collaboration; seek to attract students throughout the country (and around the world) to study CBCC in the Rocky Mountain region; with particular recognition of increasing diversity and engaging under-represented populations

Objective # 6: Promote public policy to enable and sustain CBCC.

- Harness the political power of CBCC in the Rocky Mountain region
- Facilitate communication and marketing to key audiences, such as federal and state policymakers, philanthropic foundations, others
- Build key relationships to advance the practice of CBCC
- Collect and tell stories at different scales
- Achieve policy outcomes
- Rebuild power in local communities to support local economies and healthy landscapes

Objective # 7: Create a regional funding strategy to support CBCC.

- Create a collective impact strategy to allocate financial resources more effectively
- Grow and sustain dedicated funding to coordinate CBCC efforts and to facilitate cross learning
- Explore and nurture new funding mechanisms and partnerships

Next Steps

The initial purpose of this *Preliminary Action Plan* is to organize and focus the attention of the Leadership Team that emerged from the workshop. As revealed in Appendix 1, twenty-four participants volunteered to serve on the Preliminary Leadership Team to determine next steps.

In the short term, and so long as resources allow, the Center for Collaborative Conservation (CCC) at Colorado State University and the Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy will assist the Leadership Team with the development and implementation of the Preliminary Action Plan.

The next steps are to:

1. Share this *Preliminary Action Plan* with the Preliminary Leadership Team to get some initial input and advice;
2. Revise and update the *Preliminary Action Plan* based on the initial feedback; and
3. Convene a conference call with the Preliminary Leadership Team to:
 - a. Discuss the *Preliminary Action Plan*.
 - b. Clarify the structure and process for moving forward.
 - c. Identify resources needed to move from vision to action.
 - d. Map out and seek agreement on next steps towards a final Action Plan.

Appendix 1: Leadership Team

Arizona

1. Mark Brehl, Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership
2. Karen Simms, Pima County
3. Tom Sheridan, Altar Valley Conservation Alliance/University of Arizona
4. Tahnee Robertson, Southwest Decision Resources

Colorado

5. Richard Alper, Mediator
6. Retta Bruegger, Colorado State University Extension
7. John Rizza, Colorado State University Extension/Natural Resources Conservation Service
8. Claire Harper State & Private Forestry and Tribal Relations, Watershed Partnerships, Forest Legacy, Community Forests & Open Space US Forest Service
9. Casey Davenhill, Colorado Watershed Assembly
10. Heather Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Wildlife
11. Lindsay Murdoch or Rae Robinson, Cross Watershed Network

Idaho

12. Amy Verbeten, Friends of the Teton River

Montana

13. Erin Farris-Olsen, Montana Watershed Coordination Council
14. Jim Burchfield, Montana Forest Collaboration Network
15. Gary Burnett, Heart of the Rockies

New Mexico

16. Alan Barton, New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
17. Elaine Kohrman, USFS Region 3 Tahnee Robertson, Southwest Decision Resources

Utah

18. Lorien Belton, Jack H. Berryman Institute, Utah State University
19. Stephanie Minnaert, Grand Staircase Escalante Partners
20. Jay Olsen, Utah Watershed Coordinating Council

Wyoming

21. Wanda Burget, Accord Resource Solutions, LLC and Wyoming Mining Natural Resource Foundation
22. Rox Hicks, USFWS (also representing Colorado)
23. Deb Kleinman, The Lupine Collaborative
24. Jessica Western, University of Wyoming

Initial Coordinators

Heather Knight, Center for Collaborative Conservation, Colorado State University
Matt McKinney, Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, University of Montana
Shawn Johnson, Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, University of Montana