CREATING SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS IN THE WEST: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

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Two women approach one another on Main Street in a rural western town. On becoming aware of the other's presence, they cross to opposite sides of the street. Though of similar age and interests, each avoids the other because of their perceived differences—one supports timber cutting and believes the local timber industry's long tenure to be a central pillar in the community. The other woman is a relative newcomer whose anti-timber-harvest stance and other "outsider" views are equally strongly held and defended. In a town suffering economic depression, each woman views the other as the cause of her distress.

The town could be any one of the hundreds throughout the West where a richness of natural resources first attracted miners, loggers, and ranchers. More recently, such towns have attracted a growing immigration of newcomers whose livelihoods and sensitivities are often tied to economies and cultures outside the region. Amid traditional concerns about economic survival and resource utilization arises a growing concern with resource preservation. With these differences comes conflict.

A BATTLEFIELD OF INTERESTS

Not able to organize itself in ways that would build sustainable prosperity, the West bloodies itself in endless fights over whatever can momentarily pass as "economic development."

—Kemmis (1998)

The West has a rich history of fighting over its natural resources. In the beginning, loggers, miners, and ranchers largely controlled the allocation decisions for water, timber, and range. Since the 1970s, however, other interests have enjoyed a greater and greater say in natural resources management. Flush with a feeling of empowerment or stung with a sense of lost opportunity, these factions have proved again and again their commitment to fight rather than settle. Peter Drucker (1994) describes the situation as "battlefields between groups, each of them fighting for absolute victory and not content with anything but total surrender of the enemy." However, victory in the natural resource arena has become increasingly difficult to declare. Instead, the legacy is one of procedural stalemate, lawsuits, and the zero-sum game of lobbying (Chrislip 2000; Snow 2001). Lost in this swirl of heat and smoke is a sense of community and the associated principle of neighboring.

Settlers to the West faced many hardships. While nature's challenges were met with individual hard work and personal courage, most settlers discovered that long-term tenure on the land required a little assistance from one's neighbors. Ranchers helped one another round up cattle off the open range and farmers helped neighbors harvest wheat before the locusts did.

In recent years, with a growing population of people "from away," the cohesiveness represented by "neighboring" has fractured. A growing population believes it doesn't need, nor is it indebted to, the larger community. Concerned about a society that

"bowls alone," Robert Putnam (2000) warns that the nation's stock of social capital (the fabric of our connection with one another) has plummeted, impoverishing both communities and their citizens. The results are plain to see in the West, as "No Trespassing" signs proliferate, disputes are settled at the courthouse instead of the kitchen table, and stewardship of the land has become someone else's responsibility. The resulting loss of trust and sense of community from years of acrimony over natural resource management has led to a lack of civility or sense of community. To rediscover civility, restore community, and achieve improved conservation of natural resources, a new approach is needed.

AGE OF COLLABORATION?

A style of management that emphasizes people getting together to cooperatively solve shared problems seems almost like common sense. Yet most observers of the protracted conflicts over natural resource management in recent years agree that common sense is not so common.

—Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000)

In the recent past, a growing number of citizens and local governments across the West have been trying a different approach. Frustrated with divisiveness, they are creating processes that seek common ground, gain influence through inclusiveness, build social capital, and create a constituency for change (Chrislip 2000). Instead of a winner-take-all approach, warring parties discover reasons to work together, if only from simple exhaustion. "The ranchers know that if they are to continue to use the public's land, they need public support. The environmentalists recognize that if they want open space and habitat and a healthy watershed, the ranchers have to stay in business" (Marston 2001). This realization that existing approaches are not working and that a new approach is needed lies at the root of "collaboration."

To date, collaborative efforts have focused on a wide array of issues including water allocations, timber management, wildlife conflicts, range improvement, and rural community development. The concept of collaboration has begun to be codified into policy and law. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148), for example, calls for the development of community wildfire protection plans that must be "collaboratively developed" by local and state government representatives in consultation with the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other interested parties. The challenges of policy and law dictating "thou shalt collaborate" to agencies unaccustomed and untrained to undertake such activities will be a recurring theme in this paper.

This paper is based on the premise that a more collaborative approach to resource management provides the West's best chance for resolving conflict and restoring civility and dignified democratic discourse. If appropriate people are brought together to work constructively with good information, they will create effective visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the community (Chrislip 2002).

We also address the need for community-based collaborations to address the stated concerns that local groups wield undue influence, that urban constituencies are increasingly disenfranchised, and that participants may possess dubious political and financial motivations (Cestero 1999; Coggins 2001; Dukes and Firehock 2001). Finally, we focus specifically on community-based collaborations—that is, processes undertaken at the local level by a range of citizen and government stakeholders—but the lessons articulated can be applied more broadly to collaborative endeavors in general.

METHODOLOGY

Our neighbor advised us to get together. Although we couldn't influence the rains, we could work together to change the other problems. We could be effective as a group. We could enlist the help of the very people who misunderstood us.

—Malpai Borderlands Group

As stated earlier, this paper draws on the experience of more than 125 collaborative projects supported by the Resources for Community Collaboration (RCC) program of the Sonoran Institute during the period

1998–2004, as well as dozens of others supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) over the last 10 years. Launched in 1998 with a founding grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the RCC works to provide financial and technical support to organizations undertaking collaborative efforts across western North America to resolve natural resource issues. The NFWF is a nonprofit organization, established by Congress in 1984, that develops and funds conservation partnerships benefiting fish, wildlife, and plants, and the habitat on which they depend.[1]

The lessons and learnings presented here are the result of project reports, conference proceedings, surveys, and personal communications produced by the projects listed in the nearby box. The primary sources of information and insight are the individual practitioners who shared their firsthand experience with the authors; the primary information sought was "lessons learned"— what worked and what did not. Where observations were common to more than one project, they were recorded and a typology was developed in which to frame similar learnings. To provide a sense of the breadth of projects, specific organizations are cited throughout the discussion. Often, many other projects reported similar learnings.

To further illustrate the potential of community-based collaborations, particularly the overlapping ingredients of success that arise within collaboratives addressing rangelands, we highlight three collaborative efforts in the southwestern United States: Malpai Borderlands, Rowe Mesa, and the Diablo Trust. These case summaries were prepared by Peter Warren, Craig Conley, and Tischa Muñoz-Erickson, respectively, as part of a panel presentation at the 2005 Eighth Biennial Conference of Research on the Colorado Plateau. The panel discussions were developed into a concise set of learnings by Janet Lynn and Michele James,

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[1] Whitney Tilt served as the director of conservation projects for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation from 1988 to 2002.

Sample Ground Rules

- Participants will attend all meetings.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- The motivations and intentions of participants will not be questioned.
- The personal integrity and values of participants will be respected.
- Stereotyping will be avoided.
- Commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept.
- Delay will not be employed as a tactic to avoid undesirable results.
- Disagreements will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than as battles to be won.

Legitimacy and Respect. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.

Active Listening and Involvement. Participants commit to listen carefully to one another, ask questions for clarification, and make statements that attempt to educate or explain.

Responsibility. Each of us takes responsibility for getting our individual needs met, and for getting the needs of other participants met. Participants commit to keeping their colleagues or constituents informed about the progress of these discussions.

Honesty and Openness. Participants commit to stating needs, problems, and opportunities, not positions.

Creativity. Participants commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. A creative group can often find the best solution.

Consensus. Participants agree that any decision will be reached by consensus.

Separability. This process is in no way meant to detract from or interfere with current or other efforts, but to potentially arrive at a consensus-driven alternative.

Media. Participants agree that a climate that encourages candid and open discussion should be created. In order to create this climate, participants agree not to attribute suggestions, comments, or ideas of another participant to the news media or nonparticipants.

Freedom to Disagree. Participants agree to disagree.

Rumors. Participants agree to verify rumors at the meeting before accepting them as fact.

Freedom to Leave. Anyone may leave this process but only after telling the entire group why and seeing if the problem(s) can be addressed.

Dispute Resolution. Participants agree that in the event this effort is unsuccessful, all are free to pursue their interests in other forums without prejudice.

of the Ecological Monitoring & Assessment Program at Northern Arizona University.

This paper also benefits from the learnings of four other organizations committed to furthering collaborative approaches as a tool for conservation: the Community-Based Collaborations Research Consortium, the Ecosystem Management Initiative at the University of Michigan, the National Forest Foundation, and the Red Lodge Clearinghouse. The set of 11 lessons presented below reflect the authors' sense of the most important ingredients for success. As with any such anthology, the authors acknowledge the risks of omission and oversimplification.

LEARNINGS FROM THE FIELD

It takes an incredible amount of intestinal fortitude to stay there and be active and not leave the table. You stay there because it's important to tell people what you are for, not what you're against. That's the basis for true collaboration.

> —Lynn Sherwood
> Colorado Cattlemen's
> Agricultural Land Trust
> (Red Lodge Workshop 2001)

Drawing on the collective experience of RCC/NFWF-supported projects and other collaborative organizations, a number of lessons become clear. While not presented as an exhaustive or exclusive list, 11 lessons are critical for collaboration to succeed and for community-based collaboratives (CBCs) to function:

1. Understand what collaboration is and is not.

2. Recognize challenge and time involved.

3. Exhaust traditional approaches (ripeness).

4. Build a common vision (passion for place, a community of purpose).

5. Create an open, inclusive, and transparent process.

6. Ensure stakeholders are representative of the community.

7. Provide facilitation and process.

8. Develop a common factual base.

9. Secure operational funding.

10. Achieve and communicate results.

11. Meet or exceed applicable laws and be accountable.

1. Understand What Collaboration Is and Is Not

This stuff is really hard.
> —Idaho Conservation League

Collaboration has become the process of choice for many elected officials, federal and state agencies, and community members faced with concerns about natural and social resources. Yet community-based collaboration remains a relatively new and uncalibrated tool for addressing and resolving resource conflicts.

To engage in collaboration, one needs to understand what collaboration is (and what it is not). For our purposes, collaboration is the process by which perceived adversaries enter into civil dialogue to collectively consider possible solutions. As such, collaboration represents a growing obligation to public participation that builds from the act of informing, the willingness to consult, and the invitation to cooperate and partner (IAP2 2004). Collaboration is stronger than cooperation and partnership because it requires the consideration of shared power and may be defined as a "shared responsibility for achieving results" (Chrislip 2002).

Under the above definition, collaboration raises the specter of shared power. Power relations are critical to initiating and successfully implementing collaborative efforts. Who has what decision-making authority, who has control of public opinion, and who aligns with whom are all elements of power that will come into play as community-based collaboration evolves. Who initiates the process, what parties are invited to the table, and who is excluded are further expressions of power relationships that must be recognized and addressed. Since the very conflicts to be addressed by a collaborative effort are likely the result of power inequities (real or perceived), many parties come to the collaborative table seeking some realignment of power, while other parties come to that same table to protect the status quo. Often, some authority or control is a critical incentive for participation; it is often a necessary companion to making collaborative groups responsible and accountable.

Putting these power considerations into a real context, a group of diverse stakeholders labors hard to reach agreement and collaboratively drafts a set of recommendations to a federal land management agency. The land management agency lauds the group for its efforts and then either ignores the group in its decision making or watches, powerless, as someone further up the chain of command renders a decision completely apart from the collaborative recommendations.

Conversely, an agency finds that while members of the collaborative reached agreement internally, the broader community was not adequately engaged and does not support the collaborative's decisions. Both situations illustrate the challenge of engaging in a collaborative effort where the powers and authorities, vis-à-vis a community-based collaboration, may be poorly defined. A majority of collaborative groups identified this as a major issue; these groups stressed the need for participants to engage in frank and continuing discussions on expected outcomes and the process of decision making by government agencies, and to agree on legal sideboards early on (Bureau of Land Management and Sonoran Institute 2000).

Most community-based collaborations in the western United States involve one or more federal land management agencies. To many stakeholders interested in working with federal agencies, agency representatives often appear more concerned with process than outcomes. On the agency side, many agency managers polled in various internal studies believe that collaboration violates one or more laws regarding their decision-making responsibilities. Coupled with a general aversion to risk taking and armed with a multitude of regulations, managers find it easy to identify rules and policies that obstruct their ability to collaborate (Tilt 2005).

To help a collaborative approach succeed, federal land management agencies can actively support field staff in their efforts at collaboration through training, developing improved performance measures that reward greater cooperation and enhanced public participation, and improving transition management so collaborative efforts are not derailed by personnel transfers.

2. Recognize Challenge and Time Involved

Collaboration is a long and exhausting process. Some people become burned out and disinterested while other relationships are indelibly forged for the long term.
　　　　　　　　　　　—Utah Open Lands

The fastest way to move a cow is slow.
　　　　　—Klamath Basin Ecosystem Foundation

In a world where everything is meant to be easier and faster, collaboration takes time—to explore and identify areas of potential common ground, to develop the necessary trust, to experiment with possible ways to address shared problems, to build the coalitions necessary for effecting policy changes, and to conduct the necessary project work, monitoring, and evaluation. A reading of eighteenth-century American history reminds us of the time and effort required to form a participatory democracy. Since each collaborative effort is formed and functions within its own context, few if any simple templates for success exist. Certain lessons and principles are applicable to collaborations as a whole, as captured here. Many other considerations, however, depend on an individual CBC's ability to adapt to the time- and space-specific context and content of their circumstances.

Utah Open Lands echoes another common experience: the continual need for steadfast nurturing of participants to ensure long-range maintenance of vision, goals, and enthusiastic participation of members.

Although it is tempting to find shortcuts, these tasks enable a group—especially one in which members do not trust each other—to work together and pull in the same direction. At the same time, a CBC must remember what many practitioners have learned the hard way: it takes weeks (if not months) to build trust and develop relationships; it takes only seconds to destroy them.

Another outcome of the long and potentially exhausting collaboration process is the reality that some participants burn out and others simply lose interest. Single-interest "whiners" will come and go, but effectively

dealing with them can still take a long time and a lot of patience. As one practitioner dryly observed, "Don't start unless you are thick-skinned."

The Madison Valley Ranchlands executive director noted another challenge faced by CBCs: "Face it—nobody has the time or energy to go to meetings just for the sake of going." With the understanding that participants must remain motivated, CBCs should constantly look for ways to keep the process energized with an ongoing sense of accomplishment. CBCs have successfully used field trips, special events to celebrate milestones, and potluck dinners to involve members at the ground level. More than one CBC member mentioned how food and drink seem to bring a community together. Observers also commented on the need to have fun and maintain a sense of humor. These informal get-togethers help build respect and understanding among group members and throughout the community.

The majority of organizations polled noted that the social capital of working together to forge common goals extended far beyond individual project outcomes. While difficult to quantify, collaboration's impact on social capital cannot be ignored, especially since many practitioners believe it is the most significant outcome of their efforts. CBC practitioners routinely noted that some indelibly forged relationships emerge as the result of working together through countless meetings in search of common ground. Returning to the two women in the paper's introduction, in real life they became involved in a collaborative process; while the effort's outcome was undecided, they no longer crossed the street to avoid each other because they were no longer strangers.

3. Exhaust Traditional Approaches

We'd gotten awfully good at knowing what we were against, and decided it was time to figure out what we were for.

—Bill McDonald
Malpai Borderlands
(Cash 2001)

While working collaboratively seems like the obvious choice, it should be viewed as the method of "latter" resort, not the first.

Much as an apprentice is expected to spend years learning a trade before he is considered a master craftsman, a key ingredient for CBC success is the realization that traditional forums for redress have fallen short. To be successful, all parties involved in a collaborative effort must be motivated to work together. They must be willing to consider sharing power in the search to develop alternatives to the status quo. It is not enough to be told that a collaborative approach makes sense; it must become the collective desire of the group undertaking the effort.

A collaborative effort is initiated by a complex alchemy of factors (a more detailed discussion of these factors is beyond the scope of this paper). Practitioners engaged in collaborative efforts, however, commonly identified the element of having exhausted other approaches to resolution. Because conflict initially influences most collaborative efforts, the landscape is often marked by divergent interests entrenched in their own camps. They have explored a range of traditional approaches, such as lobbying, administrative appeals, and litigation, to resolve the conflict. When these approaches fail to reduce conflict, interest may grow in trying something different.

In 1998, a maze of regulations, paralyzing litigation regarding endangered species, and a loss of community due to economic instability brought ranchers, the Forest Service, and the Sonoran Institute together to form the Eagle Creek Watershed Group. The group's goal was to restore their namesake to a perennial stream. In electing to pursue formation of a watershed group, participants noted that a key ingredient was the exhaustion of other approaches to resolution. Grazing regulations had been hotly contested for years and unknown or unwanted animal species were granted protection with little or no local support for their conservation.

In Safford and other communities in east-central Arizona, residents saw economic prosperity ebbing from their communities; yet the traditional methods of appeal had brought little to no relief for ranchers, rangelands, or waterways. In this one corner of

Arizona, a small group of stakeholders who were veterans of failed processes were willing to try something new.

Given its focus on public lands, a second critical aspect found in Eagle Creek was the willingness of the district ranger to engage as a participant rather than a hesitant bystander. RCC-supported CBCs consistently noted the federal land managers' "willingness to take a chance" as a necessary ingredient to the CBC process.

Organizations intent on embracing collaborative approaches to conservation need to ask, "What would we be doing if we were not engaged in a CBC?" If the answer is "taking legal action," "maintaining our role as an outside agency expert," or "seeking a public referendum," the issue and participants are likely not ripe for engaging in a collaborative approach. If the answer is some variation on the theme of "we have tried everything short of breaking the law," the ground may be ripe for collaboration.

4. Build a Common Vision (Passion for Place, a Community of Purpose)

If you can get all of the stakeholders at the table and let them express their concerns, grievances, and needs, then trust begins to enter into the discussions.
—Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

Leave your mission at the door. While the individual capacities of each group lend strength to the whole, we have to occasionally re-focus on the issue at hand and subdue our own organizational interests for the greater good.
—Coalition for the Valle Vidal

The foundation for uniting a collaborative effort lies in forging a single vision built on a passion for place or a community of purpose. Passion may arise from a variety of sources, but most often it is the love of land and community that arises from tenure on it and in it. In practice, many efforts fail to ensure that a vision is developed common to all at the collaborative table. While many potential ingredients exist in development of a vision, surveyed practitioners recognize a number of consistent attributes:

1. Individuals must be passionate and committed. They may represent one or more agencies or organizations, but they draw on a personal desire to make the collaboration work.

2. The group must shape its own vision rather than adopt one already fashioned. Work to jointly develop a set of goal statements and purposes, develop a common vocabulary, and ensure that all stakeholders (including new members) receive an orientation to place them on equal footing with their peers.

3. A good vision focuses on what the group shares rather than on areas of disagreement. Success is glimpsed when individuals with different views are willing, at least on a trial basis, to put past antagonisms aside and work to build trust and solve problems.

4. A good vision statement acts as a touchstone for all members, serving as a milepost for where the group has been, where it is at the moment, and where it is going. It becomes the benchmark for defining success.

As the Rincon Institute and others have learned firsthand, most collaborative efforts form in the face of real or perceived crisis. Faced with this sense of urgency, it is difficult not to focus on short-term outcomes rather than focusing on the broader vision. But the long-term vision unites the greatest number of stakeholders and engenders the greatest sense of community. It is the "what" that continually helps define the "how."

A core of like-minded people often forms the nucleus of an emerging collaborative. It is tempting for this committed core to assume that others will share their vision and eagerness to participate, but they must commit to building a working vision that will resonate with the larger community. Experience shows that the collaborative effort must budget adequate time and effort for building a groundswell of interest, conducting outreach, and initiating project planning with the larger community. The core group must also work to constantly bring the currently unengaged into the process and be willing to allow the project's vision to evolve accordingly. Before approaching opinion leaders and other vital stakeholders,

however, the emerging CBC must develop a compelling case for the tangible benefits that will accrue to the community from the project.

In southwestern Montana, the Big Hole River Foundation found its origins in a number of challenges—it arose as a response to drought, water allocation politics, and other social conflicts. It also arose from the shared values and concerns of the region's citizens and communities who collectively forged a vision "to understand, preserve, and enhance the free-flowing character of the Big Hole River, and to protect its watershed, culture, community, and excellent wild trout fishery." They bet their time and energy that a voluntary, collaborative approach would have a more profound and widespread impact than a litigious approach that would serve only to divide the stakeholders into pro and con camps and create a win-lose situation.

In southern British Columbia, the Columbia River Successful Communities Forum (SCF) decided to "dream big and see what happens." Before SCF's efforts, local governments and citizens likely would not have willingly embraced the notion of creating a citizen's guide to planning. But during 5 years of effort, local governments and citizens began to support and encourage the idea and actively participated in its development. Asked to measure their impact, SCF notes that

> focused public dialogue about the future is now not only possible, it's expected. That dialogue very clearly includes ecological, economic, and social factors. The notion that we need to protect functioning green spaces for ecological and economic reasons is taking hold, and creating controversy—this is not an issue that will go away any time soon. Official community planning has become the norm in this region. While the SCF is not responsible for this shift, it has played a significant role in the public's desire to be involved, and to be certain that those plans will reflect their values and hopes for the future, as opposed to just mitigating the impacts of growth.

Finally, as collaborative groups work to shape a common vision, some stakeholders may choose not to participate for ideological or other reasons. It is important to keep stakeholders who are not at the table in mind as a vision is fashioned, and to continually challenge the group to work to gain the participation of these individuals.

5. Create an Open, Inclusive, and Transparent Process

The earlier ALL stakeholders are involved in planning that will affect them, and the more transparent the decision-making process, the better the outcome.
—Friends of the Santa Cruz

As a basic tenet of representative government, the need for community-based collaboratives to be "open and transparent" is, at first glance, a statement of the obvious. To actually conduct a collaborative effort in this manner, however, presents more of a challenge. CBC practitioners and researchers provide some guidance.

A collaborative group operating as a self-appointed set of stakeholders might claim to represent the broader community but actually represent only a subset of special interests. In addition, the ability to exclude people from the collaborative table without accountability to the larger community appears to be more of a cabal than a collaborative.

Critics of the Quincy Library Group, for example, argued that the group's "community driven consensus" did not represent the full range of stakeholders, and asked to whom was the library group accountable (Cestero 1999). Resolution of these issues lies largely in a CBC's ability to involve the public "early, often, and ongoing" (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Practitioners stress the need for collaborative groups to continually work to ensure that their process includes all stakeholders regardless of their views or opinions. CBCs must make sure that each participant understands his or her role in the collaborative and work to create a climate where all participants believe their opinion is important. It is also essential to glean input from everyone involved in the process so nobody at the table is surprised.

Teresa Jordan (1998), member of the Toiyabe Watershed and Wildlands Management Team, notes that while Wendell Berry entreats us to think locally and act locally, the dark side of local control is the potential for

local tyranny. The collaborative process can escape the taint of localized tyranny only if it remains open and the "optics" of its actions are transparent. Two key aspects of an open process are (1) incorporating the attitudes and viewpoints of people who are not at the collaborative table and (2) insisting on including local experience-based knowledge in the collaborative project.

Idaho's Clearwater Elk Initiative resisted the impulse to jump right into solving the problem without first establishing rules and guidelines. They agreed upon operational guidelines that ensured a process open to all interested parties regardless of views, forged ground rules for meetings and discussions, and then worked to adhere to them so no one thought the project had more than one standard of conduct.

Additional themes emerge from the collective wisdom of Utah Open Lands and other practitioners. The need for open communication (internal and external) is noted as essential to maintaining trust. Leadership should be shared so that it is everyone's responsibility to keep the project moving rather than relying on one person in the group to be the "vision keeper" or "traffic cop." Meeting roles can be rotated so leadership and workload are shared rather than consolidated in a few individuals. In turn, this shared workload helps prevent burnout and enables smoother transitions of leadership should individual members of the group leave the process.

One final pragmatic observation from the field is that a written record of CBC process and actions is necessary. An open and transparent process is reflected in a comprehensive set of meeting minutes that includes such obvious items as attendance and decisions made.

6. Ensure Stakeholders Are Representative of the Community

A broad-based coalition is more believable, tangible, can reach a more diverse constituency, and has a more complete skill set to tackle major issues.
                    —Coalition for the Valle Vidal

We will send one representative to your first meeting. If he's comfortable with the process, he will

attend the second meeting; if he's not, we will send 50 to the next meeting.
                    —Northern Forest Pulpworkers

Dealing with people who are directly affected by grizzlies is more productive than dealing with formal elites, who may see an issue like grizzly conservation as an opportunity for grandstanding.
                    —Gravelly Range Grizzly Project

Building on lesson 5, stakeholders at the collaborative table must reflect the interests of the whole community—representative representation. RCC's experience is that the success of a CBC is directly linked to the effort's success in identifying stakeholders and opinion leaders in the community. Failure to address the issues of inclusiveness and diversity at the stakeholder table can render the collaborative process into little more than a replication of the power imbalances that already surround a set of issues.

A common criticism of community-based collaborations is that they are used as a way of avoiding established public processes (Dukes and Firehock 2001). Side-stepping the issue of whether established public processes serve either the public interest or natural resource stewardship, this criticism is easy to understand when legitimate interests are intentionally excluded from the process or elect not to participate. In addition, who represents whom—who has the proper portfolio to represent the environmental interests or those of industry? For the critic turned cynic, the stakeholder table often appears set by Capt. Renault's memorable line in the film "Casablanca" to "round up the usual suspects." The collaborative table needs to go beyond the "usual suspects" to provide a place for new voices and for the CBC to establish accountability to the larger community.

Recognizing the need for inclusiveness and diversity is a necessary step. Creating it at the collaborative table is the hard part. Half of the stakeholders surveyed in a random sample of 76 watershed-based stakeholder efforts in California and Washington noted that some critical interests were not effectively represented at the table (Leech 2004). Leech also noted that ordinary citi-

zens often face a lack of motivation or other obstacles to participation, unlike agency, industry, and environmental representatives who can often participate as part of their jobs. As raised in lesson 5, other collaborations have observed similar challenges. A group is seen as either "self-selected"—choosing to define who gets to sit at the table from within a narrow view of stakeholders—or representing those who are willing to sit at the table regardless of the necessity of involving certain other interests for successful resolution of the issues at hand.

Although one or more disputes may have brought people to the table, it is people, not issues, who make the collaboration succeed or fail. With that in mind, participants will likely spend much more time on people issues than on natural resource issues. The personality factor is distracting, and there is a continuing need to focus on the areas of mutual interest and not on whom to blame. The experiences of the Calapooia Watershed Council, the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, and others offer additional insights:

1. Do not confuse constituents or partners with stakeholders. It is akin to the difference between eggs and ham—the chicken is interested, but the pig is committed.

2. Learn about and appreciate the various missions of your fellow collaborators even as you work to have them represent their knowledge and experience rather than their ideology or organizational mantra.

3. Protect ALL stakeholders' interests and avoid alienating one or more participants who may turn into spoilers.

4. Agency participants need to work on connecting with collaborative efforts, rather than directing them.

5. Failure to actively work to involve a diverse and representative range of stakeholders will likely result in failure of the CBC to accomplish its goals.

Practitioners consistently listed strong leadership as an essential ingredient for an extended life of a collaborative effort. Credible stakeholders in the collaborative who help convene, catalyze, and sustain the process are critical to the effort's success.

When viewed from the outside, a CBC drawn from diverse sectors of the community demonstrates the group's commitment to inclusiveness and provides a forceful statement to outside observers on all sides of the issue.

A diverse and representative stakeholder group is also the best defense against the potential problem of key players sitting at the table but not being "honest brokers." In the absence of leadership from key players, individuals may retain their individual rather than collective alliances and work to subvert the group's progress (Calapooia Watershed Council).

Government officials, industry representatives, and environmental organizations participate in a collaborative project as part of their jobs and typically receive some form of compensation for their investment of time. By contrast, many private citizens and individuals working for advocacy groups are not paid to participate and need to spend precious free time to do so. Asymmetries in available time and compensation can, de facto, lead to bias in representation and participation, often to the detriment of those who lack power under the status quo.

7. Provide Facilitation and Process

People want to work collaboratively and they are curious about the work of various conservation groups, but they also want to know that their time and energy have been invested in real progress. It is important to keep the planning work tied to results on the ground.
—Methow Conservancy

The facilitator must not presuppose to know the outcome of any collaboration. Collaborations are about listening, reflecting, sharing resources, and exploring potential approaches to the issue at hand. It is a process of group exploration and problem solving, and is driven by individuals' desire to improve on the status quo.
—Murie Center

Having set the collaborative table with a diverse and representative group of stakeholders, many of whom are likely leaders in the community, it is now time to "herd the cats." Heeding the advice of more than one seasoned practitioner to "never attempt to facilitate and lead at the same time," CBCs should consider engaging outside facilita-

tors to help the group obtain its collective goals. In the experience of the CBC groups polled, strong facilitation experience was rare in emerging collaboratives, which required them to acquire skilled facilitators from the outside.

In selecting a facilitator, the most important attribute is that all participants in the collaborative process perceive the facilitator as legitimate and fair. The facilitator's purpose is to build a process, work with the group to establish sideboards, and then strive to make sure the sideboards are observed. A facilitator also makes sure that the quieter voices in the process don't get run over. As observed by one collaborative, the facilitator helped build mutual respect where environmentalists who have never ranched didn't tell ranchers how to ranch, and ranchers didn't run roughshod over the naturalistic interests of environmentalists.

Another part of a facilitated process is to keep the group focused on being proactive, not reactive—to focus on the vision, not on the past. A collaborative effort must work to make progress happen rather than sit back and see what happens. The primary role of effective facilitation is to establish and enforce ground rules for fairness and respectful behavior. The sample ground rules presented here (see box, next page) are adapted from those developed by the Saguache County Study Group in Colorado.

It is also important to continually foster a respectful and benevolent environment. The Sonoran Institute's publication "Beyond the Hundredth Meeting" makes clear the need for productive meetings right in its title (Cestero 1999). Collaboratives need to outline time commitments in advance so people can attend without fear that their lives will be swept away in meetings. Once in meetings, conveners look for ways to ensure that all members are heard and feel useful by utilizing smaller group meetings and delegating specific work assignments to subcommittees. Lastly, facilitators respect people's time by starting and ending meetings punctually.

As with many processes, success lies in the details. Something as simple as scheduling meetings becomes quite important. For example, meetings need to be convenient for all participants, not just a few. If a single set of convenient times proves elusive, then meeting schedules should rotate to accommodate the widest possible range of schedules. While staffs of many agencies and advocacy organizations are veterans of "attending meetings," many other citizens and stakeholders will not be comfortable with this particular form of social discourse (Bureau of Land Management 2003).

If a facilitator doesn't work well with the group, or a subset of the group, it is time to find a new facilitator. Idaho's Clearwater Elk Initiative had to change facilitators after five meetings: "We were hesitant to make the change, but it made a tremendous difference," one participant noted.

These are just a few examples of how a facilitated process works to establish an atmosphere where folks are willing to try something new—that is what community-based collaboration is all about.

8. Develop a Common Factual Base

Science that does not incorporate people who are involved in the subject of study is imperfect.
—Living Oceans Society

A major obstacle confronting resolution of many natural resource issues is their apparent complexity. Creating a common factual basis is critical in order to "bound the problem with credible information," in the words of Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000). Many CBCs note that ideological conflicts (Republican vs. Democrat, meat-eater vs. vegan, agnostic vs. Catholic) are surmountable barriers to progress, but conflict over issues of fact can incapacitate any collaborative process.

The first step is to recognize the need for a common basis of scientific information. The next is to recognize that the process for collecting that information must be a shared effort, not merely a stockpiling of data by one or more "experts." Since federal and state land management agencies are often repositories for natural resource information, their involvement in CBCs must go

Collaborative Organizations and Projects
Included in the Study

Cultural and Community Organizing

Big Island Resource Conservation Council (Hilo, HI); Kealakehe Ahupua 2020
Center for a Vital Community (Sheridan, WY); Teambuilding Retreat for Stewardship Workshops
Friends of Pronatura (Tucson, AZ); Community Training Workshops
Indigenous Community Enterprises (Flagstaff, AZ); Navajo Hogan Affordable Housing
Island Institute (Sitka, AK); Civic Collaboration Initiative
Living Oceans Society (Sointula, BC); Traditional Knowledge for Marine Planning
Mexicano Land Education & Conservation Trust (Espanola, NM); Land Grant Environmental Justice Project
Montana Preservation Alliance (Helena, MT); Tongue River Valley Natural and Cultural Preservation
Murie Center (Moose, WY); Teton Sustainability Project
Saguache County Environment and Economic Development (Saguache, CO); "Valley Wide" Summit
Tree New Mexico (Albuquerque, NM); Bluewater Ranch Restoration "Listening & Training"

Forest Use and Management

Backcountry Snowsports Alliance (Eldorado Springs, CO); Wolf Creek Winter Recreation Task Force
East Kootenay Environmental Society (Kimberly, BC); EKES Pulp Mill Project
Flathead Economic Policy Center (Columbia Falls, MT); Flathead Forestry Project
Gifford Pinchot Task Force (Vancouver, WA); Forests and Communities Collaborative Program
Grand Canyon Trust/Forest Foundation (Flagstaff, AZ); Restorative Forest Management
Idaho Conservation League (Boise, ID); Boulder-White Cloud Mountains
Jefferson Center for Education and Research (Wolf Creek, OR); Harvest of Alternate Forest Products
Quincy Library Group (Quincy, CA); Community Stability Proposal
San Miguel Watershed Coalition (Montrose, CO); GMUG National Forests Stakeholders
Siskiyou Regional Education Project (Cave Junction, OR); Community Involvement in RACs
San Isabel Foundation (Westcliffe, CO); Wet Mountain Collaborative Mapping Project
Tongass Conservation Society (Ketchikan, AK); Ketchikan Community Forest Planning
Western Colorado Congress (Montrose, CO); Red Mountain Pass Stakeholder's Meeting
Yaak Valley Forest Council (Troy, MT); Yaak Valley Forest Stewardship

Land Use

Beaverhead County Community Forum (Dillon, MT); Beaverhead County Housing
Big Hole River Foundation (Butte, MT); Big Hole River Conservation Corridor
California Oak Foundation (Oakland, CA); Salinas River Easements
Calapooia Watershed Council (Albany, OR); Management plan for Thompson's Mills
Capitol Land Trust (Olympia, WA); Springer Lake Community Planning
Columbia River Greenways Alliance (Invermere, BC); Community Guide to Citizen Involvement
Conservation Land Network (Bozeman, MT); Conservation Land Network
Copper River Watershed Project (Cordova, AK); Copper River Tourism Plan
Diablo Trust (Flagstaff, AZ); Colorado Plateau of Rangelands Planning
Earthlaw (Denver, CO); Front Range Riparian Protection
Friends of the Santa Clara River (Newbury Park, CA); Santa Clara River Enhancement
Gallatin County Open Lands Board (Bozeman, MT); Community Plan for Open Space
Georgia Strait Alliance (Nanaimo, BC); First Nations Involvement in Orca Pass
Gowgaia Institute (Queen Charlotte, BC); Haida Gwaii Ecosystem Planning
High Country Citizens Alliance (Crested Butte, CO); Upper Gunnison Valley Planning
Methow Conservancy (Winthrop, WA); Conservation Planning for the Methow Valley
Rincon Institute (Tucson, AZ); Cienega Corridor Conservation Council
Salmon River Mountains Working Group (Salmon, ID); Salmon River Mountains Working Group
Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (Duncan, BC); Somenos Marsh Wildlife Refuge

Land Use (continued)

Swan Ecosystem Center (Condon, MT); Conservation Strategy for the Swan Valley of Montana
Utah Open Lands (Castle Valley, UT); Castle Valley Project
Mining and Energy DevelopmentCoalition for the Valle Vidal (Taos, NM); Valle Vidal
Northern Plains Resource Council (Billings, MT); Stillwater Mining "Good Neighbor" Agreement
Western Slope Environmental Resource Council (Paonia, CO); North Fork Coal Working Group

Ranching, Agriculture, Invasive Plants

Amigos Bravos/Taos County (Taos, NM); Taos County Weed Control
Catron County Citizens Group (Glenwood, NM); Gila NF Rangeland and Forest Management
Community Environmental Council (Santa Barbara, CA); Wine Industry Task Force
Eagle Creek Watershed Partnership (Safford, AZ); Working Rangeland Partnership
Hells Canyon Preservation Council (LaGrange, OR); Grazing Alternatives for Local Ranchers
Malpai Borderlands Group (Douglas, AZ); Malpai Stewardship
Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group (Elko, NV); Elko Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy
Quivira Coalition (Santa Fe, NM); Progressive Ranch Management Demonstration
Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Assn. (Douglas, WY); Thunder Basin Grasslands Project
Toiyabe Watershed and Wildlands Management Team (Austin, NV); Tipton Ranch Collaborative
Watershed & Water Use
1000 Friends of New Mexico (Santa Fe, NM); Acequia and Environmental Protection
Ecological Assn. of Hardy and Colorado Rivers (Mexicali, MX); Community Participation in Colorado River Delta Restoration
Amigos Bravos (Taos, NM); Somos Vecinos/We Are Neighbors
Applegate Partnership (Applegate, OR); Applegate Partnership
Community Foundation of Western Nevada (Reno, NV); Champions of the Truckee River
Friends of the Santa Cruz, Tubac, AZ; Viable Riparian Conservation Options in Santa Cruz County
Headwaters (Ashland, OR); Headwaters and Talent Irrigation Clean Water Collaboration
Henry's Fork Foundation (Aston, ID); Henry's Fork Watershed Council
Klamath Basin Ecosystem Foundation (Klamath Falls, OR); Klamath Basin Assessment Project
North Fork River Improvement Association (Hotchkiss, CO); North Fork Gunnison Restoration
Oregon Water Trust (Portland, OR); Enhancing Stream Flows in Rogue River Tributaries
Rio Grande Restoration (El Prado, NM); Acequia and the Santa Fe River
San Juan Citizens Alliance (Durango, CO); Dolores River Flows by Consensus
Santa Fe Watershed Association (Santa Fe, NM); Santa Fe/Rio Grande Stakeholders Meeting
Sierra Nevada Alliance (South Lake Tahoe, CA); Hydro Healing Project
South Yuba River Citizens League (Nevada City, CA); Yuba Watershed Council
Sun River Watershed Group (Great Falls, MT); Sun River Watershed Partners for Success
Truckee River Watershed Council (Truckee, CA); Truckee River CRM Plan
Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (Milton-Freewater, OR); Walla Walla Habitat Conservation Collaboration

Wildlife Management

Clearwater Elk Collaborative (Lewiston, ID); Clearwater Basin Elk-Related Issues

Institute for Ecological Health (Davis, CA); Sacramento County HCP Collaborative

Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative (Ennis, MT); Gravelly Range Grizzly Project

Madison Valley Ranchlands Group (Ennis, MT); Madison Valley Ranchlands Elk Management Program

Salmon River Mountains Working Group (Salmon, ID); Diamond Moose Grazing Project

beyond the agency simply providing information. Regardless of the information's accuracy, stakeholders around the table must come to accept the science itself. The information cannot be force-fed to them by a group of self-proclaimed experts (who might already be viewed by many of the stakeholders as part of the problem). Case studies of CBCs involving the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management consistently point out the challenge of agency participants interacting with other participants as fellow community members rather than as authorities with command and control responsibilities (Dukes and Firehock 2001; Tilt 2005; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000).

A look at water in the West is illustrative. Water allocation issues form a very complex web of laws, court decisions, operating decrees, and other forces. A collaborative effort focusing on water allocation issues needs access to both pertinent data and experienced professionals. Too often, outside experts simply dictate their findings to community groups rather than becoming part of the process. Further, they often overlook local or native knowledge, and the overall need for CBCs to achieve a collective comfort with the factual information provided. The Swan Ecosystem Center and other CBCs emphasize the need to build a process that recognizes the local or native knowledge of each community member, and to treat each as an expert in his or her own right.

To be effective, CBCs need to produce and present their own information from a community perspective (Gowgaia Institute). Clear information and an open forum to discuss how to use it are central to collaboration. The process of participating in informed discussions among diverse stakeholders (with equally diverse knowledge bases) also helps break down segregated silos of interest. The experience of Eagle Creek and others demonstrates that the collective development of solid information in a readily understood format helps to move participants from unyielding positions to respectful compromise. It also helps to move the overall group toward shared goals.

Finally, a factual basis does not reside in an inanimate assembly of data. Gaining a factual basis for resolving a set of issues is forged out on the land itself. Collaborative after collaborative noted the power of field trips and on-the-ground workshops to engender a growing sense of place and a greater understanding for how others view the same landscape. For the Quivira Coalition, field trips were the way they got to the "grassroots"—literally getting folks to look at plants and their roots as part of rangeland management. Each person in the group—the logger, the mushroom gatherer, the "tree-hugger"—has a unique view of themselves and unique perceptions of one another. Participating as a group helps us understand how love of the land can rightly manifest in a wide array of expressions.

9. Secure Operational Funding

Securing sufficient operational funding is a critical factor in launching, and maintaining a successful collaborative. Efforts to secure long-term, unrestricted, operational support are largely unsuccessful to date.
                    —Columbia River Greenways Alliance

The greatest threat to our project is a lack of dedicated staff time if key participants are not fully funded to engage in the collaborative process.
                    —Gifford Pinchot Task Force

The majority of organizations polled in this research face pressing and continuing challenges to identify sufficient funding to maintain their collaboratives. Although the majority of operational budgets are small, even by nonprofit organization standards, it remains difficult for these organizations to maintain stable budgets. Many collaboratives are successful in attracting sufficient funding for restoration projects, but the same sources are unwilling to provide funding for administration (South Yuba River Citizens League). It is a cold hard fact that an emerging collaborative effort must have some start-up resources to achieve some early success and interest. This success, in turn, is required to demonstrate the project potential that most funding sources want to see before they fund the project.

The Island Institute speaks for the vast majority of CBCs when it notes the sad lack

of funders that support community-based collaboration at all, and the nearly total lack of funders who recognize that durable collaboration depends on extended effort. Funding for 1–3 years is generally insufficient to develop the local capacities needed to sustain healthy civic communities and their natural environment—what CBCs are offered translates into short-term speculation rather than essential long-term investment.

The Sonoran Institute's Resources for Community Collaboration program has faced these challenges firsthand. From 1998 to 2004, the program provided $640,000 to CBCs, with the program's funding consistently falling short of the demonstrated need. But the program's ability to consistently fund worthy projects year in and year out is limited due to financial constraints as well. Insights into the world of fundraising (Management Institute for Environment and Business 1993; Tilt 1996) include the following points:

1. Remember that people give to people. Develop relationships with the funding community. Unsolicited proposals seldom receive funding.

2. Develop a realistic budget for the project. Even volunteer organizations need more financial resources than anticipated to stay involved and vital.

3. Good deeds seldom attract funding on their own. Develop grant-writing skills as soon as possible within the collaborative, or find someone who can provide these skills.

4. Build institutional support (administrative overhead) into project funding.

5. Acknowledge your supporters. Say thank you, and then say thank you again.

10. Achieve and Communicate Results

We have a lot of technically competent people but they would have done something else for a career if they were interested in people. They are not the best communicators in many instances.
          —Unnamed Forest Service Employee
                    (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000)

"Nothing succeeds like success" is a common message from the field. Obviously CBC participants and those outside the process expect results in return for their time, effort, and patience. The following are some of the lessons put forward by the Swan Ecosystem Center, the Sun River Watershed Group, and others:

1. Identify specific actions that can be taken and then follow through to demonstrate some results.

2. Work on small do-able projects to gain skills and trust. Tackle controversial work later.

3. Accomplish tasks incrementally so you can continually acknowledge successes and reward your group and community with a celebration on each significant success story.

The need for good communication is also a constant theme heard from practitioners. While everyone acknowledges the need for it, few institutions are consistently good at it. In natural resource management, communications have too often been reduced to a robotic process of "public involvement" where public notice is provided, a requisite number of public hearings is conducted, and some agency makes a decision that appears totally divorced from any public input. This serves as a good model for what CBCs should not do. Some proactive lessons include the following:

1. Involve the public early and often.

2. Take full advantage of existing social networks in the community and target opinion leaders to involve them in the collaborative effort.

3. Work to familiarize the community with the project's goals and process.

4. Communicate by telephone, e-mail, and websites, but not at the expense of face-to-face interaction.

5. Keep accurate records of all events: participant lists, minutes, photos, articles, etc.

The experience of the Applegate Partnership in southwestern Oregon also cautions against seeking publicity before relationships and trust are fully developed. This early notoriety can cause damaging internal tension and conflict (KenCairn 1999).

11. Meet or Exceed Applicable Laws and Be Accountable

It is imperative for collaborative organizations to develop mechanisms for self-evaluation which allows for efficient use of funds, energy, and the planning of useful activities, as well as to transfer their story in the request of funding and support.
        —Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group

In today's world of competing interests and watchdogs, it is not enough to do "good work." CBCs must be capable of demonstrating their adherence to applicable federal and state laws and establishing sufficient monitoring and evaluation capacity to track and document project outcomes.

To be viewed as successful, both internally and externally, CBCs must demonstrate that their process meets or exceeds environmental law and policy. For example, many critics consider the Quincy Library Group collaboration to have represented a select group of special interests that successfully gained Congressional intervention to circumvent existing state and federal laws (Cestero 1999).

CBCs must also ensure that their monitoring and evaluation protocols are capable of assessing environmental and social progress. When monitoring, CBCs should remember that more measurement does not equal more understanding. There is a continual need for information triage because of the infinite amount of information available (Ecosystem Management Initiative 2004).

Finally, there is the importance of accountability for outcomes. Supporters and critics alike express the concern that CBCs do not pay enough attention to monitoring and evaluating outcomes. The environmental and social impacts of CBCs too often remain largely unknown. Although the body of thoughtful research on the subject of community-based collaborations is growing, most information remains anecdotal. One presenter at a gathering of researchers (the CBC/RCC 2003 Annual Meeting, Snowbird, Utah) noted the tendency to romanticize CBCs doing "on-the-ground conservation work" and urged the need for additional research to harden the benefits of utilizing a collaborative approach.

A CLOSER LOOK AT RANGELAND COLLABORATIONS

The 11 lessons presented above find field validation and additional depth in the first-hand experiences of the following three working collaborations. These rangeland efforts each demonstrate that collaborations can succeed and that adaptive learning can continue to flourish in difficult environments. Additionally, the overlap between these efforts demonstrates the potential for local collaborations to promote emerging social networks at a larger regional level.

The Malpai Borderlands Group, Arizona and New Mexico

The Malpai Borderlands Group began as informal discussions between a handful of concerned ranch families with ties to the land and ranching going back to the 1890s and early 1900s. Today, the group is a nonprofit organization led by local ranchers, with participation of state and federal agencies, scientists, the Nature Conservancy, and other stakeholders. The objective is to restore and maintain the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape that will support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant, and animal life. Situated in the valleys of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, the group aims to accomplish these goals by working to encourage profitable ranching and other traditional livelihoods that will sustain the open space nature of the land (Sayre 2005).

Two immediate concerns of both the ranchers and environmental interest groups involved with the Malpai Borderlands Group were the restoration of remaining native grasslands and their protection from further subdivision and development. Thus, the group immediately began to focus their energy on restoring fire to grasslands, implementing three major prescribed burns in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. In addition, they developed the first grassbank system, which allows forage on one ranch to be made available to another rancher's cattle in exchange for one or more conservation benefits and/or easements on neighboring

or associated lands. The group now holds conservation easements on 12 ranches with a total of more than 75,000 acres of private land protected from development.

Several components have led to the sustainability and success of the Malpai Borderlands Group. One of the first steps to success was the creation of a mission statement that all stakeholders could agree upon. This statement has become an important reference point that continues to maintain focus and guide decisions about the group's future projects. Another critical ingredient was establishing trust among members such that any one member could speak comfortably in public on behalf of the collaboration as a whole. Although each member may have a different perspective on what they want the collaboration to accomplish, conveying their common goals to the public has been crucial in strengthening the collaborative effort. Monitoring has been another important component of the Malpai Borderlands Group's success. Two fundamental reasons to adopt a monitoring protocol for collaborative projects are the importance of educating land managers and decision makers on the progress and outcome of the project, and the added credibility and defensible base that monitoring provides for the group's actions. In addition, every year the Malpai Borderlands Group hosts several workshops to share ideas and experiences with people who are interested in similar locally organized efforts. Furthermore, their meetings have included visitors from Mexico, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Indonesia, and Kenya; there is thus a global awareness and desire for collaborations.

The Rowe Mesa Grassbank, New Mexico

Inspired by the work of the Malpai Borderlands Group, the collaborative Rowe Mesa Grassbank (RMG) was established in 1997 to demonstrate how grassbanking can serve as a practical tool for restoring national forest system lands in northern New Mexico. In 2004, the project was transferred from the Conservation Fund to the Quivira Coalition. At the core of the collaborative are five major partners: The Quivira Coalition, the U.S. Forest Service, the Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association, the New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, and the current permittee participants. The three main goals of the RMG are to improve the ecological health of public grazing lands for the benefit of all, to strengthen the economic and environmental foundation of northern New Mexico's ranching tradition, and to demonstrate that ranchers, conservationists, and agency personnel can work together for the good of the land and the people.

The current political and social climate and the willingness of the various participants to collaborate during the initial stages of the RMG's formation were essential. Gaining the cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service and Stockman's Association was an important first step that enabled the RMG to gain the added trust of the current permittees and smaller landowners and ranchers from the surrounding communities. The collaboration has also found success through their ability to constantly adapt to the changing needs of the stakeholders as well as those expressed by outside interest groups. Thus, a new model is currently emerging on how to achieve the collaboration's goals and continue the success of the program while also being financially sustainable. This model depends on implementing a set of analytic and restoration tools as well as creating new relationships between people with an interest in public lands management. Another aspect vital to the success and management of the RMG has been the number of monitoring and restoration tools used to leverage forage in the grassbank for restoring land health on Rowe Mesa and in participating Forest Service grazing allotments. These tools include qualitative land health assessment, management-directed monitoring (including social and ecological), niche marketing, prescribed fire and post-fire grazing management, management of pinyon/juniper encroachment, and the use of professional herders. Furthermore, the RMG has also made continual efforts to improve education and outreach, strengthen ties to local communities, and focus on long-term management goals. This has brought

the Rowe Mesa Grassbank national attention, and more important, acceptance and respect from local communities and interest groups.

The Diablo Trust, Arizona

Initially founded in 1993 by two ranches, Bar-T-Bar and Flying M, the Diablo Trust was created to link private and public values under one holistic goal: to create sustainable rangeland management that maintains the tradition of working ranches and provides economic viability while managing for ecosystem health. Situated east of Flagstaff, Arizona, collaborators of the Diablo Trust now include local ranchers, state and federal agencies, scientists, environmentalists, and other interested stakeholders.

One vital aspect that has led to the success of the Diablo Trust is the conviction that good land stewardship incorporates participatory research and monitoring projects. Introducing scientists into a collaborative environment has helped the Diablo Trust develop appropriate research questions that are relevant to the ranchers and that address perceived conflicts among stakeholders and the outside public (Sisk et al. 1999). In addition, integrated collaborative research and sound monitoring protocols can generate clear measures of effectiveness and progress in which to evaluate the success of the collaboration (Muñoz-Erickson and Aguilar-Gonzalez 2003).

Working with researchers at Northern Arizona University and Prescott College, the Diablo Trust incorporates both research and monitoring into rangeland conservation. This approach can foster collaboration by leveling the playing field among stakeholders by providing equal access of information to everyone, incorporating multiple sources of information and values, and engaging stakeholders in the data collection and generation of knowledge through multi-party monitoring projects (Sisk and Palumbo 2005; Muñoz-Erickson and Aguilar-Gonzalez 2003). Finally, science has also enhanced collaboration by bringing credibility to the process and by motivating the group to be accountable for their management actions.

The inclusion of research and monitoring in the collaborative process has brought several benefits to scientists as well. Collaborations provide scientists with the resources to "scale up" their studies from small plots to whole landscapes. In addition, the ability to collaborate with the people who manage the land results in more meaningful, insightful, and applicable science (Sisk and Palumbo 2005). In order to continue this fruitful relationship between stakeholders and scientists, the Northern Arizona University and Prescott College researchers have invested significant time into the collaborative process, anticipating a multi-decadal relationship. All stakeholders share the goal of sustaining research and monitoring over long periods to generate information that is relevant to an ecological system typified by slow responses interrupted by periodic bouts of drastic change.

By taking an active role and using this collaborative scientific approach, the Diablo Trust supports numerous successful projects, such as monitoring experimental vegetation plots over the long term, investigating the ecological effects of fire and grazing on grassland diversity and productivity, determining the effects of grazing on pronghorn habitat, discovering historical changes in grassland compositions, and developing the Integrated Monitoring for Sustainability project (Loeser et al. 2001; Muñoz-Erickson et al. 2004), which is a multi-party monitoring process that incorporates social and ecological well being and acknowledges their interrelationship. Through the IMfoS project, the Diablo Trust worked with the Northern Arizona University and Prescott College research team in developing the Holistic Ecosystem Health Indicator (HEHI) to assess and monitor the sustainability of the Diablo Trust's collaboratively managed rangelands. This monitoring tool measures ecological and social indicators of rangeland health and combines data from existing monitoring efforts, collected by different agencies, resource users, and volunteers, into a single data repository.

These research and monitoring efforts have brought national recognition to the

Diablo Trust, stimulating more collaboration with other groups such as the Malpai Borderlands Group and the Northwest Colorado Stewardship Council. It is the hope of the Diablo Trust that these efforts will enhance the group's adaptive management efforts by making information transparent, facilitating communication among stakeholders, and increasing learning efficiencies.

CONCLUSION

Don't concentrate on skeptics; concentrate on the eager learners.

—Quivira Coalition

Against the onslaught of sweeping change, Custer County [Colorado] offers us the rare glimpse of hope—that by setting aside our differences and focusing on our common love for the land, individual people can still make a difference.

—Todd Wilkinson (2004)

Community-based collaborations face many challenges. Many times the underlying problem and its solution are poorly understood, there is a paucity of data and little understanding of what the information means, and personnel and financial resources are small or nonexistent. In addition, conflicting values clutter the stage and innovation is often viewed as risky and expensive. Collaborations must bring together a diverse and representative group of stakeholders, and they must also embrace the amount of time, effort, and funding that is necessary to create and sustain a successful collaborative process. Resonating from each of our rangeland examples is the importance of gaining the trust of the stakeholders and outside interest groups by maintaining an open and transparent process that incorporates research and monitoring protocols in which to evaluate their goals.

Given these challenges, why would anyone elect to pursue community-based collaboration? The answer lies in the belief that collaboration represents an alternate approach that meets the national interest through local and place-based actions, and that the appropriate people brought together to work constructively with good information will create useful visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the community. Collaborative groups have found that the process of collaboration is constantly changing and they are continuing to discover new methods of achieving landscape-scale conservation goals.

The power of community-based collaboration is its recognition that humans are part of the environment and a mandatory part of the solution. This paper assembled the field experience of dozens of practicing CBCs. Their experience confirms that community-based collaboration can be a fruitful road to long-term solutions. The three rangeland case studies also illustrate the potential that collaboration can magnify its impact beyond the community level through its connections with other similar groups, leading to emerging regional networks for resource management. But these solutions take time, determination, and strong people skills. Practicing CBCs have learned firsthand that good will, or at least a desire for it, is a fundamental prerequisite for collaboration. They point out the need to measure the benefits of CBCs in both social and biological terms, and to mark progress against a group's goals. They also point out many practical pieces of advice such as identifying an easily achievable first project to build trust and demonstrate the collaborative's worth. And practitioners stress over and over the importance of building relationships—CBCs are about working with people and building social capital.

Quoting historian Bernard DeVoto, Wallace Stegner dryly observed that the only true individualists in the West were usually found hanging from a rope, the other end of which was held by a group of cooperating citizens (Hahn 1998). In today's West, conflicts over natural resources are too important to be left to battles between individuals; they require involvement of the community, with its sense of place, its sense of economic foundation, and its collective capability to instill a sense of stewardship of natural resources. That is the lasting impact of community-based collaboration.

Successful communities and stewardship come from the ground up, originating within the community and involving citizens who make a conscious public commitment to a common vision that includes both a diversity of people and landscapes.

—Luther Propst, Sonoran Institute

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