WESTERN COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION NETWORK

CONNECT CONVENE CATALYZE

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION CONSERVATION

Charter - *Final Draft (Oct 2019)*

The Western Collaborative Conservation Network is a regional network that promotes and supports community-based collaborative conservation efforts working to strengthen and sustain healthy landscapes, vibrant communities, and thriving economies. This charter is the consensus document that provides active partners with a roadmap of the key elements of the Network and how it operates.

Why Now

Increasingly, civic leaders, citizens, agencies and organizations are stepping forward to convene and facilitate community-based, collaborative efforts to address conservation and other community issues. Community-based collaborative conservation (CBCC) is a public process where multiple stakeholders work together to solve common problems or achieve common conservation, economic and societal goals. These processes are often citizen-driven, place-based, multi-stakeholder, and multi-objective. They vary in purpose and spatial scale and each process is tailored to the particular needs and interests of a community, watershed, or ecosystem. There is no single model for CBCC because every community and landscape is unique. There is, however, an emerging community of CBCC practitioners and an evolving set of best practices, resources, and learning opportunities to support these efforts.

Community leaders, natural resource managers, conservation practitioners, and other stakeholders increasingly recognize that a collaborative approach leads to more inclusive, informed, higher quality and broadly supported decisions with more enduring conservation, economic and community outcomes.

Given the challenges facing the intermountain West, along with the success of CBCC to build more resilient landscapes and human communities, it is time to scale-up, leverage and amplify these efforts.

Objectives

The Leadership Team of the Network agreed on a set of priority objectives to guide the work of the Network in achieving the mission.

1. Develop a regional network/community of practice.
2. Increase awareness of, and engagement with, the CBCC approach.
3. Promote and support the creation of state-level and sub-regional CBCC support organizations/networks.
4. Engage, inspire, and prepare future collaborative leaders.
5. Promote public policy to enable and sustain CBCC.
6. Create a regional funding strategy to sustain CBCC efforts.

Geographic Scope

The Network is focused generally in the intermountain West, characterized by significant federal lands, lack of water, the fastest growing region in the country, and extensive experience with community-based collaborative conservation.

Approach

The Network acts at the regional scale as a connector, convener and catalyst. Working groups and committees, as time and resources allow, engage partners to build collaborative capacity of CBCCs across the region. The Network leverages existing expertise and resources, focusing on value and results that partners could not achieve on their own. By working together, partners in the Network foster innovation, learning, and collaboration through building relationships, exchanging ideas, collaborating on shared priorities, and providing a community of practice support system.

- *Connector:* The Network connects groups investing in community-based collaborative conservation efforts across the western states to share knowledge and experiences, co-learn, pool resources, develop collaborative skills through peer-to-peer learning, and share impact stories to create a stronger collective voice for collaborative natural resource management efforts.
- *Convener:* The Network convenes a community of practice and support organizations to identify resources, barriers, needs, gaps and opportunities which strengthen collaborative capacity for community-based collaborative conservation across the region.
- *Catalyst:* The Network catalyzes existing and new resources and expertise to overcome and reduce barriers to collaboration, fill critical gaps in collaborative capacity, and adopt solutions so community-based collaborative efforts create more durable and lasting conservation solutions.

Structure and Teams

The WCCN emphasizes shared leadership and acts as a network of networks to support efforts of community-based collaborative conservation (CBCCs) groups at local, state and regional scales. The Network aspires to support new and strengthen existing state level hubs that convene and serve local collaboratives, agencies and organizations within each state or subregion. The WCCN also strives to engage state/sub-regional hub representatives in the regional Leadership Team as a core strategy for engagement at multiple scales.

WCCN Network - Multiple Scales. This diagram is a conceptual representation of the current and aspirational structure and functions of the Network and how it links with existing efforts and operates across scales.
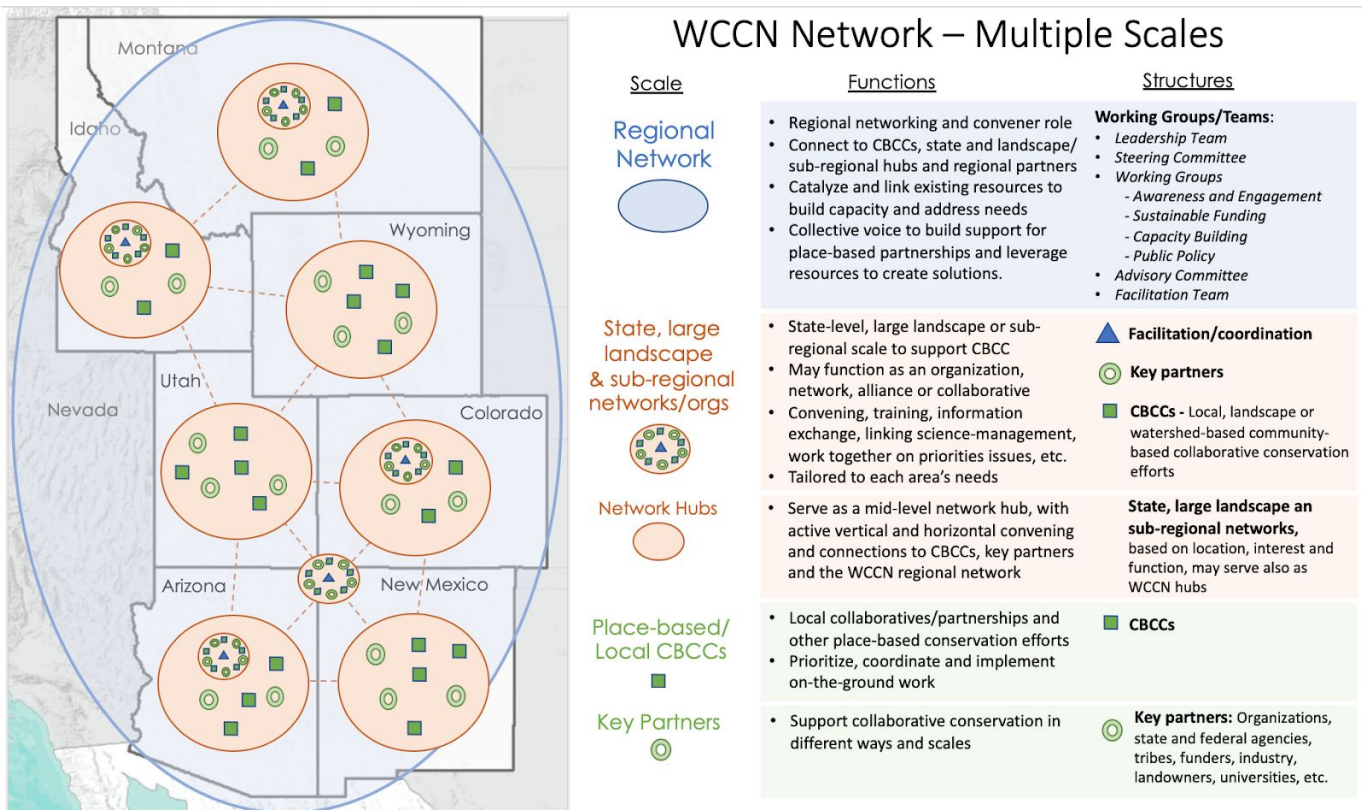
WCCN Structure. This diagram represents the key teams, groups and committees and their roles in the Network.
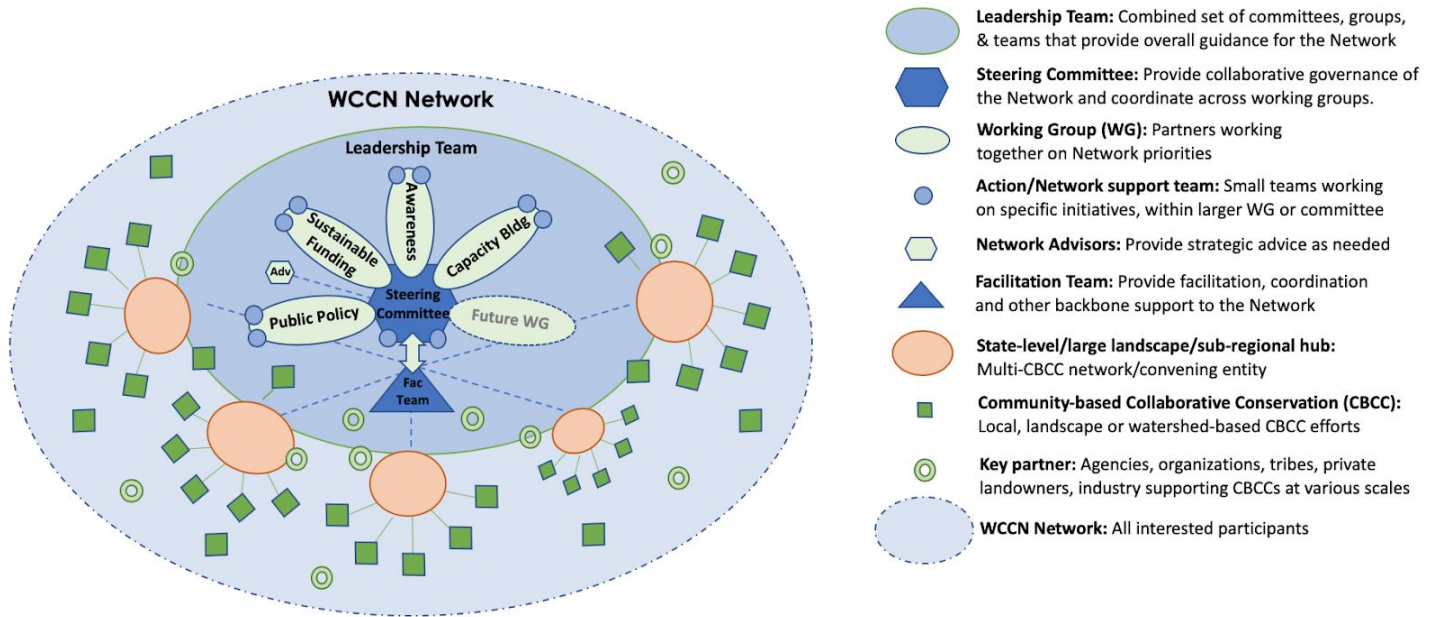
LEADERSHIP TEAM

Purpose: Provide overall guidance and collective leadership for the Network, and move forward the efforts of the Network in partnership with others across the region, as time and capacity allows.

Members:
- Comprised of all Network working groups, committees and teams.

Roles and responsibilities:
- Serve as the guardian of the Network's vision and mission.
- Provide input to the Steering Committee on network governance, priorities, design and development, annual program of work, and other decisions.
- Provide for the long-term financial and organizational sustainability of the Network concurrent with Steering Committee.
- Work on priority CBCC related activities and strategies across the region with CBCCs, state and sub-regional CBCC networks/organizations, and other key partners.
- Recommend amendments to this charter to be approved by the Steering Committee.

Meetings:
- Regular e-updates followed by quarterly virtual meetings.
- Annual or bi-annual in-person meetings as part of Network-wide events.

Network Support Teams:
- As needed, smaller teams may be developed to provide support for specific functions of the Network
- Network Support Teams are subsets of the Leadership Team (or combinations of participants from the Steering Committee, Working Groups, and the Advisory Committee) and may be short or longer-term.
- Examples of Network Support Teams could include: Network Launch, CRAFT, communications, data collection and mapping, Network website, communications across the Support Teams and/or Working Groups of the Network.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Purpose: Serve as the representative team of core partners providing coordination, strategy, oversight and governance/decision-making support to the Network.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Work in consultation with Leadership Team to:

- Guide Network development and governance including strategic direction, policy, and long-term financial and organizational sustainability, which may include cooperating or partnership agreements with Network members.
- Serve as guardian/trustee of the Network's vision and mission concurrent with the Leadership Team.
- Develop, approve and implement the Network annual work plan and associated annual budget.
- Ensure coordination across Network Working Groups, Teams, and Committees.
- Additional specific roles include:
    o Help compile quarterly reports and share with the Network.
    o Help design and implement higher-level/Network-wide events.
    o Arrange for and approve staffing as necessary to pursue the Network's strategic purposes and objectives.
    o Advance new initiatives and priorities for the Network consistent with the purpose and objectives of the Network, including approval of new Working Groups, Network Support Teams and Committees.
    o Approve amendments to the Charter upon recommendation by the Leadership Team.
    o If needed, may form a management team to manage weekly business between meetings of the Steering Committee. Would be a subset of and report to the Steering Committee, and would include at least one Facilitation Team member.

Members:

- Composition: 7-13 members with balanced representation of geographies, working groups, state-level hubs/support networks, and local CBCCs.
- Term: Two years, staggered terms, renewable for up to two additional terms.
- Selection and renewal:
    ○ The Leadership Team shall review, select and approve/renew members of the Steering Committee
    ○ Criteria include: a) geographic representation (7 states or eco-regions), b) can represent a state hub, working group, or committee, c) contribute a relevant perspective, network or expertise, and d) will participate actively on the Steering Committee (attend calls/meetings, etc.)
    ○ Any Leadership Team member and the Facilitation Team may nominate Steering Committee members.
    ○ Annual review initiated by the Facilitation Team with recommendations to the Steering Committee for decision.
- Expectations/Responsibilities: regular attendance (at least 75% of the calls/meetings), active contribution, come prepared.

Facilitation: the Facilitation Team prepares draft agendas, organizes meetings/calls, facilitates and documents Steering Committee meetings.

Meetings: Monthly/bi-monthly virtual meetings and one in-person meeting per year (with higher frequency initially)

WORKING GROUPS

Purpose: Collaborative, action-oriented groups to move forward and provide leadership on specific priority program areas/objectives of the Network.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Develop and implement work plans, based on CBCC and Leadership Team input and member capacity and interest.
- Build on and connect existing organizations/efforts in the region to advance working group priorities.

Coordination:

- Volunteer co-coordinators lead/facilitate working groups.

- Convene meetings/calls, encourage active participation by working group members, ensure documentation and sharing of notes, and guide planning and implementation of work plans.
- At least one co-coordinator from each working group serves on the Steering Committee and ensures communication and coordination between the respective working group and the Steering Committee.

Members:
- Interested CBCC practitioners from across the region, including CBCCs, state or sub-regional networks/organizations that support CBCCs, public land management agencies, community members, academic institutions, conservation organizations and other professionals.
- Preferably comprised of at least one representative from each state, with a majority of participants representing an on-the-ground CBCC and state/sub-regional support networks/organizations.
- Participants of working groups are self-identified and participate as they have time and interest .

Formation:
- Formation, as well as dissolution, of a Working Group is the decision of the Steering Committee. The Leadership Team may recommend formation/dissolution of a Working Group.

Meetings:
- As needed to move forward work plan implementation.
- Share updates quarterly with the Steering Committee or as requested.

Current Working Groups:
- **Awareness and Engagement:** Increase awareness of community-based collaborative conservation and identify, inform and engage place-based collaboratives who may wish to participate and benefit from the WCCN.
- **Public policy:** Review and propose revisions to relevant policy; engage and inform policy makers to better support and enable community-based collaborative conservation.
- **Capacity Building:** Advance the practice of CBCC and train current and future CBCC leaders.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Develop, implement and leverage a multi-faceted fundraising strategy, including identifying and pursuing diverse funding opportunities to secure and expand resources for CBCCs, state and landscape-based hubs, and the Network itself.

Action Teams:
- Smaller action teams in coordination with working group(s) can be formed as needed for CBCC partners to work on specific priority areas, and may be active as long as needed.

NETWORK ADVISORS
Purpose: Upon request, advise the Steering Committee strategically on specific Network issues, direction and strategies.
Members: Key sub-regional, regional or national scale partners.

FACILITATION TEAM
Purpose: Provide overall facilitation, coordination and other backbone support for the Network.
Roles and responsibilities:
- Key roles
  - *Coordination:* Colorado State University' Center for Collaborative Conservation serves as host organization and coordinator for the Network. This support includes webspace for online Network resources (CRAFT, CBCC directories, map and profiles, etc.).
  - *Facilitation:* University of Montana's Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy provides facilitation and strategic support for the Network.
- Convene, develop agendas for, and facilitate the work and decision making of the Steering Committee and the Leadership Team.
- Provide coordination support to the Working Groups and Committees.
- Work with the Steering Committee, and consult with the Leadership Team, to coordinate and draft the proposed budget, work plan and other supporting documents of the Network. These documents will be shared with the

Leadership Team and the Steering Committee for review, amendment and final approval by the Steering Committee.
- Consult with the Working Groups and the Advisory Committee regarding actions and agenda items to bring forward to the Steering Committee and the Leadership Team.
- Subject to the formation of a management team, if any, make operational and financial decisions as needed between meetings of and in consultation with the Steering Committee.
- Facilitate strategic planning and implementation of the vision and mission, and support overall sustainability of the Network.

STATE, SUB-REGIONAL AND LARGE LANDSCAPE-BASED HUBS

Purpose: Serve as active mid-level hubs in the Network connecting local CBCCs and state-level efforts, helping to expand and deepen engagement in the WCCN regional Network and to ensure both vertical and horizontal linkages in each state or sub-region. These types of hubs may already exist or may be formed in the future.

Roles and Responsibilities:
- An organization or network that plays a critical role by directly connecting to and supporting local collaboratives with grounded knowledge of local social, ecological and economic conditions. Such hubs foster, support and coordinate among existing collaboratives and efforts. (example: the Arizona Cross-Watershed Network convenes state level agencies and organizations and local watershed partnerships to foster coordination, knowledge and resource sharing, and collaboration on cross-cutting issues.)
- Where a new collaborative is forming, the state or sub-regional hub could assist in its development.
- Hub representatives participate in the Steering Committee or Leadership Team and function as a conduit between the WCCN network and their state level hub.

COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATION CONSERVATION GROUPS (CBCCS)

Purpose: Local/place-based efforts comprised of community groups, local government, agencies, organizations, landowners, industry and other stakeholders working towards shared goals in a specific watershed or landscape. See Appendix A.

Role: Convene, prioritize, coordinate and implement on-the-ground collaborative conservation and related work.

KEY PARTNERS

Purpose and Roles: Organizations, agencies, tribes, funders, industry, private landowners, universities, and individuals who offer guidance on strategic direction or other targeted support as needed.

Decision Making

- The Network will operate collaboratively at all levels, and strive for consensus decisions and agreements in order to ensure broad support by all relevant CBCC participants/partners.
- Consensus has been reached when participants agree they can accept whatever is proposed after every effort has been made to meet the interests of all relevant participants. Working group/committee members have the right to expect that no one will ask them to undermine their interests. Each member is responsible for proposing solutions that will meet everyone else's interests as well as their own. If consensus cannot be reached, areas of divergence and the reasons for divergence, will be documented. If a decision is needed and consensus cannot be reached, a pre-determined fallback decision method will be used (e.g., supermajority voting, coordinator's preference).

Funding

Budget:
- The Facilitation Team, in consultation with the Steering Committee and Leadership Team, will develop an annual network budget.

- The Steering Committee will review and approve the final annual budget prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Fiscal year: July 1st to June 30th

*Sustainable Funding Working Group w*ill work with the Steering Committee to:
- Develop and implement a diversified fundraising strategy. This could include paid membership (and benefits to members), grants, donations, and other options.
- Encourage financial sustainability of the Network
- Explore new and creative funding mechanisms (e.g., cross connection of funding sources which might typically only fund CBCC projects).

Communications

Within/across Network teams (working groups, committees, and teams):
- All in-person and teleconference meetings will be documented and notes shared within two weeks.
- Meeting notes, announcements and other relevant information will be posted in the internal collaboration Google Drive folders.
- Communications shall be as open as possible.
- Relevant teams will be given convenient and routine opportunities to provide input to decisions by the Steering Committee and the Leadership Team.
- Working Groups, Committee and Team meetings will be open to all interested.
- The Steering Committee in consultation with the Facilitation Team will assist in continuous development and improvement of the Network website, including regular postings.

To Broader Network:
- E-newsletter (quarterly desired).
- Regular postings to the public website.
- Announcements of Network events and other CBCC learning and engagement opportunities.

Amending the Charter

Based on recommendations from the Leadership Team, the Steering Committee may agree by consensus to charter amendments, as needed.

Appendix A: Definitions

- *Community-based Collaboration*: 1) a group that has been convened voluntarily from within the local community to focus on a resource management issue(s) whose management impacts the physical, environmental, and/or economic health of the local community; 2) Was brought together by a shared desire to influence the conservation and use of natural resources through recommendations or direct actions that will impact the management of the resource; 3) Has membership that includes a broad array of interests, some of which may be in conflict; and 4) utilizes a decision-making process that requires participation by local stakeholders. (adapted Dukes et al. 2011)
- *Collaborative initiatives:* are a dynamic set of actors connected by their shared commitment to undertaking a sustained process of interaction in order to collectively address environmental or social-ecological situations that cross boundaries and are linked to a geographic place. (Ch'aska Huayhuaca-Frye)
- *Collaborative conservation:* is the process of creating a sustainable future for peoples and places by inviting diverse and inclusive groups of stakeholders to jointly solve problems through collective learning and action. (Reid et al., 2011)
- *Community-based Conservation:* reverses top-down, center driven conservation by focusing on the people who bear the costs of conservation. In the broadest sense, then, community-based conservation includes natural resources management, by, for, and with the local community. For most conservationists the agenda is to make nature and natural products meaningful to rural communities. For local communities, the agenda is to manage natural resources and, through conservation practices, improve their economic well-being. (adapted Western & Wright, Natural Connections, 1994, p.7)
- *Collaboration* is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. Those parties with an interest in the problem are termed stakeholders. Stakeholders include all individuals, groups, or organizations that are directly influenced by actions others take to solve the problem. Each stakeholder has a unique appreciation of the problem. The objective of collaboration is to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of the problem among the stakeholders than any one of them could construct alone. Collaboration results in solutions emerging by dealing constructively with differences, joint ownership of decisions, and stakeholders assuming collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain. (Emerson et al. 2011)
- *Conservation:* an ongoing interaction between people and their natural environment that is meant to sustain and improve natural resources and human communities and prioritizes sustaining diversity and resiliency to multiple stresses. Importantly, the stakeholders required to construct the collaborative are diverse and may bring different values, perspectives, and cultural worldviews to the process. The collaborative process allows groups to produce outcomes that would not have been possible without collaboration. (Definition from 2010 exercise in defining collaborative conservation with Stacy Lynn, Robin Reid, Lee Scharf, Jill Lackett and Ch'aska Huayhuaca-Frye)

Appendix B: Values and Principles

Listening to Understand:
- PRINCIPLE: Listening to Understand requires trust, respect, and civility; everyone is responsible to ask questions, listen to others' answers/solutions, and then invite participation; putting aside differences, and always searching for common values and solutions. Listening to understand will lead to adaptive innovation.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow:
- PRINCIPLE: Recognizing and understanding the past, provides a foundation for the present and direction for the future.

Sense of place and Community:

- PRINCIPLE: Individuals within communities develop deep historical and emotional connections where they work, worship and play. As stakeholders, it is critical that these individuals and communities have a voice in the management and decisions made within their landscape/watershed.
- NOTE: We take ownership and invest in the resources of our community. Our voices are critical to making and keeping a durable solution. A sense of place and community comes from caring about, preserving and utilizing landscapes/watersheds. CBCC is about supporting and connecting to viable local economies, including nearby landscapes from which a community derives its' economic, cultural, social and recreational values.

Inclusivity:
- PRINCIPLE: Healthy landscapes and watersheds benefit everyone, even those who don't live within the landscape/watershed. There is a need to understand and protect all the values our natural resources provide. By collaborating with diverse groups, we can work on durable solutions that recognize and meet our common goals. Sometimes these different solutions create conflict. When conflict arises, understanding and respecting the values of the affected community should provide a valuable guidepost in determining solution(s).