



# Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide

February 2025

# Acknowledgments

The Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide is a product of the Colorado Forest Health Council, with development led by the Council's Leveraging Resources Committee and supported by funding from the Colorado State Forest Service and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute. Guide development was facilitated by CDR Associates and ERO Resources.

In creating this guide, the authors conducted extensive outreach to gather insights into the resources, considerations, and factors that support or challenge collaborative forest management planning in Colorado. Through multiple rounds of engagement, they connected with over 90 individuals from 40 agencies and organizations via focus groups, individual interviews, an online survey, and a conference session. Participants represented a wide range of expertise in watershed, recreation, forest, and fire management and policy across local, state, and national levels. We extend our sincere gratitude to each participant for their invaluable perspectives and thoughtful contributions to this guide.

## Authors

- Christina Burri, Colorado State Forest Service
- Laura Hickey, CDR Associates
- Ch'aska Huayhuaca, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
- Alison Lerch, Colorado Department of Natural Resources
- Katie McGrath Novak, CSU Center for Collaborative Conservation
- Lili Perreault, ERO Resources
- Brett Wolk, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
- Courtney Young, Colorado Department of Natural Resources



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# Introduction

Forests provide a wide range of social, economic, and ecological values that motivate communities across Colorado to actively sustain and enhance forest resilience. The **Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide** is designed for government agencies, private landowners, and place-based collaborations to improve coordination in forest management strategies and more effectively leverage resources. The benefits of Colorado's forests, as well as the threats of lost forest resilience, exceed the ability of individual entities to effectively sustain forest resilience on their own. The guide provides a framework for aligning collaboration, community values, and technical and financial resources in shaping forest management planning.

This guide aims to assist Colorado communities working towards collaboratively developing and implementing forest resilience strategies that cross landscapes throughout a county or multiple adjacent counties to better mitigate, respond, and recover from common forest disturbances. It presents 15 actions, adapted from the Collaborative Stages of Readiness (Huayhuaca et al., 2023), to foster and maintain forest resilience and adaptation, particularly concerning wildfire risk in Colorado. By implementing actions outlined in this guide, partners have a roadmap for developing forest resilience management strategies that access science-based tools and are tailored to the specific needs and landscape context of the forest managers, communities, and collaborators involved.

Through articulating actions that support robust forest resilience planning and collaborative adaptive management processes, the guide will also aid program managers and funding agencies to better align their resources with the planning needs across Colorado. The purpose of the guide is to assist with positioning all areas and communities in Colorado to better leverage resources, knowledge share, and be competitive at receiving funding to achieve effective forest health management and resiliency.

**The entry point for this guide will vary based on local factors such as forest conditions, socio-economic factors, cultural aspects, and past relationships.** Collaboration often emerges in response to external triggers, such as biophysical disturbances, socio-political uncertainties, or policy mandates. These drivers can spark new collaborations or reshape existing ones, and many active collaborations are already taking place across Colorado.

The guide encourages a shift from reacting to immediate events—like a grant opportunity for watershed planning—to a more holistic approach combining community values and local knowledge with science based tools. By fostering and deploying collaborative capacity throughout the state, interested and affected parties will be better equipped to respond to sudden events by working together more effectively toward shared forest resilience goals.

## Action Format

Each action begins with an overview of the key questions, outcomes, supporting resources, competencies, and level of effort, providing a structured approach for implementation.

### Key Questions

These are the guiding questions that each action seeks to address, helping to clarify the objectives and focus of the activity. They serve as a roadmap, shaping both the process and the outcomes by ensuring that relevant issues are thoughtfully considered.

### Outcomes

These are the tangible deliverables, reports, templates, or tools developed through the activity. Each product represents a step forward in the planning process and may serve as a reference for future actions or broader strategic goals.

### Supporting Resources

This includes handbooks, data sources, analytical tools, and other materials of statewide relevance that may support completion of the action. These resources are intended to streamline processes, provide insights, and ensure that the action aligns with broader state-level forest resilience goals.

### Competencies

Based on Cheng and Sturtevant 2012, this outlines the skills, expertise, and human resources essential for successful completion. Competencies may involve technical knowledge, collaborative skills, or specialized training and should be assessed early to ensure the project team is well-prepared.

### Level of Effort

This estimated “level of effort” is relative to all other actions and accounts for factors such as time, resource availability, stakeholder engagement, community engagement, and the overall complexity of the task. Actions like defining opportunities, developing a vision, and securing resources typically require a high level of effort due to their multifaceted nature and the depth of collaboration needed. Actions focused on communication, outreach, and monitoring may be less resource-intensive but still demand regular attention to maintain momentum and consistency. Context-specific factors, such as the availability of resources and local constraints, may require adjustments to these estimates.

Additionally, following any information or context, each action includes one or more of the following:

- **Activity:** An activity is a specific task or action undertaken to achieve the outcomes of the action
- **Template:** A framework or structure to complement an action and use as a starting point for creating documents, plans, or processes.
- **Case Study:** A detailed analysis of a specific instance, event, or project used to illustrate principles, lessons, or best practices.

# Collaborative Capacity

The Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide actions outline approaches that both rely on and work to build collaborative **capacity**, where collaborative capacity refers to the ability to collaborate across sectors, disciplines, and jurisdictions to address shared challenges and achieve mutual goals. Collaborative capacity is developed and supported by a variety of collaborative **competencies** and **conditions**.

## Collaborative Competencies

Collaborative **competencies** encompass the essential skills and knowledge needed to lead, manage, and participate effectively in collaborative efforts. These competencies can be organized into five core areas (Policy Consensus Initiative, 2011):

### Collaborative Leadership and Management:

- Strengthening leadership roles, styles, and skills to inspire trust and guide multi-stakeholder processes.
- Planning and managing partnerships, networks, and problem-solving processes.

### Process Dynamics:

- Effective communication, including active listening, cross-cultural understanding, and persuasive presentation.
- Group facilitation skills to manage dynamics, foster teamwork, and support decision-making.
- Conflict resolution strategies for managing disagreements constructively.

### Analytical Skills:

- Situation assessment, issue analysis, and strategic decision-making in collaborative contexts.
- Evaluating outcomes and adapting processes to improve effectiveness and accountability.

### Knowledge Management:

- Integrating technical, scientific, and culturally relevant information to inform decisions.
- Leveraging technology, such as GIS and decision-support tools, to enhance collaboration.

### Professional Accountability:

- Maintaining personal and professional integrity by upholding fairness, transparency, and inclusivity.
- Engaging in reflective practice to assess and improve collaborative performance.

## Collaborative Conditions

Collaborative conditions include the tools, norms, and mechanisms that enable effective teamwork and problem-solving. By examining the state of collaborative conditions, groups can gauge their collaborative capacity. For more detailed guidance on assessing collaborative conditions, refer to ACTION 15.

- **Clear directive:** A well-defined vision and goals that provide direction and purpose for the collaboration.
- **Strategic and inclusive recruitment:** Engaging the appropriate stakeholders who bring the necessary expertise, resources, and perspectives.
- **Resources:** Sufficient financial, technical, and human resources to support the collaborative effort and ensure it can be sustained.
- **Communication channels:** Effective methods and tools for sharing information, ensuring that all participants are informed and engaged.
- **Group norms and guidelines:** Clear, shared expectations for behavior that help maintain a positive, productive working environment and guide decision-making.
- **Clear scope:** Defining the boundaries and objectives of the collaboration, ensuring alignment on the issues and desired outcomes.
- **People:** The right mix of knowledge, expertise, and diverse perspectives needed to make informed decisions and drive the collaboration forward.
- **Accountability mechanisms:** Systems in place to ensure all participants are responsible for their roles and commitments, fostering trust and follow-through.



# Forest Management Authorities in Colorado

In Colorado, forest management is overseen and funded by many levels of governmental and non-governmental organizations, each with specific responsibilities, jurisdictions, knowledge or resources to contribute towards forest resilience. These entities work together to manage forest resources in Colorado, balancing conservation, recreation, and resource extraction needs while addressing issues like wildfire management and forest health. Here is an overview of some of the key entities involved:

## Federal



FEMA



## Tribal

Tribal governments oversee and support forest management on Tribal owned lands within Colorado, as well as connections to ancestral homelands where they may have authorities or interests to support resilient forests

## State

### Colorado State Forest Service



Supports private landowners and state-managed lands, while developing best practices for forest management and wildfire mitigation.

### Department of Natural Resources



Oversees several divisions related to natural resource management, including forestry, parks and wildlife, and the state land board.

### Division of Fire Prevention and Control



Oversees wildfire prevention, including prescribed fire, and response on forested lands and in the wildland-urban-interface.

## Local

### Governments

May manage municipal or county parks, open spaces, and other forested areas at the local level typically related to land-use planning, local wildfire mitigation efforts, and park management.

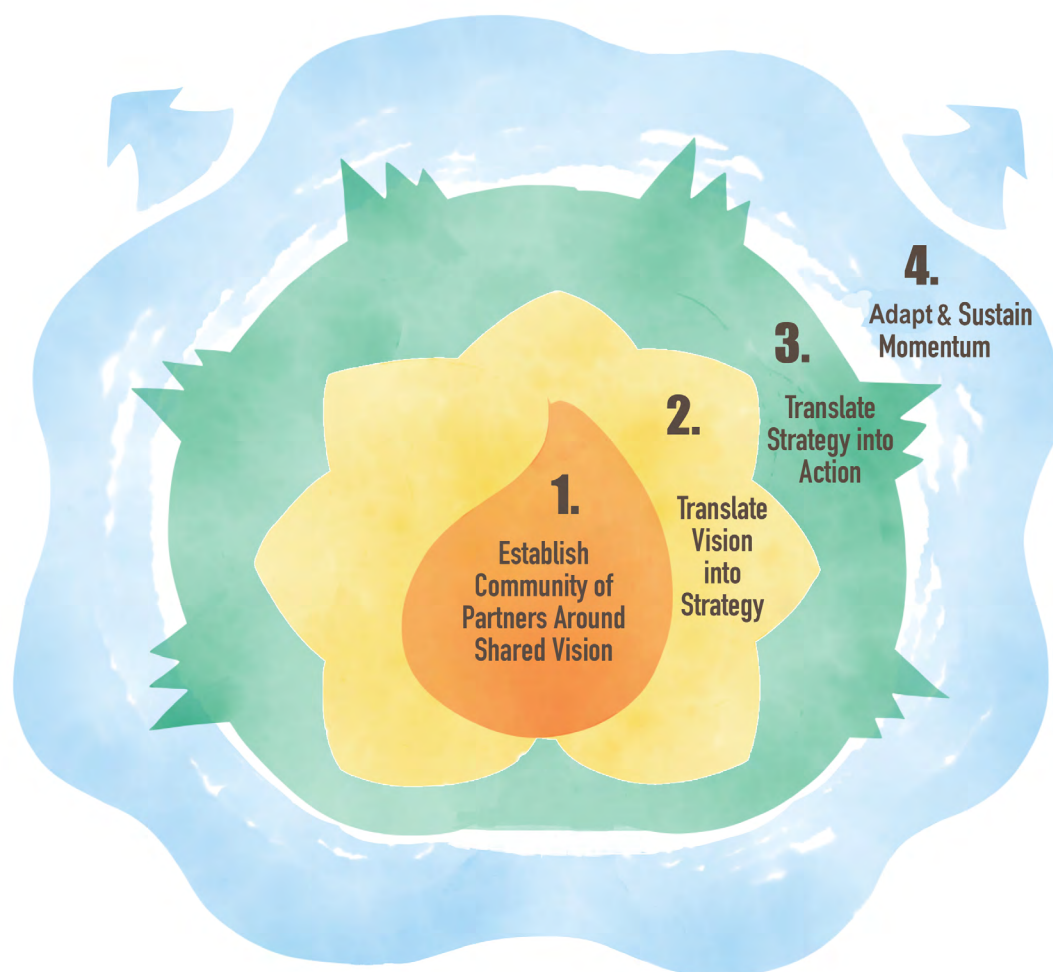
### Non-Government Organizations

Various NGOs and conservation groups work on forest management and conservation projects in collaboration with state and federal agencies to engage in conservation, restoration, and advocacy work related to forests

### Place-Based Organizations

These organizations vary in structure but often show up as conservation districts, collaboratives, or watershed coalitions and often play convening roles.

# Applying the Collaborative Readiness Framework



Above: The four Collaborative Stages of Readiness from Huayhuaca et al, 2023.

To plan and implement strategies for forest resilience at cross-boundary scales necessitates collaboration. However, developing the capacity to collaborate—and further demonstrating successful partnership in pursuits to obtain technical and financial support—can be challenging. Applying the **Stages of Collaborative Readiness Framework**, developed by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, helps overcome this challenge by demonstrating clear outcomes of the actions included in this guide, thus providing benchmarks to track and cite progress and success of collaboration.

This introduction provides a very high-level overview of the four stages of readiness, developed specifically to prepare landscapes and communities to receive and recover from wildland fire. For more details and information, refer to [Preparing landscapes and communities to receive and recover from wildfire through collaborative readiness: A concept paper](#).

The **Colorado Forest Resilience Planning Guide** offers a variety of resources to help achieve collaborative readiness outcomes through 15 targeted actions to support forest resilience planning processes across broad landscapes. The tables below provide an overview of the actions and outcomes associated with each stage of readiness.



Right: The four Collaborative Stages of Readiness from Huayhuaca et al, 2023, adapted to reflect each of the 15 actions from this guide by corresponding stage.

Stage 1. Establish a Shared Vision	
Collaborative Readiness Outcome	Supporting Guide Actions
The group of collaborators has sufficient internal capacity to convene inclusive and effective processes.	Action 2: Stakeholder List Action 3: Defined Partner Responsibilities
The shared vision develops and coalesces along with membership.	Action 3: Codes of Conduct Action 4: Vision Statement
Interests are identified and the key stakeholders are engaged (including jurisdictional leadership, science partners, community-connected partners, and historically excluded partners).	Action 1: Forest Resilience Values, Risks, and Assets Action 2: Planning Landscape Boundaries Action 3: Commitment to Collaboration Action 4: Problem Statements
The collaboration has access to sufficient knowledge of local networks and expertise in critical subject matter to inform strategic planning in the next stage.	

<b>Stage 2. Translate a Vision into Strategy Stage</b>	
<b>Collaborative Readiness Outcome</b>	<b>Supporting Guide Actions</b>
The collaboration has identified crucial factors for achieving forest resilience to disturbance, and developed plans that describe coordinated action to address those factors and achieve desired future conditions.	Action 6: Portfolio of Potential Strategies Action 7: Community Outreach Plan Action 8: Resilience Objectives and Indicators Action 9: Prioritized Portfolio of Strategies and Objectives
Planning processes result in the development of structures or products that represent shared meaning and knowledge and facilitate collaboration.	Action 5: Values, Risks, and Opportunities Map Action 6: Portfolio of Past and Planned Collaborator Actions Action 8: Definitions of Success
Frameworks to guide social learning are generated.	Action 7: Community Outreach Plan

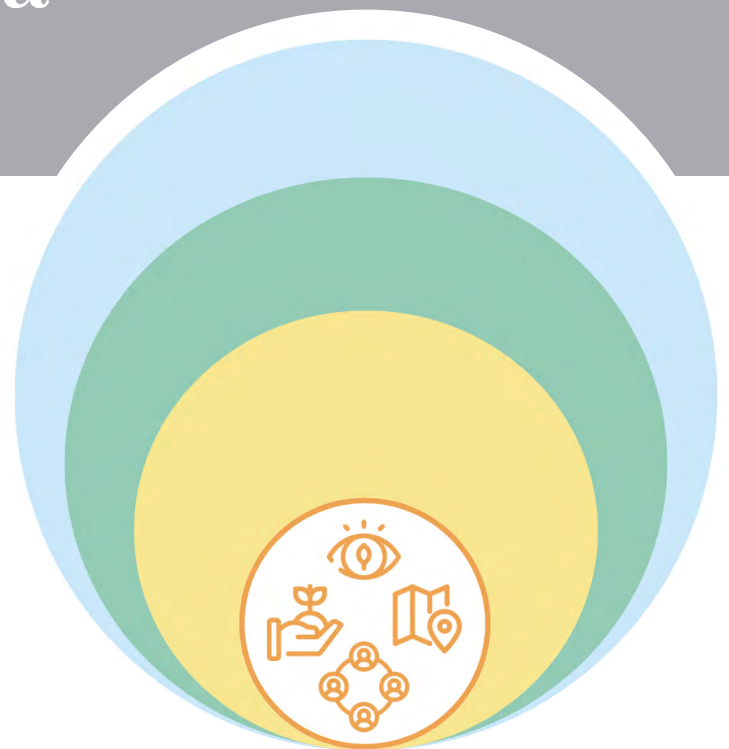
<b>Stage 3. Translate Strategy Into Action</b>	
<b>Collaborative Readiness Outcome</b>	<b>Supporting Guide Actions</b>
Investment shifts towards implementation as the spatial strategy is rolled out on the ground, and completed projects are clearly connected to the landscape strategy.	Action 10: Pilot Projects Action 11: Joint Funding Applications
Implementation schedules and locations are coordinated to magnify impact and efficiency.	Action 10: Project Update Tool Action 11: Funding Allocation and Administration Agreements
Trust builds through incremental successes, and learning begins on the earliest pilot projects as the monitoring and adaptive management plan is tested and refined.	Action 10: Project Update Tool Action 12: Progress and Monitoring Reports
Early metrics of social consent and results of outreach are tracked and shared.	

**Stage 4. Adapt and Sustain Momentum**

<b>Collaborative Readiness Outcome</b>	<b>Supporting Guide Actions</b>
<p>Planned projects have landowner agreements in place and are in alignment with relevant planning requirements.</p>	<p>Action 13: Adaptive Management Actions</p> <p>Action 14: Communication Materials and Activities</p> <p>Action 15: Collaboration Situation Assessment and Recommendations</p>
<p>Collaborative priorities and strategies are institutionalized in NEPA or other agency planning protocols to increase accountability of agencies to partners and communities</p>	
<p>The collaboration convener has sufficient staff and is able to absorb and distribute funding, with agreements in place to do so—otherwise, group cohesion may be challenged.</p>	
<p>The group is supported by collaborative adaptive management such that the vision, strategies, and structure can shift and evolve with changing conditions while preserving the network. Long-term, the collaboration can contribute to landscape and community preparedness by advocating and building capacity for under-resourced partners as they collectively take on broader systemic challenges to forest resilience.</p>	

# How to Establish a Shared Vision

Stage 1 involves a significant preparation period for assessing the situation and context, setting broad goals, and identifying convening authorities—individuals or organizations responsible for leading the effort. In this stage, the convening authority works to pinpoint key participants, assess interests, and address any gaps in partnerships, initiating processes to build relationships and trust among stakeholders. Through ongoing engagement, stakeholders collaboratively define problems, establish geographic boundaries, identify areas of agreement, and develop a shared vision for forest resilience. Building the internal capacity needed for effective teamwork requires skilled individuals for key roles like coordination and leadership. Investing in these early actions can enhance the ability to engage the right stakeholders, helping communities and managers prepare for and adapt to changing forest conditions.





# ACTION 1

## Define Forest Benefits and Values

### Key Questions

- *What ecological, economic, and sociocultural values do forests provide on the landscape?*
- *Which aspects of the forest structure, function, and landscape support values?*
- *What will the forest need to adapt to and/or recover from to continue providing values?*

### Outcomes

- Forest Resilience Values, Risks, and Assets

### Supporting Resources

- [Colorado Forest Action Plan](#)
- [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#)

### Competencies

- Human and financial resources to coordinate, manage meetings and communications
- Systems for internal communication and flows of information for collective development of products
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities in effective process design, facilitation, systems thinking

### Level of Effort

Requires research and stakeholder engagement to identify opportunities. While it involves gathering data and insights, it's manageable within a moderate time frame and complexity.

## Defining Forest Resilience

### The state of Colorado defines resilience as:

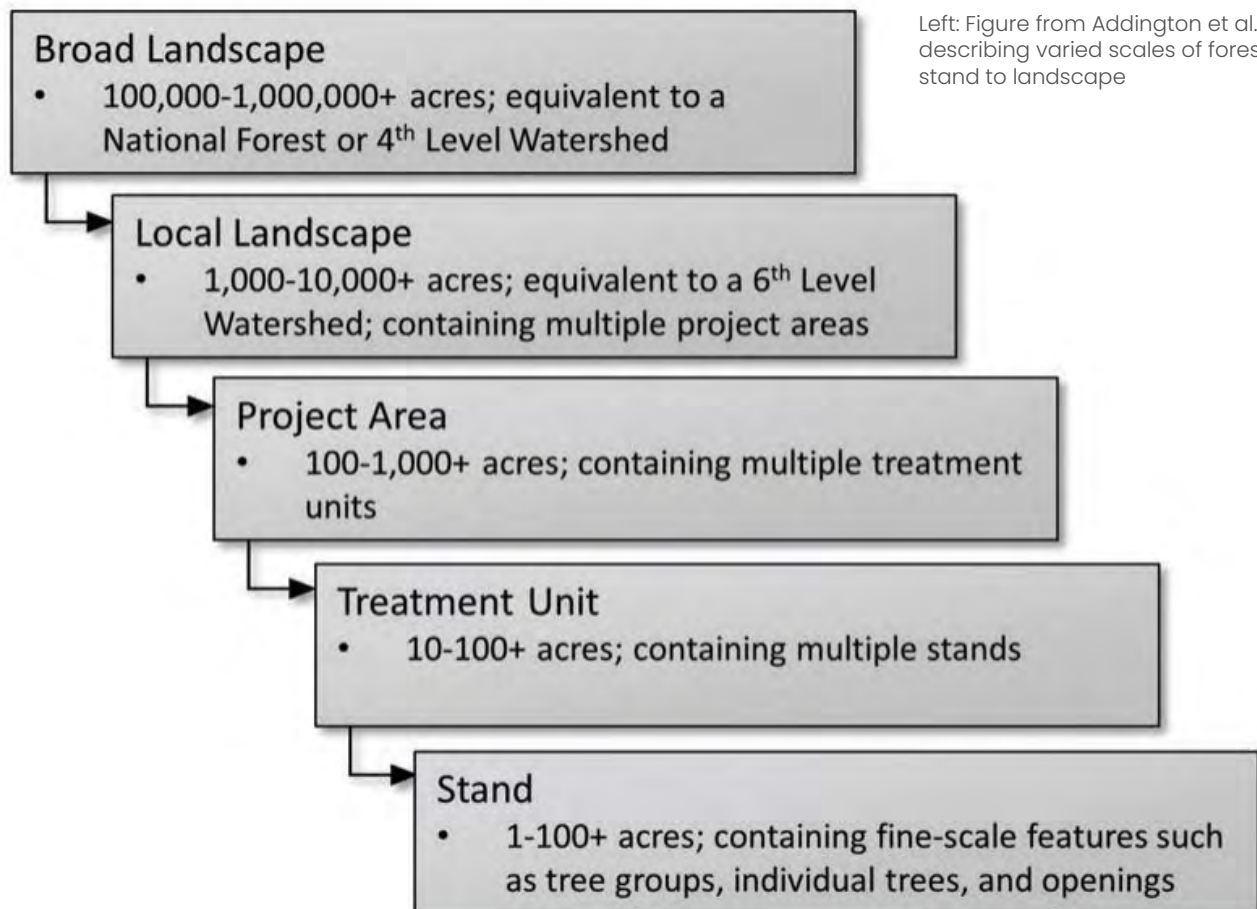
“The ability of communities to rebound, positively adapt to, or thrive amidst changing conditions or challenges—including human-caused and natural disasters—and to maintain quality of life, healthy growth, durable systems, economic vitality, and conservation of resources for present and future generations.” (Colorado General Assembly, 2018)

### Ecologists have defined ecosystem resilience as:

“The ability of an ecosystem to recover its fundamental structures, processes, and functions” (Holling, 1973) or “The capability to retain similar structures and functioning after disturbances for continuous development” (Liu et al., 2007).

### The definition of forest resilience for planning depends on context and scale.

This guide emphasizes planning across broad landscapes (Addington et al., 2018) and encourages collaborative groups to define forest resilience for the distinct landscape.



Left: Figure from Addington et al. 2018 describing varied scales of forests from stand to landscape

# The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

[The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#) (i.e. Cohesive Strategy, Wildland Fire Executive Council, 2014) developed in 2014 and [updated in 2023](#) is a comprehensive framework developed to improve wildland fire management across the United States. Federal, state, tribal and local entities, and communities, must work together, outside institutional silos and across jurisdictional boundaries to determine shared values and risks, prioritize those risks and make collective investments at scale in high priority areas that result in progress toward the three goals:

## Resilient Landscapes

Landscapes, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.

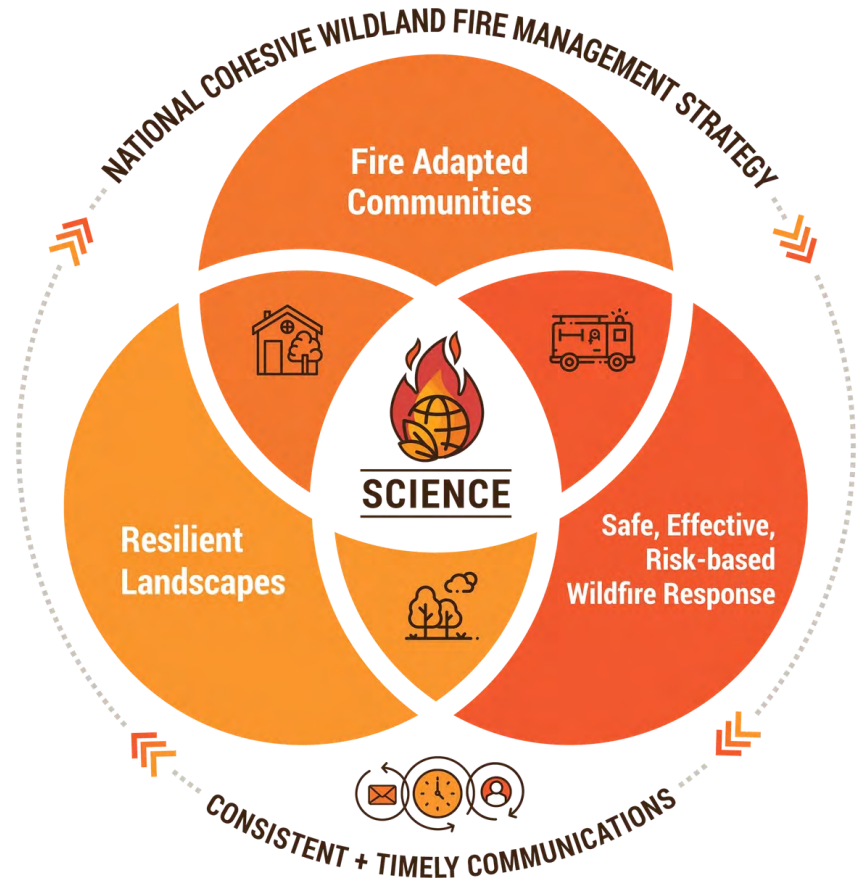
## Fire Adapted Communities

Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire.

## Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response

All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Beyond these three goals, the Cohesive Strategy also recognizes that using best available science, traditional ecological knowledge, data analysis, and technology supports integrated implementation planning and decision-making and is foundational to both short-term and long-term success in addressing the nation's wildfire crisis—much like this guide—and provides a framework of action types that will help define forest resilience opportunities like vegetation management, restoration, conservation, building codes and land use, community preparedness, incident management, and more. Most forest resilience values developed using ACTION 1 of this guide will fit within the Landscape Resilience component of the Cohesive Strategy. However, some values may overlap with Fire Adapted Communities and Wildfire Response. In such cases, consider collaborating with partners who have expertise in these areas during forest management planning.



Above: A graphic of the overlap between the Cohesive Strategy goals from the 2023 update

## Understanding Community Values

When determining forest resilience values and benefits, it's important to engage the broader community in discussions about how forests impact their lives. Involving community members during the brainstorming phase helps identify their priorities early on and allows for the incorporation of these values into decision-making guidelines. Additionally, feedback gathered can be referenced later to promote buy-in during the implementation of strategies.

Describing community values as interests rather than positions helps shift the conversation from fixed demands to the underlying needs and concerns that drive those demands. A position is a specific stance or request, often fixed and non-negotiable, while an interest represents the deeper reasons or needs behind that stance. For instance, a position might be "We need to clearcut this forest area," while the underlying interest could be "We need to ensure sustainable timber production to support the local economy." On the other hand, an opposing position might be "We need to protect the entire forest from any logging," but the underlying interest could be "We want to preserve biodiversity and protect natural habitats." By focusing on these underlying interests, forest managers, conservationists, and other stakeholders can work together to find solutions that balance economic, ecological, and community needs, rather than becoming entrenched in rigid positions.



Community forest resilience values can be assessed through formal methods like surveys and polls, or through informal approaches such as sticky-note activities at community events. Regardless of the method, consider the following to ensure meaningful engagement:

- **Broad Questions:** Early discussions about values and opportunities should encourage expansive thinking. Keep questions broad and straightforward, such as: "How do you benefit from forests?" or "What matters most to you about this forest landscape?"
- **Promote Transparency:** Provide information on how community input will shape the values statement and resilience management strategies. Let community members know where they can access the resulting information in the future.
- **Use Visual Tools:** Incorporate maps, diagrams, or other visual aids to illustrate concepts and encourage discussion. Visuals can help clarify complex information.

## Understanding Landowner Values

Engaging forest landowners early in resilience planning is crucial, as they hold a unique dual role: stewards of the land and integral members of the community. Their insights and priorities are key to shaping decisions that balance conservation goals with local needs. Early involvement builds trust, fosters collaboration, and lays the groundwork for unified strategies that connect private and public lands into a cohesive, resilient landscape. Empowering landowners as active partners unlocks their potential to drive meaningful, lasting change that benefits both the environment and their communities.

Engaging forest landowners meaningfully and efficiently requires approaches that foster trust, encourage open communication, and respect their unique position as both stewards of the land and active community members. Some approaches that can be effective in engaging landowners in forest resilience planning include:

### Forming a Community Working Group

A community working group brings together landowners, local stakeholders, conservation groups, government agencies, and other relevant parties to discuss shared goals, challenges, and opportunities related to forest management.

- **How It Works:** This group meets regularly to exchange ideas, provide input on planning processes, and collaboratively develop strategies. The group's collective knowledge and diverse perspectives can inform decisions about forest resilience.
- **Best Practices:** Ensure diverse representation (including smaller landowners, not just large ones), set clear goals for each meeting, and provide resources to help landowners understand technical aspects of forest resilience.

### Landowner-Specific Feedback Events

Hosting targeted feedback events or workshops specifically for forest landowners allows for focused discussions on the issues that matter most to them.

- **How It Works:** These events can be structured as open forums, panel discussions, or hands-on workshops where landowners can ask questions, share concerns, and provide feedback on specific proposals or strategies related to forest management and resilience.
- **Best Practices:** Offer a mix of formats (e.g., presentations followed by Q&A, small group discussions) and ensure that the events are accessible (both in terms of location and timing). Providing materials in advance can help landowners come prepared with questions or ideas.

### One-on-One Consultations or Site Visits

Personalized consultations or on-site visits with landowners provide a more direct and tailored approach to understanding their unique needs and goals.

- **How It Works:** A forest management expert visits properties to address concerns, assess conditions, and provide tailored resilience strategies. This personalized approach fosters honest discussions and site-specific recommendations, encouraging deeper engagement.
- **Best Practices:** Ensure these consultations are mutually respectful of landowners' time and privacy. Offer follow-up visits or check-ins to provide continued support as plans are developed or implemented.

# Activity

## Forest Values and Opportunities Discussion

### This activity contains 3 steps:

1. Identify Forest Benefits
2. Group Benefits into Value Categories
3. Analyze Supporting Characteristics

### 1. IDENTIFY FOREST BENEFITS

Begin with a brainstorming activity such as sticky noting, group discussion with shared note taking, or live polling to determine existing and desired forest benefits. When discussing the following prompts, seek to understand the underlying needs and concerns (interests) when any fixed demands (positions) arise.

#### Prompting Questions:

- What matters to us about our forests?
- How do forests benefit our community's character and health?
- How do we want our forests to be known?
- What do we care about in our forests?
- What do we care about around our forests?
- What principles guide our management of forests?
- Can we identify desired forest benefits?

### 2. GROUP BENEFITS INTO VALUE CATEGORIES

Once benefits are defined, group each benefit into a value category. Categories to consider include:

- **Forest Health:** Benefits of this value might include the ability to withstand and recover from disturbances and soil stabilization.
- **Watershed Health:** Benefits of this value might include supporting municipal water systems, water storage, aquatic ecosystems, and agricultural water supplies.
- **Wildfire Resistance:** Benefits of this value may include reduction of fire intensity and spread, protection of life and property, reduction of smoke impacts on air quality, community preparedness, and enhancing fire responder safety.
- **Wildlife:** Benefits of this value might include habitat provision, biodiversity of wildlife, and conservation.
- **Human Use:** Benefits of this value might include resource use, recreation and tourism, cultural significance, carbon sequestration, and educational opportunities.

### 3. ANALYZE SUPPORTING CHARACTERISTICS AND RISKS

For each value category consider the following question: *Which aspects of the forest structure, function, and landscape support this value?*

- **EXAMPLE:** *The value of wildlife is supported by characteristics like contiguous habitat corridors and species diversity*



## ACTION 2

# Align Planning Boundaries with Opportunities

### Key Questions

- *What is the geographic scope that affects forests in the landscape?*

### Outcomes

- Planning Landscape Boundaries
- Stakeholder List

### Supporting Resources

- [Colorado Forest Atlas](#)
- [Colorado Interactive Map \(BLM\)](#)
- [Colorado Conservation Districts \(NRCS\)](#)
- [Colorado Watershed Plan Layer](#)
- [Atlas of Collaborative Conservation in Colorado \(CSU CCC\)](#)
- [FACO Place-based Network Map](#)

### Competencies

- Technical expertise in GIS and spatial analysis
- Technical expertise in gathering, compiling, and synthesizing spatial data
- Strategic planning facilitation

### Level of Effort

Involves analyzing data and using GIS tools. Requires collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that boundaries reflect both ecological and social factors, making it moderately intensive.

## Geographic Scope

A **geographic scope** refers to the specific area or region that is the focus of a project, study, or initiative. It defines the physical boundaries within which planning, activities, analyses, or assessments will take place. Key aspects of geographic scope include:

- **Spatial Boundaries:** The defined limits of the area under consideration, which can vary in size from local neighborhoods to entire regions, countries, or ecosystems.
- **Contextual Relevance:** Geographic scope often relates to the issues being addressed, such as environmental concerns, resource management, or community engagement. It helps ensure that the analysis is relevant to the specific characteristics and needs of that area.
- **Stakeholder Involvement:** The geographic scope may influence which stakeholders are involved, as different regions can have different communities, governance structures, and priorities.
- **Data Availability:** The geographic scope can impact the types of data that are accessible or relevant for the analysis, as different areas may have varying levels of data collection and availability.
- **Ecological and Social Considerations:** The geographic scope may encompass specific ecological features (like watersheds or habitats) or social characteristics (such as demographics or cultural practices) that are pertinent to management goals.
- **Cultural Resources:** The geographic scope may include historically, archaeologically, or culturally significant sites, traditions, and landscapes that influence planning and decision-making, ensuring that heritage and cultural values are preserved and integrated into project objectives.

Clearly defining the geographic scope is essential for effective planning and implementation, as it helps set expectations for outcomes and informs decision-making processes. This action focuses on defining a landscape boundary that accurately reflects forest resilience values (see ACTION 1). Establishing this boundary is an iterative and politically nuanced process, often requiring time and adjustments as new stakeholders engage and contribute to framing problems and solutions. Consequently, it may take several revisions, following the completion of other actions in this guide, before the boundary is finalized. Defining the boundaries of the forest landscape—considering factors such as watersheds, forest types, and the wildlife-urban interface—is crucial for identifying potential partners and resources, as well as for developing effective mitigation and recovery strategies.

### LEVERAGING RESOURCES

*Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) are spatial units defined by existing features such as roads or ridge tops that may serve as fire control features. All National Forests in Colorado have a PODs network, which are updated periodically. PODs are developed through workshops drawing on local knowledge of land managers, firefighters, responders, and others to identify the safest and most effective control lines to be used in the event of a wildfire. PODs are increasingly being incorporated into pre-fire planning and prioritization for large landscapes, often in combination with risk assessment metrics. Determining PODs in collaboration with local firefighters may be helpful to define boundaries of the forest landscape. PODs will then be used in ACTION 5 as part of the risk assessment process and in ACTION 6 to identify potential response strategies. More information on PODs and their uses can be found in CFRI resource: Using Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) on Your Forest.*

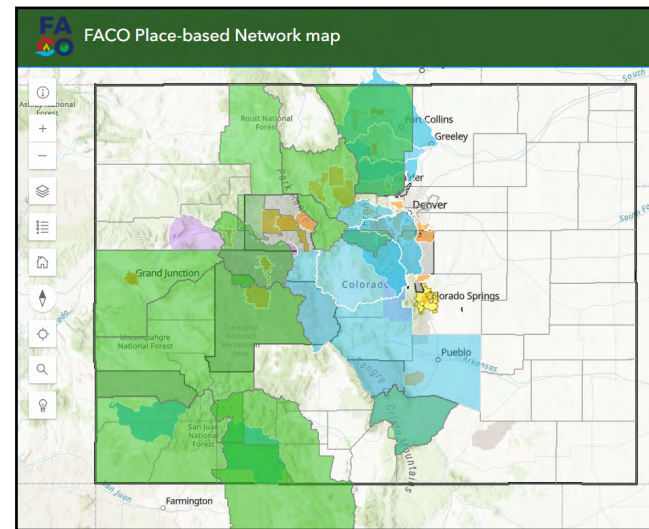
## Establishing the Scale of Planning

For the purposes of planning across broad landscapes, starting at the county or multi-county scale when establishing geographic boundaries offers several advantages:

- **Administrative Framework:** Counties serve as established administrative units with defined governance structures, simplifying coordination with local governments and agencies.
- **Resource Allocation:** Counties manage various resources, including land, water, and infrastructure. Planning at this level aligns resource management efforts with local priorities.
- **Data Availability:** Counties typically have access to extensive demographic, economic, and environmental data that inform planning efforts, making it easier to assess needs and vulnerabilities.
- **Ecosystem Connectivity:** Environmental issues such as wildlife habitats, water quality, and wildfire risks often span political boundaries. County-scale planning addresses these issues more holistically by considering larger geographic areas.
- **Funding Opportunities:** Many funding programs and grants are organized by county jurisdictions, enhancing eligibility for financial support when planning at this scale.
- **Existing Partnerships:** Counties often have established relationships with various stakeholders, including non-profits, businesses, and state agencies, facilitating collaboration and resource sharing.
- **Comprehensive Planning:** County-level planning can integrate various sectors, such as land use, transportation, and environmental protection, leading to more effective strategies.

In conjunction with county boundaries, it is essential to consider various boundary types—such as National Forests, Watersheds, Tribal trust lands, and Municipalities—that support effective forest management planning and stakeholder identification. This approach fosters holistic resource management by addressing ecological interconnections,

facilitates targeted strategies in high-priority areas, and encourages collaboration with Tribal Governments, integrating traditional ecological knowledge. It also supports watershed-level planning for water quality and availability, aligns forest management with urban development goals, and aids in identifying relevant stakeholders. Additionally, recognizing these boundaries promotes adaptive management practices, improves communication, and builds trust among stakeholders. Overall, this comprehensive approach leads to more effective and inclusive forest management, benefiting both ecosystems and communities.



### LEVERAGING RESOURCES

*The Fire Adapted Colorado Place-based Network Map above showcases the diverse ways boundaries can be set for collaborative planning. Some boundaries follow county lines, others align with watershed areas, and some combine both approaches. What matters most is that these boundaries were intentionally chosen based on specific values and the scale of management needed for each area.*

# Activity

## Define the Forest Resilience Landscape

### This activity contains 4 steps:

1. Gather Baseline Boundary Data
2. Create Values-Based Boundaries
3. Refine Boundary
4. Finalize Recommendations

### 1. GATHER BASELINE BOUNDARY DATA

Begin by discussing and identifying the relevant boundary types to include. Once the list is established, utilize GIS tools to gather spatial data for each identified boundary type. Ensure the accuracy of the data by referencing reliable sources and previous studies. During this process, document any additional insights or observations about the boundary types that arise during discussions. Boundary types to consider include:

- **County:** Provides a foundation for collaborative planning efforts that can effectively address local challenges while leveraging existing frameworks and resources.
- **Federal Lands and Tribal Trust Lands (USFS, NPS, BLM, BIA):** Opens avenues for federal grants and programs dedicated to conservation and restoration. Facilitates engagement with Tribal Nations and land managers.
- **Conservation Districts and NRCS:** Facilitates engagement with private stakeholders and offers specialized knowledge in conservation practices, land management, and sustainable forestry.
- **Municipalities:** Enhances collaboration between urban and rural areas, aligns forest management with local development and land-use planning, and facilitates outreach and engagement efforts to educate residents.
- **Watershed Plan Districts (CWCB):** Supports strategies that consider both land and water management, improving water quality and availability.
- **Ecosystem Type and Wildland-Urban Interface (CSFS):** Supports development of strategies that are ecologically sound, community-focused, and responsive to both environmental and socio-economic factors
- **Place-Based Collaboratives (CSU CCC and FACO):** Present opportunities to leverage local knowledge regarding conditions, needs, and challenges.

Keep in mind that certain partners may not want to share different types of information related to their lands or may want to enter into a data sovereignty agreement so that information can be shared and protected in a confidential manner.

# Activity

## Define the Forest Resilience Landscape (continued)

### 2. DRAFT VALUES-BASED BOUNDARIES

Utilize GIS to create visual representations of boundary options that reflect each identified forest resilience value from ACTION 1—such as biodiversity, carbon sequestration, or community access—by outlining supporting features like specific habitats, water sources, or existing land uses.

If feasible, divide the determination of these value boundaries among multiple small groups. Each group can discuss the supporting features of the mapped values (e.g., ecosystems, community assets) and document insights on large sheets of paper or digital platforms. Afterward, each group presents its findings to identify common themes and critical features from different perspectives.

### 3. REFINE BOUNDARIES

Organize a design charrette where diverse stakeholder groups work together to refine boundary options from the values-based boundaries. Provide tools for mapping and visualizing changes in real-time. A sample agenda template for this kind of workshop is provided on the next page.

### 4. FINALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepare a summary report, including visualizations, that compiles the findings, boundary options, and stakeholder feedback into a comprehensive report that outlines recommended boundaries and rationales.

# Template

## Boundaries Design Charrette Agenda

**Objective:** To collaboratively create and refine values-based boundaries for forest resilience using gathered data and stakeholder input.

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Time:** [Insert Start and End Time] 6.5 hours total, plus 1 hour lunch break

**Location:** [Insert Location]

---

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes)

- Brief overview of the agenda and objectives
- Introductions of participants (name, organization, role)
- Icebreaker activity to foster engagement

### 2. Review of Gathered Data (30 minutes)

- Presentation of spatial data and insights gathered
- Overview of identified forest resilience values and their supporting features
- Discussion of any initial questions or clarifications

### 3. Breakout Session: Creating Values-Based Boundaries (1 hour)

- Divide participants into small groups (4-6 people each)
- Each group focuses on one or two specific forest resilience values
- Task: Use maps and data to outline proposed boundaries reflecting the assigned values
- Document supporting features and considerations for each boundary option

### 4. Group Presentations (1 hour)

- Each group presents their proposed boundaries to all participants (5-10 minutes per group)
- Collect feedback and questions from the larger group
- Discuss common themes and variations in proposed boundaries

### 5. Lunch Break (1 hour)

### 6. Refining Boundaries: Collaborative Discussion (1 hour)

- Open discussion on the proposed boundaries
- Identify areas of agreement and areas needing further refinement
- Use visual aids (maps, charts) to facilitate discussions

# Template

## Boundaries Design Charrette Agenda (continued)

### 7. Interactive Mapping Session (1 hour)

- Utilize GIS tools to visualize proposed adjustments in real-time
- Engage participants in modifying boundaries based on feedback
- Ensure that all perspectives and suggestions are documented

### 8. Prioritization of Boundaries (30 minutes)

- Discuss and prioritize which boundaries will be included in the final recommendations
- Consider ecological, social, and economic factors in the prioritization process
- Use a voting system or consensus approach for final decisions

### 9. Next Steps and Action Items (30 minutes)

- Outline the process for finalizing boundaries based on feedback
- Assign tasks for documenting outcomes and creating the summary report
- Discuss timeline for the next meeting and follow-up communications

### 10. Closing Remarks (15 minutes)

- Reflect on the day's activities and outcomes
- Thank participants for their contributions
- Provide contact information for further questions or suggestions

---

#### Materials Needed:

- Projector and screen for presentations
- Maps and GIS tools for visualization
- Large sheets of paper or digital platforms for breakout sessions
- Markers, sticky notes, and other supplies for group activities
- Refreshments for breaks



# ACTION 3

## Gather Collaborators

### Key Questions

- *Who are the decision-makers and authorities that influence forest management, wildfire mitigation, wildfire response, and community recovery strategies within landscape boundaries?*
- *Are there existing venues for forest management collaboration that can scale to the county or multi-county scope?*

### Outcomes

- Stakeholder List
- Defined Partner Responsibilities and Commitment to Collaboration
- Codes of Conduct

### Supporting Resources

- [Decision Authority and Decision Space](#)
- [Stages of Collaborative Readiness](#)
- [Toolkit for Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Branching Out: Creating & Revising Collaborative Governance Documents](#)

### Competencies

- Ability to recruit and retain all relevant collaborators who will contribute diverse problem frames and potential solutions
- Access to social networks at different levels, including place-based communities and communities of practice

### Level of Effort

Involves networking, outreach, and building relationships, to identify and engage potential collaborators which can take variable time and effort.

## Keys to Collaboration

Effective collaboration for forest resilience requires a balance of authority, inclusivity, clear expectations, and well-defined operating protocols. It begins by identifying decision-making authority within each organization, ensuring the right stakeholders are engaged and fostering accountability and transparency from the outset.

Inclusivity is central to the process. Involving a diverse range of participants—such as local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and tribal representatives—ensures that a variety of perspectives are incorporated, enriching the planning process. This diversity not only enhances the quality of decision-making but also ensures that strategies are more comprehensive and reflective of different needs and values.

Recognizing opportunities for synergy between stakeholders is also crucial. Collaboration can unlock shared resources, innovation, and mutual support, enabling more effective and sustainable forest management. When organizations and communities work together, they can leverage each other's strengths, making efforts more powerful and resource-efficient.

Clear expectations about roles, responsibilities, and commitments are essential for maintaining focus and trust throughout the process. Defining these elements up front helps avoid confusion and ensures everyone is aligned in their contributions. Strong operating protocols further support this by establishing consistent procedures for decision-making, communication, and conflict resolution. These protocols provide the structure needed to keep the collaboration on track and make it more efficient and productive.

When these components—clear authority, inclusivity, collaboration, defined roles, and solid operating protocols—are in place, the collaborative process becomes a powerful tool for creating sustainable, effective forest management strategies that benefit both the environment and the communities involved.

## Decision Authority, Decision Space, and Convening Authority

**Decision Authority** refers to the formal power or right of individuals or groups to make decisions within a specific context or organization (U.S. Forest Service, 2023). It defines who has the ultimate say in decision-making processes and can include roles such as managers, team leaders, or governing bodies. Decision authority is often outlined in organizational structures and operating protocols.

**Decision Space** refers to the range of options available for decision-makers to choose from within a given framework or context (U.S. Forest Service, 2023). It encompasses the boundaries and limitations that influence the choices available, such as policies, regulations, resource availability, and stakeholder inputs. Decision space allows for flexibility and creativity within the defined authority, enabling decision-makers to explore various alternatives.



Above: The contributing factors that influence decision space from USFS, 2023.

Considering both decision authority and decision space when gathering collaborators in forest management is crucial for several reasons:

- 1. Clarity and Transparency:** Understanding decision authority helps clarify who has the power to make decisions, which can foster transparency and trust among collaborators. It ensures that all participants know their roles and responsibilities in the decision-making process.
- 2. Effective Collaboration:** By recognizing decision space, collaborators can identify the range of options available for addressing forest management challenges. This understanding encourages creativity and allows for more diverse solutions, ultimately enhancing collaboration.
- 3. Conflict Resolution:** Clear definitions of decision authority can help prevent conflicts arising from ambiguity about who can make decisions. Additionally, acknowledging decision space can facilitate discussions about boundaries and limitations, making it easier to resolve disagreements.

A **Convening Authority** is a person or entity under whose oversight the collaborative process occurs. The convening authority ensures that goals, timelines, and resources are managed effectively and acts as the main point of contact for all participants.

### Qualities of Convening Authority

- Has credibility, influence, legitimacy, and resources to establish forums and assemble participants
- Can be an involved government agency, nongovernmental organization (NGO), foundation, public figure, trusted party, international organization, church, university

### Convening Authority Roles and Responsibilities

- Host, sponsor, champion of collaborative forum
- Functions in more of a legitimizing role, providing influence or leverage to bring parties to the table
- Formally invites parties to participate
- Receives the convening recommendations
- Makes the go/no-go decision on collaborative process
- Establishes the forum and assembles participants

## LEVERAGING RESOURCES

*Existing networks as convening authorities can relieve administrative burdens and prevent duplication of efforts. Visit the [Atlas of Collaborative Conservation in Colorado \(CSU CCC\)](#) and [FACO Network Directory](#) for possible convening authorities.*

*Existing plans can also lead in the direction of convening organizations. Consider searching for the following common examples within landscape boundaries :*

- *Community Wildfire Protection Plan*
- *Wildfire Ready Action Plan*
- *Fire Adapted Communities*

*While exploring existing plans, consider :*

- *Who developed or commissioned the plan?*
- *Was it informed by multi-stakeholder input and, if so, who was involved?*
- *What values or themes were considered in any analyses?*
- *What is the boundary of the plan's operating picture?*
- *Is data available from the plan?*

## Common Roles in a Collaboration

When gathering collaborators, discuss their expected roles and commitments using the following list. One person may fulfill multiple roles, or many people may fill the same role. Where vital roles are unfulfilled, consider including support for these capacities in funding applications. Because all communities and collaborations are unique, not all groups will have every role listed below, and others will have additional roles not listed here.

**Facilitator:** Guides discussions, ensures all voices are heard, and helps resolve conflicts. Facilitators are key in maintaining a productive and collaborative environment. In some groups, a neutral 3rd party facilitator may be more effective in this role than someone who holds other stakes/roles in the group.

**Technical Experts:** Provide specialized knowledge and guidance on best practices and technical aspects of forest management.

**Community Representatives:** Act as liaisons between the planning team and local communities. They bring in the perspectives and concerns of local residents who are affected by forest management decisions.

**Government Officials:** Represent local, regional, state, or national government interests and regulations. They help ensure that the planning process aligns with government initiatives, legal requirements and public policies.

**Tribal Government Representatives:** An individual that is an officially designated employee that represents a tribe in discussions. They may act as a liaison between the tribe and other organizations. Represents the tribe in discussions, advocates for resources and programs that benefit the tribe, and helps ensure that programs and policies are accessible and developed in consultation with the tribe.

**Landowners:** Provide local knowledge and connections as owners of private or communal land within the forest area. Their input is crucial for addressing land use issues and integrating land management practices with broader forest management goals.

**Special Interest Parties:** Focus on positional interests such as conservation of biodiversity, industry needs, or recreation interests. These parties bring unique insights and viewpoints, helping to create a more comprehensive understanding of context-specific issues and potential solutions.

**Economic Analysts:** Evaluate the economic impacts of different management strategies, including cost-benefit analyses and financial feasibility. They help ensure that the plans are economically sustainable.

**Researchers/Academics:** Contribute data and research findings from various disciplines that inform decision-making. They may also be involved in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of management strategies.

**Legal Advisors:** Offer guidance on legal issues related to land use, environmental regulations, and stakeholder rights. They help navigate legal frameworks and ensure compliance.

**Public Relations/Communications Specialists:** Manage outreach and communication strategies to keep the public informed and engaged. They help in building support and understanding for the planning process.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists:** Develop and implement systems for tracking progress, assessing the effectiveness of management strategies, and adapting plans as necessary.

**Funding Coordinators:** Identify funding sources, develop grant applications, manage budgets, and ensure financial resources are allocated appropriately for various aspects of the planning and implementation process.

# Activity

## Catalog Collaborators

There are a number of options to collect information about partners in order to understand shared goals, needs, procedures and map capabilities and resources including:

- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Ask partner organizations about their objectives, roles, and needs. This can provide quantitative and qualitative data.
- **Interviews (one-on-one or group):** Gather in-depth insights about organizational goals, roles, and challenges.
- **Workshops and Focus Groups:** Guide discussion to share information, objectives, and needs in a group setting.
- **Review Organizational Documents:** Gather mission statements, strategic plans, annual reports, and other publicly available documents to understand their objectives and priorities.

### When engaging potential collaborators consider asking the following questions:

- What are the primary goals and objectives of your organization in relation to forest resilience and health?
- What guiding documents or plans does your organization currently follow in relation to forest management?
- What specific skills or resources can your organization contribute to a collaborative effort?
- What are the current challenges or key priorities your organization is facing in forest management?
- In what ways do you see collaboration enhancing your initiatives or objectives?
- Who do you believe are the key stakeholders or community members we should involve in this collaboration?
- What previous collaborative experiences has your organization had, and what insights can you share to guide partnership expectations?

To effectively catalog answers to these questions, consider using a structured format such as a table or a spreadsheet. Using this format not only organizes the information but also makes it easier to analyze and identify common themes or gaps among partner organizations. Here's a suggested format where each cell can contain brief summaries or key points from organization responses:

Organization Name	Goals and Objectives	Guiding Documents	Skills	Priorities	Collaboration Benefits	Key Stakeholders

# Template

## Operating Protocols

Structures, operating rules, and codes of conduct should be tailored according to need. If the planning area is large with many diverse interests, or the issues are inherently more contentious, then more formal rules and codes of conduct may be necessary. If the local culture prefers less structure and more handshake-style collaboration, or the area is smaller and more homogeneous, then less formal structures, rules, and codes might suit the situation better. In case the former suits the community, or there is interest to pick and choose, consider defining the following:

---

### **Shared Purpose:**

This summarizes the common vision, goals, and objectives that all participants strive to achieve.

### **Responsibilities:**

- **Convening Authority:** This clarifies the role of the individuals or organizations bringing stakeholders together.
- **Collaborator Expectations:** This outlines what each organization involved in the collaboration is expected to contribute. It includes roles, commitments, and the nature of participation from each entity.
- **Representation and Alternates:** This specifies how each participating organization will be represented in the collaboration. It may include designating primary representatives and alternates to ensure continuity and effective communication.
- **Advisory Groups:** This defines groups of experts or stakeholders that provide guidance and input throughout the collaborative process. Advisory groups help to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making.
- **Facilitators:** This clarifies the role of the individuals or organizations guiding discussions and processes within the collaboration.

### **Decision-Making**

- **Authority:** This defines who has the authority to make decisions within the collaboration. This can include identifying primary decision-makers, representatives from each organization, and any advisory roles.
- **Process:** Decide whether decisions will be made by consensus (where all parties agree) or by majority vote. Each approach has its advantages and implications for stakeholder engagement and satisfaction.
- **Criteria:** This describes criteria for how decisions will be evaluated and made. This may include factors like feasibility, impact, resource availability, and alignment with the shared purpose.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Outline processes for resolving disagreements or conflicts that may arise during decision-making. This can include mediation, facilitation, or predefined escalation procedures.

# Template

## Operating Protocols (continued)

### Communications

- Internally: This includes how information is shared among partners, ensuring transparency and alignment on goals and actions.
- Externally: This involves communication strategies directed towards stakeholders outside the core group, ensuring that the public is informed and engaged.
- Media: This refers to how information about the collaboration is disseminated through various media channels, including press releases, social media, and community newsletters.

### Meetings

- Cadence: This outlines the frequency and timing of meetings for the collaboration.
- Ground rules: These are the established norms and expectations for behavior during meetings and collaboration.



# ACTION 4

## Develop a Vision of Forest Resilience

### Key Questions

- *What does a resilient forest landscape look like?*
- *What problems need to be addressed to meet this vision?*

### Outcomes

- Refined Forest Resilience Values
- Vision Statement
- Problem Statements

### Competencies

- Skills in conflict management, consensus building, and negotiation
- Writing and communication

### Level of Effort

Requires extensive stakeholder involvement and consensus-building, which can be time-consuming and complex due to differing perspectives and interests.

## Applications of a Shared Vision

A well-defined vision is a powerful tool in collaborative planning, offering several key strengths that guide and strengthen the entire process:

- 1. Clarifies Long-Term Goals and Desired Outcomes:** A clear vision provides a shared understanding of the collaboration's ultimate objectives, helping all participants align their efforts toward common goals. This clarity ensures that everyone involved is working toward the same long-term outcomes, reducing ambiguity and increasing focus.
- 2. Guides Resource Allocation:** With a clear vision, teams can make informed decisions about how to allocate resources—such as time, money, and personnel—in ways that support the most critical initiatives. This ensures that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively, directing attention and investment toward the areas that will have the greatest impact on achieving the vision.
- 3. Aligns Priorities with Stakeholder Interests:** A well-defined vision also helps demonstrate how the collaboration's priorities align with the interests and concerns of key stakeholders. Whether those stakeholders are community members, funding bodies, or partner organizations, a shared vision creates a sense of unity and purpose, reinforcing the collaboration's relevance and value to everyone involved.
- 4. Provides Sideboards for Decision-Making:** A clear vision also serves as a useful framework when the collaboration is faced with a flood of new ideas or opportunities. It acts as a touchstone for determining whether proposed initiatives or suggestions align with the collaboration's scope. In this way, the vision helps the group stay focused, enabling them to say, "This fits within our vision and scope" or, "This falls outside our scope." This clarity helps prevent mission drift and ensures the collaboration remains on track.

In sum, a well-articulated vision not only defines what success looks like in the long term but also serves as a guiding tool to prioritize actions, allocate resources, and stay aligned with stakeholders, all while providing clear sideboards to help manage the influx of new ideas.

## Consensus Building Tips

An interest-based discussion approach is an effective method for building consensus around a vision for forest resilience by fostering open dialogue among diverse stakeholders. This approach encourages participants to articulate their underlying interests and values rather than simply advocating for specific positions. By focusing on shared goals—such as ecosystem health, community safety, and economic viability—participants can identify common ground and explore creative solutions that address the needs and concerns of all parties involved. Facilitating respectful communication and active listening, this method not only helps clarify differing perspectives but also cultivates trust and collaboration, ultimately leading to a more unified and sustainable vision for forest resilience.

# Activity

## Collaborative Visioning

### This activity contains 3 steps:

1. Refine Forest Values
2. Develop a Vision of Forest Resilience
3. Write Forest Resilience Problem Statements

### 1. REFINE FOREST VALUES

Begin by revisiting the forest benefits and values identified in ACTION 1. Confirm these values with the collaborators present. If any new benefits or values emerge during the discussion, ensure they are added to the list.

### 2. DEVELOP A VISION OF FOREST RESILIENCE

Encourage participants to envision a resilient forest by drawing or writing their ideas on flip charts or sticky notes. Afterward, facilitate a sharing session where everyone discusses their visual representations. Identify common themes and values that arise from these visions. Collaboratively draft a vision statement that encapsulates the key elements identified during the discussions, focusing on clarity, conciseness, and inspiration.

#### Prompt Questions:

- What does a healthy forest look like?
- What species thrive in this forest?
- How do communities interact with and benefit from this forest?
- How do components of the Cohesive Strategy (Landscape Resilience, Fire Adapted Communities, Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response) fit into the vision of resilience?

### 3. WRITE FOREST RESILIENCE PROBLEM STATEMENTS

A problem statement outlines the situation the group aims to change or the opportunity for improvement they wish to pursue. Understanding the vision and related problems will guide effective resource allocation for maximum impact. Continue the discussion around the shared vision by asking: What problems need to be addressed to meet this vision?

#### Characteristics of a Problem Statement

- Describes the situation using only necessary details
- Combines the interests of all involved in the problem-solving effort
- **Does not articulate the solution**

#### EXAMPLE

Vision: A resilient forest ecosystem that supports biodiversity, enhances community well-being, and adapts to climate change while providing sustainable resources for future generations."

Problem statement: Increasing climate variability is compromising the forest's ability to adapt, resulting in heightened risks of pests, diseases, and extreme weather events.

# Template

## Visioning Workshop Agenda

**Objective:** To collaboratively refine and confirm the forest values identified in previous discussions, develop a clear and inspiring vision statement for forest resilience, and articulate specific problem statements that need to be addressed to achieve that vision.

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Time:** [Insert Start and End Time] 4 hours total, plus 1 hour lunch break

**Location:** [Insert Location]

---

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (15 minutes)

- Brief overview of the agenda and objectives
- Introductions of participants (name, organization, role)
- Icebreaker activity to foster engagement

### 2. Icebreaker Activity (15 minutes)

- Quick group activity to foster interaction and create a comfortable atmosphere.

### 3. Review Forest Values (30 minutes)

- Present the existing forest values from ACTION 1.
- Open the floor for confirmation and discussion.
- Document any new benefits or values that emerge.

### 4. Visioning Exercise (1 hour)

- Provide flip charts and sticky notes for participants to draw or write their ideas.
- After 30 minutes, invite participants to share their visual representations.
- Facilitate a discussion to identify common themes and values.

### 5. Lunch Break (1 hour)

### 6. Problem Statement Development (1 hour)

- Discuss the shared vision and identify problems that need addressing.
- Facilitate a brainstorming session to articulate problem statements.
- Ensure each statement is clear, incorporates stakeholder interests, and avoids suggesting solutions.

### 7. Closing Remarks and Next Steps (15 minutes)

- Recap key outcomes from the workshop.
- Discuss how the vision and problem statements will guide future actions.
- Thank participants for their contributions and outline follow-up plans.

# How to Translate Vision into Strategy

Stage 2 centers on turning shared values into practical strategies for forest resilience. In this stage, landscape-scale collaborations work to align broad landscape goals with local priorities through a tiered approach, emphasizing community engagement, adaptive management, and coordinated actions guided by spatial planning. Partners use science-based tools to create strategies that blend local knowledge with achievable goals. Scientific partners are essential to this effort, sharing knowledge through presentations, shared glossaries, and practical examples to build a common understanding among stakeholders. For strategies to be effective, it is crucial to involve foresters and resource managers alongside policymakers and scientists. Ultimately the actions in this stage work towards developing frameworks that connect overarching landscape goals with specific project objectives, allowing partners to identify and pursue focused treatment opportunities that meet both regional and local needs.





# ACTION 5

## Conduct a Forest Resilience Spatial Assessment

### Key Questions

- *How can we map and/or quantify the values on the landscape?*
- *Which forest resilience values are prioritized among stakeholders?*
- *What risks are specific to our values?*
- *What implementation opportunities exist to improve forest resilience?*

### Outcomes

- Values, Risks, and Opportunities Map
- Identification of Remaining Data Needs

### Supporting Resources

- [US Forest Service Strategic Analytics Branch](#)
- [Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System](#)
- [Colorado Forest Atlas](#)
- [Colorado Forest Tracker](#)
- [Wildfire Risk to Communities](#)
- [Colorado Water Conservation Board Hazard Mapping & Risk MAP Portal](#)
- [Firewise USA Interactive Map](#)
- [Colorado Parks and Wildlife Conservation Dashboard](#)
- [Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Conservation Data Explorer \(CODEX\)](#)

### Competencies

- Analytical competencies
- Knowledge of available and appropriate decision support tools and frameworks
- Ability to effectively socialize and apply computer-based decision support tools in collaborative settings
- Technical expertise in GIS and spatial modeling
- Subject matter and local expertise in fire, fuels, and risk management
- Skills in assessing and navigating tradeoffs, consensus building, and conflict management

### Level of Effort

Involves detailed data collection and analysis, requiring technical expertise in GIS and ecological modeling as well as intensive stakeholder engagement. Requires significant time and specialized skills.

## Discovery through Spatial Assessment

A spatial assessment provides collaborators with a shared understanding of forest resilience values across the landscape, helping them pinpoint areas with the highest impact and opportunity. By examining risks associated with key resilience values (identified in ACTION 1) within a defined geographic scope (set in ACTION 2), the assessment reveals where resources and efforts can be most effective.

This strategy integrates data on potential threats, anticipated impacts, and responses, creating a shared definition and understanding that aligns stakeholders on priority areas. In addition to quantitative data, engaging with stakeholders (ACTION 3) and communities (ACTION 7) adds essential qualitative insights, clarifying high-value areas and building collective buy-in. With a clear view of both threats and opportunities, collaborators can strategically develop (ACTION 6) and prioritize (ACTION 9) risk mitigation, response, and recovery strategies to strengthen forest resilience in high-impact areas.

- **Modeled Risk:** National or local simulations of forest health and resilience threats (wildfire, pest and pathogen, climate)
- **Forest Health:** Biodiversity, condition, acres covered, stand density, stand age, disturbance history
- **Forest Management and Wildland Fire Mitigation:** Past and planned forest treatment activity
- **Watershed Health:** Major rivers, lakes, and tributaries, aquatic biodiversity, water quality, municipal storage volume
- **Wildland Fire Response:** Life and property, community preparedness/evacuation routes, planned suppression tactics
- **Wildlife:** Sensitive habitats, biodiversity of wildlife, migration corridors, and past and planned conservation activity
- **Human Infrastructure:** Recreation, cultural, transportation, utility, and residential infrastructure impacted by forest health and resilience



## CASE STUDY: CHAFFEE COUNTY

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute’s (CFRI) [Risk Assessment and Decision Support \(RADS\) framework](#) uses science-based information and action, and constraints and cost-based valuation to assess risks within a landscape. Chaffee County’s Community Wildlife Protection Plan (CWPP) was updated using the RADS framework through a highly collaborative effort between the County, stakeholders, and CFRI (Dunn and Wolk 2023).

The process involved incorporating science-based modeling and community-level knowledge of the landscape through a series of collaborative meetings. Priority values, risks, assets and other input gathered during initial meetings (Stage 1) were used to inform the wildfire risk assessment model, which was subsequently refined using group feedback to reflect community knowledge and priorities. The output were maps characterizing wildfire risk within the forest landscape that would be used to create a treatment priority map in the following stages.



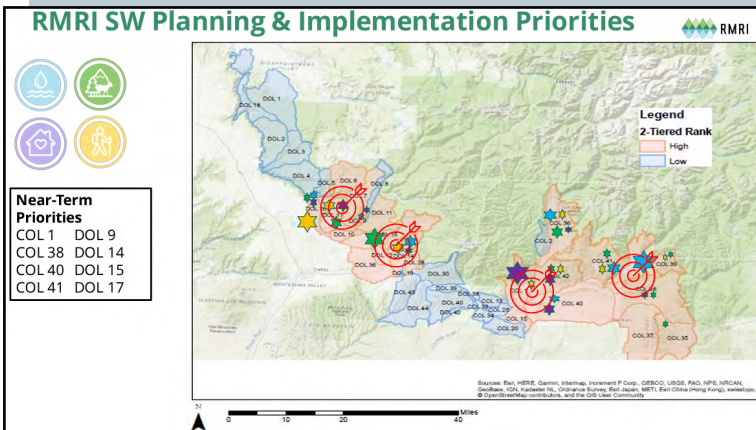
## CASE STUDY: ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE – SOUTHWEST

[RMRI-Southwest](#) serves as a collaborative strategic plan for fostering resilient, sustainable landscapes in southwest Colorado. The project spans both public and private lands, setting ambitious goals to manage 20,000 acres of private property and 290,000 acres of national forest, necessitating [a rigorous spatial assessment](#) for planning and prioritization.

The spatial assessment process began by dividing the landscape into Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), with fire and fuels experts categorizing each POD as “high” or “low” priority based on established collaborative priorities. Stakeholders and subject-matter experts then identified areas within high-priority PODs that aligned with key RMRI values: clean water, forests and wildlife, communities, and recreation. These inputs were ranked for each value, narrowing the field to the top five PODs per value, with each POD assigned a “value score.”

Next, collaborators assessed these high-value PODs by evaluating feasibility, funding, partnerships, social support, and broader interest, which contributed to each POD’s “opportunity score.” The team then plotted PODs on a graph of value versus opportunity, organizing them into three categories: “Planning,” “Go,” and “High Opportunity.”

Planning PODs scored high in value but low in opportunity, Go PODs scored high in both, and High Opportunity PODs scored medium in value but high in opportunity. PODs with lower scores in both areas were designated for future efforts. The result was a narrowed scope of focus to 12 out of over 40 PODs in the landscape. For more information, visit the RMRI Southwest website.



# Activity

## Spatial Risk Assessment

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ensure the collaboration has well-defined Forest Resilience Values and their Supporting Characteristics. Guidance on developing these is included in ACTION 1. The following risk assessment approach, adapted from Dunn & Wolk (2023), builds on these foundational values.

### This activity contains 4 steps:

1. Determine Relative Importance of Forest Resilience Values and Supporting Characteristics
2. Determine Risks to Values
3. Draft Forest Resilience Risks and Values Map
4. Identify Forest Resilience Opportunity Areas

### 1. DETERMINE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FOREST RESILIENCE VALUES AND SUPPORTING CHARACTERISTICS

This step prioritizes values critical to forest resilience to guide strategic efforts. Partners engage in structured discussions to evaluate and rank these values based on their importance to ecosystems and communities.

#### Prompt Questions:

- What values are essential for forest resilience?
- How do these values impact local communities?
- What are the economic benefits and burdens of these values?

#### Process:

1. Partners individually rank the values from most to least important.
2. Compile rankings to create a collective, prioritized list.

#### Refinement:

For each value, rank Supporting Characteristics to build a more nuanced understanding. For instance, if “biodiversity” is a key value, supporting characteristics might include specific species, habitat types, or genetic diversity.

#### Prompt Questions:

- What specific supporting characteristics of [insert value] are most vital?
- How do these sub-values contribute to overall resilience?

#### Process:

1. Assign relative importance to each characteristic.
2. Create a detailed framework connecting values and characteristics.

**Outcome:** A ranked list of Forest Resilience Values to guide decision-making.

# Activity

## Spatial Risk Assessment (continued)

### 2. DETERMINE AND MAP RISKS TO VALUES

In this step, identify threats to the prioritized values and their supporting characteristics. Risks such as climate change, invasive species, and human activities are assessed to pinpoint vulnerabilities.

#### Prompt Questions:

- What are the most significant risks to our identified values?
- How can these risks be mitigated?

#### Process:

1. Use problem statements from ACTION 4 as a starting point.
2. Collaboratively discuss and visually map risks using tools like GIS or manual mapping methods.

**Outcome:** A Risk Map that highlights vulnerabilities and helps prioritize intervention areas.

### 3. DRAFT FOREST RESILIENCE RISKS AND VALUES MAP

In this step, create a visual representation combining identified values, supporting characteristics, and associated risks. This map serves as a foundational tool for planning and communication.

#### Prompt Questions:

- What are the critical assets and areas that support our resilience values?
- How can these assets be effectively visualized for diverse stakeholders?

#### Process:

1. Identify appropriate mapping tools/software for clarity and accessibility.
2. Develop a map that integrates resilience assets, supporting characteristics, and risks.

**Outcome:** A Forest Resilience Risks and Values Map that facilitates shared understanding and strategic planning.

### 4. IDENTIFY FOREST RESILIENCE OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Building on the previous steps, identify areas within the landscape that present the greatest opportunities for enhancing forest resilience. This includes locations for restoration, conservation, or community engagement efforts.

#### Prompt Questions:

- Where can we have the greatest positive impact?
- What opportunities align with community needs and values?

#### Process:

1. Evaluate the overlap of values, assets, and risks.
2. Collaboratively outline potential projects and initiatives.

**Outcome:** A clear, actionable list of Forest Resilience Opportunity Areas.

# Template

## Spatial Assessment Workshop Series

### Workshop 1: Determining the Relative Importance of Forest Resilience Values and Supporting Characteristics (3.5 Hours)

**Objective:** Prioritize forest resilience values and rank their supporting characteristics to guide strategic planning.

- **Welcome and Overview (15 minutes)**
  - Introduce the workshop series and today's objectives.
  - Explain the importance of prioritizing values and their supporting characteristics.
- **Shared Forest Resilience Values (20 minutes)**
  - Present a pre-identified list of forest resilience values.
  - Discuss their significance to ecosystems, communities, and economies.
- **Rating and Ranking Values (45 minutes)**
  - Break into groups to rate each value based on defined criteria (ecological, economic, and social importance).
  - Compile group ratings into a collective ranked list of values.
- **Identifying Supporting Characteristics (30 minutes)**
  - Break into groups to brainstorm key supporting characteristics for the top-ranked values.
  - Discuss how these characteristics support overall resilience.
- **Ranking Supporting Characteristics (45 minutes)**
  - Use a similar rating scale to assess the relative importance of each supporting characteristic.
  - Compile a ranked list of supporting characteristics for each value.
- **Group Discussion (30 minutes)**
  - Share results from breakout groups.
  - Finalize prioritized lists of values and their supporting characteristics.
- **Closing Remarks (15 minutes)**
  - Recap workshop outcomes and highlight how these rankings will guide the next steps.
  - Preview the next workshop.

**Outcome:** A ranked list of forest resilience values and their supporting characteristics to inform risk identification in Workshop 2.

# Template

## Spatial Assessment Workshop Series (continued)

### Workshop 2: Determining and Mapping Risks to Forest Resilience Values (3.5 Hours)

**Objective:** Identify and assess risks to prioritized forest resilience values and their supporting characteristics.

- **Welcome and Recap (15 minutes)**
  - Recap Workshop 1 outcomes and revisit prioritized values and supporting characteristics.
  - Outline objectives for risk identification.
- **Introduction to Risk Assessment (20 minutes)**
  - Present key risk factors (e.g., climate change, invasive species, human activities).
  - Share examples of risk mapping methods.
- **Breakout Groups – Identifying Risks (45 minutes)**
  - Identify risks to each prioritized value and its supporting characteristics.
  - Document risks and discuss potential impacts.
- **Collaborative Mapping Activity (1 hour)**
  - Use GIS tools or manual techniques to map risks alongside values and characteristics.
- **Group Discussion (45 minutes)**
  - Review risk maps created by breakout groups.
  - Identify patterns and key areas of vulnerability.
- **Closing Remarks (15 minutes)**
  - Summarize outcomes and outline the role of the risk map in subsequent workshops.
  - Preview the next workshop.

**Outcome:** A risk map highlighting vulnerabilities to prioritized values and characteristics.

# Template

## Spatial Assessment Workshop Series (continued)

### Workshop 3: Drafting the Forest Resilience Risks and Values Map (3.5 Hours)

**Objective:** Create a visual map integrating forest resilience values, supporting characteristics, and risks to guide planning.

- **Welcome and Recap (15 minutes)**
  - Summarize Workshop 2 findings, focusing on risks and vulnerabilities.
  - Outline objectives for the mapping session.
- **Introduction to Asset Mapping (20 minutes)**
  - Discuss the benefits of asset maps and tools for creating them (e.g., GIS, manual mapping).
  - Define map components: values, supporting characteristics, and risks.
- **Collaborative Mapping Activity (1.5 hours)**
  - Identify and map forest resilience assets for each value and sub-value.
  - Overlay risks identified in Workshop 2.
- **Group Review and Refinement (45 minutes)**
  - Present the draft map and collect feedback.
  - Adjust the map collaboratively for clarity and usability.
- **Closing Remarks (15 minutes)**
  - Highlight the map's significance and its role in identifying opportunity areas.
  - Preview the next workshop.

**Outcome:** A preliminary Forest Resilience Risks and Values Map integrating key findings.

# Template

## Spatial Assessment Workshop Series (continued)

### Workshop 4: Identifying Forest Resilience Opportunity Areas (3.5 Hours)

**Objective:** Pinpoint and prioritize areas for restoration, conservation, or community engagement to enhance forest resilience.

- **Welcome and Recap (15 minutes)**
  - Review the Forest Resilience Risks and Values Map from Workshop 3.
  - Revisit prioritized values, supporting characteristics, and risks.
- **Introduction to Opportunity Areas (20 minutes)**
  - Explain criteria for identifying high-impact intervention areas.
  - Provide examples of opportunity areas (e.g., restoration zones, community projects).
- **Breakout Groups – Identifying Opportunities (1 hour)**
  - Discuss and identify areas with the greatest potential for positive impact.
  - Map and document opportunity areas collaboratively.
- **Group Presentations and Prioritization (1 hour)**
  - Share findings from breakout groups.
  - Use collective input to rank opportunity areas based on ecological, social, and economic impact.
- **Closing Remarks (15 minutes)**
  - Recap outcomes and emphasize the importance of community-driven actions.
  - Outline steps for finalizing and implementing the findings.

**Outcome:** A clear list and map of Forest Resilience Opportunity Areas for future action.



# ACTION 6

## Brainstorm Mitigation, Response, and Recovery Strategies

### Key Questions

- *How can we sort past and planned partner actions to identify critical gaps?*
- *What mitigation, response, and recovery strategies address or influence threats to values?*

### Outcomes

- Portfolio of Partner Planned Actions
- Forest Resilience Strategy

### Supporting Resources

- [CSFS Natural Resources Grants Database](#)
- [2023 Cohesive Strategy Update](#)
- [Colorado Community Wildfire Protection Plans](#)
- [Conditions-based NEPA](#)
- [Colorado Post-Fire Playbook](#)
- [COCO Community Wildfire Mitigation Best Practices Toolbox](#)

### Competencies

- Strategic and systems thinking skills
- Decision analysis skills

### Level of Effort

Requires collaborative sessions and creative thinking, but can be streamlined with clear objectives and leveraging of earlier action outcomes.

## Strategies, Objectives, and Actions

In the context of the approach proposed through ACTION 6, ACTION 8, and ACTION 9 of this guide, the terms “strategies,” “objectives,” and “actions” are used to create a shared understanding and framework for collaboration. The most important feature of implementing this approach is establishing a common language that works across all stakeholders, ensuring clear communication and effective coordination. **Strategies** refer to carefully planned approaches or methods designed to achieve broader objectives, often serving as a guiding framework for decision-making. **Objectives** are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goals set to meet these strategies. In contrast, **actions** are individual initiatives undertaken to implement or contribute to these objectives. Actions may come to fruition as engagement actions, management actions, monitoring actions, etc. To activate existing plans, prevent duplicated efforts, and identify areas where scaling can provide shared benefits, the suggested approach begins by gathering planned partner actions and working backward to define the broader collaboration strategies.

### Key Characteristics of Strategies:

- **Broad in Scope:** Strategies outline the overall direction and priorities for achieving long-term goals.
- **Goal-Oriented:** Focused on achieving overarching objectives rather than specific tasks.
- **Guiding Framework:** Serve as a blueprint for decision-making, helping to align multiple efforts.
- **Flexible and Adaptive:** Adapt to changing circumstances or new information to remain effective.
- **Resource Allocation:** Provide a high-level plan for how resources will be distributed to support various initiatives.

### Key Characteristics of Actions:

- **Narrow in Scope:** Actions focus on specific, tangible actions or deliverables.
- **Action-Oriented:** Clearly defined steps to achieve a particular outcome within a strategy.
- **Time-Bound:** Typically have a clear timeline, start, and end points.
- **Defined Outputs:** Produce measurable results, such as planting trees, installing infrastructure, or hosting a community workshop.
- **Strategy Implementation:** Serve as building blocks to execute strategies.

### EXAMPLE

- **Strategy:** Wildfire mitigation prioritizes reducing fuel loads, protecting critical infrastructure, and increasing community preparedness.
- **Action:** Conduct prescribed burns on 1,000 acres of high-risk forestland to reduce fuel loads and minimize wildfire intensity as part of the wildfire mitigation strategy.

In summary, strategies establish the “why” and “what” of achieving goals, while actions define the “how” and “when” for steps within the strategic framework.

The ACTION 6 approach focuses on developing collaborative forest resilience strategies within a mitigation, response, and recovery framework. Recognizing that wildland fire will remain a part of Colorado’s future, it is crucial to address not only mitigation but also response and recovery strategies, particularly in areas where fire is most probable.

### **Mitigation Strategies**

Mitigation strategies focus on reducing risks before they occur by addressing root causes and vulnerabilities. These strategies may include:

- Reducing fuel loads through prescribed burns and creating firebreaks to lower wildfire intensity.
- Promoting biodiversity by reintroducing native species or establishing buffer zones to prevent the spread of invasive plants, reducing risks from pests and diseases.

Specific actions implementing these strategies might include conducting controlled burns on a designated acreage or replanting native vegetation in fire-prone areas.

### **Response Strategies**

Response strategies guide immediate actions during a crisis to manage impacts effectively. These may involve:

- Coordinating efforts to combat a bark beetle infestation by assessing affected areas and applying targeted treatments.
- Mobilizing resources to manage tree falls and landslides following a major storm.

Specific response actions could include deploying field teams to apply insecticides or setting up emergency operations to clear debris and stabilize slopes.

### **Recovery Strategies**

Recovery strategies focus on restoring ecosystems and communities after a disturbance. These may include:

- Replanting native trees and implementing erosion control measures following a wildfire.
- Collaborating with communities to rehabilitate landscapes impacted by pest outbreaks, incorporating local knowledge and labor.

Specific recovery actions could involve planting vegetation to stabilize soils or holding community workshops to engage residents in restoration efforts.

By developing these strategies collaboratively, stakeholders can establish a shared vision for forest resilience, aligning efforts across mitigation, response, and recovery. This approach creates a more adaptive and sustainable forest ecosystem that benefits both the environment and the communities that depend on it.

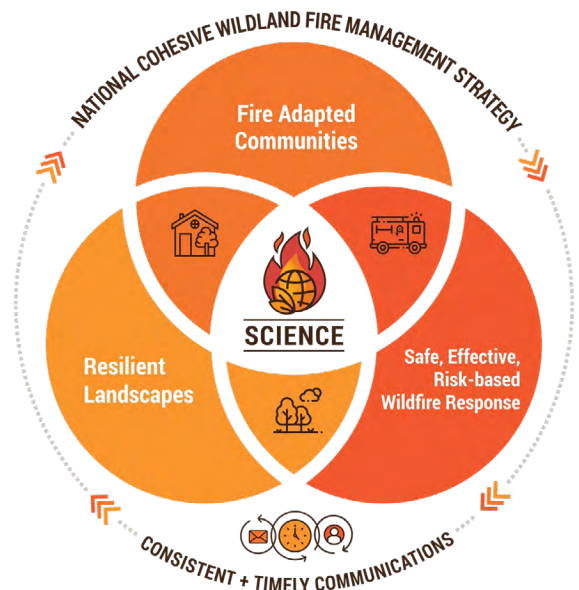
## Leveraging the Cohesive Strategy

Several established frameworks can assist in developing mitigation, response, and recovery strategies, ensuring they are comprehensive, evidence-based, and adaptable to local contexts within the **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy** (Cohesive Strategy). The Cohesive strategy provides a unified approach to wildland fire management across the United States, emphasizing collaboration among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, as well as community stakeholders. This framework encourages diverse input and shared responsibility in developing comprehensive fire management strategies, making it an invaluable tool for brainstorming effective approaches.

Initially published in 2014 (Wildland Fire Executive Council, 2014) the Cohesive Strategy identified 19 management options across three key focus areas: Landscape Resilience, Fire Adapted Communities, and Wildfire Response. Landscape resilience strategies center on enhancing ecosystems' ability to withstand and recover from various disturbances, such as wildfires, pests, and climate change impacts. By promoting diverse ecosystems, implementing sustainable land management practices, and utilizing prescribed fire, stakeholders can brainstorm innovative solutions that align with local conditions and needs.

[The 2023 Cohesive Strategy update](#) (Wildland Fire Leadership Council, 2023) introduced 15 additional management options, enriching the framework with new insights and tools. This continuous evolution invites stakeholders to consider emerging challenges and advancements in science and community engagement when brainstorming strategies. For instance, new technologies and practices can be discussed in conjunction with existing strategies to create more effective responses to disturbances.

Each focus area provides a structured environment for collaboration, fostering the generation of ideas that connect resilience strategies. For example, while brainstorming around Landscape Resilience, participants can discuss how enhancing biodiversity can contribute to reducing fire hazards. Similarly, strategies from the Fire Adapted Communities focus area, such as community education and preparedness, can be integrated with landscape management practices to create comprehensive solutions. Finally, the Wildfire Response focus area promotes proactive measures such as pre-positioning resources, enhancing communication, and coordinating efforts, which, when combined with landscape resilience and community preparedness, ensure communities are better equipped to handle wildfires while maintaining ecological health.



## NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)

NEPA provides a structured process for federal agencies to evaluate the environmental impacts of proposed projects, including those related to forest management and can be useful in determining a landscape resilience strategy. This framework ensures that potential environmental consequences are considered before making decisions, facilitating mitigation strategies. [Conditions-based NEPA](#), compared to conventional NEPA, provides more flexibility for forest managers because it analyzes management activities within the larger project boundary rather than in specific target locations. Therefore, conditions-based NEPA can be used to develop forest management and wildfire mitigation approaches that are flexible to specific needs of a forested landscape and that can be adapted over time as management needs evolve.

## PODs (Potential Operational Delineations)

The PODs framework helps identify priority areas for management and response during wildfires, and thus is most useful in determining a safe and effective wildfire response strategy. PODs categorize landscapes based on their ecological values, potential fire behavior, and the likelihood of successful intervention, guiding resource allocation and tactical planning. This pre-planning or pre-fire effort can also be applied to other land management goals to integrate fire behavior reduction with forest condition improvements that may have additional ecological benefits. For example, PODs can be used as a tool for establishing prescribed burn blocks, or to target an area simultaneously for wildfire mitigation and restoration through timber harvest.

## Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)

CWPPs are the result of a collaborative process to assess wildfire risks and prioritize actions. They begin with risk assessments to identify fire hazards and vulnerable areas and prioritize engaging community members for input, lending a useful framework for both safe and effective wildfire response as well as fire adapted communities. Priorities may include creating defensible spaces, improving access for emergency services, and establishing fuel breaks. CWPPs also detail response and recovery strategies, such as evacuation plans and communication protocols, ensuring they are regularly updated to reflect community needs.

## Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Framework

The FAC framework empowers communities to proactively reduce wildfire risk through education and fire-resistant practices. This framework focuses, as the name suggests, specifically on developing and supporting fire adapted communities. Workshops can educate residents on fire behavior and emergency preparedness, while community-led initiatives, like fire councils, can identify local vulnerabilities and prioritize mitigation actions, such as debris removal or home improvements. Collaborations with local businesses can create incentive programs for adopting fire-safe landscaping, enhancing community resilience.

# Activity

## Develop Forest Resilience Strategies

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This activity is designed to gather partner ideas to prevent duplication, identify gaps, and uncover synergies, ultimately informing the development of broader collaboration strategies. In this step, prioritize expansive brainstorming to generate a broad range of ideas. The process of specifying and prioritizing objectives, and sequencing actions will occur in ACTION 8, ACTION 9, and ACTION 10.

### This activity contains 3 steps:

1. Gather Past and Planned Partner Actions
2. Identify Gaps and Synergies in Existing Actions
3. Consider Potential Funding Opportunities

### 1. GATHER PAST AND PLANNED PARTNER ACTIONS

To build a comprehensive portfolio of actions for forest resilience, start by cataloging past and planned actions from all relevant partners. This includes reviewing past initiatives, ongoing efforts, and upcoming projects related to mitigation, response, and recovery within the targeted landscape. Engage stakeholders such as local agencies, conservation groups, and community organizations to gather information on these actions.

When cataloging actions, consider the following:

- **Action Title**
- **Description:** A brief overview of the action.
- **Objective:** What the action aims to achieve (e.g., mitigation, response, recovery).
- **Risk(s) Addressed:** Specific risks the action targets.
- **Target Area:** Geographic areas or ecosystems affected.
- **Lead Organization:** The organization responsible for implementation.
- **Stakeholders Involved:** Key partners and stakeholders.
- **Timeline:** Expected start and end dates.
- **Funding Source:** Identified funding sources or financial support.
- **Status:** Current status (e.g., planned, in progress, completed).
- **Metrics for Success:** How success will be measured.
- **Notes:** Any additional relevant information or considerations.

# Activity

## Develop Forest Resilience Strategies (continued)

### 2. IDENTIFY GAPS AND SYNERGIES IN EXISTING ACTIONS

Next, analyze the cataloged actions to identify gaps and opportunities for synergies. Consider areas that lack sufficient planning or resources, including specific threats to forest health, underserved communities, or ecological needs. Engage stakeholders to ensure that no critical values, risks, or assets are overlooked.

#### Prompt Questions:

- Which forest resilience values do the existing actions address? Are there areas or values not covered?
- How effective have the existing actions been?
- Are there emerging threats or changes that existing actions do not address?
- What resources (financial, human, technical) are allocated to these actions, and are there any limitations?
- How do community needs and stakeholder perspectives align with current actions? Are there concerns that need more attention?
- Are there opportunities for collaboration or synergies that have not yet been explored? Which partners could enhance the effectiveness of these actions?
- How do the existing actions align with broader regional or national forest management goals?

### 3. CONSIDER POTENTIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Lastly, consider the funding opportunities available to support the identified actions. Begin by evaluating internal resources, such as staffing and budget allocations, and identify external funding sources. Explore potential funding avenues, including municipal or local funds, state emergency funds, public utility assistance, and federal grants. Engage stakeholders to discuss these options, organize actions effectively, and build a strong case for financial support. Identifying funding opportunities early helps ensure the actions are actionable and sustainable.



# ACTION 7

## Build Public Awareness

### Key Questions

- *How will the public remain aware and informed?*
- *How will the public be involved in prioritization and/or decision-making?*

### Outcomes

- Community Outreach Plan

### Supporting Resources

- [IAP2 Values, Ethics, Spectrum](#)
- [Toolkit for Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples in Conservation](#)

### Competencies

- Knowledge, skills, and abilities in community engagement, public communication, and outreach approaches
- Knowledge of community dynamics
- Access to social networks
- Skills in conflict management

### Level of Effort

Involves planning and conducting outreach, education, and communication efforts, which can vary in scope.

## Applications of Public Engagement

Engaging the public in forest management decisions is vital for developing strategies that reflect diverse interests and are rooted in local knowledge. By educating the public and soliciting their input, stakeholders and managers can deepen understanding and uncover innovative solutions to challenges such as wildfires and ecosystem health. Public engagement helps create mutually agreeable strategies, fostering collaboration and increasing the chances of successful implementation.

## Regulatory Requirements

Public outreach is often mandated by laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, however, the extent of collaborative engagement in NEPA processes varies. In areas where watershed or forest health collaborations are already in place and there is sufficient trust between them, the lead agency may coordinate with the existing collaboration on project communications, and the collaboration may provide a bridge for the agency to connect with community members. For example, the collaboration might raise awareness about the project prior to scoping by sending mailers to nearby communities; during scoping, they might host meetings, webinars, and field trips. Line officers and agency staff might give presentations at partner meetings, and work with the partners to ensure that community values and desired future conditions identified through collaboration processes are reflected in NEPA documents. Ultimately, collaborative community engagement in NEPA processes not only increase participation and ownership but also help address unforeseen challenges effectively.

## IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation offers a useful framework for understanding the different levels of engagement. For the general public, the primary focus is on informing and consulting—providing information and gathering feedback, but not necessarily involving them directly in decision-making. This approach helps raise awareness and ensures that the public has a voice in the process. For stakeholders, such as landowners or NGOs, the engagement can shift to more active levels, like involving them in the process to gather input, or even collaborating on key decisions to develop strategies that reflect shared needs.

Tailoring the level of engagement according to the audience ensures that decisions are informed by diverse perspectives, while fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. Higher levels of public participation can increase community buy-in, as the public feel their input is valued. By fostering these relationships, forest managers can not only make better-informed decisions but also build the support needed for long-term, successful forest management.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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The IAP2 spectrum may fit into forest resilience planning at all levels of engagement:

### **Inform**

At this level, the goal is to provide the public with balanced and objective information about forest resilience plans, practices, and potential impacts. This ensures that community members are informed and understand the context of management decisions.

- Example: Use newsletters, public meetings, and online platforms to share information about upcoming projects, ecological assessments, and forest health initiatives.

### **Consult**

This stage involves seeking feedback from the public on specific management proposals or plans. The aim is to understand community concerns and preferences.

- Example: Conduct surveys, focus groups, and public forums to gather input on forest resilience values, risks, or proposed management strategies.

### **Involve**

Involving the public means working directly with them to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are reflected in decision-making.

- Example: Create working groups or advisory committees that include stakeholders such as local residents, landowners, and environmental organizations. These groups can actively participate in developing management plans and strategies, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

### **Collaborate**

At this level, the public is actively engaged in the decision-making process, working in partnership with management teams to develop solutions.

- Example: Facilitate co-management initiatives where the public is involved in planning, implementing, and monitoring forest management strategies.

### **Empower**

This highest level of participation enables the public to make decisions. The public has a significant, direct influence on the outcomes.

- Example: Develop a ballot initiative to dedicate a percentage of sales tax to wildfire mitigation and response in, where the public votes in favor or against the measure.

## Strategies to Reach the Public

**Newsletters** are regular publications (digital or print) that provide updates, information, and news about a specific organization, project, or initiative. They can include articles, event announcements, tips, and success stories.

- **Collaborative Content:** Work with partner organizations to co-create articles or feature stories. Highlight partner initiatives to attract their audience to the newsletter.
- **Shared Distribution:** Partner organizations can share newsletters with their email lists or include it in their communications, expanding reach to new subscribers.
- **Cross-Promotion:** Include links or sections in newsletters that promote partners' events, resources, or initiatives, encouraging them to reciprocate.
- **Feedback Loop:** Include calls to action (CTAs) for readers to provide feedback, share their thoughts, or engage in discussions, fostering a sense of community.

**Tabling** involves setting up a booth or table at public events (e.g., farmers' markets, fairs, community festivals) to engage with attendees directly. This provides an opportunity to share information, answer questions, and gather feedback.

- **Event Selection:** Choose events that align with the target audience and mission. Ensure they attract community members interested in forest management or related topics.
- **Engaging Setup:** Design an inviting table with informative materials (brochures, flyers, posters) and interactive elements (games, surveys, demonstrations). Use visuals to capture attention.
- **Joint Tabling:** Set up a booth alongside partner organizations at community events. This draws more visitors and showcases a united front on shared goals, such as forest management or community health.
- **Resource Sharing:** Share materials, such as brochures or giveaways, that represent all partners, maximizing exposure and providing a cohesive message.
- **Event Collaboration:** Co-host or co-sponsor events with partners, leveraging their networks to attract more attendees and create a larger impact.

**Websites and Social Media** are accessible online tools that allow individuals and organizations to create, share, and interact with content in real-time. They are effective for reaching a broad audience and facilitating engagement.

- **Platform Selection:** Choose platforms that align with the audience demographics.
- **Content Strategy:** Share a mix of content types, including updates, educational posts, videos, infographics, and event promotions. Use storytelling to connect with followers emotionally.
- **Tagging and Mentions:** When posting content, tag partner organizations and encourage them to re-share posts.
- **Collaborative Campaigns:** Create joint social media campaigns that highlight shared goals or initiatives, encouraging both audiences to engage and participate.

# Activity

## Community Outreach Plan

### This activity contains 3 steps:

1. Define Public Outreach Goals
2. Identify Public Outreach Strategies and Audiences
3. Develop Public Outreach Materials

### 1. DEFINE PUBLIC OUTREACH GOALS

Based on the IAP2 spectrum, suggested outreach Goals for forest resilience planning include:

1. To create a community that is **informed** about forest resilience goals, planning processes, and implementation progress
2. To create a community that is **consulted** about forest resilience values, assets, and risks
3. To create a community that is **involved** in ranking forest resilience values, assets, and risks

These goals should be refined and discussed with stakeholders to ensure they align with the vision and processes of the collaboration. Clear goals help guide the development of outreach materials and ensure that the materials effectively communicate the intended message and engage the community at the appropriate level of participation.

### 2. IDENTIFY PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND AUDIENCES

To ensure the success of outreach efforts, it's crucial to tailor engagement strategies to the needs and dynamics of the community.

Consider the following questions when developing strategies:

- Who are the key audiences, their interests in forest management, and any specific community factors influencing engagement?
- What community groups or organizations can we partner with to enhance engagement?
- What communication channels are most effective for reaching different segments of the community?
- What events or activities (e.g., workshops, field trips) can attract diverse community participation?
- How can we ensure inclusion and accessibility for marginalized, underrepresented, and differently-abled groups?
- What incentives (e.g., food, childcare, transportation) can encourage broader participation?
- What tools or methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups) best collect meaningful community feedback?
- How can we foster safe spaces for open dialogue where participants feel heard and valued?
- What metrics and lessons from past efforts can guide and measure the success of our strategies?
- How do we follow up to ensure community input is acknowledged and acted upon?

# Activity

## Community Outreach Plan (continued)

### 3. DEVELOP PUBLIC OUTREACH MATERIALS

Once public outreach goals and strategies are defined, develop clear and engaging materials that align with the engagement level and audience.

Consider the following when developing materials:

- **Clarity and Accessibility:** Ensure that materials are easy to understand and accessible to all community members, including those with different literacy levels, disabilities, or language needs.
- **Visual and Informative:** Use visuals (e.g., infographics, maps) to complement written information. These can be especially helpful for illustrating complex ideas, such as forest resilience strategies or specific risk areas.
- **Localized Content:** Tailor the materials to reflect the community's unique needs, values, and interests. For example, provide localized data or case studies to make the content more relevant.
- **Multiple Formats:** Provide materials in different formats (e.g., print, digital, video) to accommodate various preferences and accessibility needs.
- **Engagement Opportunities:** Highlight ways for the public to engage with the process, such as upcoming events, surveys, or focus groups.
- **Interactive Tools:** Incorporate opportunities for the community to interact with the material, such as feedback forms, QR codes to access more information, or interactive maps of local forest resilience projects.

# Template

## Community Outreach Plan

### Goal 1: To create a community that is informed...

**Strategy 1.1:** [Describe the strategy to inform the community, e.g., holding informational meetings, creating newsletters, etc.]

- **Target Audience:** [Describe the specific groups you want to reach, e.g., local residents, school children, senior citizens, etc.]
- **Materials Needed:** [List materials such as flyers, pamphlets, posters, videos, digital presentations, etc.]

**Strategy 1.2:** [Another strategy if applicable]

- **Target Audience:** [Target group]
- **Materials Needed:** [Materials]

### Goal 2: To create a community that is consulted...

**Strategy 2.1:** [Describe the strategy to consult with the community, e.g., surveys, focus groups, community meetings, etc.]

- **Target Audience:** [Describe the groups to be consulted]
- **Materials Needed:** [Materials like survey tools, feedback forms, meeting agendas, etc.]

### Goal 3: To create a community that is involved....

**Strategy 3.1:** [Describe the strategy to involve the community, e.g., volunteer opportunities, partnerships, collaborative projects, etc.]

- **Target Audience:** [Community members who can get actively involved]
- **Materials Needed:** [Volunteer sign-up forms, event coordination materials, etc.]

**Strategy 3.2:** [Another strategy if applicable]

- **Target Audience:** [Target group]
- **Materials Needed:** [Materials]



# ACTION 8

## Establish Measurable Objectives

### Key Questions

- *What are the key indicators of a successful implementation effort?*
- *Where are values, risks, and outreach takeaways reflected in objectives?*

### Outcomes

- Definitions of Success
- Resilience Strategies Objectives and Indicators

### Supporting Resources

- [CFRI Monitoring Handbook for Evaluating Forest Management Outcomes](#)
- [St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership Guidelines for Developing Desired Future Conditions](#)

### Competencies

- Knowledge, skills, and abilities in evaluating outcomes, knowledge management
- Capacity to design, manage, analyze, and integrate measures into decisions
- Subject matter expertise in relevant topics such as forest and fire ecology, economics, and social science

### Level of Effort

Requires discussions among stakeholders to agree on clear, quantifiable objectives. It is a structured process that can be managed relatively efficiently.

## Planning for Success

Defining success at the *strategy* level before prioritizing and implementing forest resilience management actions is crucial because it sets clear, overarching objectives that guide decision-making and resource allocation. This proactive approach ensures that stakeholders have a shared understanding of desired outcomes, enabling more focused and coordinated efforts across various activities. By establishing strategy-level objectives, stakeholders can prioritize long-term goals and broader impacts, avoiding the more narrow, task-specific focus that typically characterizes project-based objectives.

Incorporating both qualitative and quantitative indicators enhances this process. Quantitative indicators provide measurable data to track progress and assess performance on a larger scale, while qualitative indicators offer deeper insights into community engagement, stakeholder experiences, and ecological impacts. Together, these indicators create a comprehensive framework for evaluating strategy success, ensuring that strategies remain adaptable and aligned with both changing conditions and stakeholder needs.

### SMART Objectives

**Specific:** The strategy-level objective clearly defines the desired outcomes for resilience, such as ecosystem recovery, reduced wildfire risk, or community preparedness. It outlines what is being managed (e.g., forest health, wildfire risk) and the direction of change (e.g., increase biodiversity, decrease fire intensity). The objective should avoid overlap with other strategies, ensuring it stands independently within the broader resilience framework.

**Measurable:** A clear, quantifiable measure is tied to the strategy's success, such as reduction in wildfire damage, increase in biodiversity, or improvements in community resilience. These measures could be tracked through ongoing monitoring or assessments, such as changes in species composition or fire incidence. Indirect measures (e.g., improved forest canopy) may also be used as proxies for broader resilience outcomes.

**Attainable:** The strategy's objectives should be realistic given the ecological, social, and economic contexts, with enough resources to implement and monitor actions. The strategy should account for past conditions, potential changes, and available funding, ensuring that the goals set are achievable within the constraints of the landscape and stakeholder capacity.

**Relevant:** The strategy's objectives should align with broader regional or national goals, such as enhancing ecosystem services, reducing fire risks, or improving community safety. These objectives must reflect the values of stakeholders, ensuring that the desired outcomes are meaningful to all parties involved and in line with legal or policy requirements.

**Time-bound:** The strategy should have clear timeframes for assessing progress toward the objectives and for completing the desired outcomes. This time component helps create a structure for periodic reassessment and adaptation of strategies, ensuring they remain effective over time in response to changing conditions.

By framing objectives in this way, forest resilience strategies can be both flexible and accountable, allowing for sustained progress toward long-term goals while adapting to new challenges and opportunities.

# Activity

## Setting Values-Based Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This activity establishes clear objectives and measurable KPIs to support forest resilience strategies, focusing on achieving **Desired Future Conditions** (DFCs). It ensures alignment with the **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy's** (Cohesive Strategy) pillars while framing progress toward ecological and community resilience.

#### This activity contains 3 steps:

1. Define Desired Future Conditions
2. Translate Desired Future Conditions into Values-Based Objectives
3. Develop Specific KPIs to Track Progress

### 1. DEFINE DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

Desired Future Conditions describe the long-term ecological, social, and fire-management outcomes for landscapes, communities, and wildfire responses. These conditions guide the development of strategies and objectives, ensuring alignment with the Cohesive Strategy's pillars.

Examples of Desired Future Conditions (Aligned with Cohesive Strategy Pillars):

- **Landscape Resilience:** Forest ecosystems are diverse, healthy, and capable of withstanding wildfire with minimal ecological damage.
- **Fire-Adapted Communities:** Communities are prepared, engaged, and able to coexist safely with wildfire risks.
- **Wildfire Response:** Firefighting resources are coordinated, effective, and able to minimize wildfire impacts swiftly.

### 2. TRANSLATE DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS INTO VALUES-BASED OBJECTIVES

Objectives should break down DFCs into actionable, measurable goals that provide a roadmap for achieving these conditions. They should address specific aspects of landscape health, community preparedness, and wildfire response capabilities.

Examples of Desired Future Conditions (Aligned with Cohesive Strategy Pillars):

- **Landscape Resilience:** Thin 500 acres of high-risk forest annually to reduce fuel loads and enhance ecosystem health. Increase the diversity of native understory plants in treated areas by 20% within five years.
- **Fire-Adapted Communities:** Improve defensible space compliance to cover 70% of homes within identified high-risk zones within three years. Increase public participation in wildfire safety workshops by 30% within one year.
- **Wildfire Response:** Reduce wildfire response times by 15% by upgrading resource pre-positioning and agency coordination over the next two years.

# Activity

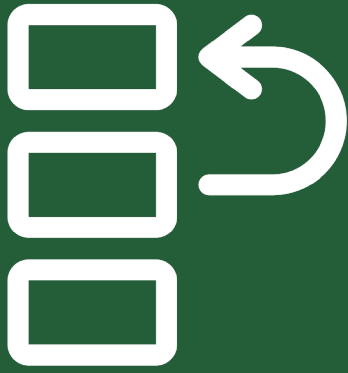
## Setting Values-Based Objectives and KPIs (continued)

### 3. DEVELOP SPECIFIC KPIS TO TRACK PROGRESS

KPIs provide measurable indicators to monitor progress toward DFCs. They ensure that actions are effective, strategies remain relevant, and adjustments can be made as necessary.

Examples of KPIs (Aligned with Cohesive Strategy Pillars):

- **Landscape Resilience:**
  - Percentage of acres treated annually compared to planned targets (e.g., 500 acres thinned).
  - Percent increase in native biodiversity in treated forest stands.
  - Rate of reduced wildfire intensity in treated areas based on post-event assessments.
- **Fire-Adapted Communities:**
  - Number of homes with defensible space per year.
  - Community-level adoption rate of wildfire risk reduction plans.
  - Attendance metrics for wildfire preparedness workshops (e.g., increase by 30% in a year).
- **Wildfire Response:**
  - Average wildfire response time reduced to under 15 minutes for initial attack.
  - Number of inter-agency coordination events completed successfully during wildfire events.
  - Resource readiness scores based on deployment efficiency of pre-positioned firefighting assets.



# ACTION 9

## Prioritize Mitigation, Response, and Recovery Objectives

### Key Questions

- *Which objectives can be implemented collaboratively that cannot be effectively executed alone?*
- *What criteria should be used for prioritization?*
- *Which objectives are best suited to deploy pilot projects?*

### Outcomes

- Prioritized Portfolio of Strategies and Objectives

### Competencies

- Decision analysis competencies
- Subject matter expertise
- Access to data and information
- Skills and resources to synthesize information
- Technical and spatial modeling expertise
- Decision Authority

### Level of Effort

Requires stakeholder input and analysis but is generally straightforward once criteria are established, leading to a moderate effort.

## Prioritizing Effectiveness

By systematically evaluating and ranking objectives based on criteria such as urgency, impact, feasibility, and stakeholder support, decision-makers can ensure that the most critical outcomes are addressed first. This process helps identify the objectives that will have the greatest effect in mitigating forest and community health risks, improving response capabilities, and facilitating community and ecosystem recovery. Prioritization also ensures that resources are allocated effectively and that objectives are pursued in a coordinated manner. By focusing on high-priority objectives, communities and ecosystems can more effectively manage disturbances like wildfires, pest outbreaks, and climate change, leading to more sustainable and adaptive forest management practices.

## Impact versus Effort Analysis

Impact versus effort analysis is a framework used to evaluate objectives by assessing their expected benefits relative to the resources required for implementation. This analysis helps prioritize actions by placing them on a matrix where the vertical axis represents the potential impact or benefits of the objective, such as ecological improvements or community engagement, while the horizontal axis reflects the effort or resources needed, including time, funding, and manpower. By categorizing objectives into quadrants—ranging from high impact/low effort to low impact/high effort—stakeholders can identify quick wins that maximize benefits with minimal resources, as well as more ambitious objectives that may require substantial investment but offer significant long-term gains. Ultimately, this analysis aids in making informed decisions, ensuring that limited resources are allocated to objectives that promise the greatest return on investment in terms of both ecological and social outcomes.

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is a critical tool for evaluating forest management objectives, providing a systematic approach to assess the economic viability of various initiatives. By comparing the total expected costs of achieving an objective—such as funding, labor, and materials—against the anticipated benefits, including ecosystem services, enhanced biodiversity, and reduced risks from disturbances like wildfires, stakeholders can make informed decisions. This analysis helps identify objectives that not only deliver significant ecological and social returns but also offer the best value for investment. Furthermore, CBA can incorporate both direct financial metrics and indirect benefits, such as improved community well-being and resilience to climate change. Ultimately, employing cost-benefit analysis enables decision-makers to prioritize objectives that optimize resource allocation while ensuring sustainable forest management and long-term environmental health.

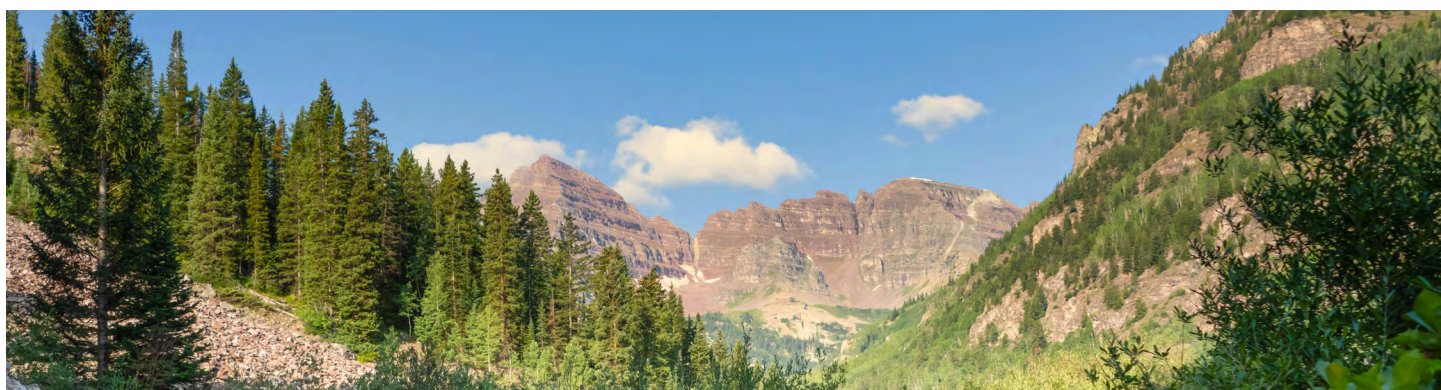
## Decision-Support Matrix

Using a decision-support matrix to prioritize forest resilience management objectives allows for a comprehensive evaluation both qualitatively and quantitatively. In a qualitative approach, stakeholders can assess objectives based on criteria such as ecological impact, community engagement, and alignment with long-term goals, providing insights into how each objective contributes to overall resilience. This qualitative assessment can involve assigning scores or rankings to reflect the perceived value of each objective. On the quantitative side, the matrix can incorporate numerical data, such as cost estimates, projected outcomes, and timeframes for implementation, enabling a clear comparison of potential returns on investment. By combining these qualitative and quantitative analyses, the decision matrix facilitates a balanced perspective that not only highlights the strategic importance of each objective but also grounds decisions in measurable outcomes, ultimately guiding stakeholders toward the most effective and sustainable management objectives for enhancing forest resilience.

### Criteria for Developing a Decision Matrix

The development of a decision matrix is heavily reliant on established criteria that have been agreed upon by stakeholders. Key criteria to consider include:

- **Urgency:** Assess the immediate risks and threats to forest health that require prompt action.
- **Feasibility:** Evaluate the practicality of achieving each objective, taking into account available resources and capabilities.
- **Potential Impact:** Analyze the expected benefits of each objective on forest resilience values, including ecological health and community well-being.
- **Timeframe of Impact:** Consider the potential for each objective to contribute to sustainable forest management over both the short and long term.
- **Estimated Budget:** Review the financial implications of each objective, including initial costs and long-term funding requirements.
- **Multi-Benefits or “Packaging Potential”:** Identify objectives that deliver multiple ecological, economic, and social outcomes, thereby maximizing the impact of investments.
- **Social Support:** Assess the level of backing from stakeholders and communities, as strong support can enhance the likelihood of successful implementation.



## The Power of Pilot Projects

For partners new to implementation, launching pilot projects can serve as a valuable opportunity to build capacity in project management and administration. These pilot projects, even if they are small in scale, can provide hands-on experience that enhances skills and confidence among team members.

While the selection of pilot project locations may prioritize factors such as accessibility, visibility, or current partner resources over strategic spatial considerations or the highest group priorities, this approach can still be effective. The key objective is to create momentum that demonstrates success and effectiveness, which can be instrumental in attracting resources and support for future, more extensive projects. By showcasing tangible outcomes, these initial efforts can engage stakeholders, highlight the potential for broader impacts, and lay the groundwork for scaling up initiatives that address more pressing strategic needs. Additionally, the lessons learned from pilot projects can inform best practices, refine methodologies, and enhance collaboration among partners, ultimately contributing to more successful implementation of future forest management strategies.



### Characteristics of Effective Pilot Projects

- **Clear Objectives:** Well-defined goals for focused efforts and measurable outcomes.
- **Feasibility:** Realistic in scope and scale, ensuring successful implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Consideration for maintaining benefits beyond the pilot phase.
- **Scalability:** Designed for potential expansion or replication for broader impact.
- **Resource Allocation:** Adequate funding, personnel, and materials for implementation.
- **Visibility:** Positioned in accessible locations to maximize community awareness.

## CASE STUDY: Upper South Platte Partnership Science and Management Team

[The Upper South Platte Partnership \(USPP\)](#) exemplifies how a well-structured collaboration can lead to effective, prioritized cross-boundary forest management. By coordinating efforts across federal and non-federal lands—including state, local, and private properties—USPP aligns prioritization, implementation, and monitoring to achieve the greatest collective benefit. This approach ensures a cumulative treatment footprint across the landscape, with measurable impacts on reducing wildfire risks and safeguarding water resources, ecosystems, habitats, cultural heritage sites, and surrounding communities.

USPP's structure includes three focused teams that collectively shape its strategic and operational efforts:

1. **Goals, Strategies, and Funding Team (GSFT):** Guides long-term planning and secures resources for implementation.
2. **Management and Science Team (MST):** The engine for project development, management, and monitoring.
3. **Engagement, Communication, and Outreach (ECO) Team:** Builds public awareness and fosters community involvement.

The MST plays a critical role in ensuring that USPP's forest health projects, wildfire risk mitigation efforts, and landscape-level strategies are effectively prioritized and implemented. Through this team, the partnership creates connectivity and coordination across various projects, enabling participants to work together toward a shared vision of resilience.

### Core Functions of the MST:

- **Collaborative Project Development:** Designing projects with broad, landscape-scale impact and collective effectiveness.
- **Enhancing Project Connectivity:** Establishing a shared understanding of where and how participants are working to ensure alignment and integration.
- **Securing Resources and Removing Barriers:** Addressing logistical, financial, and policy challenges that might hinder collaborative priorities.
- **Tackling Technical Challenges:** Coordinating solutions for mechanical treatments, biomass utilization, and prescribed fire implementation specific to projects.
- **Tracking and Reporting Progress:** Working with the Watershed Coordinator to monitor proposed and ongoing projects, ensuring readiness for future opportunities and compiling accomplishments into annual landscape-level reports.
- **Providing Technical Oversight:** Reviewing participant applications for USPP-designated funding to ensure alignment with collaborative priorities.

This clear structure enables USPP to translate diverse stakeholder input into actionable priorities. The MST, in particular, ensures that collaborative planning leads to practical, effective interventions across the landscape. By connecting projects, removing barriers, and ensuring alignment with shared goals, USPP creates a unified strategy that maximizes its influence on wildfire behavior and resilience outcomes. Through its integrated framework, USPP not only advances individual projects but also builds a holistic approach to landscape resilience and facilitates meaningful progress across boundaries.



UPPER SOUTH PLATTE  
PARTNERSHIP

# Template

## Prioritization Workshop Agenda

**Objective:** To collaboratively evaluate and prioritize forest management objectives based on agreed-upon criteria and develop a list of prioritized objectives, along with actionable next steps for implementation.

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Time:** [Insert Start and End Time] 5 hours total, plus 1 hour lunch break

**Location:** [Insert Location]

---

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (15 minutes)

- Brief overview of the agenda and objectives
- Introductions of participants (name, organization, role)

### 2. Overview of Forest Management Strategies (20 minutes)

- Presentation of current strategies and their objectives.
- Discuss the importance of prioritization.

### 3. Establishing Prioritization Criteria (30 minutes)

- Review proposed criteria (e.g., urgency, feasibility, potential impact).
- Open discussion for additional criteria and consensus on final criteria.

### 4. Data Presentation (20 minutes)

- Share relevant data or research that informs objective effectiveness and impacts.

### 5. Group Activity: Decision Matrix (1 hour)

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Each group uses the decision matrix to score objectives based on agreed-upon criteria.
- Groups compile their results.

### 6. Lunch (1 hour)

### 7. Impact versus Effort Analysis (30 minutes)

- Groups analyze the scored objectives using an impact versus effort matrix.
- Identify quick wins and high-impact, high-effort strategies for potential piloting.

### 8. Pilot Project Identification (30 minutes)

- Based on the analysis, each group identifies potential pilot projects.
- Discuss the feasibility and expected benefits of these pilots.

# Template

## Prioritization Workshop Agenda

### 9. Group Presentations (30 minutes)

- Each group presents their findings, including prioritized objectives and proposed pilot projects.

### 10. Discussion and Refinement (30 minutes)

- Open floor discussion to address discrepancies between groups.
- Refine scores and reach consensus on priority objectives and pilot projects.

### 11. Action Planning (20 minutes)

- Identify next steps for implementing prioritized objectives.
- Assign responsibilities and timelines.

### 12. Closing Remarks (10 minutes)

- Recap key outcomes of the workshop.
  - Thank participants for their contributions.
- 

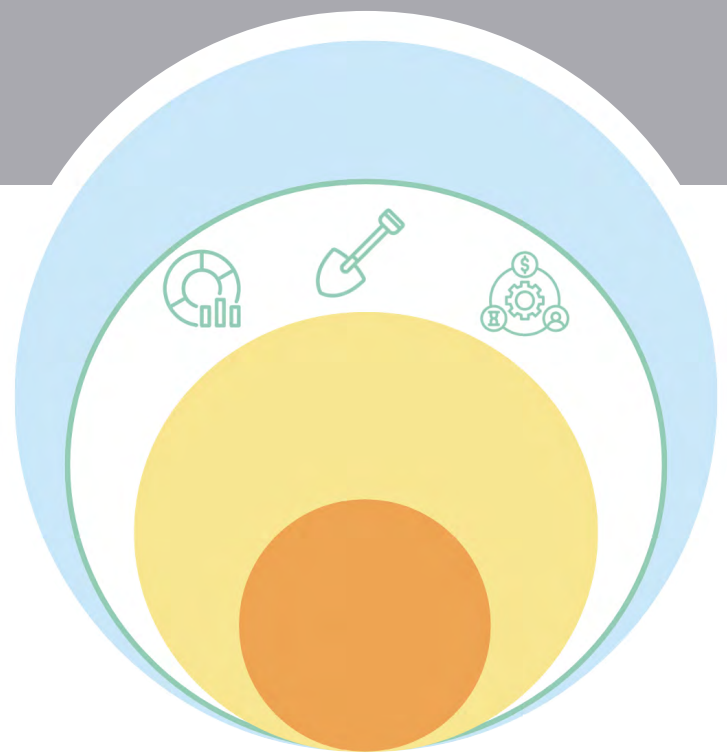
### Materials Needed

- Projector and screen (for presentations)
- Flip charts or whiteboards (for group discussions)
- Markers and sticky notes
- Printed decision matrix and impact versus effort templates
- Evaluation forms for feedback

# How to Translate Strategy Into Action

In Stage 3, the key goal is to launch pilot projects and synchronize efforts that focus on enhancing forest resilience. As roles clarify, partners with land management agreements take on larger roles, while nonprofits and other groups focus on connecting stakeholders, building trust, and coordinating activities. Since relationships with communities and landowners take time, continued outreach in priority project areas is essential. Securing funding for tools, training, and operational needs, as well as setting up clear resource-sharing agreements, helps prevent conflicts. As projects yield results, shared successes build trust and enable partners to refine monitoring and adaptive management plans. Early goals might include tracking community engagement through outreach events, field trips, and public meetings.

While implementation is the focus, maintaining a collaborative spirit remains key. Investing in tools like websites and data-sharing platforms ensures alignment among partners. As the collaboration grows, bringing in specialists in project development and communications may be necessary for continued success.





# ACTION 10

## Activate Strategies and Communicate Progress

### Key Questions

- *What actions are necessary to meet objectives and how will they be implemented?*
- *How will updates and progress be communicated with collaborators?*

### Outcomes

- Pilot Projects
- Project Updating Tools
- Implementation Plans

### Competencies

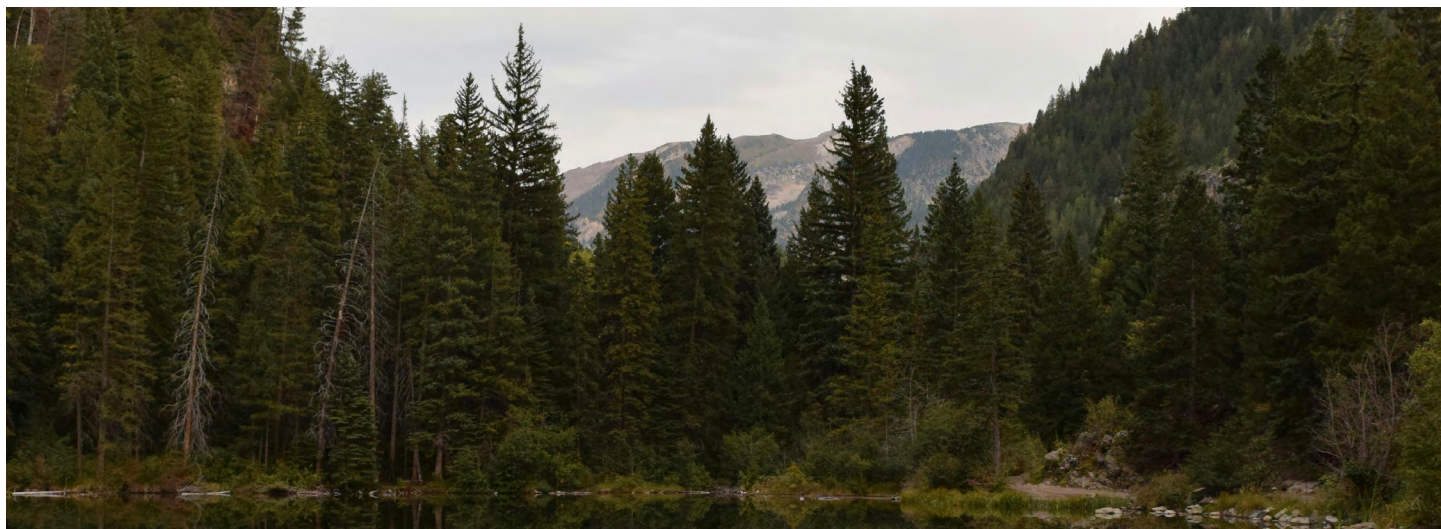
- Project-level planning skills
- Human and financial resources for project implementation

### Level of Effort

Involves coordinating efforts and providing updates, which can be done through established communication channels. Requires less intensive effort given the effort put into planning in earlier actions.

## Aligning Strategies, Objectives, and Actions

To ensure effective forest resilience and wildfire management, the transition from broad strategies to specific actions is achieved by aligning those strategies with clearly defined objectives and shared priorities. This alignment ensures that each action supports the overarching goals of forest resilience, while sequencing actions based on priorities allows for a more coordinated and impactful approach across the landscape. In this process, it is also important to visualize and communicate how these actions interconnect.



Revisiting Partner Actions Gathered in ACTION 6 is an important step to ensure alignment with the broader objectives established in ACTION 8. In ACTION 6, stakeholders provided a catalog of past and planned partner actions, detailing current initiatives, management plans, and projects targeting forest resilience. In this next step, these actions should be reviewed and compared with the objectives developed in ACTION 8, ensuring that each action aligns with the goals and desired outcomes for forest resilience. This alignment ensures that efforts are working toward common objectives and helps identify any actions that may need to be refined or expanded to fully support these goals.

Once actions are aligned with objectives, the next step is to group and sequence actions based on the shared priorities established in ACTION 9. This process helps identify which actions should be taken first, ensuring that the most urgent and impactful initiatives are prioritized. Stakeholders should also consider the spatial and temporal coordination of actions, ensuring that interventions complement one another and are not duplicated. By grouping actions into cohesive projects and sequencing them effectively, the collaboration can maximize its collective impact across the landscape.

Leveraging pilot project opportunities plays a critical role in this process. As part of the sequencing, stakeholders should identify specific areas or communities for pilot projects that will allow them to test strategies and build momentum for larger-scale efforts. These pilot projects provide valuable data and insights, enabling stakeholders to refine strategies, enhance their effectiveness, and gain stakeholder support before scaling up.

## Common Operating Pictures

Creating a **Common Operating Picture** (COP) helps facilitate this process by providing stakeholders with a shared visual framework that illustrates planned and completed actions. A COP might include maps, dashboards, or other visual tools that integrate data layers such as risk assessments, suppression difficulties, and Potential Operational Delineations (PODs). These tools enable stakeholders to visualize how mitigation, response, and recovery strategies overlap and interact geographically. Using this visual representation, stakeholders can focus on co-developed spatial strategies, coordinate schedules, and align actions in a way that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness.

A simplified version of a COP can be a user-friendly dashboard that consolidates key information and updates related to forest resilience strategies. The simplicity of a dashboard makes the information accessible and easy to navigate, fostering better communication and decision-making across stakeholders. Such a dashboard can include the following elements:

- **Current Projects:** A list detailing ongoing and upcoming initiatives, their status, objectives, and timelines.
- **Priority Areas:** Sections highlighting critical regions or issues that need attention, focusing on high-risk areas or community concerns.
- **Key Metrics:** Basic indicators such as the number of completed projects, funding levels, and community engagement statistics, offering a quick overview of progress.
- **Next Steps:** A summary of upcoming tasks and responsibilities for stakeholders to keep everyone on track.
- **Updates and News:** A space for recent developments, new opportunities, or changes that stakeholders need to be aware of.

### LEVERAGING RESOURCES

*In addition to mapping and dashboard tools, Learning Networks are an important resource for enhancing collaboration and shared learning. These networks, which focus on forest health and wildfire management, bring together government agencies, non-profit organizations, researchers, and local communities to share knowledge and strategies. They provide a platform for open communication and collaboration, helping participants develop adaptive management approaches based on the latest science and local experiences.*

*Examples of relevant learning networks include:*

- [Fire Adapted Colorado Network](#)
- [Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network](#)
- [Coalitions and Collaboratives](#)
- [Fire Learning Network](#)
- [Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network](#)
- [Indigenous Peoples Burning Network](#)
- [Southern Rockies Fire Science Network](#)

# Template

## Project Implementation Plan

**Project Title:** [Insert Project Title]

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Prepared By:** [Insert Name/Organization]

---

**Description:**

[Briefly describe the project, its actions, and the need it addresses. Outline how these align with overarching forest resilience strategies and specific objectives.]

**Land Ownership:**

[Insert land ownership details.]

**Project Location (Include map/s):**

[Insert project location, including maps.]

**Forest Type:**

[Insert forest type.]

**Current Conditions:**

[Include pre-treatment inventory, if available, in tables or figures.]

**Need for Management Action:**

[Explain why management action(s) is/are needed and how it connects to broader forest resilience strategies.]

**Briefly Describe Management Action:**

[Describe the specific action(s) to be taken and how it aligns with established priorities and objectives.]

---

### GOALS

**Strategy Objectives:**

[Identify and describe the broader strategy and objectives the project meets]

**Project-Level Goals:**

[Define project-level goals in more detail, addressing community education, wildfire risk, etc. Be specific in terms of indicators to evaluate outcomes.]

**Connection to Vision**

[Describe how the project-level goals connect to the larger forest resilience and how they align with values, risks, and assets.]

**Project Prioritization and Conflicts:**

[Explain how actions should be prioritized and identify any potential conflicts between them.]

# Template

## Project Implementation Plan (continued)

### STRATEGIC LOCATION

#### Location and Fit:

[Describe the strategic location of the project within the larger landscape management plan. Explain how it complements other management efforts in the area.]

#### Neighboring Management Actions:

[Include a map and describe neighboring management actions (both past and planned), which contribute to a larger contiguous treatment area.]

#### Risk Assessments and Prioritization:

[If available, include maps from risk assessments, focus areas, or Potential Operational Delineations (PODs). Use CO-WRA if no local spatial planning tools are available.]

---

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

#### Partners:

[List stakeholders involved, including roles and responsibilities.]

#### Engagement Strategy:

[Describe how stakeholders will be engaged throughout the project. Refer to ACTION 3 and ACTION 7 for detailed approaches to community and partner engagement.]

---

### ACTION MANAGEMENT

Action	Responsible Party	Timeline	Resources Needed	Status

# Template

## Project Implementation Plan (continued)

### BUDGET

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
[Item 1]		
[Item 2]		
Total Budget:		

---

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

#### Metrics for Success:

[Define specific indicators for success. Link these metrics to the project's objectives and priorities.]

#### Evaluation Timeline:

[Outline when evaluations will take place and specify who will conduct them.]

---

### RISK MANAGEMENT

#### Potential Risks:

[Identify potential risks and challenges during implementation.]

#### Mitigation Strategies:

[Outline strategies to mitigate identified risks.]

---

### COMMUNICATION PLAN

#### Communication Channels:

[Describe how updates will be communicated to stakeholders (e.g., meetings, reports, emails).]

#### Frequency of Updates:

[Specify how often stakeholders will receive updates.]



# ACTION 11

## Secure Resources for Implementation

### Key Questions

- *What are the specific resources needed for implementation?*
- *Who are the potential partners and stakeholders that can contribute resources?*
- *Who is responsible for securing and managing funding?*
- *What strategies will be employed to ensure sustainable funding and resource allocation over the long term?*

### Outcomes

- Resource Needs Identification
- Joint Applications
- Funding Allocation and Administration Agreements

### Supporting Resources

- [CSFS Natural Resource Grants Database](#)
- [CWCB Grants and Special Programs](#)
- [CPW Grant Programs](#)

### Competencies

- Grant writing and fiscal management skills
- Negotiation and conflict management skills

### Level of Effort

Involves extensive research, proposal writing, and negotiations with various stakeholders. This process can be complex, highly competitive, and time-consuming.

## Categorizing Resource Needs

Fostering partnerships with various organization types in forest resilience planning, including federal and state agencies, nonprofits, local businesses, and community groups allows collaborations to remain both strategic and swiftly opportunistic in acquiring resources. A critical element of this approach is the development of a dynamic plan for ongoing funding and resource management. This involves actively exploring diverse funding sources—such as grants, public-private partnerships, and fundraising initiatives—while also establishing transparent, flexible processes for resource allocation that ensure all partners are aligned and can quickly seize new opportunities as they arise.

Once management strategies are in place, it's crucial to identify the specific financial, human, and technical resources needed for successful implementation. Defining specific needs can support the competitiveness and alignment of strategies to support opportunities. Common resources needed include:

### **Funding:**

- Grants from government agencies, foundations, or nonprofits for planning, restoration, and ongoing management.
- Incentives to landowners for sustainable forest practices.
- Matching Funds either monetary or in-kind, required by some funding programs to leverage additional support.

### **Workforce:**

- Skilled Labor such as foresters, ecologists, and fire specialists to implement forest management plans.
- Volunteers for smaller-scale restoration, monitoring, and outreach projects.
- Contractors for specialized tasks like tree thinning, timber harvesting, and erosion control.

### **Technical Assistance**

- Expert Guidance on best practices or specific topics like climate adaptation, wildlife mitigation, and invasive species management.
- Training & Capacity Building to help communities and landowners understand forest management and access support.
- Planning Tools like software and data platforms (e.g., GIS) for forest planning, inventory management, and risk analysis.
- Permitting & Compliance for navigating environmental regulations and securing permits for forest activities.

### **Data & Information**

- Inventories of forest health, species composition, and structure to inform decision-making.
- Climate & Weather projections and models to support resilience planning and wildfire risk management.

## Facilitating Partnerships & Collaboration

- Government Agencies: Financial, technical, and regulatory support from local, state, and federal agencies.
- Nonprofits & Advocacy Groups: Technical expertise, funding, and local engagement to support forest management projects.
- Private Landowners & Industry: Collaboration with businesses and landowners for funding or carrying out management activities.

## Tools & Equipment

- Field Equipment: Tools like chainsaws, bulldozers, and herbicide sprayers for hands-on management.
- Firefighting Equipment: Resources for fire prevention and suppression, such as fire engines and aerial support.
- Monitoring Equipment: Cameras, sensors, and drones for tracking forest health and effectiveness of management actions.

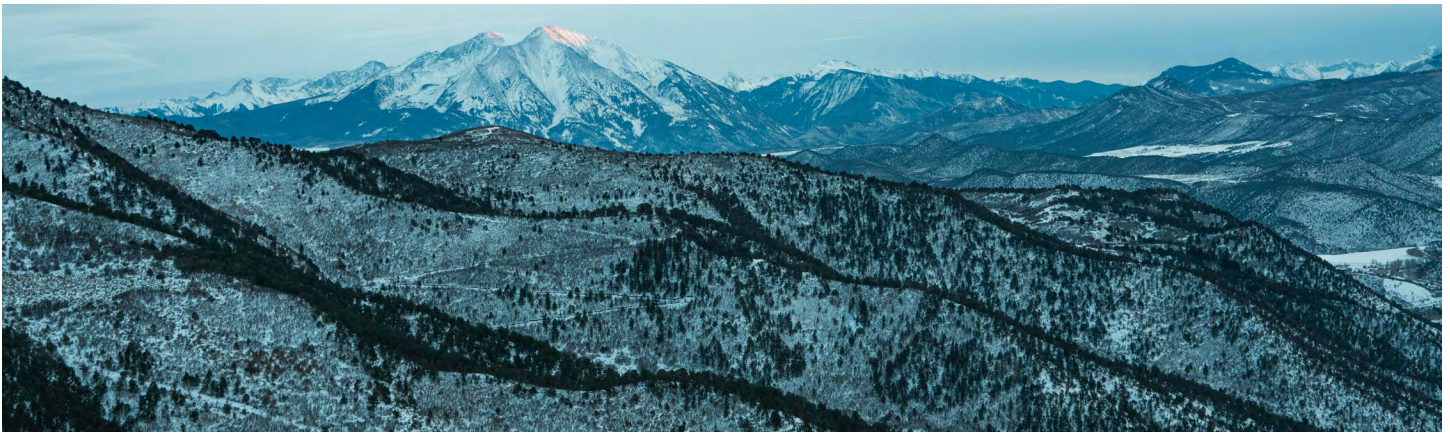
## Keys to a Compelling Joint Application

To create compelling joint funding applications, emphasize readiness for collaboration among partners. Highlight shared goals and mutual benefits (ACTION 8), and present a cohesive vision (ACTION 4) aligned with the funder priorities. Detail each partner's roles and expertise (ACTION 3), showing how their strengths ensure project success. Include a clear funding allocation structure with transparent decision-making processes, and provide evidence of past successful collaborations. Lastly, outline a robust communication plan to maintain engagement and information sharing among partners and stakeholders. This preparation builds credibility and assures funders of the collaboration's potential for impactful outcomes.

### CASE STUDY: COLLABORATION LEADS TO COSWAP FUNDING IN TELLER COUNTY

In 2022, years of coordinated collaboration across agencies prepared the Woodland Park Field Office of the Colorado State Forest Service to receive a \$1 million Landscape Resilience Investment award from Colorado's Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP). This program, administered through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, funds the North Cat 2 fuels treatment project near the North Catamount Reservoir, aiming to mitigate wildfire risks, safeguard critical water resources and infrastructure, protect wildlife habitats, and strengthen defenses for nearby communities.

This initiative is part of a larger effort enabled by Colorado's SB21-258, a bipartisan law passed in 2021 to launch COSWAP, which allocates funding to high-impact fuels reduction projects that protect lives, property, and infrastructure. The North Cat 2 project, one of five in the area under a Good Neighbor Authority agreement, has backing from the Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Springs Utilities Forest Management Division, the U.S. Forest Service Pikes Peak Ranger District, the Department of Natural Resources, and Teller County Commissioners. Without extensive, multi-year collaboration, the North Cat 2 project wouldn't have been possible.



## **Aligning Projects and Programs with Appropriate Funding Sources**

Recognizing when a grant opportunity aligns with a co-developed strategy is a critical capacity that can help ensure resources are used efficiently and strategically. When a new grant opportunity arises, the collaboration must assess whether it aligns with the co-developed strategy's goals, scope, and timeline. It's not always about fitting a project to an available grant, but rather finding the grant that best supports the work already outlined in the strategy. Some approaches to build this capacity include:

### **Familiarity with the Grant Landscape**

To direct partners effectively, it's important to have a comprehensive understanding of the available funding sources. This includes federal, state, and private grants, as well as lesser-known or niche sources that might be a better fit for specific project elements. Looking at databases of potential funding sources like the CSFS Natural Resource Grants Database, CWCB Grants and Special Programs, CPW Grant Programs, and National Forest Foundation Grant Programs pages is a helpful starting point. Additionally, building relationships with grant administrators and regularly engaging in funding networks or workshops helps stay informed on emerging opportunities.

### **Facilitating Partnerships with Funding Entities**

Often, the best funding opportunities come from collaboration between grantors and local partners. Cultivating these relationships will not only help direct the right funding to the right projects but can also ensure a smoother application process. Identify liaisons who can support the application process and help align project proposals with the funder expectations. Solicit technical assistance for writing proposals or organizing the necessary documentation to ensure the project aligns with both the strategy and the funder requirements.

### **Monitoring and Adjusting**

The funding landscape and collaborative strategies may change over time. Ongoing monitoring is necessary to ensure new funding opportunities are captured and that the strategy remains adaptable to these shifts. Regularly revisit the strategy and funding landscape to identify any shifts in priorities or new opportunities that may arise. Encourage adaptive management within collaborations so projects and funding sources can evolve in response to new data, emerging threats, or changing community needs.

# Activity

## Joint Application Discussion

When approaching a joint application for funding and resources, several key considerations should be discussed to ensure a successful proposal:

1. **Alignment of Goals and Objectives:** Ensure all partners have a shared understanding of the project's goals and objectives. Discuss how each partner's mission aligns with the proposed project.
2. **Match Requirements:** Review the funding agency's match requirements, including cash contributions, in-kind services, and other resources. Confirm how each partner can meet these requirements and document their commitments.
3. **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Discuss who will lead different aspects of the project and how tasks will be divided.
4. **Budget Development:** Collaboratively develop a budget that reflects the contributions of each partner, ensuring transparency regarding costs, funding sources, and financial management practices.
5. **Resource Allocation:** Discuss how resources (e.g., personnel, equipment, facilities) will be shared among partners, ensuring that all partners are equipped to contribute effectively to the project.
6. **Governance Structure:** Establish a governance structure that outlines decision-making processes, roles in project oversight, and mechanisms for conflict resolution.
7. **Evaluation and Reporting:** Determine how success will be measured and reported. Agree on key performance indicators (KPIs) and the responsibilities for monitoring progress and reporting outcomes.
8. **Communication Strategies:** Develop a communication plan that facilitates regular updates and collaboration among partners. Discuss how information will be shared with stakeholders and funders.
9. **Sustainability Plans:** Consider how the project will be sustained beyond the funding period. Discuss strategies for securing future funding and continuing collaboration.
10. **Risk Management:** Identify potential risks associated with the project and develop a plan for managing those risks. Discuss how each partner can contribute to risk mitigation.
11. **Timeline and Milestones:** Create a timeline that outlines key milestones and deadlines for the project, ensuring that all partners are aware of the schedule and committed to meeting deadlines.

By addressing these considerations upfront, partners can enhance their preparedness for a joint funding application, increasing the likelihood of securing resources and achieving successful project outcomes.

# Activity

## Grant Opportunity Alignment Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate whether a grant opportunity aligns with the co-developed strategies

<b>Strategy Alignment</b>	Does the grant support key outcomes and objectives of the strategy?	
	Does the grant address specific issues outlined in the strategy (e.g., wildfire risk, habitat restoration)?	
<b>Geographic and Values Fit</b>	Is the grant's geographic scope aligned with the strategy's target areas?	
	Does it serve the communities or areas prioritized by the strategy?	
<b>Funding and Timeline</b>	Is the funding amount sufficient for the project's needs?	
	Does the timeline align with the strategy's milestones and project duration?	
<b>Collaborations</b>	Does the grant support the involvement of key stakeholders or partners?	
	Does it encourage collaborative efforts in line with the strategy's framework?	
<b>Feasibility</b>	Is the meeting the grant opportunity feasible with available resources and expertise?	
	Does the grant support long-term outcomes or sustainability goals?	

### FINAL EVALUATION

- Does the grant align with the strategy in most key areas?
- Is it a valuable addition to the strategic goals?

*If "No" is selected for critical items, reconsider pursuing the grant or adjust the project for better alignment.*

# Template

## Funding Allocation and Administration Agreement

**Agreement Date:** [Insert Date]

### PARTIES

**[Organization/Partner Name 1]**

Address: [Insert Address]

Contact Person: [Insert Name and Title]

Email: [Insert Email]

Phone: [Insert Phone Number]

**[Organization/Partner Name 1]**

Address: [Insert Address]

Contact Person: [Insert Name and Title]

Email: [Insert Email]

Phone: [Insert Phone Number] **Land Ownership:**

[Insert land ownership details.]

**Project Title:** [Insert Project/Grant Title]

**Project Description:** [Insert Brief Description of the Project/Grant]

---

### PURPOSE

This Agreement outlines the terms and conditions for the allocation and administration of funding provided for the [Project/Grant Title] to ensure effective collaboration and resource management among the participating organizations.

### FUNDING ALLOCATION

**Total Funding Amount:** [Insert Total Amount]

**Funding Breakdown:**

- Partner 1: [Insert Amount/Percentage]
- Partner 2: [Insert Amount/Percentage]
- [Continue for additional partners as needed]

# Template

## Funding Allocation and Administration Agreement (continued)

### USE OF FUNDS

Funds allocated under this Agreement will be used exclusively for the following purposes:

- [List Specific Purposes, e.g., personnel costs, materials, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, etc.]

---

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS

#### [Organization/Partner Name 1]

- [List specific responsibilities, e.g., manage finances, report on expenditures, oversee project activities, etc.]

#### [Organization/Partner Name 2]

- [List specific responsibilities, e.g., provide technical support, coordinate outreach, etc.]

---

### REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Partners agree to provide regular updates on funding use and project progress.
- Reporting Frequency: [e.g., quarterly, bi-annually, etc.]
- Report Submission Deadline: [Insert Date]
- Report Contents: [List what each report should include, e.g., financial reports, progress updates, challenges faced, etc.]
- Describe the decision-making process and roles within the governance structure (e.g., steering committee, project lead).
- Outline conflict resolution mechanisms.

---

### AMENDMENTS

This Agreement may be amended or modified only in writing, signed by all parties.

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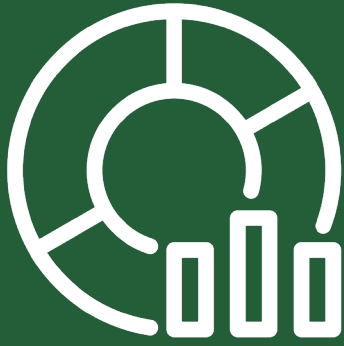
### TERMINATION

This Agreement may be terminated by any party with [insert number] days written notice. Upon termination, any unspent funds must be returned to the original funder unless otherwise agreed upon.

---

### SIGNATURES

By signing, the parties agree to the terms outlined in this Funding Allocation and Administration Agreement.



# ACTION 12

## Monitor Implementation

### Key Questions

- *How do current outcomes compare to the established objectives and indicators?*
- *Are there any unexpected challenges or obstacles?*
- *How will adjustments be made in response to monitoring data?*

### Outcomes

- Progress and Monitoring Reports

### Supporting Resources

- [NIACS/USDA Adaptation Quick Guide](#)
- [CFRI Monitoring Handbook for Evaluating Forest Management Outcomes](#)

### Competencies

- Access to monitoring expertise, tools and protocols
- Capacity to gather, compile, analyze, communicate, and integrate ecological, biophysical, and/or socio-economic data into decision making

### Level of Effort

Requires setting up systems to track progress and collect data. While it can be structured, it still demands continuous effort and attention to detail.

## Monitoring Tools

Monitoring the response to management strategies essential for assessing their effectiveness and making necessary adjustments. This monitoring and maintenance will likely continue for multiple years and may require additional resources, such as personnel and funding.

Specific tools can be used to track progress and engage stakeholders and community members during the implementation and monitoring process:

1. **Project Reports:** These reports provide detailed progress updates and establish benchmarks to evaluate whether the implementation is successful or if it requires reorganization or re-prioritization.
2. **Surveys:** Surveys facilitate ongoing collaboration and feedback from stakeholders and community members. As conditions change, community members can offer valuable insights based on their localized knowledge of implementation outcomes.
3. **Situation Assessments:** Collaborative capacity and needs may evolve throughout the project's duration. Regularly assessing the capacity of collaborators and identifying potential resource gaps can help sustain the project and allow for necessary adaptations. ACTION 15 outlines a method for conducting a collaboration situation assessment.

## Adaptive Management Planning

To effectively address how adjustments are made in response to monitoring data and develop an adaptive management methodology, organizations should establish a feedback loop that begins with regular data collection using predefined indicators related to project goals. This data should be analyzed to identify trends, successes, and areas needing improvement.

Engaging stakeholders is crucial; collaborative reviews of monitoring results should involve project team members, community representatives, and experts to facilitate diverse perspectives. Clear decision-making criteria for making adjustments should be developed, prioritizing actions based on their impact on project goals and available resources. Specific action plans detailing responsibilities, required resources, and timelines for implementing adjustments must be created and documented to maintain transparency.

Continuous monitoring of these adjustments is essential to evaluate their effectiveness, creating a cycle of iterative learning. Regular updates should be communicated to stakeholders about the adjustments made and their outcomes, fostering trust and ongoing engagement. Finally, promoting a culture of adaptability through training and capacity building ensures that the team is prepared to respond effectively to changing conditions and insights gained from monitoring data. This structured approach enhances project resilience and effectiveness over time.

# Activity

## Monitoring for Adaptive Management Discussion

When developing a collaborative monitoring plan, several key considerations should be discussed to ensure approaches that align with collaborative adaptive management:

1. What indicators should we monitor to assess progress, and who will be responsible for tracking them?
2. How frequently should we collect and review this data, and who will coordinate these efforts?
3. What methods will we use to analyze the monitoring data, and who will conduct the analysis?
4. How will we interpret the results, and who will be responsible for making decisions based on this interpretation?
5. How will we share monitoring results with all stakeholders, and who will oversee communication?
6. What regular communication methods should we establish for feedback, and who will facilitate these discussions?
7. What resources (financial, human, technical) are necessary for effective monitoring and adjustments, and who will ensure these resources are available?
8. When should we review our adaptive management procedures, and who will lead the review process?

By addressing these considerations upfront, partners can enhance their preparedness for adaptive management, increasing the likelihood of successful adaptations.

# Template

## Project Reporting for Partners

**Project Title:** [Insert Project Name]

**Reporting Period:** [Insert Date Range]

**Prepared By:** [Name / Organization]

**Date of Report:** [Insert Date]

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a brief overview of the project, its objectives, and the significance of the report. Summarize key highlights and outcomes, including the monitoring results and any key learnings from the data.

**EXAMPLE:** This report summarizes progress on [Project Name], aimed at [Briefly state objectives]. Key outcomes during this reporting period include [Highlight major achievements] and monitoring results that indicate [key trends or findings]. These results will help inform next steps and adaptive management discussions.

---

### PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project Title</b>	[Insert Project Title]
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	[Insert Agency/Organization]
<b>Forest Type</b>	[Insert Forest Type, e.g., Ponderosa Pine, Spruce]
<b>Acres Treated</b>	[Insert Number of Acres Treated]
<b>Acres Monitored</b>	[Insert Number of Acres Monitored]
<b>Treatment Methods</b>	[Insert Treatment Methods, e.g., thinning, prescribed fire]
<b>Project Location</b>	[Insert Location and map, if applicable]

# Template

## Project Reporting for Partners (continued)

### MONITORING METHODS

Monitoring Method	Description	Monitoring Question(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Forest Health Assessment	[Describe the method used, e.g., field surveys, remote sensing]	What changes in forest composition or health have occurred?	[e.g., annually, quarterly]
Wildlife Monitoring	[Describe the method used, e.g., camera traps, surveys]	How has wildlife activity changed in response to treatments?	[e.g., biannually, annually]
Fire Risk Assessment	[Describe the method used, e.g., fire behavior modeling, field surveys]	What has been the change in fire risk due to management actions?	[e.g., annually]
Biodiversity Monitoring	[Describe the method used, e.g., species count, vegetation plots]	How have species populations or diversity changed?	[e.g., annually, biannually]

### KEY ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

Activity	Description	Status	Comments
Community Workshops	Conducted three workshops on forest health.	Completed	75 community members attended; feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
Sustainable Practices Training	Trained 20 local landowners on best practices.	Completed	Participants reported increased knowledge on sustainable practices.
Monitoring Program Setup	Established a biodiversity monitoring program.	Ongoing	Initial data collection is underway; first results expected in August.

# Template

## Project Reporting for Partners (continued)

### MONITORING RESULTS AND IMPACT

This section should focus on the monitoring results, providing an analysis of how well the project is meeting its objectives based on the data collected. Include figures, photos, and descriptive analysis where applicable. If relevant, summarize how the results contribute to adaptive management discussions and the next steps.

#### EXAMPLES:

- **Knowledge Gains:** Surveys indicated that 90% of workshop participants felt more knowledgeable about forest resilience.
- **Impact:** The project has fostered a sense of community ownership over local forest health, encouraging ongoing volunteerism and stewardship.
- **Adaptive Management Insights:** Monitoring has revealed unexpected changes in forest density, suggesting the need for adjustments in treatment methods to meet long-term resilience goals.

---

### PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Highlight any collaborations with partners and how these have contributed to the project's success.

---

### CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Identify any challenges faced during the reporting period and lessons learned that can inform future activities.

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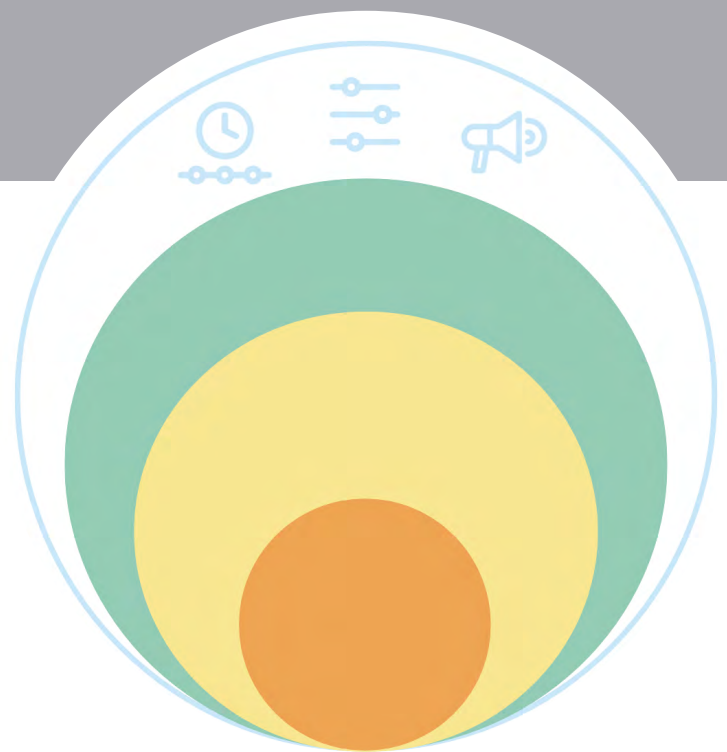
### NEXT STEPS

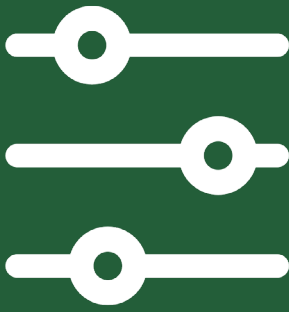
Outline the planned activities for the next reporting period, including any necessary modifications to the goals, strategies, or management actions based on monitoring and evaluations.

# How to Adapt and Sustain Momentum

At this stage, collaborations focus on maintaining expanding their impact through collaborative adaptive management aimed at strengthening forest resilience. With a foundation of effective fund management, project execution, and shared successes, these groups are ready to deepen their work by connecting stakeholders, coordinating actions, and fostering continuous learning.

Establishing clear structures, operating rules, and codes of conduct is essential. The structure should align with local factors like politics and community needs, enabling effective funding management and organizational stability. Adaptive management becomes crucial, with regular evaluations to refine strategies and adjust based on feedback. Open communication on successes and challenges keeps partners engaged and aligned on goals. Sharing outcomes with external audiences can attract resources, shape policies, and broaden impact. A commitment to adaptive management and transparency creates a culture of learning, enabling the collaboration to adapt to changing conditions and ensure long-term success.





# ACTION 13

## Practice Adaptive Management

### Key Questions

- *What adjustments are necessary based on monitoring results?*
- *What lessons have been learned from past experiences?*

### Outcomes

- Adaptive Management Actions, Workshops, and Reports

### Supporting Resources

- [Collaborative Implementation of Forest Landscape Restoration in the Colorado Front Range](#)

### Competencies

- Leadership committed to learning
- Convening capacity and co-learning process design skills
- GIS and other technical expertise to facilitate ongoing use of decision support tools in collaborative settings
- Ability to sustain the organizational structure, time, and space for monitoring and evaluation
- Adequate resources, technology, and infrastructure to allow actors to respond to evolving circumstances

### Level of Effort

Involves regularly assessing and adjusting strategies based on monitoring data. It requires ongoing commitment but can be effectively integrated into existing processes.

## Why Collaborative Adaptive Management Matters

Collaborative Adaptive Management (CAM) emerged as a response to the growing recognition that managing complex ecosystems, such as forests, requires more than traditional top-down approaches. Rooted in ecological and social sciences, CAM integrates adaptive management principles with a collaborative framework, emphasizing flexibility, stakeholder engagement, and iterative learning to address the uncertainties inherent in natural resource management.

- 1. Managing Complexity:** Forest ecosystems are dynamic and influenced by factors like climate change, invasive species, and human activities. CAM provides a structured yet flexible approach to navigating these complexities.
- 2. Enhancing Resilience:** By continuously learning and adjusting, CAM supports the development of resilient ecosystems and communities that can adapt to changing conditions.
- 3. Strengthening Partnerships:** Collaborative processes build trust, enhance stakeholder capacity, and create lasting partnerships that benefit both people and ecosystems.

Incorporating CAM into forest management ensures a holistic, adaptive, and inclusive approach that balances ecological health with social and economic needs, offering a model for sustainable resource management in the face of uncertainty.

## Key Principles of Collaborative Adaptive Management

**Collaboration Across Stakeholders:** CAM brings together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, landowners, scientists, indigenous communities, and local residents. By involving those directly impacted by management decisions, CAM ensures that multiple perspectives are considered, fostering inclusive and equitable solutions.

**Adaptive Management as a Core Strategy:** Adaptive management focuses on “learning by doing.” It treats management actions as experiments, where outcomes are carefully monitored and inform future decisions. This iterative approach allows managers to respond to new information, unexpected challenges, and shifting ecological or social conditions.

**Focus on Shared Goals and Objectives:** The collaborative process prioritizes co-developing shared goals that reflect the diverse values and needs of stakeholders. These goals guide the design of management actions, ensuring alignment with broader ecological, economic, and social objectives.

**Emphasis on Monitoring and Feedback:** Monitoring is a cornerstone of CAM. It generates data on the effectiveness of management actions, helping stakeholders understand whether goals are being met. Feedback loops ensure that monitoring results are incorporated into decision-making, enabling continuous improvement.

**Building Trust and Transparency:** Open communication and transparent processes are critical for maintaining trust among stakeholders. Regular reporting, shared decision-making, and clear accountability mechanisms foster collaboration and long-term partnerships.

## What Collaborative Adaptive Management Looks Like

This structured yet flexible cycle ensures forest management remains responsive, effective, and inclusive, fostering long-term resilience and sustainability.

### Goal-Setting Phase

**Baseline Assessment:** Evaluate current forest conditions (ecological, social, economic) using tools like mapping, habitat assessments, and community needs analysis. Define baseline indicators and metrics to track changes and inform decisions.

**Monitoring Framework:** Establish measurable goals and objectives based on shared priorities and current conditions. Set clear criteria for success to guide action planning.

### Action Phase

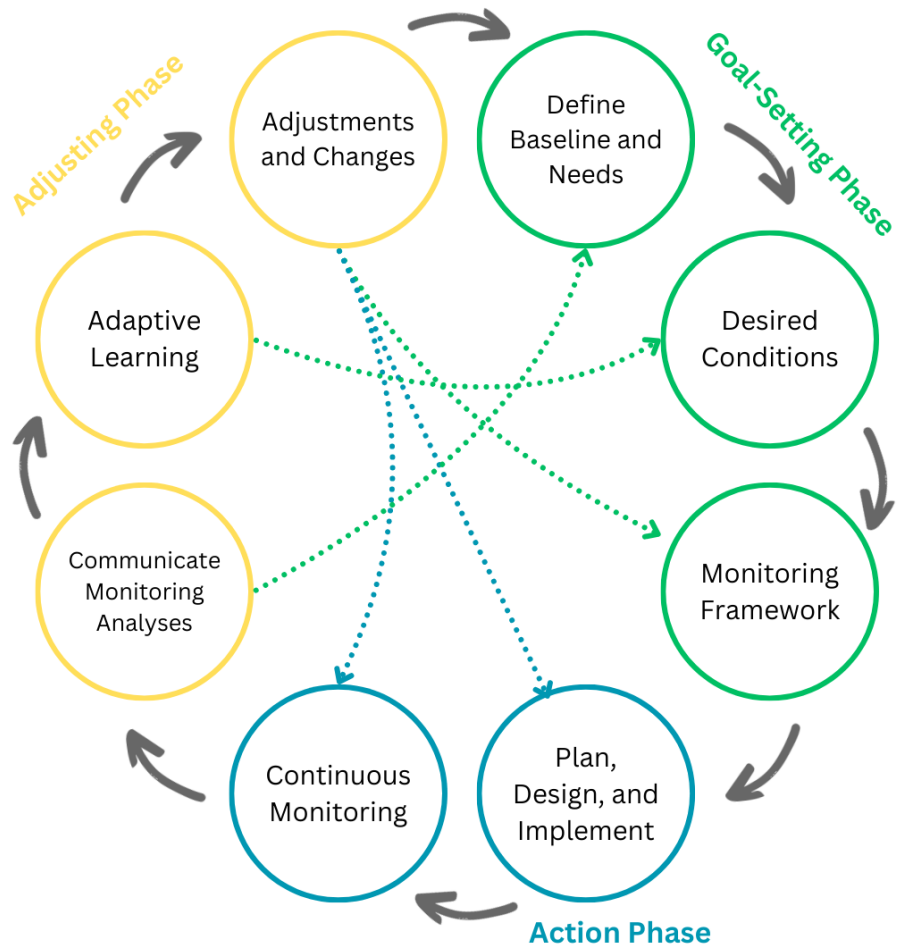
**Implementation and Monitoring:** Take actions aligned with goals, using monitoring data to measure effectiveness. Collect regular feedback through community surveys, project reports, and ecological assessments.

**Feedback Mechanisms:** Facilitate continuous input from stakeholders to incorporate local knowledge and address emerging challenges.

### Adjusting Phase

**Adaptive Learning:** Host regular review meetings to evaluate progress, discuss challenges, and refine strategies. Adjust management plans based on insights, reallocating resources or revising goals as necessary.

**Transparent Communication:** Share progress through reports, newsletters, and community meetings to maintain trust and stakeholder engagement.



Above: A depiction of the collaborative adaptive management cycle adapted from Marcot et al. 2013

# Template

## Adaptive Management Workshop Agenda

### [Insert Group Name] Adaptive Management Workshop

**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Time:** [Insert Start and End Time] 4 hours total, plus 1 hour lunch break

**Location:** [Insert Location]

---

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions (15 minutes)

- Brief overview of the agenda and objectives
- Introductions of participants (name, organization, role)

#### 2. Context Setting (15 minutes)

- Presentation on current forest management strategies
- Overview of KPIs and other goals relevant to forest management
- Discussion of the importance of adapting strategies based on performance data

#### 3. Review of Current Key Performance Indicators (30 minutes)

- Presentation of existing KPIs and their performance data
- Group discussion on the effectiveness of current KPIs
- Identify any gaps or areas for improvement

#### 4. Brainstorming Session: Adapting Strategies (1 hour)

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Each group uses the decision matrix to score objectives based on agreed-upon criteria.
- Groups compile their results.

#### 4. Lunch Break (1 hour)

#### 6. Prioritization of Proposed Strategies (45 minutes)

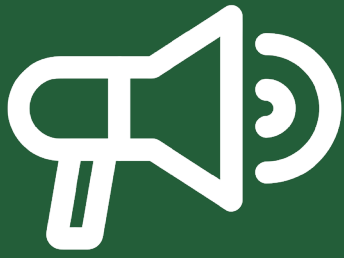
- Review and discuss all proposed adaptations
- Use a prioritization method (e.g., voting, impact-effort matrix) to identify top strategies and group consensus

#### 7. Action Planning (1 hour)

- Assign responsibilities and set timelines
- Discuss required resources and potential challenges

#### 8. Wrap-Up and Next Steps (15 minutes)

- Recap of key decisions and action items and discuss follow-up meetings and reporting mechanisms



# ACTION 14

## Communicate Results and Challenges to Leadership

### Key Questions

- *What has the journey of collaborative planning and implementation been like?*
- *How can the story of forest resilience strategies, projects, and the people behind them be shared?*

### Outcomes

- Communication Materials and Activities

### Supporting Resources

- [Colorado Forest Health Council](#)

### Competencies

- Skills and resources for effective advocacy
- Communication, writing, and reporting skills
- Community outreach and engagement skills
- Marketing, social media, and website maintenance skills

### Level of Effort

Requires preparing reports and engaging with stakeholders. Effort is manageable and can be systematized over time.

## Engaging Through Storytelling

Communicating the results and challenges of forest resilience management to state leadership is critical for fostering understanding, securing support, and mobilizing resources for large-scale collaboration. A storytelling approach can bring these efforts to life by showcasing the journey of management activities, successful partnerships, and strategic goals in a relatable way. By humanizing the data and clarifying the complexities of forest management, this approach helps leadership see the tangible impacts—such as healthier ecosystems, stronger communities, and economic benefits—making them more likely to champion policies and funding to sustain these efforts.

A liaison or champion is vital for bridging collaborations with state leadership. Engaging county leaders early ensures a strong connection to state policymakers when discussing program improvements and resource needs. Once funding is in place, close coordination with funders and program officers enables effective planning for presentations, field tours, and other engagements. These efforts keep state leadership informed, invested, and aligned, fostering a shared vision for resilient landscapes and sustained success.

## Reaching State Leadership

**Field trips or site visits** involve bringing agency leaders and policymakers directly to relevant sites where innovative forest management practices are being implemented. These experiences provide a hands-on understanding of the issues at stake and the impact of various management strategies.

- **Collaborative Planning:** Partner with other organizations to co-host site visits, showcasing a unified approach to forest management and demonstrating the collective impact of various initiatives.
- **Tailored Experiences:** Design visits that align with the interests of policymakers, focusing on specific issues such as wildfire mitigation, habitat restoration, or community engagement. Include guided tours, demonstrations, and discussions with local experts.
- **Storytelling:** Use storytelling during the visit to highlight successes, challenges, and the human impact of forest management decisions. Incorporate testimonials from community members or stakeholders to create a compelling narrative.
- **Call to Action:** To capture policymakers' and leaders' attention amid busy schedules and competing priorities, be specific and clear in policy recommendations or requests for actions.
- **Follow-Up:** After the visit, send thank-you notes and a summary of key points discussed, reinforcing the importance of the issues raised and the partnerships involved.

**Memos** are concise, written documents that communicate important information, updates, or requests to policymakers and leaders. They can summarize findings, outline recommendations, or highlight specific challenges related to forest management.

- **Collaborative Authors:** Work with partner organizations to co-author memos, lending credibility and demonstrating a collective stance on issues. Include diverse perspectives to strengthen the message.
- **Clear and Concise:** Structure memos to present key information clearly and succinctly. Use bullet points, visuals, or infographics to make complex data more digestible and engaging.
- **Highlight Partnerships:** Emphasize the role of partnerships in achieving results and addressing challenges. Showcase successful collaborations that demonstrate the effectiveness of coordinated efforts.
- **Call to Action:** Conclude memos with specific requests or recommendations for policymakers, making it clear how they can support innovative forest management initiatives, if possible, offer to be a resource for further information.



**Legislative presentations** are formal presentations delivered to lawmakers or legislative committees, often to advocate for policies, funding, or support for specific initiatives related to forest management.

- **Joint Presentations:** Collaborate with partner organizations to deliver joint presentations, pooling expertise and resources. This demonstrates broad support for the proposed initiatives and strengthens the case for action.
- **Data-Driven Stories:** Use data to support the narrative while also incorporating stories that illustrate the real-world impacts of forest management. This approach engages lawmakers emotionally while grounding the discussion in evidence.
- **Interactive Elements:** Incorporate interactive elements, such as Q&A sessions or live demonstrations (if feasible), to engage lawmakers and encourage dialogue. This helps build rapport and facilitates deeper understanding of the issues.
- **Call to Action:** Presentations should have a clear purpose, perhaps lauding a program that is working well or advocating for increased funding for an under-resourced need. Policymakers want to know how they can help, make the recommendations clear and actionable.
- **Follow-Up Materials:** Provide handouts or supplementary materials that summarize key points from the presentation, including infographics, case studies, and information about partner organizations. This ensures that lawmakers have resources to reference later.



Above: Photo of the Forest Health Council visit with Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership courtesy of Peaks to People Water Fund

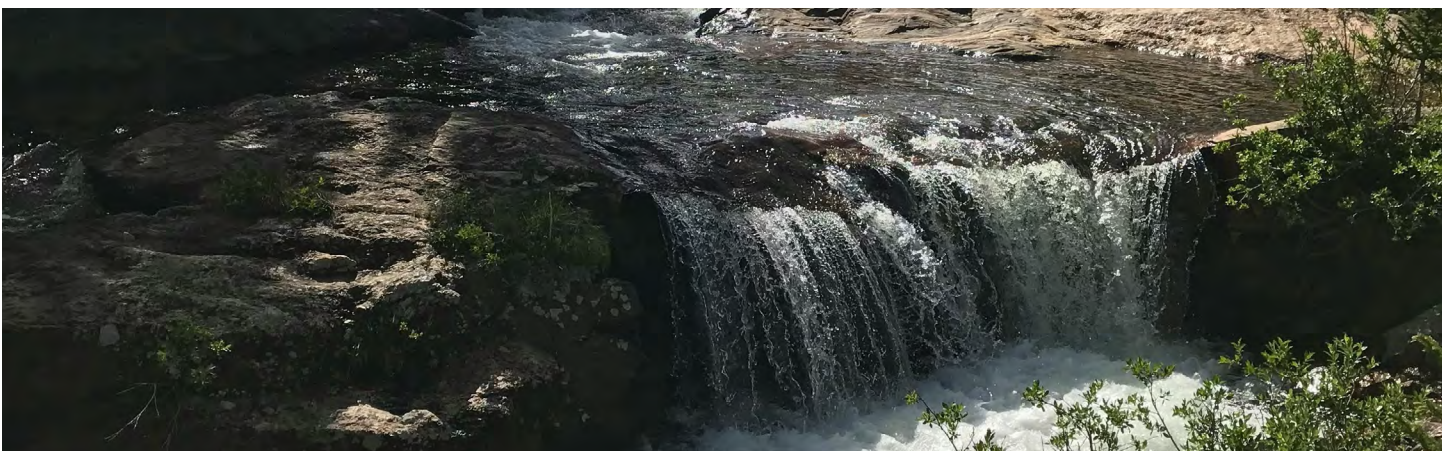
### **CASE STUDY: Peaks to People Water Fund Hosts the Colorado Forest Health Council**

In 2023 the Big Thompson Watershed Health Partnership (BTWHP) hosted a dynamic field tour for the Colorado Forest Health Council. The tour highlighted BTWHP's diverse communication approach, including speeches, on-site technical demonstrations, and collaborative discussions. Peaks to People Water Fund staff coordinated closely with Larimer County Commissioner Shaddock-McNally and BTWHP partners to ensure the itinerary aligned with Council priorities, facilitating a well-structured day of site visits and insightful conversations.

The tour addressed key challenges like post-fire recovery, water resource protection, and debris cleanup following the Cameron Peak Fire. Representatives from Loveland Water and Power, the Larimer Conservation District, and the Estes Valley Watershed Coalition shared first-hand insights on ongoing restoration needs, including workforce development. Partners from the Colorado State Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and USDA NRCS also emphasized the critical role of shared funding in amplifying impact. The tour concluded with US Forest Service and The Ember Alliance experts discussing prescribed fire and fuels management complexities. This multi-faceted event underscored the power of collaboration in advancing wildfire risk reduction and ecological resilience across Colorado's forests and watersheds.



**Peaks to People  
Water Fund**



# Template

## Results and Challenges Memo

**To:** [Recipient's Name]

**From:** [Name]

**Date:** [Date]

**Subject:** Recent Forest Management Results and Challenges in [geography]

---

Dear [Recipient's Name],

As [collaboration/partner name(s)] works toward our vision of [vision], I want to provide you with an update on our recent management activities, highlighting key results, ongoing challenges, and our impression of the implications for policy.

### Key Results

- [Category of Result]: Our [strategy implemented] has led to [describe quantitative improvement of metric] in alignment with [reference specific goal(s)].
- **EXAMPLE:** Biodiversity Enhancement: Recent initiatives to eliminate pests and pathogens have resulted in a [X]% increase in native species populations, indicating our efforts to restore habitats are proving effective.

### Challenges Faced

- [Category of Challenge]: [Issue(s)] have led to [specific consequences, e.g., pest outbreaks, drought], necessitating [anticipated and/or desired change]
- **EXAMPLE:** Funding Constraints: We face significant funding gaps for [specific projects or programs], hindering our ability to implement necessary actions that strategically work with current programs to improve forest resilience at large scale.
- **EXAMPLE:** Policy Gaps: Existing policies do not fully support [X] practices, which limits our flexibility in responding to emerging challenges such as [Y and Z].

### Recommendations

To enhance our forest management efforts and address the challenges outlined above, I recommend:

- [Broad Recommendation]: [Desired change] to inform/support/promote [specific challenge described above]
- **EXAMPLE:** Policy Revisions: Collaborate with stakeholders to develop policies that promote [specific challenge/project/program area(s)].

### Conclusion

Our collaborative efforts are yielding positive results, but continued support and collaboration are essential to overcome the challenges we face to promote forest resilience across Colorado. I look forward to discussing these findings further and exploring ways to enhance our collective efforts in safeguarding our forests.

Thank you for your time and attention.

[Signature and Contact Information]



# ACTION 15

## Check-In on Collaborative Capacity

### Key Questions

- *Are the original goals and objectives of the collaboration still relevant and aligned with each partner's mission?*
- *Are all partners feeling engaged and valued in the collaborative process?*
- *What steps should be taken in the next phase of collaboration to maintain or enhance effectiveness and impact?*

### Outcomes

- Collaboration Situation Assessment and Recommendations

### Supporting Resources

- [Stages of Collaborative Readiness](#)
- [Cultivating Collaborative Resilience to Social and Ecological Change](#)
- [Sustaining the Useful Life of Network Governance](#)
- [Toolkit for Meaningful Engagement of Indigenous Peoples in Conservation](#)

### Competencies

- Evaluation Skills

### Level of Effort

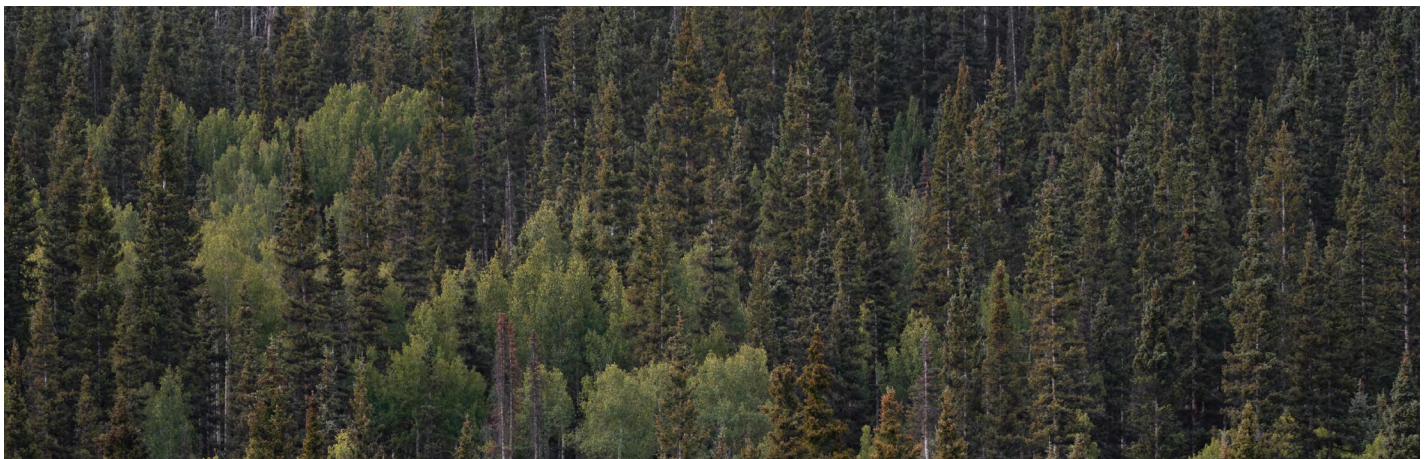
Regular assessments of collaboration capacity involve discussions and evaluations but can be structured effectively. Requires ongoing engagement but is less intensive than initial phases.

## Understanding Collaboration Capacity

Regularly checking in on long-term capacity and interest in collaboration is important for:

- **Adaptability:** Communities, organizations, and contexts evolve over time. Regular check-ins allow for adjustments to be made in response to changing circumstances, priorities, or challenges.
- **Sustained Engagement:** Interests and motivations can shift. Ongoing communication helps ensure that all parties remain invested and that the collaboration aligns with their current goals.
- **Resource Assessment:** Capacity can fluctuate due to changes in funding, personnel, or external factors. Regular assessments help identify any resource gaps that need to be addressed to sustain the collaboration.
- **Building Trust:** Consistent communication fosters transparency and trust among partners, strengthening the relationship and commitment to collaboration.
- **Preventing Burnout:** Monitoring engagement can help identify if certain partners are feeling overwhelmed or disengaged, allowing for timely interventions to share the load or recalibrate expectations.
- **Evaluating Impact:** Regular check-ins provide opportunities to reflect on the effectiveness of the collaboration, celebrating successes and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Ensuring Alignment:** It helps to ensure that all parties remain aligned in their vision and objectives, preventing miscommunication and potential conflicts.

Ultimately, these check-ins contribute to the health and sustainability of collaborations, enhancing their effectiveness in achieving shared goals. These assessments may also reveal signs it is time to reorient collaboration (which can be supported by stepping back to earlier actions) or sunset collaboration in order to free up time and resources that could be applied elsewhere.



# Activity

## Collaboration Situation Assessment

This activity is intended to discover nuanced perspectives on collaborator experiences, motivations, and concerns. The goal is to help capture the context in which collaboration has and will take place in order to identify and address underlying issues and define specific actions to adapt to changing conditions.

### This activity includes 4 steps:

1. Gather Partner Input
2. Synthesize Findings and Clarify Key Issues
3. Identify Changes and Recommendations
4. Engage Partners in Shaping Changes

### 1. GATHER PARTNER INPUT

This assessment can be completed by engaging collaborators through interviews, focus groups, or surveys to ensure specific needs, interests, and expectations, and perspectives are considered.

<b>Collaborative Conditions</b>	<b>Assessment Questions</b>
<b>Clear Directive</b>	Who called the group to order and under what authority?
	What is the group working towards?
<b>Strategic and Inclusive Recruitment</b>	Does the group include authorities able to fully address and fulfill the mandate?
	Are all of the key parties willing and available to participate?
<b>Clear Scope</b>	What issues are "on the table"?
	What issues are clearly "off the table"?
<b>Accountability Mechanisms</b>	To whom does the group report?
	How will group outputs be used? Has any commitment been made to implement agreements?
	Does the group have a clear decision-making process?

# Activity

## Collaboration Situation Assessment (continued)

Collaborative Conditions	Assessment Questions
Resources	Does the group have a schedule, timeline, and key mileposts?
	Is the group sufficiently and consistently funded?
People	Is there a Champion(s) who actively advocate for the collaboration?
	Is there a Program Manager(s) who directs resources, strategy, process, etc.?
	Is there a Facilitator who moderates discussions, ensures inclusivity, and helps resolve conflicts?
	Are there Technical Experts who can advise on projects and programs?
	Are there Practitioners who can implement projects and programs?
Communication Channels	To engage the public?
	To engage partners?
	To engage leaders and policy makers?
Group Norms and Guidelines	Operating Guidelines?

### 2. SYNTHESIZE FINDINGS AND CLARIFY KEY ISSUES

Start by conducting a thorough review of the responses to each assessment question. This will help identify strengths, weaknesses, and gaps within the collaboration structure. Look for patterns, contradictions, or areas where clarity is lacking. The goal is to ensure that the foundational elements of the collaboration—such as leadership, resources, scope, and communication—are aligned and functioning effectively.

Identify the core areas that need attention or adjustment. For example, if there is uncertainty around the group’s authority or mandate, this could be an area to prioritize. Similarly, if certain partners are unavailable or critical decisions are unclear, these issues must be addressed.

# Activity

## Collaboration Situation Assessment (continued)

### 3. IDENTIFY CHANGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the issues identified, formulate specific changes and recommendations aimed at improving the collaboration. Potential approaches include:

- **Clear Directive:** If the group's authority or mandate is unclear, work on formalizing and clarifying who called the group together and under what authority. Ensure that all participants understand the group's purpose and their roles within it.
- **Strategic and Inclusive Recruitment:** Think ahead about who needs to be involved in planning to ensure the strategy is feasible and increase the likelihood of plan implementation. Ensure that all key parties are actively involved. If critical stakeholders are missing, identify who they are and seek to bring them into the group. If participation is an issue, work to resolve availability or commitment concerns.
- **Clear Scope:** Establish clearer boundaries for what the group is working on (and not working on). This will help prevent scope creep and ensure that resources are focused on the right priorities.
- **Accountability Mechanisms:** If accountability mechanisms are weak or unclear, create transparent structures for reporting and decision-making. Ensure that all group outputs have a clear path to implementation.
- **Resources:** If the group lacks sufficient funding or is unclear about key milestones, develop a comprehensive resource plan. This plan should address funding gaps and ensure that the group has access to the necessary resources to meet its goals.
- **People:** Ensure that the roles of key individuals (e.g., champions, program managers, facilitators) are clearly defined and that each person is actively engaged in their role. If these roles are not filled or are underperforming, take action to address these gaps.
- **Communication Channels:** Review current communication channels to ensure they are inclusive, transparent, and effective. If there are gaps in engaging certain stakeholders or the public, develop strategies to address this.
- **Group Norms and Guidelines:** If operating guidelines or group norms are unclear or not being followed, review and update them to ensure they are fit for purpose. Ensure that these guidelines promote inclusivity, respect, and efficiency.

### 4. ENGAGE PARTNERS IN SHAPING CHANGES

Involve key partners in the process of shaping and refining these recommendations. Gather feedback on proposed changes and ensure that there is buy-in from all relevant parties. This can be done through meetings, surveys, or collaborative workshops. By engaging partners in the process, there is increased likelihood of successful implementation and commitment to the changes.

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