

Post-Confluence 2020 Survey Results Report

Compiled by Nicole Reese - please email nicole@crowd-conservation.org if you have any questions.

“The Western Collaborative Conservation Network (WCCN) was launched during an inaugural event held at Colorado State University, March 10th – 12th at the event Confluence 2020. Members of collaborative conservation groups and their support organizations gathered from across the West to CONNECT to peers, CONVENE to learn new collaboration skills and practice new tools, and CATALZE action on issues that limit conservation success.”

The WCCN Steering Committee conducted a survey immediately following Confluence 2020, which are shared in these [Poll Everywhere Results](#). Four months later, we conducted another post-conference survey in order to capture the value added and improved capacity of Confluence participants to deliver results over time.

Feedback collected from this second survey provides insights of how the WCCN are building capacity to deliver conservation, tell the story of our network, and will contribute to planning future WCCN events such as Confluence 2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic has dealt a massive blow to collaborative efforts worldwide with detrimental effects on communication, safety, and funding; However, the results of our survey show that our participants haven't given up on collaboration, and are continuing to figure out how to move forward despite this new challenge. WCCN strives to provide support for their endeavors through continued collaborative engagement.

In the first survey, 63% of participants rated their overall conference experience as Excellent and 35% as Good, indicating a high level of initial satisfaction after Confluence 2020. Responses have remained consistent based on the results from the second post-Confluence survey, as over half of participants agreed that they had applied insights, skills or tools they learned from the event (Q3), and in response to another question of the second survey, over 70% of participants benefited from connections made at Confluence 2020 (Q5).

83% of the first survey participants expressed that they learned new skills and were exposed to new tools, and in the second survey the majority of participants who applied that knowledge shared how they applied what they learned (Q4). There was overlap in participants' responses between the two surveys, indicating that DEI, stakeholder and community engagement, and funding were all topics that continued to provide value to participants after the event. Participants in both surveys also shared that they valued learning about the different collaborative efforts that are working in our landscape that they didn't know about before the Confluence. Connecting to a network of peers continues to be a highly valuable contribution for conservation practitioners.

The full results from the 4 month post-Confluence survey can be found in the following report.

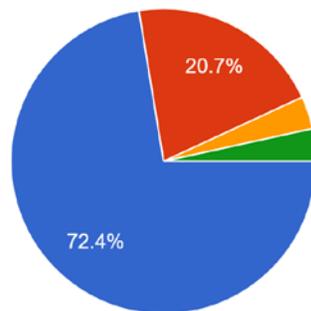
This post-event survey collected 29 responses in total, and below are the results to the questions, with the top three responses listed by highest ranking. Charts, graphs, and all written responses are also recorded for each question below the top rated responses.

Q 1. What part of Confluence 2020 did you attend? Select one answer.

I was there the entire time.	72.4%
I was able to attend only part of the event.	20.7%
I planned to attend in person but because of COVID-19 or for other reasons I joined part of the event remotely.	3.4%

1. What part of Confluence 2020 did you attend? Select one answer.

29 responses



- I was there the entire time.
- I was able to attend only part of the event.
- I planned to attend in person but because of COVID-19 or for other reasons I joined part of the event remotely.
- I registered but ultimately was unable to attend.

Q 2. If you attended only part of Confluence 2020, which part(s) did you attend? (Written responses)

Summary:

Of those who only attended part of the Confluence, most either attended the first or second half of the conference.

All 8 responses are shared below:

I was there NEARLY the entire time. I got notice during the final speaker that my flight had been canceled, so I had to scramble.

I was there only for March 11.

Last day and a half

N/A

several and mostly all sessions

The entire first day

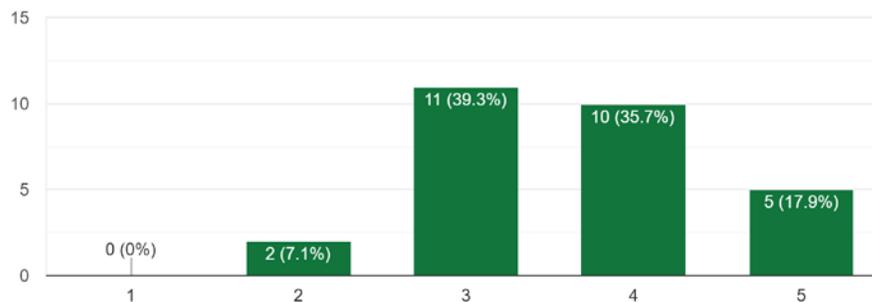
The first day through evening.

Unfortunately, only the session at which I presented

Q 3. Please rate the following statement: "I have applied insights, skills or tools I learned at Confluence 2020." Application could mean small changes in your behaviors to major changes to projects. (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree)

3. Please rate the following statement: "I have applied insights, skills or tools I learned at Confluence 2020." Application could mean sm...ur behaviors to major changes to projects.

28 responses



Q 4. Please share one or more insights, skills, or tools you have applied. (Written responses)

Summary:

Most survey participants shared insights specific to an improved understanding or thinking more strategically about topics discussed during the Confluence, such as various types of collaborative efforts and creative funding opportunities for collaboratives, following up on conservation finance ideas, and DEI. One participant highlighted that the poster session helped them practice public speaking and meet attendees.

Overall the responses suggested a desire to connect with others from the Confluence for more collaboration, engagement with the WCCN working groups, and an inspiration to apply the WCCN's co-creation philosophy to their work.

All 22 responses are shared below:

After attending the session on "capacity building" I was compelled to get involved with a working group to identify opportunities to further support capacity of collaboratives in my state and region.

Been thinking more strategically about stakeholder analysis

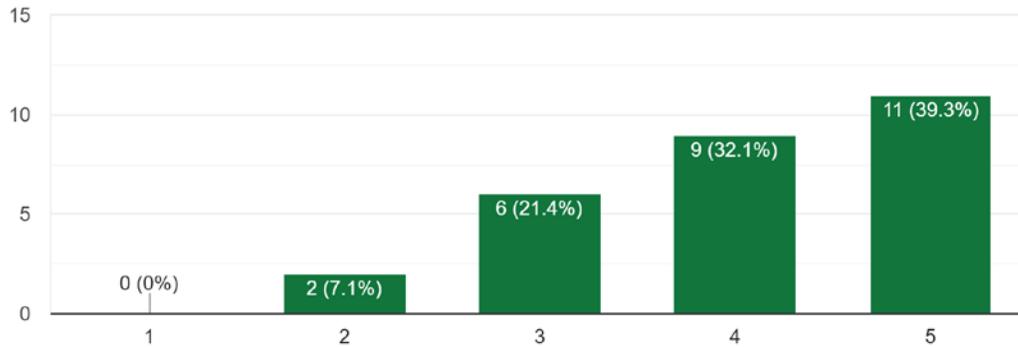
Collaborative Processes during public meetings

DEI concepts
Enlightened on Public Land issues
Facilitation best practices
Followed up on conservation finance ideas
How to better relate to public employees
I hope that the connections I made will lead to greater collaboration and ideas
I really liked the poster session speed dating thing. As a presenter it helped me work on my elevator speech, and I met a lot of great folks. Improved understanding of various types of collaborative efforts.
Learned a great deal in the development of economic tools for ecosystem services
Learned about various creative funding opportunities for collaboratives.
Learning how different we understand as native and non-native
RE: insights into messaging tools (i.e. video and messaging) to highlight work done by partnerships etc.
Since the event, I have thought a lot about the way Confluence co-created and how that resulted in substantial engagement among attendees. With everything I'm doing at <work>, I'm thinking about when and how to apply a similar approach.
Sustaining in real time an ever-expanding network of working relationships to leverage change is complicated, challenging, and time consuming. Yet, such an approach is what is required to meet both the threats and opportunities we now face.
The biggest insight I took away from Confluence is a broadened understanding of the collaborative landscape of the West. Learning what is happening where has enabled me to match my skills with the needs of several collaborative conservation efforts I hadn't even heard of before Confluence.
The social media content workshop was helpful!
The theory that FACA, as applied, is causing problems for collaboration. I still do not know if this is true, but it has kept me thinking.
There is a place for visuals to enhance conservation efforts!
We're not in this work alone.

Q 5. Please rate the following statement: "Since leaving Confluence 2020, I have benefited from connections with new people and organizations I met at the event." (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree)

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28 responses



Q 6. Please describe the most important connections you have maintained and why those connections are important to you? (Written responses)

Summary:

Eight participants explicitly stated that they made many connections that continue to engage with after the Confluence. Five expressed that Covid-19 had impacted their ability to connect. Others shared how they connected to the WCCN leadership team, with private landowners, with leaders of organizations doing similar work & fellow practitioners, or with researchers working on relevant research.

Connecting to funding opportunities and experts for DEI was also appreciated.

Not only new connections, but reconnecting with existing connections to deepen those relationships was also expressed as valuable. One participant shared that it led to a new initiative with a colleague I met for the first time.

All 23 responses are shared below:

Broader network connections with WCCN leadership team participants has given me a deeper understanding of the field and collaborative conservation in practice. Continuing to engage these relationships is helping me to grow as a facilitator and citizen of the West.

Closer connection to private landowners attending the conference expands opportunity to learn what producers are doing in other states.

Connections for funding and assist as a liaison

Connections with leaders of organizations doing similar work. Connection to academics and researchers working on relevant research to my work.

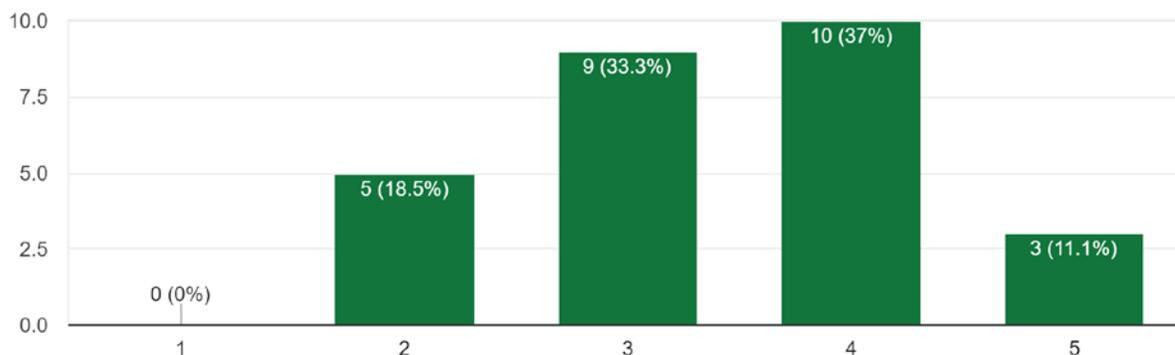
How working together with others makes it easy

Drew Bennett at the University of Wyoming.
Experts/spokespeople for DEI have provided resources and expertise
fellow collaborative conservation practitioners
Honestly, due to Covid 19 things have been extremely slow in state government
Covid has impacted my connections
I have had no contact with connections from Conference. I had full intention to, but COVID shifted some of my priorities and ability to reconnect.
It was great to meet Jessica Crowder with WLA. I would like to talk with her more because we have not worked with them much. I had planned to do that at the conference! But I got sucked away by the process of moving <my org> into remote working status after day 1.
Would like to get to know the other panelists on my panel, but since I joined remotely I don't feel as connected to them as I would like.
I developed a deeper relationship with individuals/organizations around young producers and conservation finance.
I met numerous people providing WCCN leadership and stayed in touch with a lot of them. Very specifically, meeting people from the Blackfoot challenge was helpful.
I think the most valuable connection has been with WCCN and with existing partners who I shared the experience with.
I was able to learn about several new collaborative efforts in the West and build on my knowledge of what each of them does. I have been able to then connect others that are working on similar things, in order to save them time and resources.
In some ways, the best connections (not necessarily new) came from people in my own state having the opportunity to talk and follow up after the conference.
Led to a new initiative with a colleague I met for the first time.
The Mt Working Group Circle coming together with the WCCN to explore the next Confluence. How do we do and share our work at the same time.
Too many to articulate. Just putting faces to names, realizing so-and-so is in my network, seeing how a few people's careers have progressed.
Too numerous. Connected with several people I continue to engage with.

Q 7. Please rate the following statement: "By attending Confluence 2020, I increased my capacity to achieve results." (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree)

7. Please rate the following statement: "By attending Confluence 2020, I increased my capacity to achieve results."

27 responses



Q 8. What is the most important aspect of your increased capacity? (Written responses)

Summary:

Seven survey participants mentioned networking and connecting with colleagues as an aspect of increased capacity, and one participant looked forward to connecting with other WCCN members. Responses included practiced soft skills such as facilitation and networking, and learned more about fundraising.

However, remote attendance limited participation capacity, and one participant shared honestly that their capacity had not increased.

All 19 responses are shared below:

Due to my remote and partial attendance, I don't think I got as much out of the conference as I could have or would have liked

Expanded network

facilitation skills

I don't think my capacity to achieve results in collaborative conservation increased.

I have forced myself to reach out to others.

I have learned how to be more flexible in my capacity to balance work that is more heart-centered to the work that will pay the bills.

I learned more about fundraising and participated in a group session led by the same person at Confluence 2020.

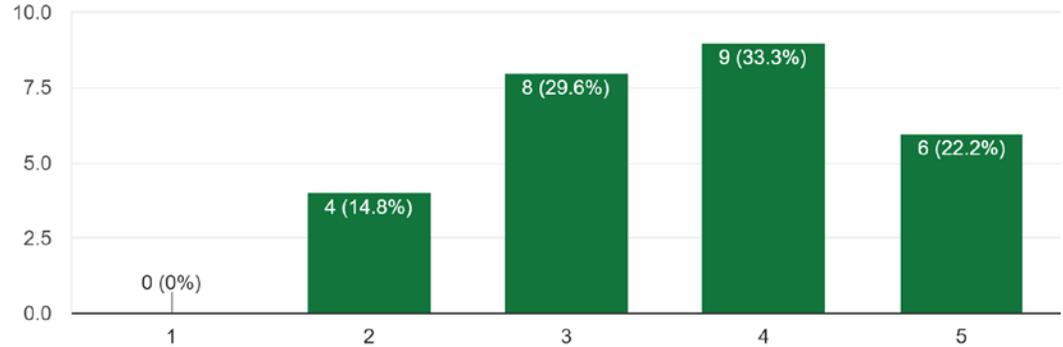
I'm not quite sure at this time. I would like to say "the ability to connect with, and learn from, people coordinating similar efforts across the West to inform my work". However, this isn't quite yet feasible as

we work out ways to communicate with one another in the WCCN.
Improved awareness of resources and other approaches to collaboration.
Increased awareness and understanding
It helped to save time and resources.
I've gotten a better understanding of where I can be of use- saves me a lot of time and others a lot of hassle!
Making known to others and the reason why it's important
More partners and more context.
Network of colleagues with whom I can connect
Networking may have had an indirect impact on our capacity
Perspective of collaboration, understanding of who is out there and what they are doing, how my work could support efforts of others/opportunities to collaborate
The connections I created among our extended community.
The networking at the event

Q 9. Please rate the following statement: "I have transferred some of my learning and new connections to others in my organization or professional network." (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree)

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27 responses



Q 10. What learning and new connections have you transferred? (written responses)

Summary:

Fundraising applications, DEI concepts, and increasing my network for mutual benefit were highlighted as topics and connections that have transferred from the Confluence, however four responses indicated that the pandemic disrupted their follow-up efforts.

All 18 responses are shared below:

Advice on applying methods of fundraising.

Connecting my peers at the University of Montana with the efforts of the WCCN is a point of focus for me over the next year. I'm looking forward to continuing to integrate those circles to the betterment of both.

Connections to USDA Forest Service partner organizations in the Rocky Mountain Region

Conservation finance/young producer networks

Contacts made with other organizations that are working on issues of interest/relevance to my colleagues. However, the pandemic really threw off the momentum and follow-up unfortunately.

Covid has impacted the connections. I learned more about carbon credit markets and have looked into them.

DEI concepts

have not yet had capacity to transfer

How to remain focused on one's local efforts while not being blind to the larger interdependent context around us. Local working groups in Central Montana are having conversations with new important partners beyond Montana.

I debriefed some of the folks I met with. I would have done more of that without COVID disruption.

I gained insights about "living with predators" that I've shared with partners working on CSU's engagement on the wolves in Colorado.

I learned more than I probably contributed

I've made my colleagues aware of the conference and subjects associated with the conference

More connections to community-based collaboratives.

Mostly about the work we did, preserve our way of life as native

Not to the degree desired due to Covid-related slowdown.

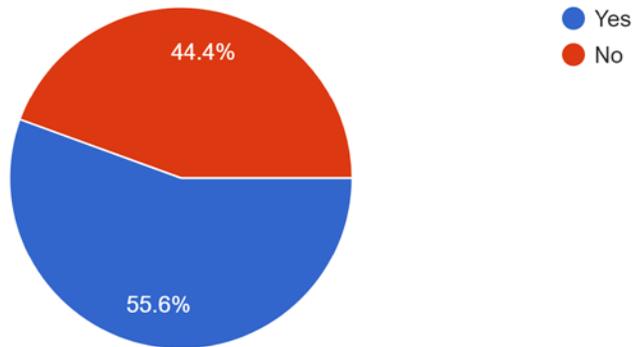
Personal connections thru networking

Shared some of the perspectives as well as potential collaborators/connections

Q 11. Have you looked at the Confluence 2020 Report that was shared on June 6 and is now posted online?

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27 responses



Q 12. If you have looked at the Report, what content did you find most valuable? (Written responses)

Summary:

Four participants of the survey expressed that they found information about the attendees, organizations and presenters most valuable. Others identified the descriptions of workshops, presentations, and action items from the working groups.

All 11 responses are shared below:

How to build capacity.

I am glad you sent out the roster of attendees, and information about the presenters and presentations.

It was all valuable although a little long for reading.

Just appreciated being reminded what we did, and why something needs to come next.

list of attendees and workshop descriptions

Names of panelists/presenters and attendee list

Nice to have all the action items from the various working groups all in one place, as well as the key points and next steps from the open space sessions.

Nothing in particular, however I noticed the formatting was a bit jumbled on some pages.

The list of organizations and individuals involved.

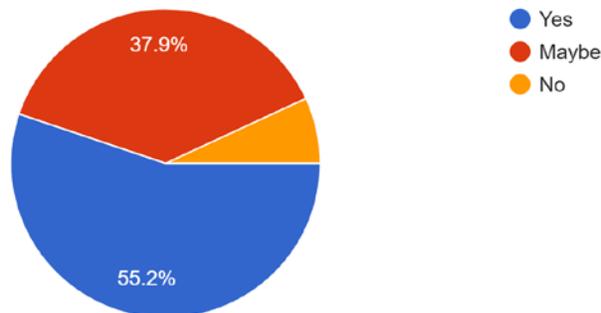
the notes/synopsis of the sessions

The overviews and takeaways of the Working Sessions.

Q 13. The WCCN is planning the next Confluence for fall 2021 in Montana. Will you plan to attend?

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29 responses



Q 14. After what you learned at Confluence 2020, what topics or themes around collaboration would you like to delve into more at the next conference? (*Written responses*)

Summary:

There were many great suggestions to this question, and Confluence 2021 organizers will want to include this wide range of topics. Participants referenced data sharing, measuring impact, and decision-making supported by data seven times. A focus on the next generation of conservation leaders was mentioned twice. Participants also requested topics discussing empowering Tribes, DEI, and landowner-led collaboratives as well as defining the spectrum of collaboration to encourage more inclusion of non-typical collaborative groups. Fundraising, navigating contentious issues, storytelling, and case studies regarding effective collaborations in addressing climate change are more examples of topics for the next conference.

All 21 responses are shared below:

Case studies regarding effective collaborations in addressing climate and biodiversity issues

Collaborating with and empowering Tribes, collaborations around conservation data and decision making supported by data.

Collaborative evaluation, decision support systems, remote collaborative efforts

Combining efforts instead of creating new groups, and active steps to preparing for climate change.

Conflict reduction, support for working lands in migration corridors, compensation for stewardship, landowner-led collaboratives

data sharing

"Discussing ways at a local, state, regional, and Western/national scale we can work to communicate and codify the descriptors for the type of work being done by local "collaboratives". There are many shapes and sizes that groups fit into within this sector (e.g., watershed groups, forest collaborative groups, conservation districts, community collaboratives, etc.) and not all of them are necessarily "collaborative". The descriptors that distinguish different types of community-led conservation groups can be important, but I think it can also hinder participation and inclusivity, and can also keep people/organizations in tightly defined boxes rather than exploring potential partnership/funding opportunities that might benefit them. For example, some groups might not identify as a "collaborative" group based on how they define their organization. Therefore, they might not participate in or see the direct connection or value in WCCN. A possible topic, then, "how do we shift the culture of the conservation community to be intentionally inclusive (with language and actions) to drive collaboration?"

Along similar lines, a barrier to community-based conservation seems to be that it's not well defined (which probably serves just fine in most cases). However, it puts groups at a disadvantage compared to other conservation entities (e.g., land trusts) who's purpose is generally consistent across communities, states, regions, etc. Because of this, their purpose is more widely understood and supported by the greater public (and individual donors). I could see WCCN as a great vehicle for helping institutionalize the work of community-based conservation groups in the west by providing some tools that provide continuity to communication around this work at scale."

Encourage and train private landowners in leadership.

"Evaluation & Storytelling- how do we better understand, measure, and share the impacts of our work? How can evaluative efforts help secure funding and assist in building capacity?

Engaging non-collaborators- how do we better engage those not involved in the collaborative process, and share the merits of the process with these folks? Are opponents of the collaborative process holding up collaborative conservation where it could be appropriate and transformative?"

How to develop capacity for local collaborative groups.

How to transition a NGO to the next generation of leaders.

How to use science in collaborations. Navigating highly contentious issues.

I wasn't able to attend some of Confluence 2020's sessions on fundraising because of concurrent sessions. I would like to focus on that again as well as facilitating tough conversations. And more networking!

Landscape scale community based collaboratives. Examples of great collaborative efforts, where the transferability of good ideas can take place. How do you build a community collaborative with an excellent foundation so that if new people come in or others leave, the goals and objectives carry forward and no one can derail things easily, because it is so strong.

More on DEI, especially inclusion relating to a diversity of opinions, perspectives, etc. How to get a seat at the table with individuals and organizations that may not have a conservation-minded mission but are important stakeholders.

More on internal/external communication tools used by those doing effective collaborative work. Peer-to-Peer sessions were helpful too, please do again.

Not exactly sure, yet something around knowing how to measure what is useful.

Online tools to assist in sharing data and information; evaluation metrics.

partnerships for funding collaboration

The next generation of conservation leaders and conservation across political and ideological boundaries.

Utilizing science and social, economic, and ecological data in collaborative problem solving

Q 15. Confluence 2021 may occur in Montana. What topics, issues, or themes related to collaboration in the Northern Rockies would you like to learn more about or focus on? (written responses)

Summary:

Responses to this question focused on rural communities, working lands, and cross-sector collaboratives. Managing conflict and contentions issues, especially development and wildlife/predators, were mentioned a few times. More DEI and Tribe engagement was also requested.

One particular response to highlight, "Why does it seem like Montana has so many collaboratives for their population? What lessons can they share with the rest of the West?"

All 24 responses are shared below:

A big challenge in Montana and the Northern Rockies is the collapse of rural communities while development, recreation/tourism, and migration are causing huge population booms in urbanized areas. Headwaters Economics would be a great resource (on almost any topic), and they have done tremendous research on growth and development of the Rockies. Something unique about the makeup of WCCN is there are locales represented who have faced these challenges who might offer some insights to groups just now grappling with these situations. Perhaps a case study of a community who has been working through this challenge for years, and a case study of a community just now grappling with these challenges. The solutions to these challenges require innovative collaborative approaches, so it would be easy to tie collaboration themes into the mix.

Advancing social and ecological resilience; Addressing rural attitudes toward environmental protection and addressing climate concerns; the economics of ecosystem benefits

Collaborations working with state and federal agencies (including land management agencies, wildlife agencies, and ag agencies).

Collaborative efforts of First Nations, cross-sector collaboratives

Conflict reduction, support for working lands in migration corridors, compensation for stewardship, landowner-led collaboratives

Dealing with the impacts of growth on ecological and human communities; how increases in remote learning and working are affecting rural communities and environments

"Dr. Tom Kalous - Communicating Effectively During Difficult Times: EQ Applied. He's given several 2-hr online trainings/webinar via ""The Management Assistance Team"" - targeting federal and state agency folks (made possible by AFWA). Questions can be directed to amyers@fishwildlife.org

This webinar examines the art of communicating effectively during difficult times through the lens of Emotional Intelligence. Communication is more than just speaking and listening. Even more important than the words we say is how we say them. Unfortunately, when times are stressful or uncertain, our

survival instincts can actually work against us when we are trying to communicate. Also, when there is interpersonal conflict, those same survival instincts can negatively influence the way in which we communicate with others. This interactive webinar will define good communication and will use the Emotional Intelligence framework to guide us toward more effective interpersonal communication and more effective communication aimed at a broader audience. Several tips and tools will also be provided along the way.

Another program offered by MAT:
Public Involvement
Presenter: Judy Stokes Weber
3-hour Webinar | No cost
May 12, 2020 at 1pm EDT

Purpose:

- Cite why public involvement is mission-critical
- Define the elements that must be present to build good relationships
- Apply resources and best practices for public involvement to guide your approach
- Examine a meeting model known as PITCH and how to apply it to your next meeting"

If native are involved on what's taking place, in preserving their way of life, heritage or cultural aspect

Landowner driven, community based collaborative efforts such as the Blackfoot Challenge and Ranchers Stewardship Alliance.

large scale collaborative conservation planning

Living with predators

Loss of habitat due to development; this topic seems to fly under the radar and without constraints. Bring forward the importance of grasslands, particularly as the Flyway habitat is reporting a significant loss of bird species due to loss of habitat and climate change. It's the "canary in the coal mine" warning from nature that things are not as they should be.

Most likely unable to attend due to budgetary issues with state government

partnerships for funding collaboration

Predators and wildlife, agriculture conflicts and how to coexist.

More on DEI

The alliance between timber companies and wilderness advocates in the Northern Rockies. It seems to have developed from the "collaboration table".

The impact and opportunities of increased recreation in the Northern Rockies during the pandemic - how has this changed our field?

Ways in which collaborative conservation work can help beginning ranchers succeed in developing their land ethic and business strategies.

What do rural and urban communities have in common

What is really working and why? What will be necessary to realistically respond to threats and opportunities.

Why does it seem like Montana has so many collaboratives for their population? What lessons can they

share with the rest of the West?

wildfire impacts on water, availability of water, water scarcity, how to unite a group of people to actively work against climate change and its symptoms.

Wildlife-related collaborations and challenges around endangered species on working lands.