

Public Policy Network Work Plan

Action Plan Objective: Promote public policy to enable and sustain Community Based Collaborative Conservation (CBCC) efforts.

Background: Generally, federal land management public policies contain the flexibility and facilitative language to allow agencies to engage in community based collaboration. However, there are some policies and guidance that infringe on the ability of agencies to effectively engage in community based collaboration. There are also factors that hamper not only collaboration, but the implementation of collaborative outcomes in a timely manner, if at all.

Strategies:

- Explore the extent to which federal land management public policies and actions support or hinder community based collaboration.
- Determine what specifically makes these policies work for collaboration and what makes them ineffective.
- Create tools that will assist agencies in developing effective policies, as well as strategies to implement current policies with the flexibility written within them.

Working Group members:

Heather Johnson- Work Group Chair. Regional Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Chief, Mountain-Prairie Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Jessica Western – Work Group Co-Chair. Ruckelshaus Institute, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources -- University of Wyoming

Jessica Crowder - Policy Director, Western Landowner Alliance

Wanda Burget -- Principal/Owner, Accord Resource Solutions, LLC

Pat O'Toole-- Landowner, Ladder Livestock, Savery, Wyoming

Erin Farris-Olsen, Executive Director, Montana Watershed Coordination Council

Bill Milton – Landowner and Musselshell Watershed Coalition

Steve Jester – Executive Director, Partners for Conservation

Shannon Wadas – Associate Director, Waters Edge West

Rick Merrick – Rural Community Forester, South Central Mountain RC&D

Paul Burnett – Utah, Trout Unlimited, Water and Habitat Program Lead

Priority Actions:

- **Develop a list of Keys to Success for public policies that create community-based collaboration, particularly in rural communities in the West.**
- **Develop a list of characteristics that are necessary for agency personnel to work in local rural communities and be successful at community-based collaboration in the work they do each day.**
 - Anticipated outcome
 - Public policies help empower local communities to support viable agriculture, sustainable economies and healthy rural communities.
 - More agency people in the local rural communities that know how to communicate effectively with local community members and, therefore, implement public policies in a collaborative way that is built on trust, respect and inclusion. They also have support from their supervisors and upper-level leadership.
 - Output
 - One page outreach document, professionally designed, that can be distributed to Congress and leadership in federal and state agencies and a wide variety of constituents working on public policy in the West. This may include examples of what is already working in local communities.
 - Through a network of key messengers, these keys to success and characteristics of highly functional collaborative personnel are shared, and adopted, in the hopes that additional policy leaders will institutionalize these ideas.
- **Plan and host a meeting with the Public Policy Working Group, and some additional invited guests, to brainstorm and design a strategy that allows the CBCC community to be more connected and coordinated, to have a larger voice, in how we approach the development of new public policy or seek to modify existing public policies.**
 - Anticipated outcome
 - Public policies in the West will be driven by community-based collaborative processes.
 - Output
 - Suggestions will be developed into action items. These action items will be broadly shared with the CBCC community to develop a network of public policy constituents that will drive implementation success.

Existing Efforts:

- There are a lot of organizations currently working to revise public policies to support local rural communities.
- There is a need to focus on rebuilding power in our local communities to support sustainable rural communities, including building healthy economies, in a collaborative way.

Critical Gaps / Needs:

- Share a definition of CBCC with public agencies and come to agreement on the definition across public agencies.
- We need consistency across agencies in how public policies are administered.
- We need more consistency in how public policies are administered when we have a change in administration.
- There is insufficient funding within agencies to support collaborative community-based efforts or to implement management activities that are collaboratively developed.
- Policies that limit collaboration. For example:
 - FACA needs to be revised or modernized to remove it as a roadblock to involving the public in community-based collaborative partnerships.
 - NEPA can be a barrier to collaborative conservation, especially in the implementation of practices recommended through a collaborative process.
- Employees within the Federal government often do not remain in their jobs long enough to be effective. The turnover makes it very difficult for local community members and organizations to fully engage and for a good collaborative process to be implemented and continue. Good ideas do not necessarily translate from one person to the next person. This is particularly challenging for landowners that need to work with multiple bureaus for their leases and permits, etc. Hiring the right people that know how to communicate and work collaboratively in rural communities is critical. Agency leadership needs to support staff by helping them retain their jobs and providing opportunities for promotion in place, rather than promotions equating to moving elsewhere.
- Cooperative Agreements with Federal and State agencies are often put in place for five or less years. To foster successful collaborative long-term partnerships, these agreement lengths should be longer. Multi-year agreements should be consider with a variety of planning, implementation and outreach stages included.
- Industry needs to be recognized as part of the community.

Objective Priority Strategies and Actions:

Strategies	Actions	Leader for Strategy/Action	Partners &/or Resources Needed
<p>Change culture and leadership of public agencies to move towards greater community-based collaboration in the policies they develop and implementation of existing ones.</p>	<p>Develop a list of Keys to Success for public policies that create community-based collaboration, particularly in rural communities in the West. Craft the above items into a one-page professionally produced document to be used to engage leadership of public agencies.</p> <p>Involve policy makers in the process.</p>	<p>Heather Johnson</p>	<p>Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Western Landowner Alliance Partners for Conservation</p> <p>Ruckelshaus Institute, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources -- University of WY.</p> <p>Montana Watershed Coordination Council.</p> <p>Accord Resource Solutions, LLC</p> <p>Resource needs: Funds are needed to complete the layout and design of the one-page document.</p> <p>Western Governors' Association</p>
	<p>Develop a list of competencies that are necessary for agency personnel to work in local rural communities and be successful at community-based collaboration in the work they do each day. Include these characteristics in the one-page document on</p>	<p>Heather Johnson</p>	<p>Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program</p> <p>Western Landowner Alliance</p> <p>Ruckelshaus Institute, Haub School of Environment and</p>

	<p>Keys to Success, so it can be a stand-alone document.</p>		<p>Natural Resources -- University of WY</p> <p>Partners for Conservation Montana Watershed Coordination Council</p> <p>Accord Resource Solutions, LLC</p> <p>Resource needs: Funds are needed to complete the layout and design of the one-page document.</p>
	<p>Work with local communities to formulate ways to retain good federal and state employees within the local communities, to provide consistency and the ability to build trust and credibility. Share these ideas broadly with agency leaders throughout the west.</p> <p>Ensure that when federal employees leave, there is a smooth transition to the next person and the agency transfers the collaborative processes that worked well. Have overlap for transfer of ideas, history and relationships.</p>	<p>Heather Johnson</p>	<p>Western Landowner Alliance</p> <p>Partners for Conservation</p> <p>Accord Resource Solutions, LLC</p> <p>Resource Needs: Need one lead coordinator to develop the suggested list in a format that is concise and professionally laid out.</p>
<p>Plan and host a meeting with the Public Policy Working Group, and some additional invited guests, to brainstorm and design a strategy</p>	<p>Host a meeting in Sheridan, WY, with the option to join via video conferencing, and have a facilitated discussion on ways that we can work</p>	<p>Heather Johnson Jessica Western Wanda Burget</p>	<p>Ruckelshaus Institute, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources --</p>

<p>that allows the CBCC community to be more connected and coordinated, to have a larger voice, in how we approach the development of new public policy or seek to modify existing public policies.</p>	<p>together to be more connected and coordinated, in order to have a bigger voice in how public policy is written, modified and delivered by agency personnel within local communities.</p>		<p>University of WY, Jess Western Facilitating Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Heather Johnson -- meeting planner.</p> <p>Western Landowner Alliance</p> <p>Accord Resource Solutions, LLC</p> <p>Montana Watershed Coordination Council</p>
	<p>Develop action items for moving forward public policy that embrace community-based collaborative processes. Share these action items with the broad CBCC community.</p> <p>Develop a White Paper that includes the highlights from the meeting in Sheridan, WY. This White Paper can then be provided to Congress and agency leadership to provide more context to the One Page outreach document.</p>	<p>Heather Johnson Jessica Crowder Jessica Western</p>	<p>Ruckelshaus Institute, Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources -- University of WY</p> <p>Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program</p> <p>Western Landowner Alliance</p> <p>Montana Watersheds</p> <p>Accord Resource Solutions, LLC</p>
	<p>Develop a Power Point presentation to accompany the One Page outreach document and White Paper. This can be used by member of the Public Policy Working Group, as well as the CBCC Leadership Team when they receive invitations to present at meetings and/or events.</p>	<p>Heather Johnson Gina McCrackin</p>	<p>Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program</p> <p>Colorado State University</p>

Evaluation

- After completion of the one page document, collaborative conservation messengers will distribute the document to key audiences. We will track the progress of change with new policies that are being developed, as well as the changes of existing policies that need modified.
- We will select key community leaders in rural communities that we have been working with and do a face-to-face or phone interview with them to see if they have seen agency personnel being more collaborative as they implement public policy.
- We will have a follow up to the Public Policy Working Group meeting within one year to discuss the action items and track whether our goal of having us working closer together on public policy, to be more connected and coordinated, has allowed us to have a bigger voice. If not, we will discuss the reasons why and adapt our strategy.

Timeline:

