

New Collaboration Approaches

Capacity Building Working Session Notes

Speakers:

John Roberts – Idaho Department of Lands (retired), Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership and Idaho's Shared Stewardship Advisory Committee shared about the U.S. Forest Service's Shared Stewardship in Idaho (idahoforester@gmail.com)

Mark Peck – Montana Forest Collaboration Network, Governor's Forest Action Plan Committee, and Lincoln County (MT) Commissioner shared about grassroots collaboration and the U.S. Forest Service's Good Neighbor Authority (mark.peck@libby.org)

Co-Hosts:

Laurel Anders – Communications Program Coordinator, Intermountain West Joint Venture

Ed Contreras – SONEC Conservation Delivery Coordinator, Intermountain West Joint Venture

Session Description:

The New Collaboration Approaches session was designed to share innovative, community-based models to increase collaboration across state and federal agencies and engage local organizations and communities. Case studies helped illustrate strategies and models to work across public and private boundaries and regulatory frameworks to effectively implement collaborative conservation that strengthens and sustains healthy landscapes, vibrant communities, and thriving economies.

As part of the introduction, attendees were asked share what they hoped to learn from the session. Responses indicated interest in: the Shared Stewardship (SS) strategy in Idaho, innovative new approaches, new organizations and ideas, new tools and approaches for collaboration, the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), and approaches that connect local and tribal communities to agencies.

Highlights from the presentations included:

- SS is a way to incorporate state and local agencies into decision-making relating to where the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) directs its resources locally.
- SS does not provide funding to states but is a leadership direction (culture shift) that helps to coordinate and focus state and federal work. It facilitates the development of shared priorities and leverages legal authorities and resources to increase efficiencies.
- In Idaho, an advisory committee and sub-committees have been established to help identify priority areas and joint projects for state and federal agencies.
- SS is a landscape-scale collaborative approach.
- GNA is a capacity-building tool that allows states to enter into agreements with USFS to leverage resources, streamline processes, and manage USFS land. Where USFS has limited resources, states and counties can assist.
- GNA is a tool for larger landscape efforts that benefit communities through stream restoration, wildlife habitat, and fuels reduction.
- Collaboration within the GNA allows groups to prioritize where the work is done and provides ability for states and counties to plan, prepare, and manage timber sales, leverage fuels mitigation funds, and undertake other activities that enhance forest health and community protection.

- Joint Chiefs facilitates government agencies working together and has proven to be very successful for conservation.
- Both SS and GNA are in their early stages in Idaho and Montana, respectively, but are achieving early success

After the speakers shared their presentation, a large group discussion centered around the following questions:

How do the case studies apply to your work?

- Working at a landscape level and across multiple agencies provides the ability to identify the most vulnerable infrastructure and target efforts in specific areas.
- GNA is working where good collaboration is already occurring.
- Leveraging resources across state and federal agencies is productive.
- State and federal agencies need to work with tribes.
- GNA is the foundation for a culture shift.

Which elements of the case studies benefit your work?

- Strategies for getting more of the heavy-hitters from federal agencies at the table are productive.
- Using existing collaboratives to be the GNA agent is effective.

How can you integrate your learnings from these case studies into your work?

- Look at states where they have successfully brought tribes to the table to work with federal agencies and use their learnings elsewhere.
- Identify authorities that facilitate collaboration and allow for integration.

Based on what you learned, what do you need to facilitate your collaborative efforts?

- Consolidated case studies can help others gain support for these approaches across the country.
- Use marketing to showcase success stories.
- Increased funding capacity for collaboration, planning, and coordination is necessary, in addition to implementation funding.
- More information about SS from the 13 states with signed agreements would be helpful for increased collaboration elsewhere.

Key findings/outcomes from this session include:

1. The GNA is a tool for capacity building where good collaboration is already occurring.
2. SS is a leadership direction across state and federal agencies.
3. Case studies showed state, federal, and local leveraging of resources and targeting efforts to solve challenges across boundaries.

Next steps include:

1. Learn more about SS, GNA, and Joint Chiefs in the 13 states with signed agreements and apply to current collaboratives.
2. Use existing collaboratives to capitalize on those mechanisms.
3. Elevate success to catalyze more state agreements and collaborative engagement across boundaries and jurisdictions.