

Building Capacity at the State and Regional Level Scales

Confluence Capacity Building Working Session

Session Hosts:

Alan Barton/Tahnee Robertson

Session Facilitators:

Karen Simms

Description of Session:

A goal of the WCCN is to organize community-based collaborative conservation (CBCC) organizations into statewide and regional networks, and to coordinate support for these networks and CBCC organizations. Networks enhance the sustainability of collaborative organizations by facilitating peer-to-peer learning and capacity building, streamlining acquisition of funding and resources and distribution to CBCC groups, and creating lines of communication through which issues can be raised and shared. In this session, we discuss case studies from Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona that illustrate how statewide networking and working with state officials can benefit CBCC organizations, by engaging a wide public, developing funding streams, and building capacity.

Outline of the Session:

Arrival: Collect information on each participant – Name, Affiliation, Email, Description of participation in statewide collaboration, Why they chose this session

10 minutes: Introductions and Framing the Session

30 minutes: 4 Case Studies, 5-7 minutes each

15 minutes: Organizing break-out sessions

25 – 30 minutes: Peer-to-peer break-out discussions; Each group generates lessons and next steps

5 minutes: Session wrap up

Case Studies:

1. Engaging a Diverse Public, Montana (Deb Love, Resources Legacy Fund)

In 2019, the Montana Outdoor Heritage Project (MOHP), a coalition of conservation, youth, tribal and rural interests, set out to hear from everyday Montanans about what outdoor heritage means to them, what concerns they may have, and to gather ideas for generating dedicated statewide conservation funding. 40 volunteer ambassadors conducted 50 listening sessions across the state, and with the support of dozens of organizations and businesses, MOHP members surveyed over 11,300 residents in just six

months. From this groundbreaking public outreach effort, MOHP is poised to deliver big for conservation, at the ballot box and in the halls of the legislature, led by passionate volunteer ambassadors carrying a powerful message from the people of Montana.

2. Statewide Funding, Wyoming (Jessica Crowder, Wyoming Landowners Alliance)

In Wyoming, a state-level task force met for one year to find ways to improve forest health. In their report, the task force recommended the state encourage place-based collaboratives to incorporate locally identified needs into planning and implementation of forest health improvement projects. The state legislature contributed \$100,000 to help collaborative groups get started or improve their operations, and the money was distributed to local groups. The biggest needs were organizational, as collaboratives needed assistance in facilitation and group processes. Some of the collaboratives were very successful in raising funds for forest health projects, providing a good return on the state's investment in some localities.

3. Southwest Coalition of Collaboratives, New Mexico, Arizona & Colorado (Alan Barton, New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute; Tahnee Robertson, Southwest Decision Resources)

Community-based collaboratives typically are voluntary efforts, and require facilitation to organize and run meetings, and coordinate other collaborative processes. The SW Coalition of Collaboratives is a relatively new initiative, with the goal of helping place-based collaboratives with organizational needs, through training and support in collaborative capacity. The goal is to engage more participants in collaborative groups in facilitating the processes of collaboration. We will review lessons from our early efforts to assess the capacity-building needs of Southwestern collaboratives.

4. Cross-Watershed Network, Arizona (Tahnee Robertson, Southwest Decision Resources)

The Arizona Cross-Watershed Network, a state-level initiative supported by the regional XWN and SDR, facilitates relationship-building across watersheds in Arizona, linking watershed practitioners by fostering on-line and in-person venues that make connecting with peers easy. The goal is to help practitioners build collective capacity, share resources, and form a community that fosters landscape-level collaboration. Practitioners value sharing and collaborating, and represent local watershed groups, non-profit organizations, public agencies, tribes, universities, consultants, grantmakers, landowners and passionate community members.

Break-out Group Activity:

Following the case studies, participants will discuss potential topics for a break-out group. We will determine four topics, which will focus on different aspects of statewide organizing. Participants will then organize into four break-out groups. The presenters will facilitate these discussions, with the goal of outlining a strategy for statewide organizing, generating important

lessons from the experiences of participants, and determining the first two or three steps to organize statewide.

Technology & Materials:

Flip charts and pens

Bio of Hosts and Case Study Presenters:

Alan Barton

Alan Barton is Collaboration Program Manager at the New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute. He has over 35 years' experience working in conservation and sustainable community development around the U.S. and in Central and South America. He has taught community development, sociology and forestry at several colleges and universities.

Alan: awbarton@nmhu.edu



Tahnee Robertson

Tahnee Robertson is the Director of Southwest Decision Resources, a facilitation and mediation group based in Arizona specializing in cross-boundary collaboration in the Southwestern US. For the past 20 years, her work has focused on designing and facilitating collaborative efforts related to watershed, forest, conservation, outdoor recreation, community planning, and engagement of underrepresented stakeholders. She and her team currently support several place-based collaboratives in AZ, NM and UT.



Tahnee: tahnee@swdresources.com

Karen Simms

Karen Simms works for Pima County, Arizona as a Natural Resources Division Manager within the Natural Resources, Parks, and Recreation Department. In this position, Karen has management responsibility for 155 Pima County open space properties including four mountain parks and twelve ranches. Prior to working with Pima County, Karen worked for nearly 30 years with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in southern Arizona before retiring in September 2017. She held positions with BLM as a Wildlife Biologist, Planning Coordinator, and National Conservation Area Manager/Assistant Field Manager. Karen is well known locally and nationally for her expertise in collaborative planning and adaptive management on public lands. Karen graduated from the University of Arizona in May 1989 with a MS degree in Wildlife Management. She received her BS degree in Zoology from the University of California, Davis in 1983.

Karen: karen.simms@pima.gov



Deb Love

Deb Love has spent the last 25 years leading collaborative conservation efforts and connecting people to nature. Currently director of the Intermountain West program at Resources Legacy Fund, Deb has served as executive director of the LOR Foundation and, prior to that, senior vice president at The Trust for Public Land. She holds a BS in organizational management from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley and an MS in environmental resource management from Antioch New England Graduate School.

Deb: dlove@resourceslegacyfund.org



Jessica Crowder

Jessica Crowder works on policy for the Western Landowners Alliance (WLA). Prior to joining WLA, Jessica was a policy advisor for former Wyoming Governor Matt Mead. In this position, Jessica worked closely with federal partners, state agencies, local governments, landowners and non-governmental organizations to develop policy and management of natural resources to benefit Wyoming citizens and landscapes. Jessica has also worked as policy analyst for the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, for the Agricultural Research Service as a technician and for Northwest College in Powell, WY as an instructor. Jessica was born in Victoria, Texas and raised on a cattle ranch in New Mexico. She holds a M.S. in Range Science and a B.S. in Range Management from Texas Tech University. Her M.S. research focused on prescribed fire and grazing management in the Northern Great Plains.

Jessica: jessica@westernlandowners.org

