

# **Sustainable Funding Strategies for Community-based Collaborative Conservation (CBCCs) Groups: Challenges and Opportunities**

Confluence 2020 Capacity Building Working Session

Session Host(s): Gary Burnett and Gary Wolfe

## Description of Session:

Community-based Collaborative Conservation groups and their support organizations, report a constant struggle to financially support their organizations from year to year, but also over the longer term. Funding for operations and capacity building is reported as the most difficult to raise. Funders report difficulties in deciding which collaboratives to fund; especially given the recent increase in number of collaborative groups.

This session will convene representatives from conservation funders, and leaders of the conservation practice community. The goal will be to: a) understand and articulate funding issues from the perspectives of practitioners and funders, b) explore examples of funding strategies to support CBCCs, and c) identify next steps for WCCN and form a Working Group to advance this effort. Case studies will be used to illustrate what has worked, what have been the lessons learned, and will be topics for breakout sessions. Participants will form small breakout groups and use case studies to explore and develop strategies to advance funding strategies to support CBCCs, summarize those discussions, and report back to the entire group.

## Outline the session: (90 minutes)

10 minutes: Introduction and Framing

30 minutes: 2-3 Case Studies presented

10 minutes: Whole group question and comment

20 minutes: Small breakout group activity

15 minutes: Break out groups share results

5 minutes: Session wrap up, summary of main outcomes and next steps

## Case Study Panel:

1. “New Mexico Collaborative Zone Grants” (collaboration between McCune Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation and Thornburg Foundation).

Henry Rael, Program Officer

McCune Charitable Foundation  
345 East Alameda Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
505-983-8300 (office)  
575-616-2253 (cell)  
[henry@nmmccune.org](mailto:henry@nmmccune.org)

2. “Montana Watershed Coordination Council’s Watershed Fund” (a pooled fund for re-granting to MWCC member collaboratives).

Ethan Kunard, Executive Director  
Montana Watershed Coordination Council  
PO Box 1416  
Helena, MT 59624  
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405-600-6771 (cell)  
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3. “Catalyst Fund re-granting fund to support CBCCs, including indigenous efforts” (managed by Network for Landscape Conservation).

Jonathan Peterson  
Catalyst Fund Manager  
Network for Landscape Conservation  
30 Keets Brook Road, Bernardston, MA 01337  
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Small breakout group activity: attendees choose one of the case studies, sit at table with case study presenter, Q&A and then strategize about how to use this information to advance their work and discuss the questions provide below.

1. Could the strategy presented in this case study be applicable to your situation?
2. Do you have suggestions for modifying this strategy that could make it more appealing or effective?
3. Do you have suggestions for other funding strategies (not presented in the case studies) that are worth sharing with the group?

Technology & Materials:

Flip charts and pens

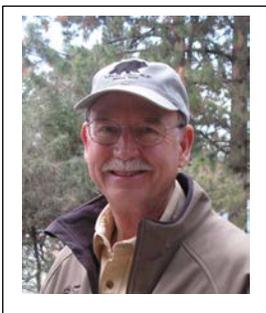
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Bio of Host(s) and Case Study Presenters:



**Gary Burnett** is a long-time leader in the conservation field,. Gary is executive director for the Heart of the Rockies Initiative, a network of 26 independent local, regional and national land trusts. He has 30 years of experience in natural resource management and nonprofit development – and has worked with and for public and private landowners/managers on land protection and stewardship; prescribed fire; and natural areas, wildlife and habitat management. Gary has developed and directed annual fund, major gift and planned giving programs for local, regional and national organizations.

Prior to his position with Heart of the Rockies, he served as executive director of the Blackfoot Challenge and development director with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. He holds an M.S. degree in Wildlife Biology from University of Montana.



**Gary Wolfe**

Gary Wolfe is executive director of the Montana-based Cinnabar Foundation, a private foundation focusing on environmental and conservation issues in Montana and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. He has 45 years of conservation and natural resources management experience in the public, private and nonprofit sectors.

Prior to joining the Cinnabar Foundation he served as CEO of two conservation NGOs – Vital Ground and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – and worked as a wildlife biologist in New Mexico.

Gary earned his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in wildlife biology from Colorado State University.

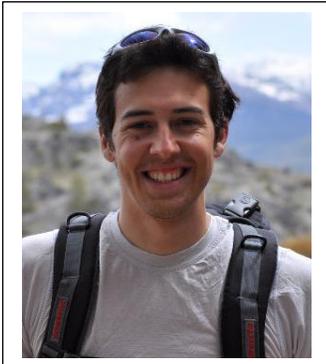


Ethan Kunard joined Montana Watershed Coordination Council (MWCC) as executive director in November 2019. Here, he focuses on supporting watershed conservation efforts through diverse partnerships at a statewide level. Prior to this, his work in the Madison Valley of Montana focused on community-based conservation related to long-term planning and development. Additionally, Ethan served as chair of the MWCC Board while they created their “Watershed Fund” and served on the Madison County Planning Board as the locale became the second-fastest growing county in Montana.

Ethan graduated from the University of Montana, where he studied in the College of Forestry & Conservation.



Henry Rael has almost 20 years of experience in the publishing and technology sectors and more than 10 years experience in grassroots community and enterprise development. Henry was on the start-up team of Innovent Technologies, a Bluetooth semiconductor company and served as a communications and marketing Manager at Broadcom Corporation, managing communications efforts for the company’s market-leading wireless products. Since returning to New Mexico in 2002, he founded a community-based economic development agency and co-founded a cooperative of small farms and a communications firm serving the non-profit sector. He currently serves as Program Officer with the McCune Foundation of New Mexico. Born and raised in Albuquerque, Henry has B.A. degrees in English and Political Science and an M.A. in English from UNM and lives in Albuquerque’s South Valley with his wife and two children.



Jonathan Peterson (Jon) has more than 10 years experience in working to advance landscape conservation. Prior to joining the Network for Landscape Conservation, he coordinated the South Mountain Partnership, a regional landscape conservation project in south-central Pennsylvania, and spent three years on the staff of the Boston-based Kendall Foundation. He is also a senior fellow of the Environmental Leadership Program. A graduate of Middlebury College and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Jon lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and young son.