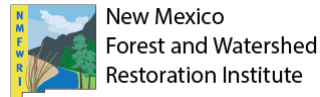


# Collaborative Governance Assessment Report

## FOR THE WESTERN KLAMATH RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP CFLRP

AUTHORS: Nicolena vonHedemann, Tyler A. Beeton, Adam J. Snitker, Melanie M. Colavito, Tara L. Teel, Ch'aska Huayhuaca, and Antony S. Cheng

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**Document Development:** In FY21, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (Forest Service) led a collaborative process to develop a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Common Monitoring Strategy that will be required for all newly authorized and reauthorized projects under the CFLRP. The Forest Service Washington Office requested assistance from the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) in developing and deploying an assessment tool to track collaborative governance within and across CFLRP projects through time. The collaborative assessment is intended to assess whether CFLRP is encouraging an effective and meaningful collaborative approach, and addresses question #12 of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. We developed an online, confidential survey that was administered to CFLRP project participants. With support from the USDA Forest Service Forest Management, Range Management, and Vegetation Ecology program, SWERI conducted regional webinars to introduce the assessment and identify project-level points of contact, which were followed by in-depth engagement with key contacts to determine recruitment strategies, administration timing, and project-specific questions. In FY22 and FY23, SWERI will be collecting baseline information for all newly authorized and reauthorized projects. SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects. The Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University funded survey administration using state funding (Arizona Board of Regents through the Technology, Research and Innovation Fund), which was used as a match to annual federal appropriations to the SWERI.

#### **Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI)**

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes include three university-based restoration institutes: the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI), the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI), and the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) in Arizona. These institutes were congressionally appointed in 2004 by the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act (PL 108-317), and the institutes work together to develop a program of applied research and service to help create healthy forests, prevent uncharacteristic wildfires, sustain the resiliency of water supplies to wildfires, and create jobs. The SWERI receive funding from five primary sources: 1) federal appropriations; 2) additional federal funding (e.g., the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act); 3) state appropriations; 4) in-kind support from host universities; and 5) extramural funding such as grants and agreements. The SWERI receive federal appropriations under the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act administered through the Forest Service. In accordance with federal law and USDA policy, these institutions are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights Room 326-A, Whitten Building 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC, 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice & TDD).

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The Ecological Restoration Institute is nationally recognized for mobilizing the unique assets of a university to help solve the problem of unnaturally severe wildfire and degraded forest health throughout the American West. ERI serves diverse audiences with objective science and implementation strategies that support ecological restoration and climate adaptation on western forest landscapes.

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Cover photo credit: Western Klamath Restoration Partnership annual workshop in Orleans, California, May 31, 2023, photo by Jodie Pixley.

**Authors:** Nicolena vonHedemann<sup>1</sup>, Tyler A. Beeton<sup>2</sup>, Adam J. Snitker<sup>2</sup>, Melanie M. Colavito<sup>1</sup>, Tara L. Teel<sup>3</sup>, Ch'aska Huayhuaca<sup>2</sup>, and Antony S. Cheng<sup>2</sup>

1. Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ  
2. Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO  
3. Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

#### **Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI), Colorado State University (CSU)**

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute is a science-based outreach and engagement organization hosted by the Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship and the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University. Colorado State University (CSU) is a land-grant university with a mission to provide teaching, research, public service, and engagement that CFRI strives to uphold. CFRI was established by Congress as part of the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes to serve as a bridge between researchers, managers, and stakeholders working to restore and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems to wildfires in Colorado, the Southern Rocky Mountains, and the Intermountain West. CFRI leads collaborations between researchers, managers, and stakeholders to generate and apply locally relevant, actionable knowledge to inform forest management strategies. CFRI's work informs forest conditions assessments, management goals and objectives, monitoring plans, and adaptive management processes.

**NAU Land Acknowledgment:** Northern Arizona University sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, on homelands sacred to Native Americans. We honor their past, present, and future generations, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home.

**CSU Land Acknowledgment:** Colorado State University acknowledges, with respect, that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. This was also a site of trade, gathering, and healing for numerous other Native tribes. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as original stewards of this land and all the relatives within it. As these words of acknowledgment are spoken and heard, the ties Nations have to their traditional homelands are renewed and reaffirmed. CSU is founded as a land-grant institution, and we accept that our mission must encompass access to education and inclusion. And, significantly, that our founding came at a dire cost to Native Nations and peoples whose land this University was built upon. This acknowledgment is the education and inclusion we must practice in recognizing our institutional history, responsibility, and commitment.

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## Executive Summary

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a collaborative governance assessment as part of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Common Monitoring Strategy. The collaborative governance assessment was designed to assess the following questions:

1. What are the structural and functional dynamics of the collaborative? Does the collaborative exhibit characteristics generally associated with healthy, well-functioning, and resilient collaboratives?
2. What do participants need or recommend to improve the process?
3. To what extent do participants feel the project is meeting process, socio-economic, and ecological goals?
4. What challenges or disruptions affect collaborative performance and durability?

The SWERI administered an online survey to members of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP (henceforth the Partnership) in April-June 2023, which included members of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRP), the Six Rivers National Forest, and Klamath National Forest.

Overall, a strong majority of respondents agreed on almost every indicator that the Partnership members worked well together and accomplished their goals. There was strong agreement that a representative cross-section of individuals who have a stake in the issues were involved in the Partnership, although few U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service hereafter) perspectives were represented in the survey responses. Nearly all respondents agreed that there was a shared understanding of the purpose and key problems addressed by the CFLRP project and strategies used to address those problems. Most respondents' expectations were met in collaborating with the Forest Service through planning, implementation, and monitoring, although some qualitative comments indicated that respondents were only evaluating their relationship with the Six Rivers National Forest in the survey because there was not meaningful collaboration with the Klamath National Forest. Nearly all respondents agreed that the collaborative process has helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect. A strong majority of respondents trusted the group to achieve desired outcomes and believed that they and other partners were committed to the collaborative process. A strong majority of respondents indicated that leaders worked well across organizations, helped maintain a common vision, and

motivated others. Participants strongly agreed that there were opportunities to co-generate knowledge, work toward adaptive management, and be flexible in the face of changes. Respondents felt that the CFLRP project had adequate technical expertise, facilitation, and funds, but not sufficient time to accomplish work. There was also strong agreement that protocols were in place to promote accountability among CFLRP participants and that protocols were understood, fair, and used appropriately. Half of respondents perceived that there were protocols in place that promoted accountability between the WKRP and the Forest Service. Most participants also understood how to inform Forest Service decisions and thought that the agency was responsive to collaborative feedback and clear about their decision-making.

Most respondents thought that the CFLRP project was moving toward achieving most desired collaborative, ecological, and socio-economic goals, particularly enhancing communication, including diverse perspectives, enabling landscape-scale planning, improving restoration pace and scale and watershed function, reducing fuel hazards, supporting local employment, and accomplishing work on adjacent lands. Most respondents did not think that progress has been made in offsetting treatment costs through restoration byproducts.

Respondents indicated some areas where there was room for improvement and made pertinent recommendations. The Partnership has dealt with several disruptions, such as limited agency capacity, high personnel turnover, biophysical disruptions such as wildfire, and limited forest products industry capacity. Commenters also listed challenges of high staff turnover, unfilled positions, difficulty in finding workforce housing, delays in funding, and pivoting to work in post-fire landscapes. Responses to these disruptions included building capacity through hiring and contracting, building in redundancies to ease turnover transitions, securing additional funding, and shifting to address post-wildfire landscapes. Three key recommendations emerged: 1) increase Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process, particularly from the Klamath National Forest; 2) enhance communication and engagement with participants, including local communities and tribes because the Forest Service has a trust responsibility to these sovereign nations; 3) implement a systematic approach to curb the impacts of turnover, including increasing staffing capacity.

The SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects, with the goal of gauging capacities and identifying areas for improvement.

## Introduction

The Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) was passed in 2009 and established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLRP was to “encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes”<sup>1</sup> through a competitive funding program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service hereafter). In 2021, CFLRP coordinators, Forest Service personnel, and partners led a collaborative process to develop a CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy consisting of ecological and socio-economic monitoring questions and indicators that will supplement local project multi-party monitoring plans and will be required for all newly authorized and reauthorized projects.<sup>2</sup>

One core component of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy relates to monitoring collaborative governance.<sup>3</sup> While the CFLRP requires projects to collaborate throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring, “collaboration” was not defined in the FLRA or CFLRP requirements, nor did the CFLRP provide specific guidelines by which collaborative groups convened and engaged in collaborative restoration throughout the life of the CFLRP project. This has resulted in a multitude of collaborative structures, processes, and practices implemented in diverse social and ecological contexts across the country. Also, collaborative groups are nested within and impacted by changes that occur within their group, external changes in social and ecological conditions, and a fluid institutional environment, all of which require groups to adjust and evolve their structures, practices, and processes (Beeton et al., 2022; Ulibarri et al., 2020). Yet, a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating attributes of collaborative governance and resilience is lacking. Systemic evaluation could lead to better understanding of what factors promote or challenge collaboration across different contexts, help target what kinds of investments are needed, and where to maintain and enhance collaborative capacity.

To address this need, the Forest Service Washington Office requested assistance from the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) in developing and deploying an assessment tool to track collaborative governance. During the development of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy, CFLRP coordinators from the Washington Office elicited feedback from CFLRP practitioners, CFLRP coordinators, and subject matter experts to identify monitoring questions, indicators, and available data sources. With respect to collaborative

governance, partners wanted to address the question, how well is the CFLRP encouraging an effective and meaningful collaborative approach? CFLRP practitioners and coordinators expressed interest in documenting collaborative health, function, and resilience, as well as performance (perceived outcomes). CFLRP practitioners and coordinators also emphasized the need for a tool that is straightforward, not time-consuming, easy to administer, and longitudinal. To directly inform the components of the collaboration assessment, we incorporated stakeholder feedback and questions of interest developed while drafting the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. Our objectives were to:

1. Develop a rigorous, systematic, and longitudinal assessment of collaborative governance that is grounded in the science and practice of landscape-scale collaborative forest restoration.
2. Support program-wide evaluation of collaborative progress and performance, and report on findings to Forest Service staff and Congress.
3. Facilitate project-level engagement, reporting, and peer-learning to inform local collaborative work and adaptive management.
4. Contribute to the theory and practice of collaborative governance through the synthesis of findings and lessons learned.

The SWERI administered the collaborative governance assessment – an online survey – to the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP, which is comprised of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (henceforth WKRP), the Six Rivers National Forest, and the Klamath National Forest, (collectively referred to as the Partnership participating in the CFLRP project) from April to June 2023. While the WKRP has been meeting in some form for 15 years, CFLRP funding was initiated in 2022. Throughout this report, “the Partnership” will refer to participants in the CFLRP project –WKRP and the two national forests. The report herein summarizes findings from the collaboration assessment. We have also integrated, where appropriate, information gathered from a worksheet completed by key Partnership participants on the local context and feedback during a presentation of initial results and discussion with the Partnership. See [Appendix 1](#) for a report brief summarizing our findings, and [Appendix 2](#) for a presentation we led with the Partnership in November 2023. We briefly highlight the approach, followed by a baseline assessment of findings and document recommendations from respondents to improve the collaborative process.

<sup>1</sup> PL 111-11 CFLRP Authorizing legislation - <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/110th-congress/senate-report/370/1>

<sup>2</sup> CFLRP National Core Monitoring Strategy - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/documents/cflrp/CMS-Fact-Sheet-final-20221013.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Here, we define governance as “the system of institutions, including rules, laws, regulations, policies, and social norms, and organizations involved in governing environmental resource use and/or protection” (Chaffin et al. 2014).

## Approach

We developed an online survey to assess:

1. What are the structural and functional dynamics of the collaborative? Does the collaborative exhibit characteristics generally associated with healthy, well-functioning, and resilient collaboratives?
2. To what extent do participants feel the project is meeting process, socio-economic, and ecological goals?
3. What challenges or disruptions affect collaborative performance and durability?
4. What do participants need or recommend to improve the process?

## Framework

The survey was structured using concepts from an integrative collaborative governance framework ([Emerson et al., 2012](#)), resilience and adaptability literature ([Emerson and Gerlak, 2014](#); [Folke et al., 2005](#); [Gupta et al., 2010](#)), and empirical findings from the first 10 years of the CFLRP ([Beeton et al., 2022](#); [Butler and Schultz, 2019](#); [McIntyre and Schultz, 2020](#); [Schultz et al., 2018](#)).

**Collaboration dynamics** – To assess collaboration dynamics, we operationalized the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance ([Emerson et al., 2012](#)). The framework incorporates multiple components of collaborative governance that are grounded in collaborative practice, link collaboration dynamics to socio-economic and ecological outcomes, and promote assessment of collaboratives across settings and time. The components include principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action ([Emerson et al., 2012](#)).

**Principled engagement** refers to ensuring the right people are involved, i.e., a representative cross-section of people and entities who have a stake in the issue. Principled engagement also emphasizes the principles of open and inclusive communication and negotiation, where individuals with diverse perspectives and knowledge work together to identify shared problems, agree on strategies to solve those problems, and agree on the purpose or scope of the collaborative.

**Shared motivation** refers to the interpersonal and relational elements of collaborative dynamics. Shared motivation includes the sub-components mutual trust, understanding, and commitment. It is often referred to as social capital, or the “glue” that holds groups together through networks, norms, rules, and trust that promote collective action ([Pelling and High, 2005](#)). This glue is crucial for effective collaboration; social capital is built

through investments in social relationships and can be expressed through mutual commitment of individuals and groups to common collaborative goals.

**Capacity for joint action** comprises four sub-components: leadership, knowledge and learning, resources, and institutional arrangements ([Emerson and Gerlak, 2014](#)). Leadership is essential for managing collaboratives, and leaders can fill many roles including convener, sponsor, public advocate, facilitator, and others. They are important for: building trust, sensemaking, bringing people together, initiating partnerships, motivating people to work together, compiling, generating, and disseminating knowledge, developing visions of and support for change, and managing conflict ([Folke et al., 2005](#)).

In a collaborative setting, participants should work together to co-create and co-develop shared understanding and knowledge through social learning; knowledge and information should be equally accessible to all members of the collaborative; and learning and knowledge should be used to inform flexible, adaptive management ([Emerson and Gerlak, 2014](#)). Social learning occurs through repeated interactions and joint problem-solving among participants. It emphasizes testing, monitoring, and reevaluating participants’ assumptions and understanding of ecosystem responses and feedbacks to learn and adapt management actions ([Folke et al., 2005](#); [Lebel et al., 2010](#); [Sharma-Wallace et al., 2018](#)). Collaboratives often pool and share resources to accomplish tasks and get work done. These can include funding, personnel, science and technical expertise, facilitation, and coordination.

Institutional arrangements are the processes, protocols, and structures needed to manage collaboration over time, i.e., the rules of the game. Collaborative structures, processes, and protocols should be clearly understood, transparent, perceived as fair and equitable, and include mechanisms of accountability ([Emerson et al., 2012](#); [Gupta et al., 2010](#); [Stern and Coleman, 2015](#)). Capacity needs change through time, and the relative amount of these four capacity types is contingent upon the local context – e.g., history of conflict, people involved, purpose and objectives of the group, among others ([Imperial et al., 2016](#)).

**Perceived outcomes** – Our assessment focuses both on perceived “process” outcomes (e.g., did the collaborative process reduce conflict, or increase the ability to plan at a landscape scale?) and socio-economic and environmental outcomes. The outcome metrics chosen for evaluation were derived from several sources: the intent of the

FLRA of 2009 and the CFLRP, project proposals, and conversations with local, regional, and national CFLRP coordinators while developing the Common Monitoring Strategy.

**Challenges or disruptions that affect collaborative performance and durability** – Disruptions—i.e., personnel turnover, legal or policy changes, and biophysical disturbances like wildfires or insect outbreaks—can happen at any time. These disruptions may impact collaborative progress and performance, and/or force groups to adapt. We developed a list of common challenges that CFLRP projects and other landscape-scale forest collaboratives reported in: 1) breakout group discussions and focus group sessions at the 2020 SWERI Cross-boundary landscape restoration workshop ([SWERI, 2020](#)) and the 2020 Idaho forest collaborative shared stewardship workshops; 2) the 2020 CFLRP Collaboration Indicator Survey administered by the National Forest Foundation<sup>4</sup>; and 3) a survey administered to Forest Service staff engaged in 2010 and 2012 CFLRP projects ([Schultz et al., 2018](#)). Identifying current challenges or disruptions that CFLRP projects are grappling with can support strategic investment toward solutions to maintain collaborative performance and durability.

**Needs or recommendations to improve the process** – We captured respondents' perspectives on needs and recommendations to improve the collaborative process by including open-ended survey questions.

### Data Collection and Analysis

We developed a standardized survey in the online survey tool Qualtrics that consisted of 21, mostly closed-ended statements using a Likert scale. SWERI piloted the assessment with and elicited feedback from the Northern Blues All-Lands Restoration Partnership and Northern Blues CFLRP project participants (n=37), as well as participants of the Colorado Front Range CFLRP (n=3) in FY21 ([Beeton et al., 2022](#)).

In FY22, SWERI and the Forest Service held regionally focused webinars to introduce the assessment and identify key points of contact for each newly authorized and reauthorized project to help with recruiting participants, scheduling the assessment, and identifying project-specific questions of interest that were appended to the standardized survey, which is outlined in our standard operating procedures document.<sup>5</sup> Drawing on experience from Northern Blues and conversations with the next round of CFLRP projects rolling out the survey, SWERI developed a menu of 15 possible appended questions that

the projects could add to the end of the standard survey to capture additional information of interest to the project. These questions addressed collaborative structure, participation and engagement, general expectations, successes, and challenges, and acceptance of wildfire mitigation and management techniques. The points of contact also identified key informants to complete a group interview or worksheet to answer questions about collaborative function that provided context for the interpretation of results. These questions included information on collaborative governance structure, rules for participation, dispute resolution processes, defining partnership vision, methods of collaboration with the Forest Service on planning, implementation, and monitoring, and a brief history of the collaborative. The initial survey results were presented to each CFLRP project to give survey respondents the opportunity to participate in an open discussion and provide feedback for this final report.

Key contacts from Western Klamath Forest Partnership leadership and the Mid Klamath Watershed Council (a member organization of the WKRP) provided support in recruiting participants and administering the survey through the Partnership listserv from April to June 2023. The survey was open for 6 weeks. We received 28 usable responses, representing more than 27% of the population. We used the statistical software program Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) to document mean responses and variation in responses. Open-ended questions were analyzed using a thematic analysis ([Ryan and Bernard, 2003](#)). Small sample sizes prohibited further statistical analyses, though this will be possible when more data has been collected.

### Findings

Our results are organized as follows. The first section includes responses related to respondents' affiliations, motivations for being involved in the CFLRP project, level of engagement, and the degree to which respondents felt the project was collaborative. We then provide a description of findings related to collaboration dynamics (i.e., **principled engagement**, **shared motivation**, and **capacity for joint action**). We provide a short description of each collaboration dynamic construct in italics to orient the reader. We follow with findings on perceived outcomes, disruptions that are challenging to collaborative progress and performance, and recommendations to improve the process. Finally, we present results from the appended question set that was developed in coordination with key points of contact

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cfri.box.com/s/hfu5cdk599j5gp5ixphm2qj7gdp4h1ef>

affiliated with the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP. For scale items (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree progress scales), percentages in the text sum somewhat agree to strongly agree or moderate to substantial progress. For clarity, we describe majority or strong majority results as greater than or equal to 60% agreement and slight majority as greater than 50% agreement. Some participants did not respond to certain questions or chose the option, “don’t know/not applicable,” and thus their responses were removed from the analysis of those questions.

### Introductory questions

The majority of participants represented tribes (39%) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (36%), and the “other” respondent represented both from a tribe and the interested public (Figure 1). The WKRP is steered by co-leads and a core team of fewer than 20 participants who represent the Karuk Tribe, several nonprofits (Mid Klamath Watershed Council, Salmon River Restoration Council, Klamath Forest Alliance, and the Environmental Protection Information Center), research community, local community councils and members, the Klamath National Forest, and the Six Rivers National Forest (WKRP Governance document). There were no respondents from the forest products industry and local, state, or other federal agencies, although they do not hold active positions in the core team. There was also only one respondent representing the Forest Service, so there is limited inclusion of their perspectives in these results.

The most frequently reported motivations for being involved in the CFLRP project were to restore forest resiliency (64%) and protect or restore cultural resources (36%) (Figure 2). A strong majority of

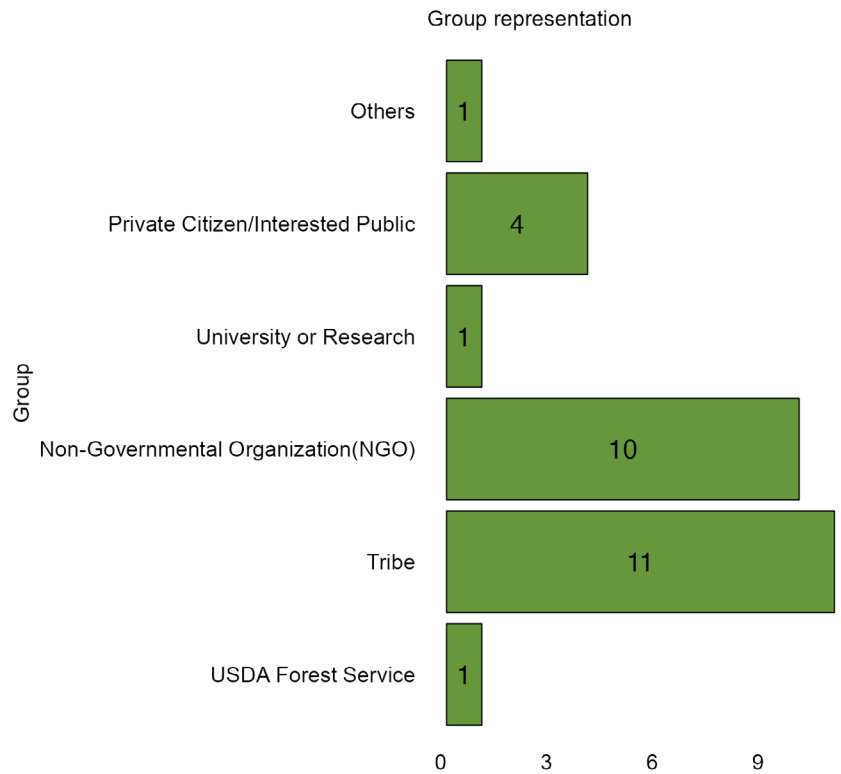


Figure 1: Respondents’ self-identified representation with associated organizations.

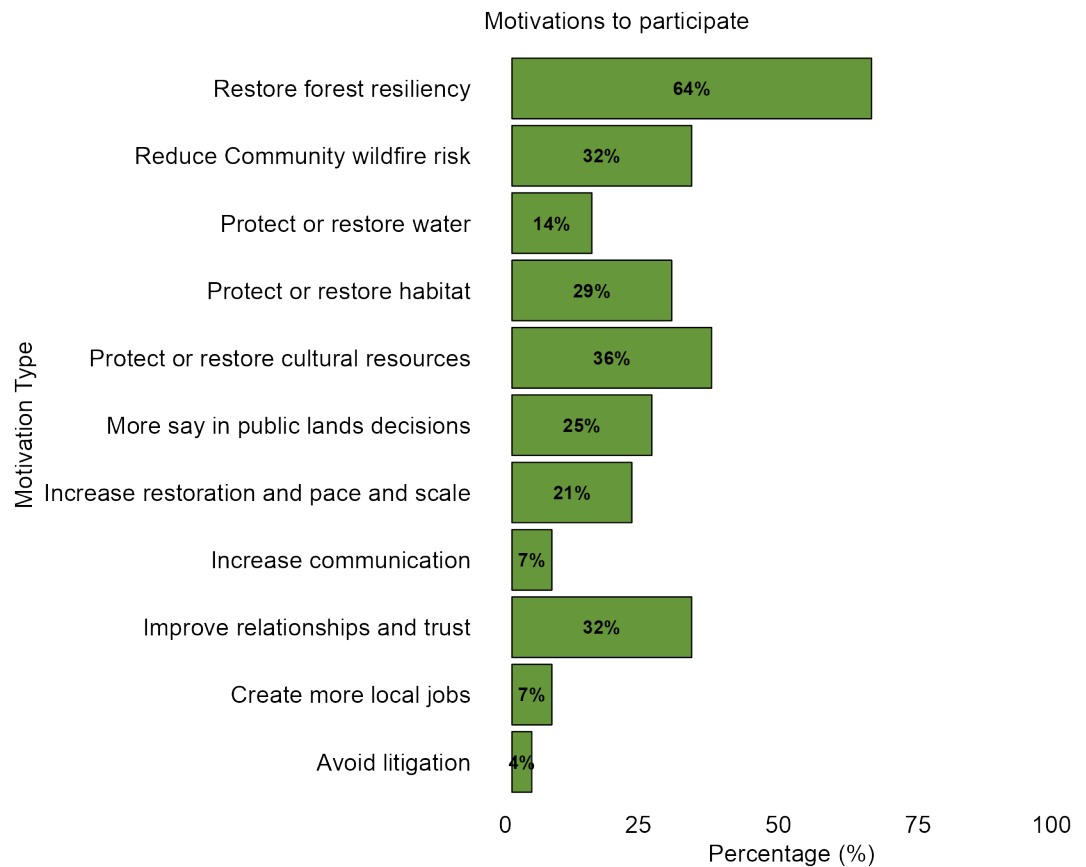


Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who identified the associated motive as reason for their participation in the collaborative. Note – respondents were able to select multiple motives.

participants (82%) reported that they were moderately to highly engaged in the CFLRP project during the past 12 months, while 18% reported low engagement (Figure 3). Respondents recorded an average of over 4 years of engagement, ranging from newly engaged in 2023 to 11 years of participation.

We asked respondents to reflect on the degree to which they thought the CFLRP project was collaborative (on a scale from not collaborative at all to very collaborative), which we defined in the survey as:

*Collaboration occurs when multiple parties come together to address problems that could not be achieved by acting alone. Effective Collaboration should typically include: inclusive and diverse stakeholder interaction throughout the process; venues for open communication and negotiation about values, interests, and appropriate management actions; and opportunities for social learning.*

A strong majority of respondents (89%) indicated the CFLRP project has been collaborative to very collaborative, with no respondents thinking the project was not collaborative (Figure 4).

**Principled engagement**

*Principled engagement refers to having the right people involved in iterative and inclusive dialogue to determine shared problems, identify shared strategies to solve problems, and agree to the shared purpose of the project.*

A strong majority of respondents (92%) agreed that a representative cross-section of individuals who have a stake in the issues and outcomes of the project were involved, although, as noted above, only one respondent from the Forest Service answered the survey (Figure 5).

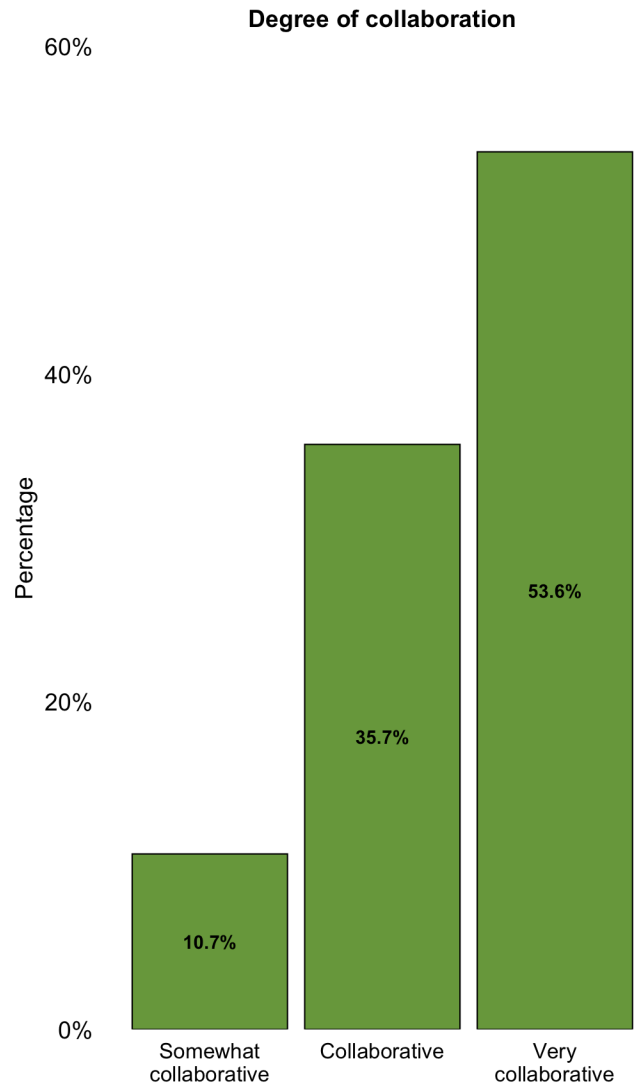
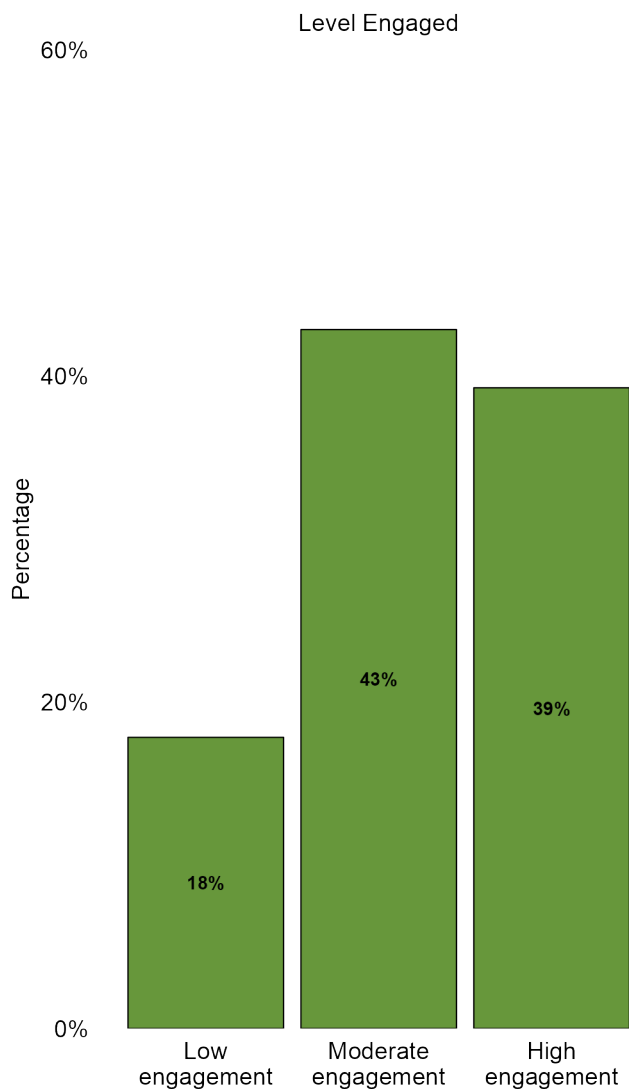


Figure 3: Percent of respondents who rated their involvement in this project as “Not engaged,” “Low engagement,” “Moderate engagement” or “High engagement.”

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who reported this project to be “Not collaborative,” “Somewhat collaborative,” “Collaborative” or “Very collaborative.”

All respondents (100%) agreed that participants worked together to identify shared interests and concerns, and a strong majority (88%) felt the collaborative process created a neutral space for CFLRP participants to openly discuss controversial issues (Figure 5).

A strong majority of respondents indicated that participants had a shared understanding of the problems that impact their landscape (100%), the strategies to solve those problems (96%), and the purpose of the CFLRP project (100%) (Figure 6)

A strong majority of respondents felt the level of collaboration between the WKRP and the Forest Service met their expectations during planning (80%), implementation (77%), and monitoring (71%) (Figure 7).

### Shared Motivation

*Shared motivation refers to trust, mutual understanding, relationship-building, and commitment to the collaborative process.*

A strong majority of participants agreed the collaborative process helped build trust in each other (100%), relationships (100%), and mutual respect of others' positions and interests (96%) (Figure 8). A strong majority (96%) of participants also trusted in the group's ability to achieve desired actions and outcomes (Figure 8). All respondents (100%) indicated that they were committed to the collaborative process (Figure 9). In addition, a strong majority believed that the Forest Service unit level staff (72%) and other project participants were committed to the collaborative process (96%) (Figure 9).

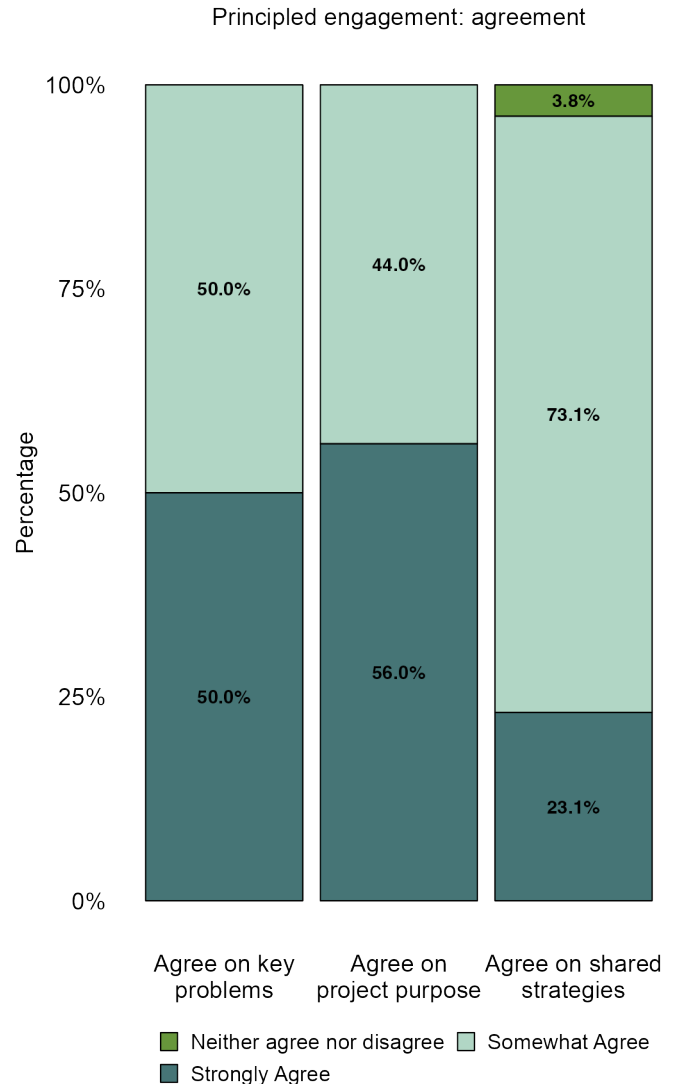
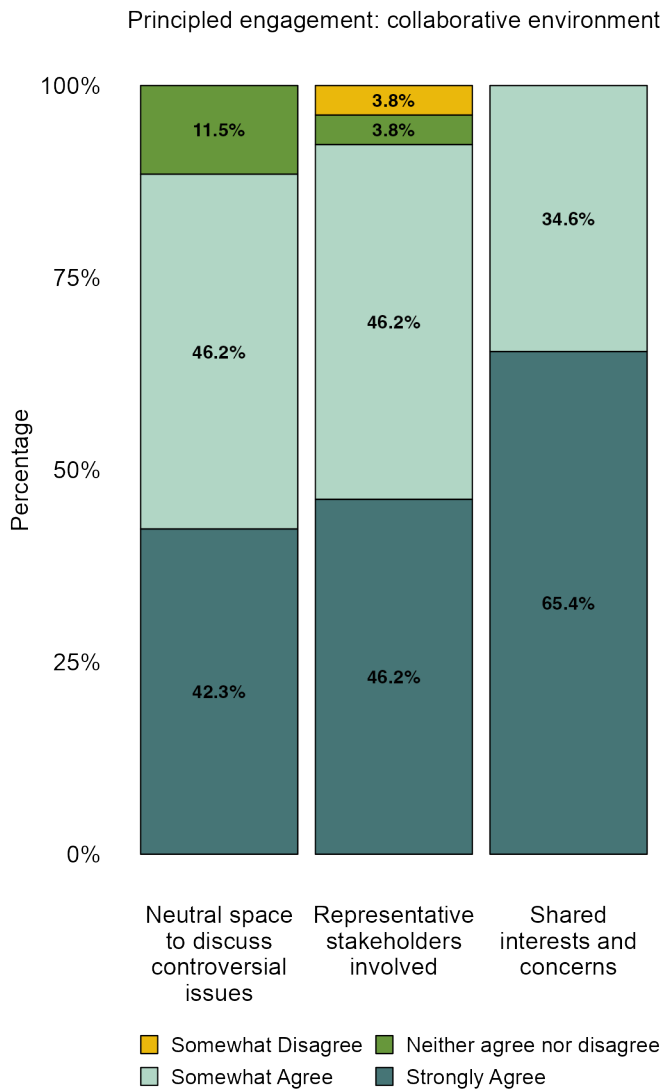


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that representative stakeholders are involved, stakeholders have shared interests and concerns, and the collaborative is a neutral space to discuss controversial issues.

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who agree or are neutral on the key problems that impact the landscape, strategies to solve problems, and purpose of the collaborative.

## Capacity for Joint Action

Capacity for joint action includes four components: collaborative leadership, knowledge and learning, resources, and institutional arrangements that support fair governance.

### Leadership

Leadership is a critical component for collaborative governance. Leaders are needed to convene partners, communicate a shared vision, and motivate people to work together.

A strong majority of respondents agreed that the Partnership had leaders who worked well with other people (100%), maintained and communicated a common vision and direction (100%), and motivated others to work together (88%) (Figure 10).

## Knowledge and Learning

Collaboratives should engage in a knowledge generation and social learning process for joint action. Knowledge should be co-produced, equally available to all partners, and be used to implement adaptive management.

A strong majority of respondents agreed that the CFLRP process provided opportunities to co-generate knowledge to learn and solve problems together (100%), that knowledge and information was shared equally among participants (76%), and that participants were committed to informing adjustments to management practices based on learning and feedback, i.e., adaptive management (79%) (Figure 11). Likewise, a strong majority felt that participants had the flexibility to alter course when landscape conditions change (e.g., wildfire affects a planning unit) (79%) and when the collaborative changes (e.g., new faces or priorities, 83%) (Figure 11).

Shared motivation: trust and respect

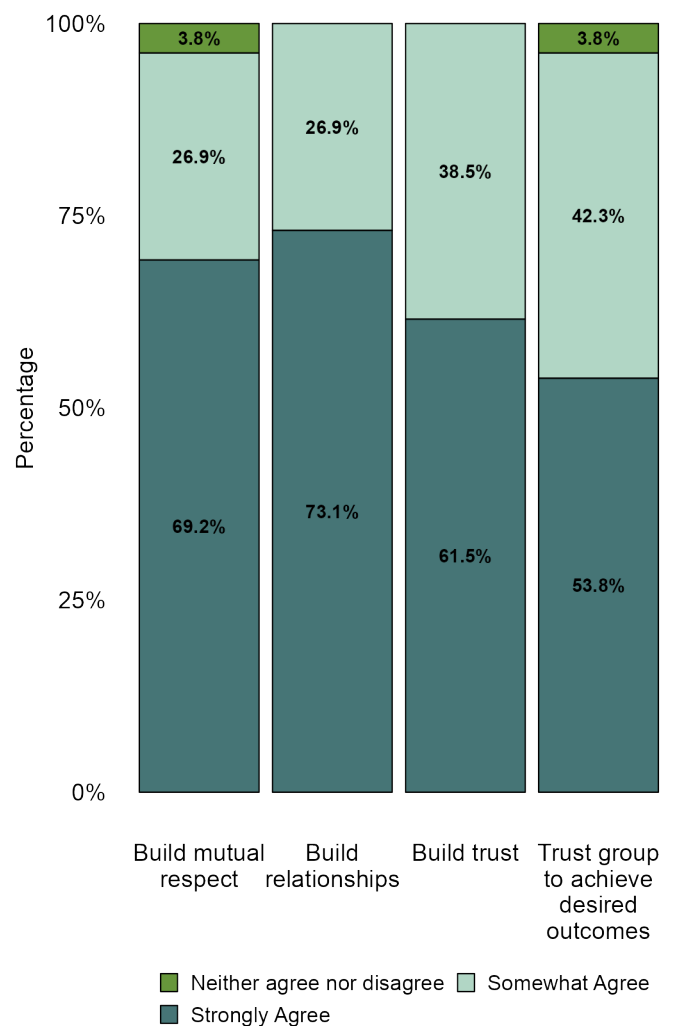
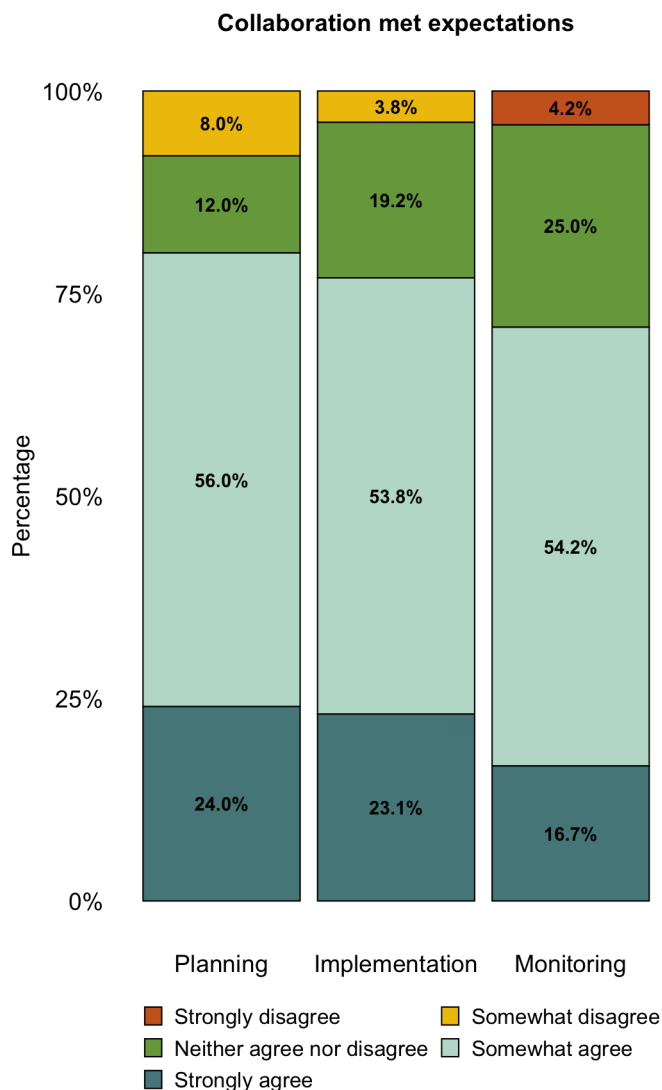


Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that the USFS collaborates during planning, implementation, and monitoring stages.

Figure 8: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that the collaborative process has helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect, as well as the extent to which participants trust the group to achieve desired outcomes.

Resources

*To accomplish tasks and get work done, collaboratives often pool and share resources, including funding, personnel time, technical expertise, and facilitation, which, in turn, can support buy-in.*

A strong majority of participants agreed that the project had adequate access to funds (91%), technical expertise (84%), and facilitation skills (96%) to get work done (Figure 12). Meanwhile, only a minority (41%) agreed that the group had adequate time to accomplish tasks (Figure 12).

Institutional Arrangements

*Institutional arrangements are the rules of the game. They include processes, protocols, and structures needed to manage collaboration over time. They should be clearly understood, perceived as fair and equitable, and include accountability mechanisms within and between entities.*

A strong majority of survey respondents (76%) agreed there were protocols (e.g., decision rules, charters, memoranda of understanding) in place that promote accountability among CFLRP participants (Figure 13). Half of respondents thought that there were protocols in place that promoted accountability between the Forest Service and CFLRP project participants (Figure 13). A strong majority agreed that existing protocols were clearly understood (78%), fair and equitable (83%), and used appropriately (88%) (Figure 13).

A strong majority of respondents (78%) felt that project participants understood when and what collaborative input was useful to inform Forest Service decisions (Figure 14). Further, a strong majority reported the Forest Service was responsive to collaborative input (72%) and agreed the agency was clear with CFLRP project participants about the decisions they make and why they make them (70%) (Figure 14).

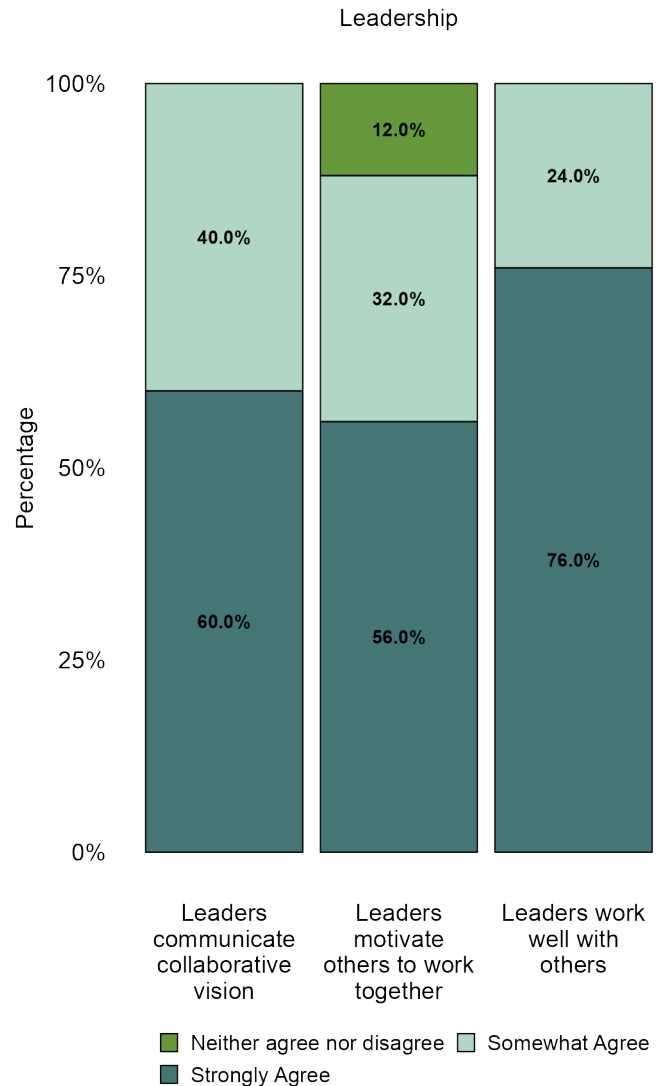
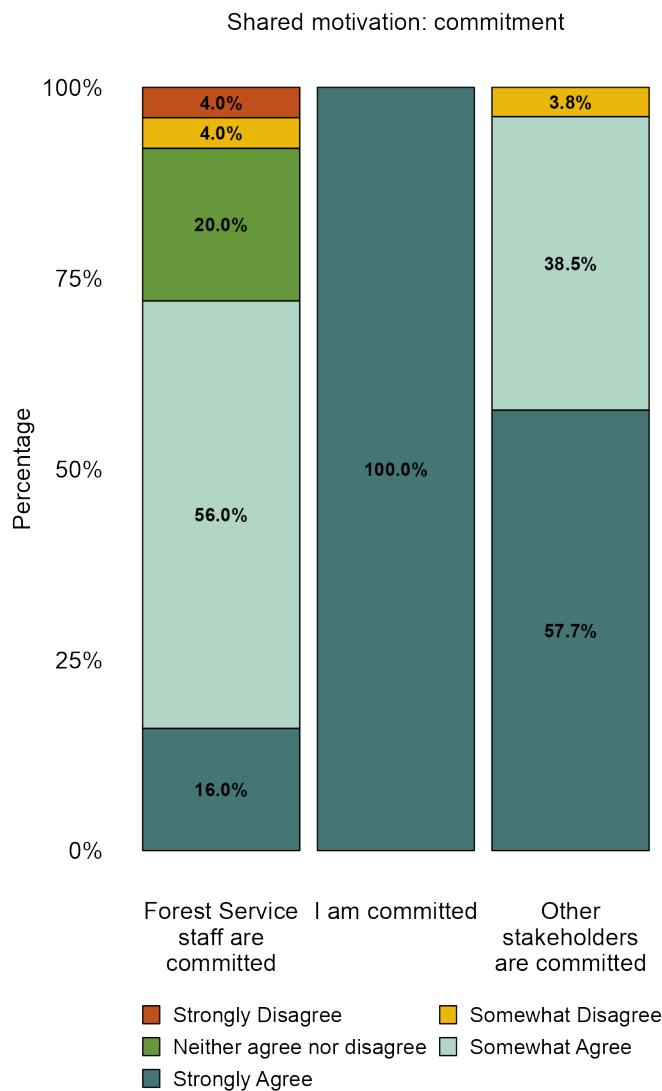


Figure 9: Percentage of respondents that agree to disagree that they, the USFS, and other stakeholders are committed to the process.

Figure 10: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that the leaders work well with others, communicate a common vision and direction, and motivate others to work together.

## Outcomes

We assessed perceived progress on process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes for the Partnership. Notably, while the WKRP has been meeting since 2007 (initially as the Mid Klamath Restoration Partners), the CFLRP project began in 2022, and thus several outcomes related to CFLRP funding may not be realized for several years after implementation (“[About WKRP](#)”).

A strong majority of respondents agreed that the CFLRP collaborative process has achieved positive results in all collaborative outcomes measured. These included enhancing communication among participants (84%), minimizing conflict among stakeholders (72%), enhancing decision making (79%), including diverse interests, perspectives, and knowledges (84%), reducing litigation (76%), enabling landscape-scale planning (84%), and enhancing planning across boundaries (72%) (Figure 15).

With regards to ecological goals, a strong majority reported moderate to substantial progress in improving or maintaining restoration pace and scale (91%), reducing fuel hazards (90%), improving fire use (66%), improving habitat for focal species (79%), maintaining or improving watershed functions (e.g., aquatic habitat, water quality, soil productivity) (82%), and controlling invasive species (76%) (Figure 16). Only a slight majority agreed that the process contributed to improvement in restoring old-growth stands (53%) (Figure 16).

In terms of socio-economic goals, a strong majority of respondents agreed the collaborative process had made moderate to substantial progress in reducing the risk of wildfires to communities (70%), supporting local employment or training opportunities (e.g., forest products industry, youth/citizen science, 90%), and accomplishing more work on adjacent lands (e.g., tribal, state, private lands, 87%) (Figure 17). However, few

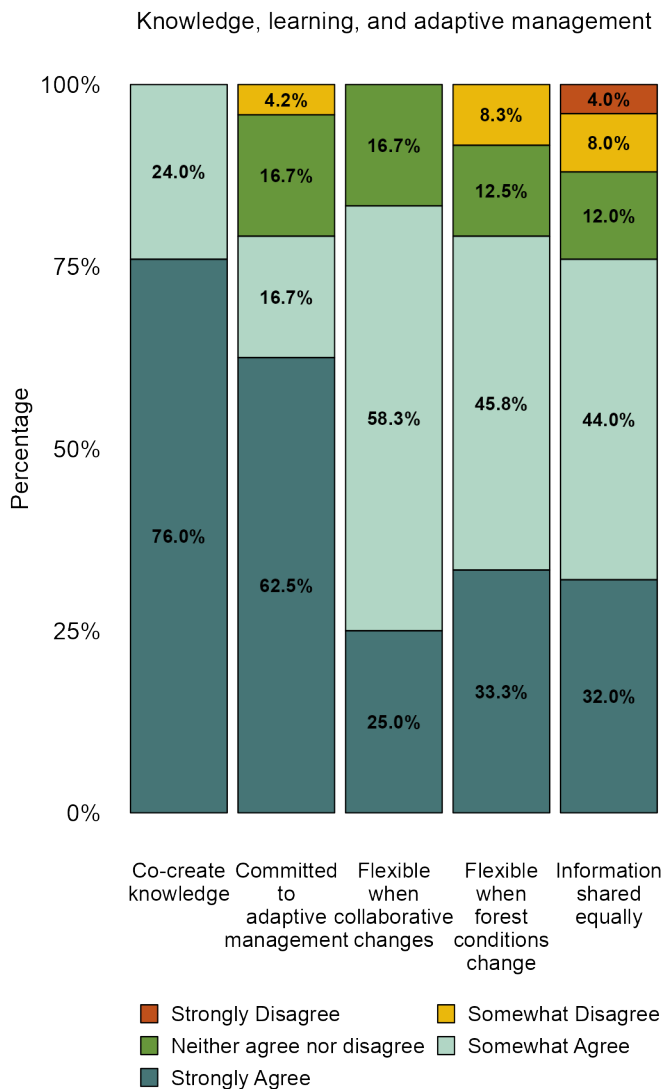


Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that knowledge and information is co-generated by participants, shared equally, and used by participants to adjust management practices.

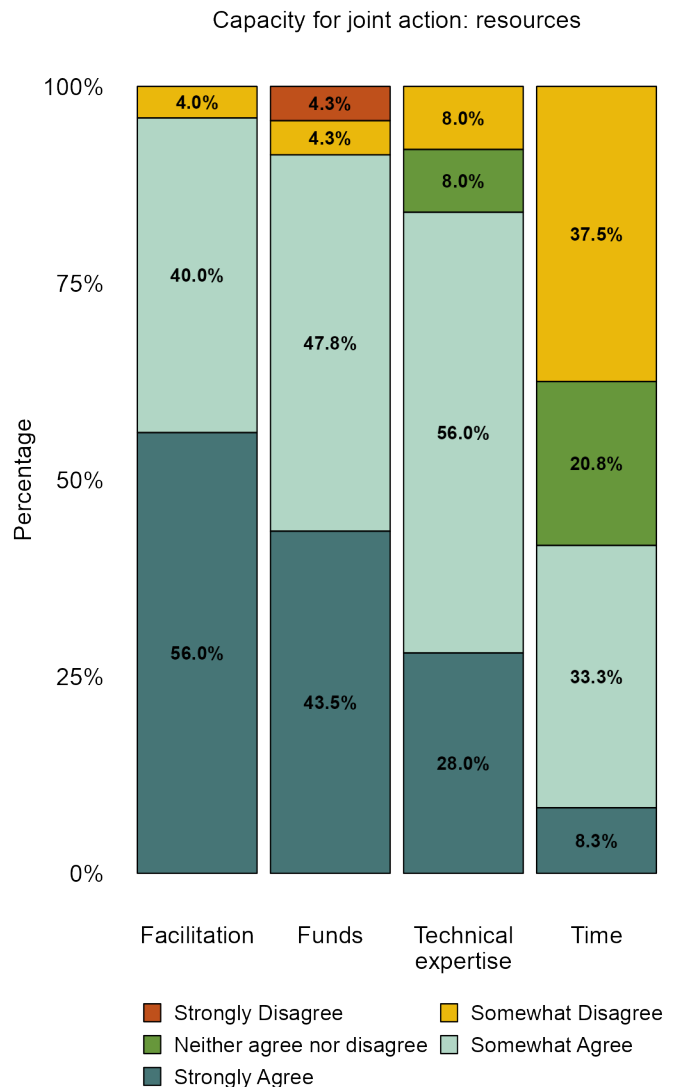


Figure 12: Percentage of respondents who agree or disagree that the collaborative has adequate: funds, time, technical expertise, and facilitation skills to accomplish work.

respondents (21%) felt there was progress in offsetting treatment costs with restoration byproducts (e.g., woody biomass) (Figure 17).

**Disruptions**

We developed a list of common challenges that CFLRP projects and other landscape-scale forest collaboratives reported in: 1) breakout group discussions and focus group sessions at the 2020 SWERI Cross-boundary Landscape Restoration Workshop (SWERI, 2020) and the 2020 Idaho forest collaborative shared stewardship workshops; 2) the 2020 CFLRP Collaboration Indicator Survey administered by the National Forest Foundation<sup>6</sup>; and 3) a survey administered to Forest Service staff engaged in 2010 and 2012 CFLRP projects (Schultz et al., 2018). Based on that list, the most substantial challenges faced by the Partnership were limited agency capacity for collaborative engagement (90% of respondents found this to be a moderate to significant challenge), frequent personnel turnover (80%), biophysical disturbances (79%), and limited capacity for local wood products industry (74%) (Figure 18).

When asked to identify additional disruptions that have impacted collaborative performance and durability, many expanded on the issues identified above. Respondents reiterated how personnel turnover, limited capacity (across both the agency and partners), moving from planning to implementation in post-fire lands, biophysical disruption, and funding were dominant issues. The most common disruption mentioned (six respondents) was how limited capacity, personnel turnover, and unfilled positions led to what one respondent called “staff overload”:

*Collaborative partner and leadership burnout. We are all doing so much and are stretched so thin. USFS forest and district leadership and personnel turnover – this is a chronic issue that appears to be baked into USFS personnel hiring, and promotion culture and policy, and is really killing the opportunities for true collaboration everywhere.*

*Key project support positions, like GIS, need to be filled at the USFS.*

Notably, a couple respondents said that the difficulty in filling positions was “largely due to lack of housing.” Together,

these accumulated challenges impact both the capacity to engage in collaboration and implement on-the-ground work. Additionally, a couple of respondents also indicated that the biophysical disruption of wildfire had also been “the major challenge” and that it was “difficult to plan, monitor, and implement treatments in recent fire footprints.” Two respondents said delays in funding were disruptive, with one stating that, “grants management consumes skillsets that should be involved in carrying out, overseeing, or advising on the work performed.”

Beyond disruptions reiterated from the survey options, individual respondents also presented several other challenges. One said that “relations between local tribe, with very minimal land base, and USDA Forest Service and non-tribal members” continues to be a challenge. National and state level policies, such as “NEPA, CEQA, Environmental Compliance” and “federal level burn bans” were also identified as disruptive factors.

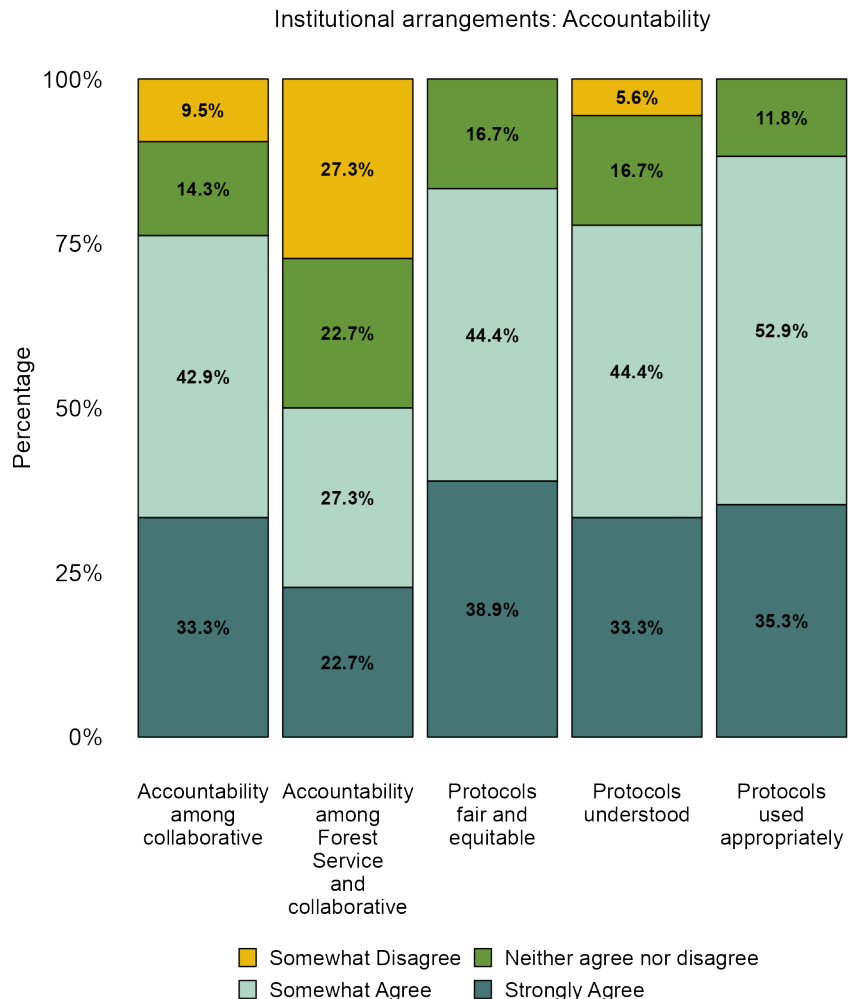


Figure 13: Percentage of respondents who either agree or disagree that protocols promote accountability among participants, between USFS and the collaborative, and that protocols are understood, fair and equitable, and are used appropriately.

<sup>6</sup> CFLRP Collaboration survey administered by the National Forest Foundation — [www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf](http://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf)

Respondents were then asked to identify how the Partnership had responded to these disruptions. The most common response was building capacity through a variety of methods. Participants tried to address position vacancies by hiring and training new staff, including within the Forest Service. However, as one respondent acknowledged, “the process is slow.” Another respondent, described actions taken to ease turnover transitions:

*There is not much we can do about frequent and chronic USFS personnel turnover, other than continuing to start fresh with new leaders every time positions transition. We are trying to work with a broader range of personnel as well as getting agreements in writing. However, new leadership can erase years and even decades of careful relationship and trust building with a simple change in leadership intent. It is very disheartening.*

Other methods of expanding capacity included contracting and expanding funding. One respondent noted, the “CFLRP project is trying to take advantage of a variety of contracting and partnership tools to expand capacity.” Another said that the Partnership has “secured multiple multimillion dollar grants,” although this can also “bring additional capacity challenges.”

Other actions to address disruptions included relying on the dedication of participants to continue talking honestly and building bridges (3 respondents), shifting priorities to address areas impacted by wildfire (2 respondents), and increasing inclusion of outlying river communities (1 respondent).

### Recommendations to Improve the Collaborative Process

We asked participants to suggest recommendations to improve collaborative process, durability, and performance. Based on open-ended responses and the quantitative data reported herein, we identified three key themes for improvement. On average, 46% of respondents (13 individuals) included answers for open-ended questions throughout the survey. Recommendations included: 1) increase Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process, particularly with the Klamath National Forest; 2) enhance communication and engagement with participants, including tribes and local communities; 3) implement a systematic approach to curb the impacts of turnover, including increasing staffing capacity. We expand on these themes by also drawing on follow-up discussions on survey results with the CFLRP participants in November 2023.

#### Increase Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process

Several respondents recommended more collaborative engagement from the Forest Service, particularly from the Klamath National Forest. Limited engagement was also seen in the fact that only one Forest Service participant responded to the survey; future survey iterations should make further connections with Forest Service leadership to encourage an increased response rate and more explicitly ask which responses relate to which forest. Respondents commented:

*The WKRP CFLRP project has a scope across two federally managed forests. These two forests interact with WKRP in completely different ways.*

*This survey should ask separately about USFS Six Rivers National Forest and USFS Klamath National Forest. We have a very different working relationship with each.*

Institutional arrangements: Transparent and responsive

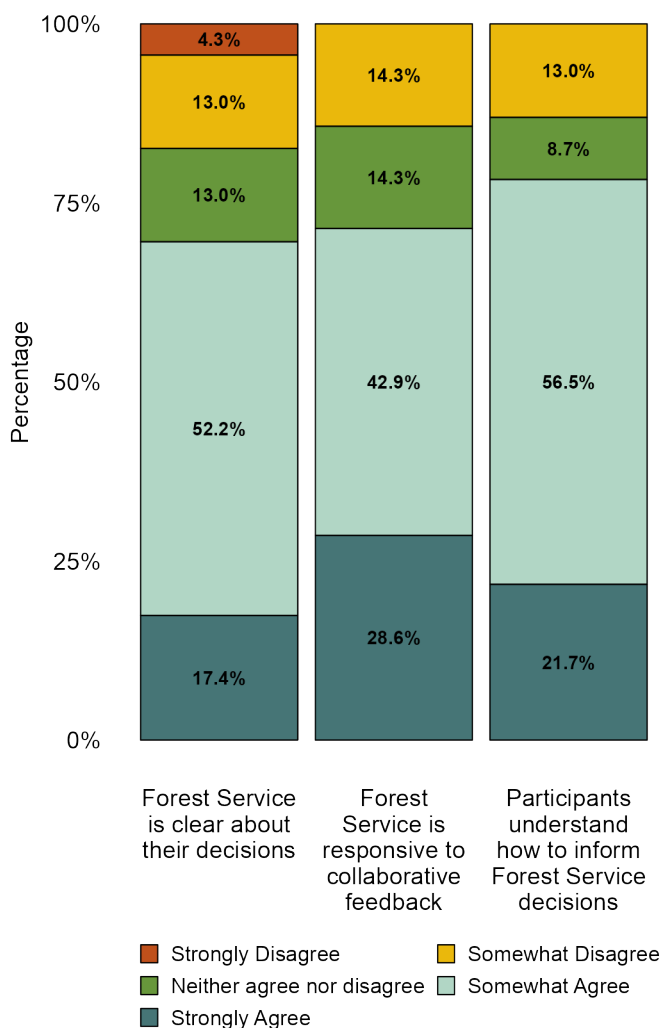


Figure 14: Percent of respondents who agree or disagree that they understand how to inform USFS decisions, the USFS is responsive to feedback, and the USFS is clear about their decisions.

Perceived outcomes: collaborative process

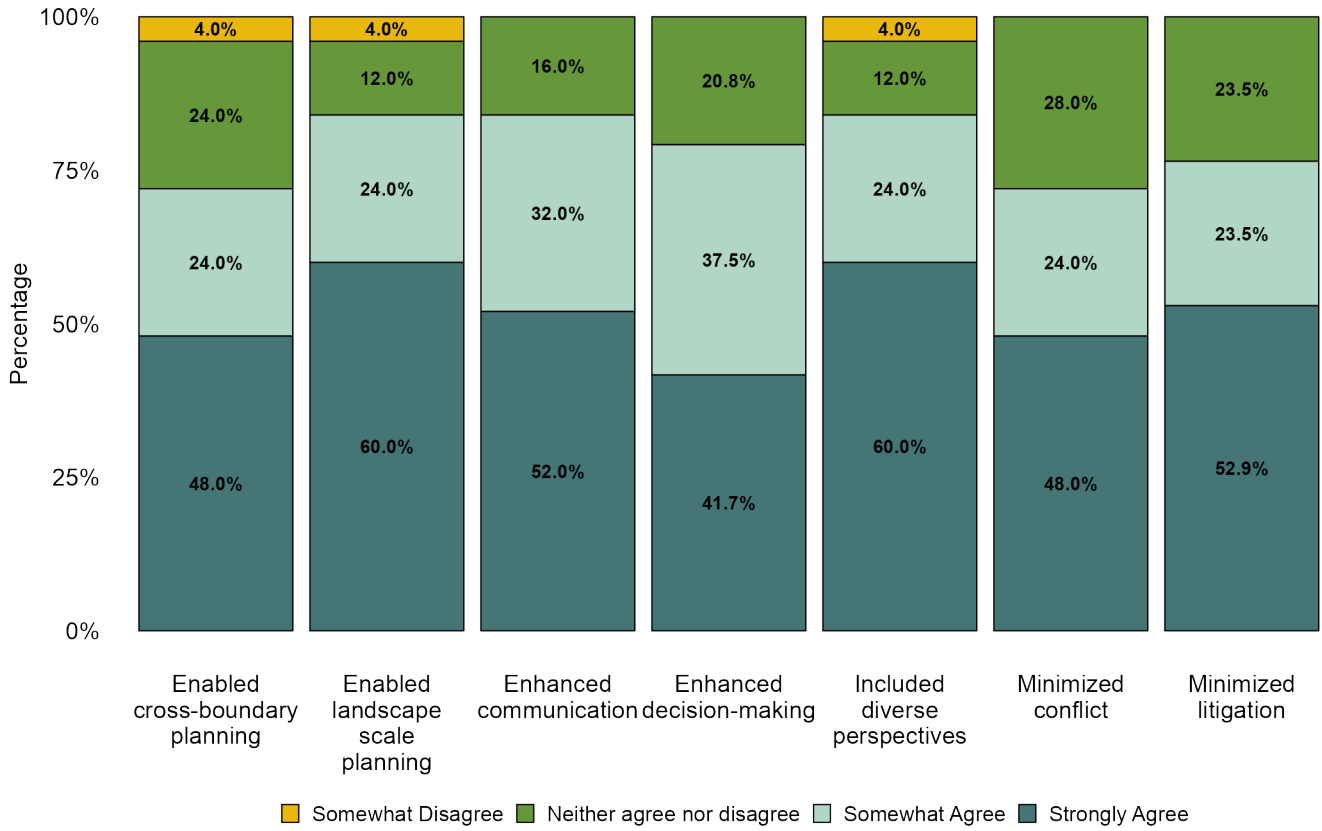


Figure 15: Percent of respondents who agree or disagree that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative.

Perceived outcomes: ecological goals

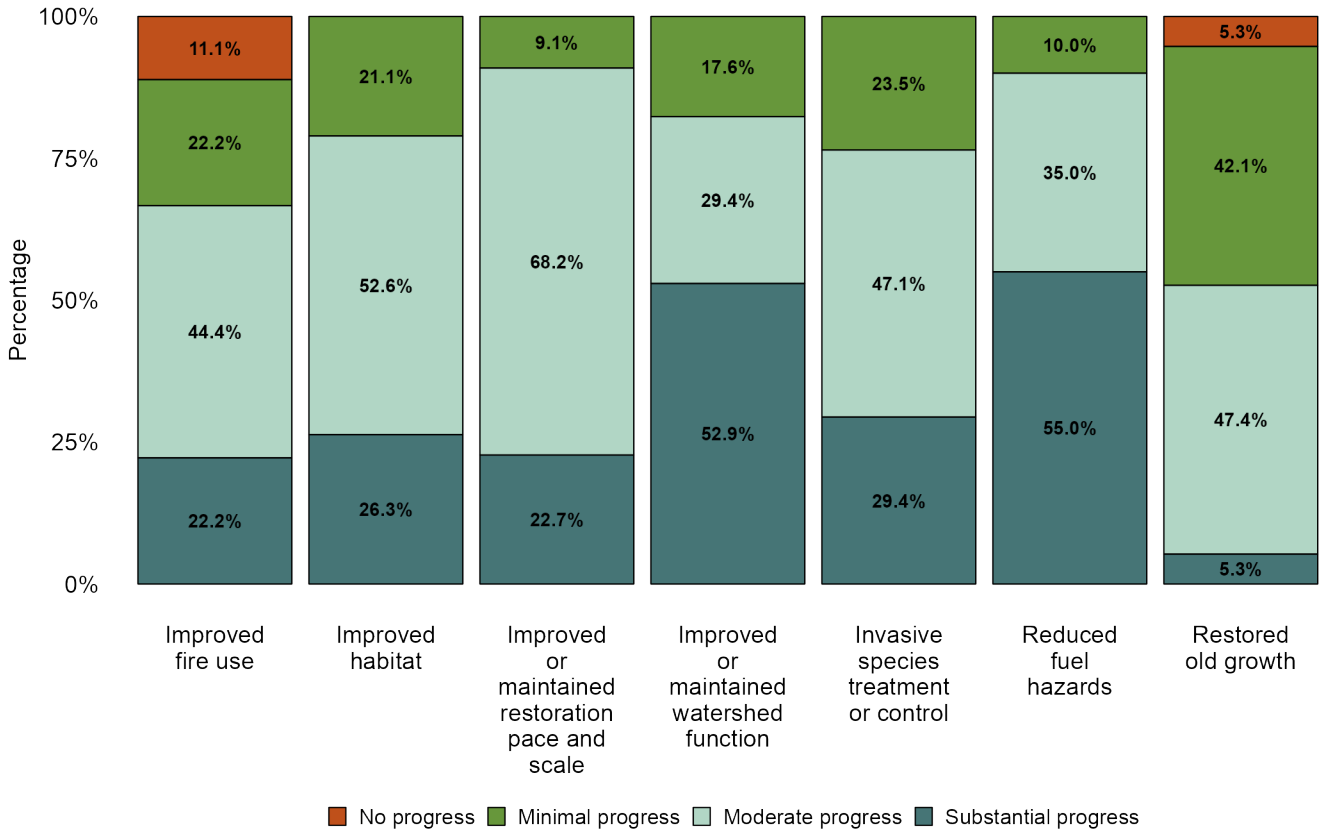


Figure 16: percent of respondents who reported no, minimal, moderate, or substantial progress toward ecological goals.

Several respondents critiqued the limited participation of the Klamath National Forest, stating that their survey responses were based on interactions with the Six Rivers National Forest, which was more engaged in collaboration. While not all respondents clarified whether their statements or quantitative responses were directed toward one or both of the National Forests associated with this CFLRP, it is likely they were reflecting on experiences with the Six Rivers National Forest because of the lack of engagement by the Klamath National Forest with WKRP.

Some respondents suggested changing incentives and motivating structures to encourage Forest Service personnel to engage more in collaborative work. One respondent advocated that the Forest Service leadership should “create a mechanism whereby Forest Service Line Officers (District Rangers and Forest Supervisors) are heavily weighted on engaging in collaborative efforts when performance reviews are conducted” because

currently there are no substantial consequences for the Klamath National Forest for not collaborating.

Several respondents critiqued the Klamath National Forest for not truly including partners in collaborative efforts and not meeting WKRP’s expectations for meaningful input.

*Within the Klamath National [Forest] projects are planned: solely by agency personnel without robust and meaningful input from CA Tribes; for timber targets with the euphemisms of “fuels reduction and restoration” and; to target old growth and mature trees, especially in riparian and late successional reserves.*

*The Klamath National Forest has given periodic lip service to WKRP and participates in some aspects, but has been unwilling to actually engage collaboratively on any forestry or fire related projects, and has gone so far as to use the WKRP collaborative name to fund projects without engaging WKRP in the process at all. If we are going to reach our goals of increasing pace and scale of important treatments, protecting communities, improving forest resiliency, and protecting our rivers, streams and wildlife, we need the Klamath National Forest to get pressure from above to truly engage.*

*The unwillingness of the Klamath NF to accept the WKRP standards for collaborative engagement has been our greatest hurdle.*

*It is my hope that KNF will come to see that they need help to manage the landscape and that there are other decision makers that need to have a strong voice in the process*

This respondent also commented on the need to continue to build “understanding and trust” with both the Klamath National Forest and Region 5 in general because “there has been hesitancy to work with Tribes that has hindered progress significantly.” In contrast, a respondent said that the Six Rivers National Forest participated in the Partnership with leadership from the Karuk Tribe and Orleans Ranger District.

One respondent additionally noted the need to have better communication from the Forest Service about funding with enough advance notice to facilitate full collaboration:

*More advanced notice and improved communication from the USFS about funding opportunities so that the collaborative process can be upheld. Often we are told that there is funding available for planning and/or implementation with 1-4 days’ notice to get together a plan. Sometimes basic out-year planning that we have done is taken out of context by USFS partners and applied*

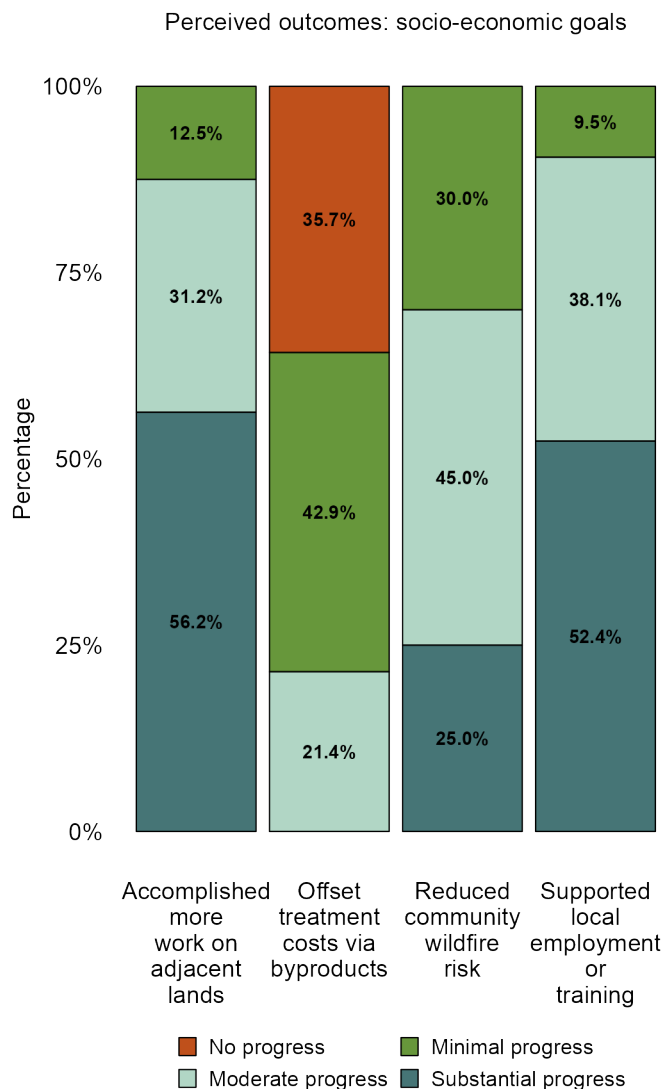


Figure 17: Percent of respondents who reported no, minimal, moderate, or substantial progress toward socio-economic goals.

to large funding sources without checking back in with the rest of collaborative, putting us in a tight spot.

Others expressed a desire for access to federal training (see [Appendix 3](#) for more detail). Steps have already been taken to improve Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process; a CLFR coordinator was hired after the survey closed (see [Appendix 3](#))

Enhance communication and engagement with participants, including tribes and local communities

Several respondents also discussed the need for better communication and engagement within the Partnership, with demonstration that collaborative input is taken into consideration. In particular, respondents highlighted the need to improve collaboration and communication with local communities about the decision-making behind project prioritization:

*Continue to strengthen communication and clarity with community members and landowners.*

*Need to improve communication with community on decisions for projects – be more inclusive and transparent about where projects are to happen. ... Part of the problem is [the] gap in considering community residents' standing*

*as well-informed collaborative participants [with] valuable input on priorities for decisions and projects in watersheds, forests, [and] WUI.*

*Be very inclusive of stakeholders; don't write off the reticent community members without effort to educate and include them in vision. Keep open communication throughout planning and implementation.*

Additional respondents emphasized the need to increase communication and engagement with tribes because the Forest Service has trust responsibilities to these sovereign nations. They noted that the collaborative must “give community and tribes a voice in management of our lands.” One respondent highlighted that the collaborative “need[s] to review whether tribes are truly consulted and listened to so as to abide by tribes’ and tribal practitioners’ expertise.” Another emphasized “when landscape-level restoration is desired by the communities, especially tribal nations where a trust responsibility exist[s],” then “forest boundaries cannot be an obstacle to achieving the objectives identified through a collaborative process.”

One additional challenge to note when engaging with a wide swath of participants is the difficulty of fully including the participation of community members or

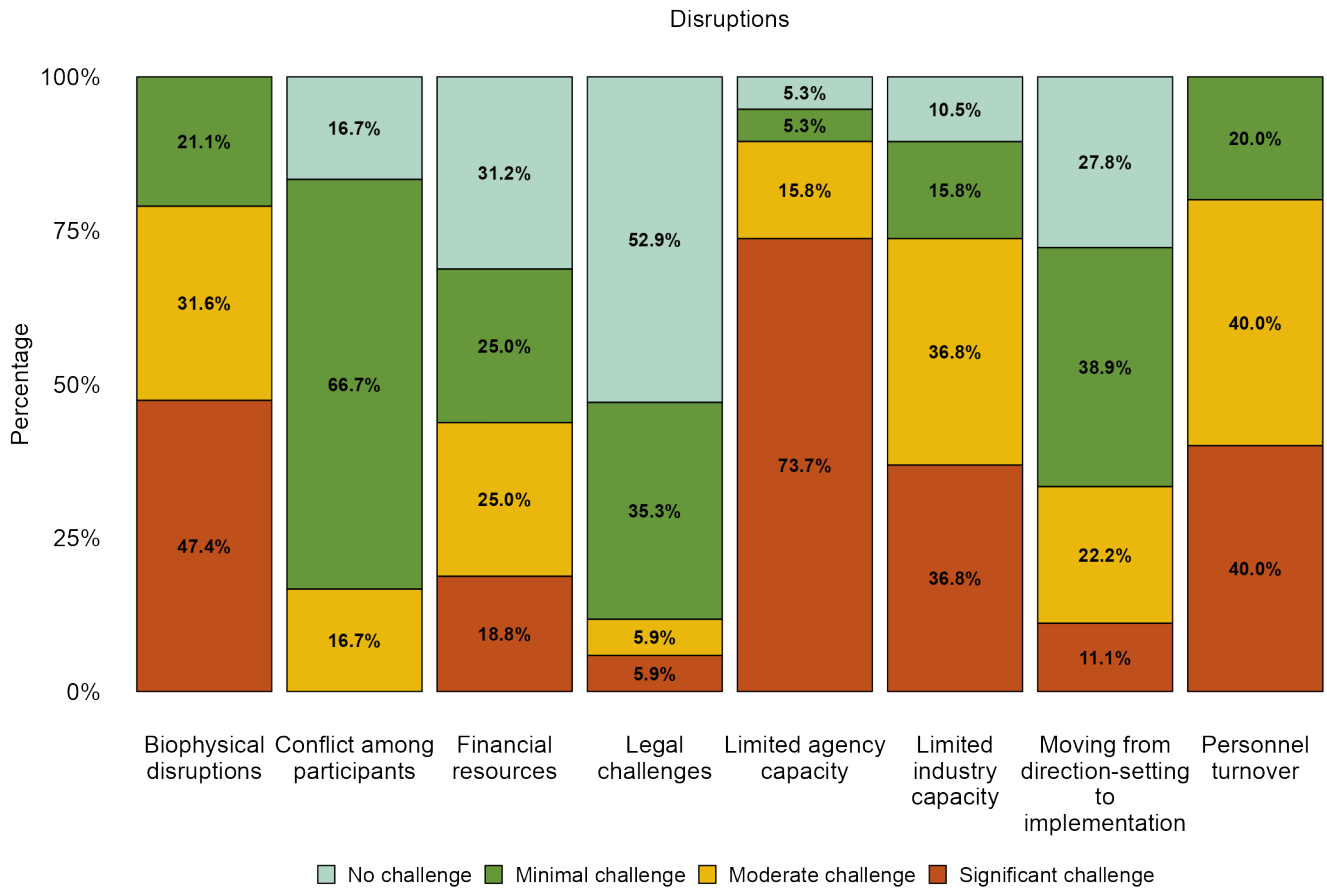


Figure 18: Percent of respondents who reported no, minimal, moderate, or significant challenges to collaborative performance and durability.

other participants who are not paid to collaborate when others have more resources to fully participate (see [Appendix 3](#) for more detail).

Implement a systematic approach to curb the impacts of turnover, including increasing staffing capacity

Quantitative results indicated that 80% of respondents thought that personnel turnover was a disruption to collaborative performance and durability (Figure 18). Additionally, a commenter noted the challenges not just of changing personnel, but also shifting priorities, and the need to provide as much continuity as possible:

*Find a way to encourage continuity in an ever-changing political environment, with wildly shifting policy directions, to accommodate long-term commitment and incremental progress toward goals while key contacts, personnel and dedication continually change.*

If frequent turnover is likely to continue, systems could be put in place to mitigate its disruptiveness. This includes creating redundancies through collaborating with several people working for the Forest Service, getting agreements in writing (see “Disruptions” above), hosting a “Collaboration 101” workshop for new Forest Service employees with frequency and encourage attendance, and increase staffing ([Beeton et al. 2022](#)).

Respondents emphasized the need to both increase Forest Service staffing (particularly GIS and CFLR coordinator positions, the latter of which was filled after the survey was closed) and enhance workforce development through trainings. As noted above (see “Disruptions”), enhancing hiring may also require addressing the housing challenge, such as through providing housing options to employees.

#### Other Recommendations

Additional recommendations were made by a few respondents. Two expressed a desire for monitoring to ensure that objectives are met, including using better tools for monitoring and reporting. With regards to wildfire, one respondent emphasized the need to “avoid shifting priorities away from proactive work to reactive work associated with response and recovery.” Two respondents emphasized the need to get more prescribed fire on the landscape, including through reducing national barriers to prescribed fire.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) deployed an online survey to the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP, which includes the

Western Klamath Restoration Partnership, the Klamath National Forest, and the Six Rivers National Forest, between April and June 2023 to assess collaborative health, function, and resilience, as well as perceived outcomes of collaborative work. Specifically, we assessed: whether the CFLRP project exhibited characteristics generally associated with healthy, well-functioning, and resilient collaboratives; the extent to which the project has made progress on meeting process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes; what challenges or disruptions affected collaborative performance and durability; and actionable recommendations to improve the collaborative process from respondents’ perspectives. The assessment serves as the collaboration assessment for the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy (question #12).

Overall, there was strong agreement on many indicators that the collaborative process was working well and accomplishing goals. It should be noted that open-ended comments indicated that there was much stronger collaboration with the Six Rivers National Forest, and, while not all respondents indicated if they were considering one or both forests, they most likely reflected on working with the Six Rivers National Forest because of the lack of engagement with the Klamath National Forest. A strong majority (89%) of respondents thought the CFLRP process – beginning in 2022 for this longstanding Partnership – was collaborative to very collaborative overall. A strong majority (92%) also agreed that a representative cross-section of individuals who had a stake in the issues were involved in the Partnership; there was, however, only one Forest Service respondent. Including a broad swath of participants can help strengthen the Partnership’s adaptive capacity by encompassing a diversity of interests, perspectives, capacities, and proposed solutions from a variety of partners and creating redundancies, can make collaborative function more resilient ([Beeton et al. 2022](#); [Folke et al. 2005](#); [Gupta et al. 2010](#)).

Nearly all respondents agreed that there was a shared understanding of the purpose of the CFLRP project and both key problems impacting the landscape and how to solve them. A strong majority of respondents’ expectations were met in collaborating with the Forest Service in planning, implementation, and monitoring. Nearly all respondents agreed that the collaborative process helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect. A strong majority also trusted the group to achieve desired outcomes and believed that they and other partners were committed to the collaborative process. Mutual commitment, especially among those with decision-making authority, is critical for collaborative durability. The Forest Service retains decision-making

authority in treatment planning and implementation on Forest Service-managed land. The agency also gives substantial discretion in decision-making to local units; thus, it is often up to Forest Service unit-level line officers to make or not make collaboration a priority by providing staff, resources, etc. (Beeton et al. 2022). This was reflected in several open-ended comments that called for higher prioritization for authentic collaboration from the Klamath National Forest.

There was largely agreement that most aspects of capacity for joint action were strong. The perception of leadership was very positive, with a majority of respondents indicating that leaders worked well with others, maintained a common collaborative vision and direction, and motivated others to work together. A strong majority of respondents also perceived knowledge co-production positively, agreeing that there were opportunities to co-generate knowledge and share information, work toward adaptive management, and be flexible when conditions (either landscape or personnel) change. A strong majority felt that the CFLRP project had adequate facilitation skills, technical expertise, and funds, but lacked sufficient time. There was also a strong majority in agreement that protocols promoted accountability among CFLRP participants and were understood, fair, and used appropriately. Participants also largely understood how to give input to the Forest Service and how the agency makes decisions and perceived them to be responsive to collaborative feedback.

A strong majority of respondents indicated that the CFLRP project was moving toward achieving nearly all of the desired collaborative, ecological, and socio-economic goals, with a few exceptions. Only a slight majority thought that the Partnership had made progress on restoring old growth, and small minority perceived the project to be making progress on offsetting treatment costs via byproducts. Several factors were identified as contributing to the success of the CFLRP project, largely the dedication, commitment, and perseverance of collaborative members; creating a safe space for sharing opinions, sufficient funding, and facilitation help were identified as positive factors, as well.

Respondents indicated a couple of areas where there was room for improvement. Capacity was an issue, as only a minority said the project has sufficient time to accomplish tasks, and several qualitative comments emphasized that participants were overburdened and that positions needed to be filled. Half of respondents perceived that there are protocols in place that promote accountability between the Forest Service and other CFLRP participants. The Partnership has dealt with several disruptions, with

a strong majority of respondents indicating that limited agency and industry capacity, personnel turnover, and biophysical disruptions like wildfire as the most significant ones. Qualitative comments also indicated additional challenges included delays in funding, a lack of housing affecting the ability to fill positions, challenges in implementation on post-fire landscapes, and national and local policies such as NEPA and burn bans. Respondents said that the Partnership took action to respond to these disruptions, namely building capacity through hiring and contracting, creating redundancies to ease turnover transitions, securing additional funding, continuing to work with dedicated and honest participants, and shifting to address post-wildfire landscapes.

Three key recommendations emerged from participant responses. First, respondents recommended increasing Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process, particularly the Klamath National Forest. Several respondents commented that the relationship between the WKRP and the two CFLRP National Forests was very different, and noted that the Klamath National Forest had limited meaningful collaboration with authentic input from the WKRP. They also suggested changing incentive structures within the Forest Service to require collaboration for employee evaluations to create consequences for not collaborating, a dilemma that has been noted in other studies as well (Beeton et al. 2022). Secondly, several respondents argued for enhancing communication and engagement with participants, including tribes and local communities. These respondents hoped for better communication, with local communities' input on project prioritization and true consultation with tribes because the Forest Service has a trust responsibility to these sovereign nations. A respondent also noted the challenges of power asymmetries within collaboration, as some participants are paid for their time to engage (i.e., members in leadership and working groups) while others are not (i.e., the interested public), a common challenge in collaborative spaces (Beeton et al. 2022). Lastly, it was suggested to implement a systematic approach to curb the impacts of turnover, including increasing staffing capacity. As respondents noted, turnover in particular can undermine relationships and trust, slow progress, and lead to lost institutional knowledge (Beeton et al. 2022; Coleman et al. 2020). Collaborative engagement is often not part of primary job duties for agency staff; when combined with vacant positions and multiple, sometimes conflicting, mandates and priorities, agency staff may not have the capacity to engage to the extent that stakeholders expect or desire (Beeton et al. 2022). With turnover likely to continue, several steps could be taken to limit its effects, such as creating redundancies,

getting agreements in writing, hosting a “Collaboration 101” workshop with new Forest Service employees, and increasing agency staffing with overlapping job duties ([Beeton et al. 2022](#)).

This report provided a baseline assessment of collaborative health and performance among the Partnership. Collaboratives are dynamic – they continue to adapt and evolve as needs or priorities change, and in response to internal and external disruptions (Imperial et al., 2016). Thus, it is important to continue to self-assess collaborative progress, durability, and resilience, so that groups can identify what is working well, what may need some work, and what support and/or guidance is needed to address challenges to maintain performance. The SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects. There will be multiple opportunities locally, regionally, and nationally for peer-networking and learning events to share successes and challenges and learn together about how to encourage healthy, durable, and resilient collaboration.

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## Appendix 1. CFLRP collaborative governance assessment: summary of findings



# CFLRP Collaborative Governance Assessment: Summary of findings for the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a collaborative governance assessment as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Common Monitoring Strategy.<sup>1</sup> The collaborative governance assessment was designed to evaluate collaborative health, function, resilience, and perceived outcomes of collaborative work. The SWERI administered an online questionnaire to members of the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP, which includes the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRP), the Six Rivers National Forest and the Klamath National Forest (collectively, the Partnership), between April and June 2023. We received 28 usable responses (27% response rate). Figure 1 illustrates what groups were represented in the questionnaire. The purpose of this brief is to:

- Summarize high-level findings from the collaborative governance assessment; and
- Document participants’ recommendations to improve collaborative performance and progress.

### Findings

What has worked well for the Western Klamath Forest Partnership CFLRP?

Overall, a strong majority of respondents agreed on almost every indicator that the Partnership members worked well together and accomplished their goals. A strong majority agreed that a representative cross-section of individuals who had a stake in the issues were involved in the Partnership. There was, however, only one Forest respondent, and some respondents indicated their evaluations applied to the Six Rivers National Forest, which more actively collaborates than the Klamath National Forest. A strong majority of respondents thought their expectations were met in collaborating with the Forest Service in planning, implementation, and monitoring. Most participants also understood how to inform Forest Service decisions and thought that the agency was responsive to collaborative feedback and clear about their decision-making (Figure 2). Nearly all respondents also agreed that the collaborative process helped build trust and relationships. A strong majority perceived of leadership positively and agreed that there were opportunities to co-generate knowledge, work toward adaptive management, and be flexible in the face of

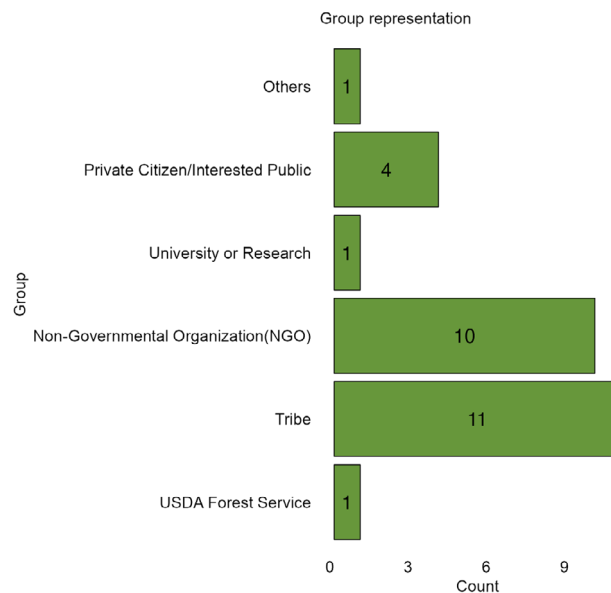


Figure 1: Respondents’ self-identified representation with associated organizations.

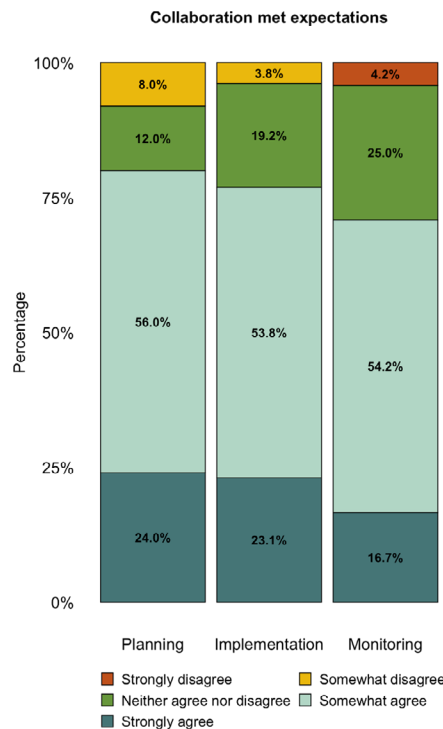


Figure 2: Percent of respondents who agreed or disagreed that they understand how to inform Forest Service decisions, the Forest Service is responsive to feedback, and the Forest Service is clear about decisions.

landscape or collaborative personnel changes. Respondents felt that the CFLRP project had adequate technical expertise, facilitation skills, and funds, but not sufficient time. There was also strong agreement that protocols were in place to promote accountability among CFLRP participants and that protocols were understood, fair, and used appropriately. Half of respondents, however, perceived that there were protocols in place that promoted accountability between the WKRP and the Forest Service.

What disruptions and challenges have affected collaborative progress and performance?

The Partnership has dealt with several disruptions, particularly limited agency capacity, high personnel turnover, biophysical disruptions such as wildfire, and limited forest products industry capacity. Commenters also reiterated the connected challenges of high staff turnover, unfilled positions, a lack of capacity, and difficulty in finding workforce housing. Others mentioned delays in funding and pivoting to working in post-fire landscapes as challenges. Responses to these disruptions included building capacity through hiring and contracting, building in redundancies to ease turnover transitions, securing additional funding, continuing to work with dedicated and honest participants, and shifting to address post-wildfire landscapes.

Progress toward desired process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes

A strong majority of respondents indicated that the CFLRP project was moving toward achieving a variety desired collaborative (Figure 3), ecological, and socio-economic goals, including but not limited to:

- Enhancing communication, including diverse perspectives, and enabling landscape-scale planning.
- Improving or maintaining restoration pace and scale and watershed function and reducing fuel hazards.
- Supporting local employment or training and accomplishing more work on adjacent lands.

A majority, however, did not see the CFLRP as yet achieving offsetting the costs of treatment through byproducts. Several factors were identified as facilitating this forward movement: the dedication, commitment, and perseverance of collaborative members, the

creation of a safe space for sharing opinions, sufficient funding, and facilitation support.

Recommendations to improve the collaborative process and performance

Respondents provided a number of recommendations to improve the collaborative process and performance, including:

- Increase Forest Service engagement in the collaborative process, particularly with the Klamath National Forest. Respondents noted the lack of incentives to collaborate within the agency.
- Enhance communication and engagement with participants, including local communities and tribes because the Forest Service has a trust responsibility to these sovereign nations, demonstrating consideration of their input in the collaborative process.
- Implement a systematic approach to curb the impacts of turnover, including increasing staffing capacity with overlapping job duties and creating redundancies.

Next steps

Results from this questionnaire provided a baseline assessment of collaborative governance among the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP. The SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects, the goal of which is to identify where capacities lie and areas for improvement to target investments and activities that support resilient and durable collaboration.

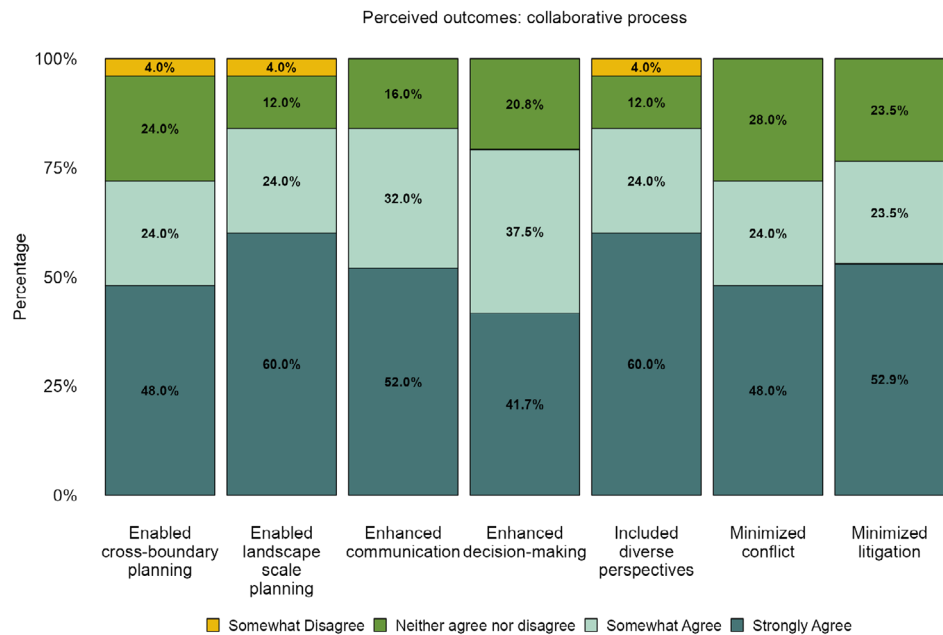


Figure 3: Percent of respondents who agree or disagree that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative.

## Appendix 2. SWERI presentation to the Western Klamath CFLRP

The document can be found online at: <https://cfri.box.com/s/4jwsbak6enq8by5fipx60zo4gx6snxwz>



### CFLRP collaborative governance survey: Summary of findings for the Western Klamath CFLRP

Niki vonHedemann<sup>1</sup>, Tyler Beeton<sup>2</sup>, Melanie Colavito<sup>1</sup>, Ch'aska Huayhuaca-Frye<sup>2</sup>, Adam Snitker<sup>2</sup>  
and Tony Cheng<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University, [niki.vonHedemann@nau.edu](mailto:niki.vonHedemann@nau.edu) and  
[melanie.colavito@nau.edu](mailto:melanie.colavito@nau.edu)

<sup>2</sup>Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, Colorado State University, [tyler.beeton@colostate.edu](mailto:tyler.beeton@colostate.edu);

WKRP Core Team Meeting  
November 28, 2023

### Objectives for Today



- Background on the survey development and rollout
- Show survey results on a few key themes
- Next steps and deliverables
- Discuss if/how results resonate with the collaborative and feedback on the survey

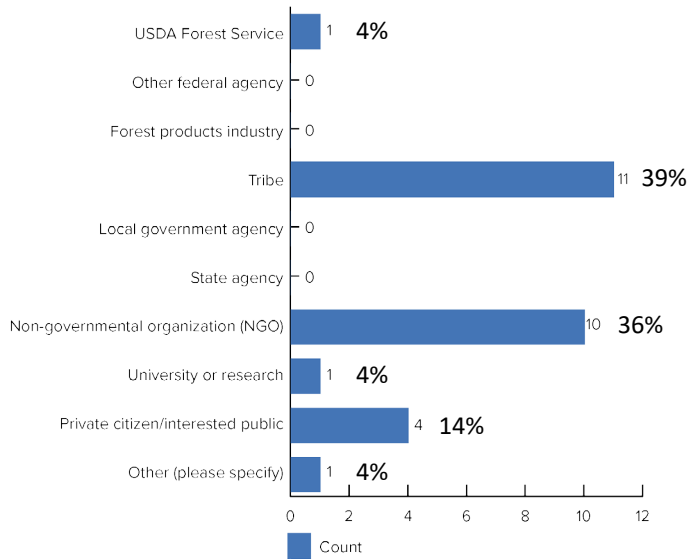




# Respondents



Group representation



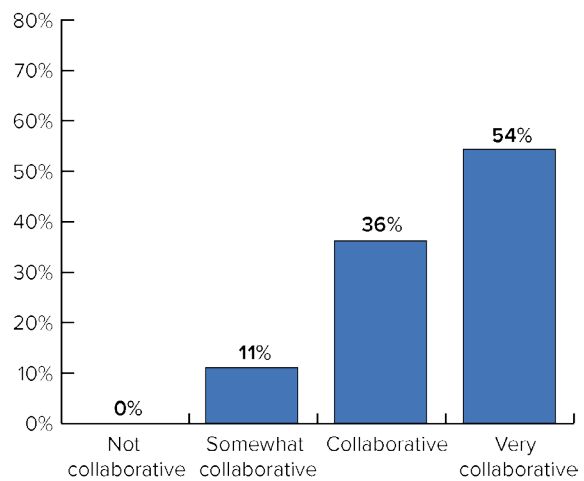
- Discussion:
  - Did most of the major players take the survey?
  - Few Forest Service responses

# Overall, how collaborative?



- 90% of respondents say this CFLRP is collaborative/very collaborative

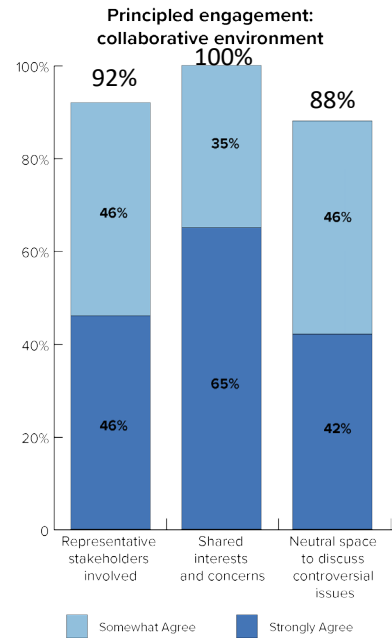
Degree of collaboration



# Stakeholder Engagement



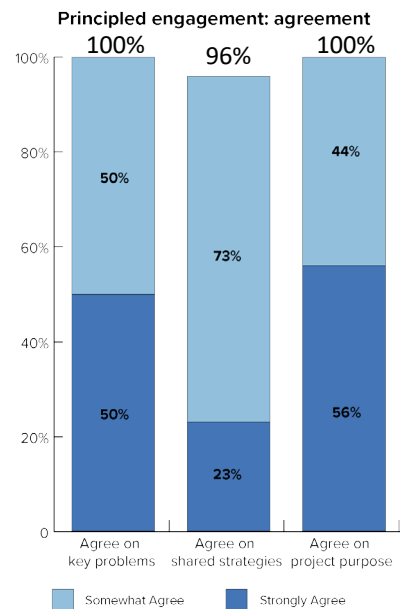
- High agreement on
  - engagement of a representative cross-section of stakeholders,
  - that participants work to identify shared interests/concerns, and
  - that the collaborative process creates a neutral space for discussion



# Stakeholder Engagement



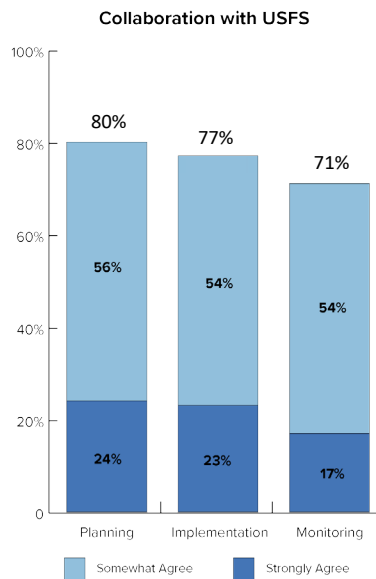
- High agreement that participants agree
  - About key problems (100%)
  - About shared strategies (96%)
  - About the purpose of the CLFRP project (100%)



## 2. Aligning expectations: USFS collaboration



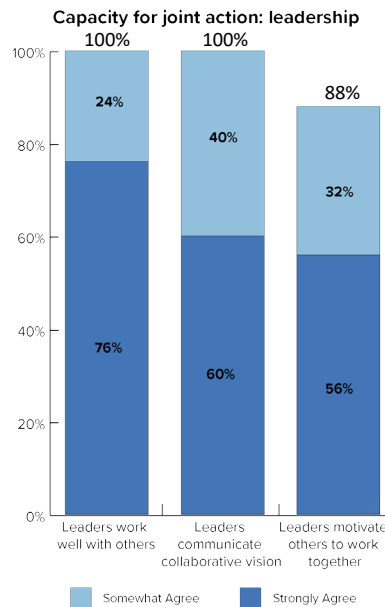
- Collaboration between CFLRP participants and the USFS has met expectations during:
  - Planning (e.g., environmental analysis, NEPA): 80% agreed
  - Implementation (e.g., post-NEPA, operations): 77% agreed
  - Monitoring: 71% agreed
- Collaboration is required in all of these, yet not defined in CFLRP/FLRA
  - Expectations may differ



## Capacity for Joint Action: Leadership



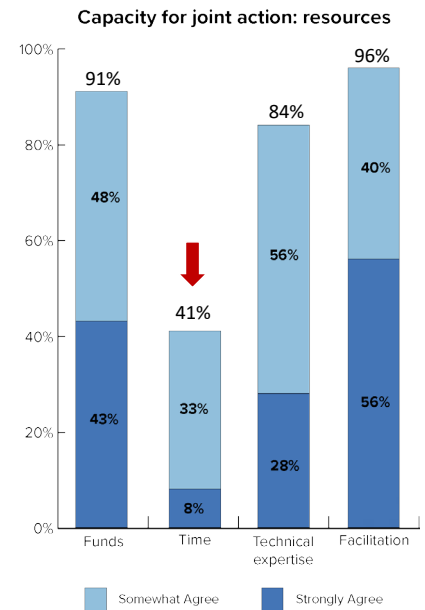
- 100% agreement that leaders
  - Have good skills for working with other people and organizations
  - Maintain and communicate a common collaborative vision and direction
- 88% agreement that leaders
  - Can motivate others to work together



### 3. Capacity for Joint Action: Resources



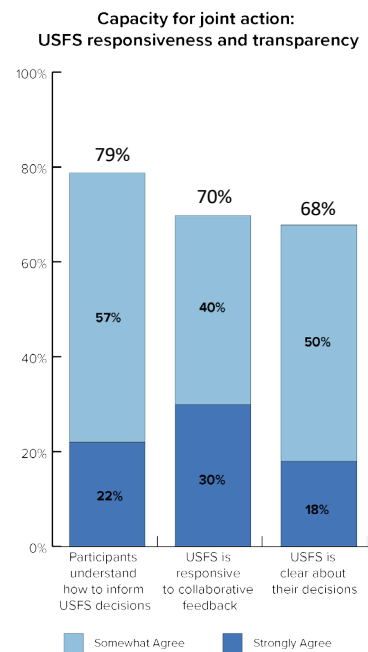
- The CFLRP project has adequate...
- Time to carry out tasks and accomplish work: 41% agree
  - Most limiting resource
- High agreement that funds (91%), technical expertise (84%), and facilitation (96%) are adequate



### 3. Capacity for Joint Action: USFS Process and Accountability



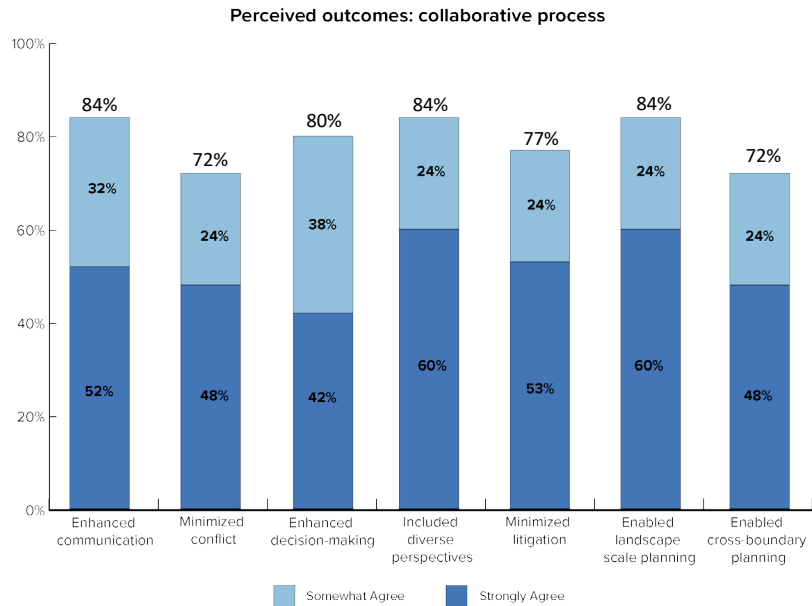
- Project participants clearly understand when and what collaborative input is useful to inform USFS decisions: 79% agree
- The USFS is responsive to CFLRP project participant feedback: 70% agree
- The USFS is clear with project participants about the decisions they make and why: 68% agree



## 4. Perceived Outcomes: Collaborative Process



- The CLFRP collaborative process has...
- High agreement on all issues



## 4. Perceived Outcomes: Recommendations to Improve or Maintain Collaborative Progress



- USFS improvements
  - Increase staffing, capacity, and engagement (incentivize collaboration)
  - Improve FS staff prioritization of goals to align with collaborative and to be more proactive (not reactive)
  - Encourage continuity in staff and policy (recognizing turnover)
  - Encourage improved communication about funding opportunities; throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring; on project decision-making
  - Increase the use of prescribed fire
  - Align collaborative functioning with the Klamath National Forest so that it engages on the same level in the collaborative as the Six Rivers National Forest
- Collaborative improvements
  - Strengthen communication and involvement of other stakeholders
    - Tribes and community members
  - Increase involvement of Tribes in the collaborative processes

## 5. Challenges and Disruptions



- Did these disruptions pose challenges to the CFLRP's performance and durability?
- Most significant challenges:
  - Personnel turnover
  - Biophysical disruptions
  - Limited agency capacity
  - Limited industry capacity

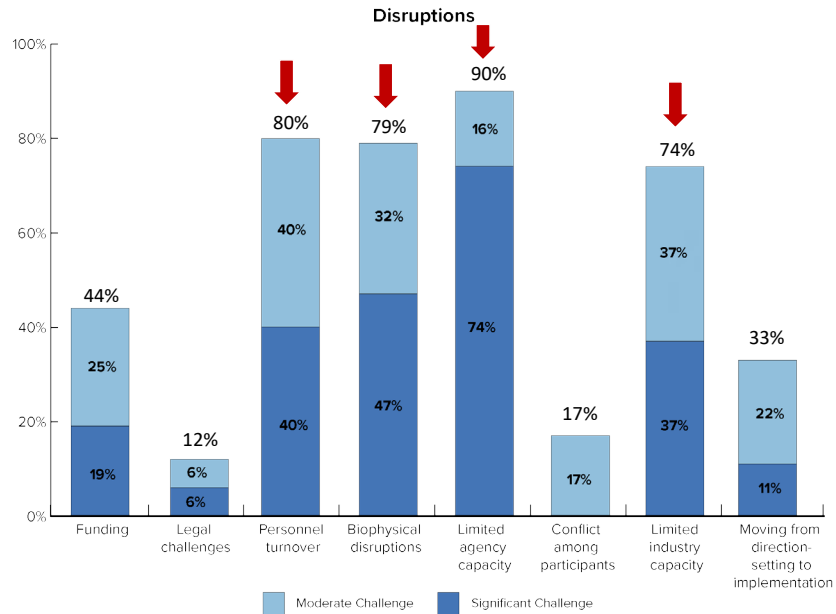


Figure 18: Percent of respondents who reported disruptions posed "Moderate challenges" or "Substantial challenges" to collaborative performance and durability.

## Additional Challenges and Disruptions



- Lack of capacity and unfilled positions (4 respondents)
- Lack of workforce housing (2 respondents)
- Burnout of staff and collaborative partners (2 respondents)
- Forest Service staff turnover (2 respondents)
- Delays in funding (2 respondents)
- NEPA, CEQA, and environmental compliance process (2 respondents)
- Other disruptions mentioned by 1 respondent each:
  - Loss of homes to wildfire
  - Unclear direction getting off the ground
  - Federal level burn bans
  - Grant management consuming time capacity of staff

## Collaborative Response to Challenges and Disruptions



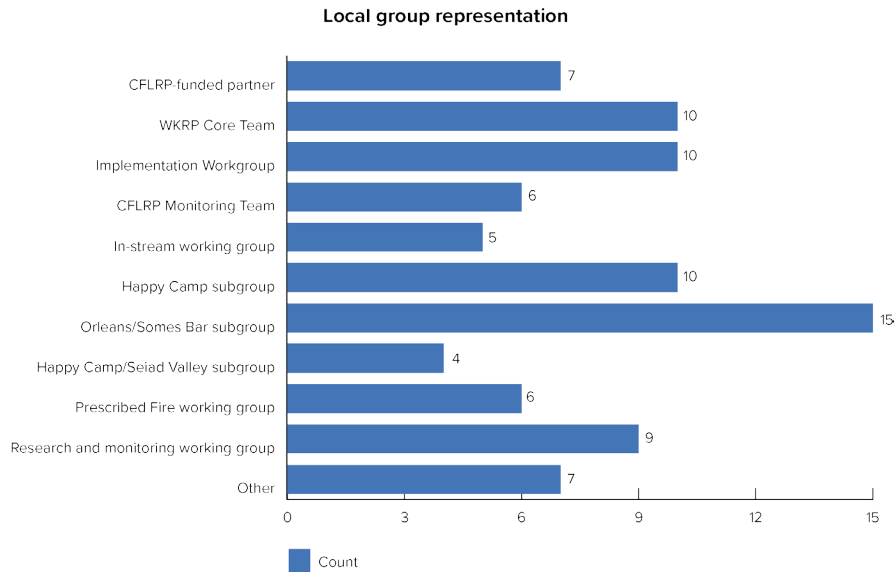
- Building capacity (4 respondents)
  - Hiring and training staff
  - Capacity mapping
  - Contracting
  - Mitigate turnover effects – agreements in writing, working with more personnel
- Partners have remained dedicated, collaborative (3 respondents)
- Prioritized adaptation in the face of challenges (1 respondent)
- Secured additional funding (1 respondent)
- Re-examining post-fire priorities, inclusion of outlying river communities (1 respondent)

## Appended Questions



- The remaining questions were developed with project leaders and are specific to this survey for the Western Klamath CFLRP

## Appended Question: Local Group Representation



## Appended Question: CFLRP Meeting Expectations?

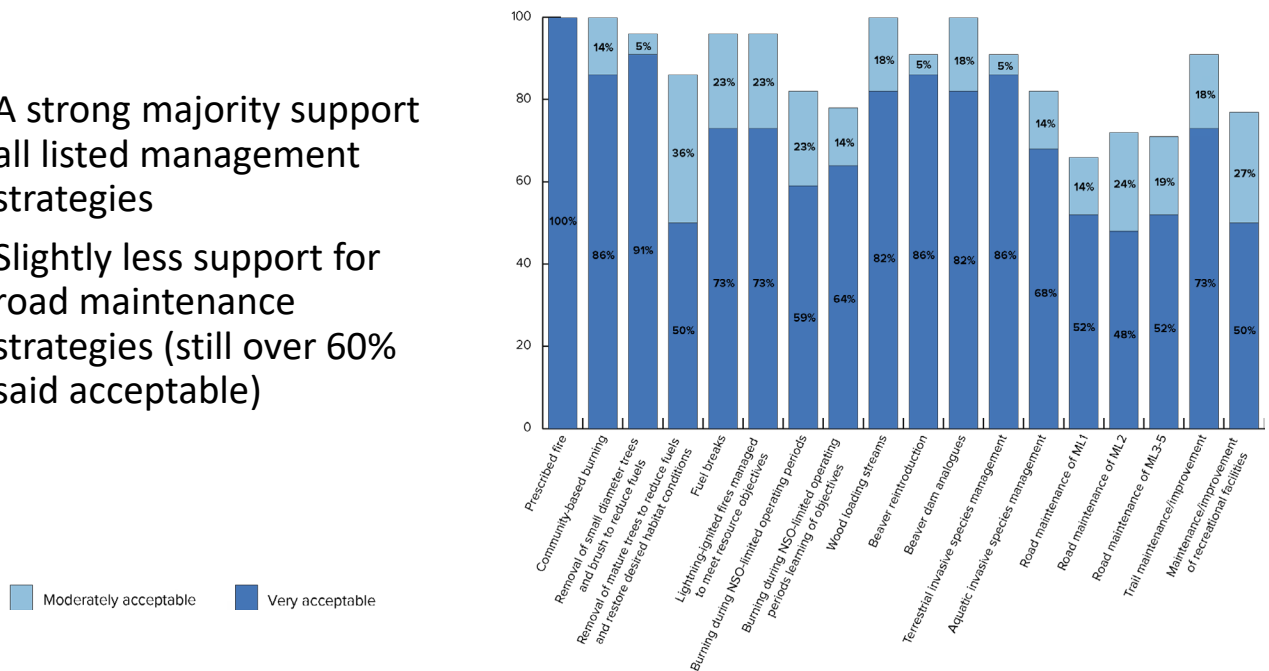


- A lot of local community engagement in projects (2 respondents)
  - Though less engagement in workshops over time
- Great work by many dedicated people (2 respondents)
  - Led to growth of projects and increased funding secured
- Planning phase was costly and time consuming, trust still an issue (1 respondent)
- Unclear roles and responsibilities initially (1 respondent)
- Should increase transparency in decision-making and inclusivity (1 respondent)
- Need for a CFLRP specific project manager (1 respondent)
- Preventing litigation (1 respondent)

## Appended Question: forest management strategies



- A strong majority support all listed management strategies
- Slightly less support for road maintenance strategies (still over 60% said acceptable)



## Appended Question: Additional Thoughts?



- Views in this survey were specific to the Six Rivers National Forest (4 respondents)
  - The Klamath National Forest has not meaningfully engaged in collaborative management and needs to
- Options for the Western Klamath survey need to be more species specific (1 respondent)
- The lack of formal agreements has been a good choice for WKRP (1 respondent)
- The issue of forest roads has not been addressed in any meaningful way throughout the process (1 respondent)

## Conclusions



- Our final report will include responses to other survey questions about:
  - Trust, commitment, knowledge sharing, protocols and accountability, ecological and socio-economic goals
- Conclusions:
  - High agreement on most responses that the CFLRP engages the right people, there is meaningful collaboration, there is joint action
  - Most respondents agreed that the USFS met expectations on implementation or monitoring. Some suggested increased staff capacity, funding, and transparent communication
  - Funding was seen as adequate, with time being the most limiting resource
  - Some disagreement around accountability and protocols - respondents emphasized a need to reinforce accountability between the USFS and the collaborative
  - For the most part, respondents thought there was clarity on how to inform USFS decisions and felt the USFS was generally responsive to feedback
  - Most respondents think the CFLRP has minimized conflict, enhanced communication, included diverse perspectives, and enabled landscape planning
  - Common disruptions include personnel turnover, biophysical disruptions, limited agency capacity, and limited agency capacity

## What to expect next



- Short-term
  - Presentation slide deck
  - 2-page fact sheet of findings
  - Report on responses
- Longer-term
  - Larger report/publication on responses across CFLRPs
  - Peer-learning among CFLRP community of practice
- Happy to engage in follow-up conversations and/or provide support if/when needed!

## Feedback on Survey



- This assessment will be completed every 2-3 years
  - Needs, capacities change – iterative process
- What worked well?
- What could we improve?
- Is there anything we did not ask that we should have?

## Discussion on major themes



- Do these results resonate with you?  
What might we be missing?
- Do any recommendations mentioned seem feasible and desirable? What help is needed?
- Comments can be sent to [Niki.vonHedemann@nau.edu](mailto:Niki.vonHedemann@nau.edu)

### Appendix 3. Appended questions

The results to the following questions reported here were developed in coordination with local CFLRP project staff, coordinators, and partners affiliated with the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership CFLRP. These questions were not part of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy.

Project leaders were interested in understanding which local groups were represented in the survey responses, and respondents could choose more than one option (Figure A1). The most common affiliation was the Orleans/Somes Bar subgroup with 15 participants. The 7 respondents who selected “other” included participants in the prescription work group (3 responses), the communications and engagement work group (1 respondent), the Salmon River subgroup (1 respondent), and the community liaison program (1 respondent), a Karuk employee, a land steward participating in many phases, and a WKRP co-lead.

Respondents were also asked what forms of communication and engagement were the best use of their time, with the option to select more than one response (Figure A2). The two most selected options included field trips (19 respondents) and a mix of both virtual and in-person meetings (16 respondents). The least popular options included surveys (4 respondents), only virtual meetings (6 respondents), and recordings (7 respondents). The “other” respondent noted that they had severely limited time and capacity for engagement.

Respondents were also asked to rate the acceptability of a wide variety of management strategies being considered or implemented by the Partnership (Figure A3). Most strategies had high levels of acceptability, with over 80% of respondents rating them as moderately to very acceptable. While a strong majority still found them acceptable, the relatively least acceptable strategies involved road maintenance of ML1 (66% found this to be moderately to very acceptable), ML2 (72%), and ML3-5 (71%). One respondent noted that these statements needed to be more species-specific because desired management practices vary by species and elevation. Another said that “the issue of forest roads has not been addressed in any meaningful way throughout the process.”

#### Collaborative expectations

When asked to explain how the CFLRP project collaborative process has or has not met their expectations, respondents outlined a variety of perspectives. One noted that collaboration success cannot be contributed to the CFLRP alone, as the Partnership has been ongoing for many years before the CFLRP project. Most respondents indicated their expectations had been met. Respondents explained that obtaining funding and minimizing litigation have been successful:

*The process has met my expectations, and [I'm] grateful for the funding which allows for an on-the-ground focus rather*

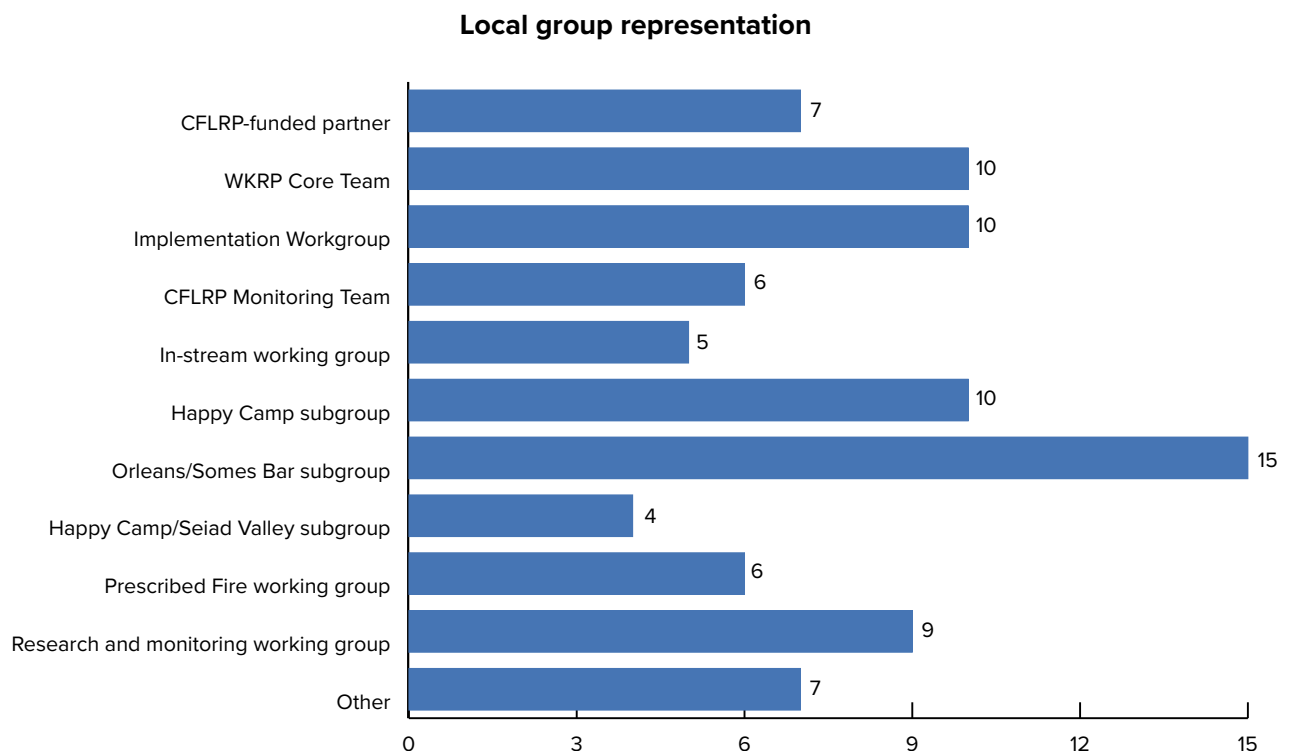


Figure A1: Percent of respondents who identified a specific group they were affiliated with.

than chasing grant funds to keep folks employed. The consistent funding woes create stress and burnout amongst Tribal and NGO program managers.

Without a collaborative path forward, we would likely still be in litigation mode.

Other respondents highlighted how they found the Partnership to be successful at bringing together diverse people and perspectives, leading to a variety of benefits:

The collaborative process has brought more diverse groups into the planning process. I have been impressed with the creativity, knowledge, and passion of those who have participated in or supported the project planning and work.

The extent of community involvement has pleasantly surprised me ... I remember some very adversarial public meetings in the past.

At the same time, several other respondents suggested their expectations had not been met. For example, a respondent discussed their disappointment that the Partnership remained somewhat exclusive, specifically neglecting community members:

[The Partnership is] not transparent nor inclusive enough for community members with standing gained by interest, knowledge, engagement as community members who are not professional staffers within the official partners; not clear how we see into decision making, proposed maps for projects; should be more opportunity and real response to citizen input such as “cross boundary” needs where USFS riparian areas affected by drought, other fuel-loaded USFS adjacent to homes, and USFS campgrounds near homes – all such should not be neglected in planning.

Another respondent also indicated that desired opportunities had not been available to them:

Would like to have more regular conversations with agency reps that are initiated proactively on the agency side. Would like access to federal training opportunities as a partner.

A respondent also indicated their disappointment in the Partnership as it related to trust: “collaboration is difficult when there are hidden agendas; trust is still huge issue.” Lastly, others argued that there had been a lack of clarity in responsibilities for reporting requirements and “it has been difficult without a CFLR project manager,” but expressed optimism that communication will be enhanced when this position filled (it was filled after the survey closed).

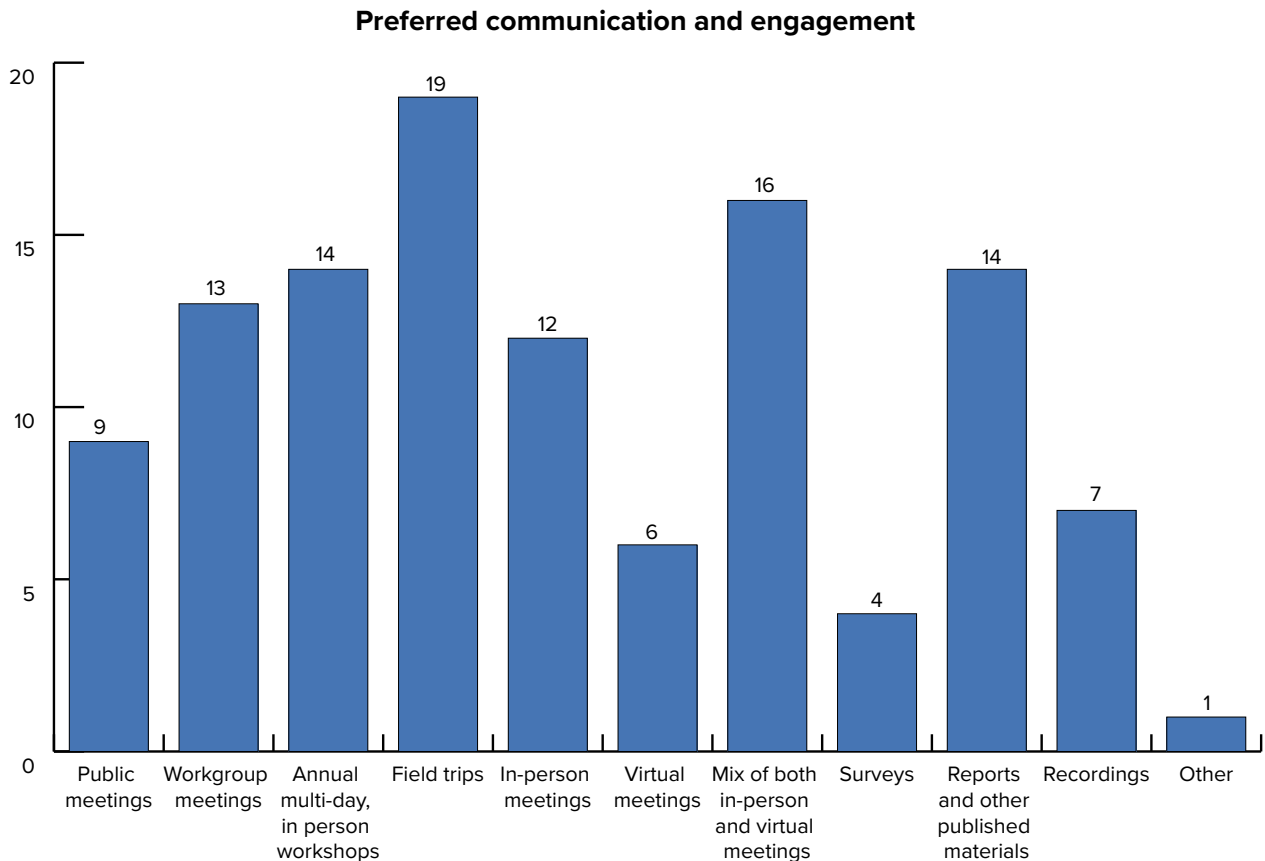


Figure A2: Number of respondents that indicated a preferred form of communication and/or engagement.

### Factors Contributing to Collaborative Success

When considering the factors that contributed to the success of the CFLRP collaborative process, most respondents outlined the dedication, commitment, and perseverance of collaborative members as some of the most consequential factors. The following statements exemplify these general sentiments expressed by many respondents as to what factors contributed to success:

*Persistent belief that this is the only way we can move forward. Dedicated and inspired leaders and workforce.*

*Strong sense of community and purpose.*

*Federal partners do seem genuinely committed to the process. Tribe continues to effectively lead restoration efforts.*

*The deep and abiding love and dedication to our region and all its inhabitants.*

Other respondents highlighted additional factors that contributed to success, including creating a safe space for participation, funding, and facilitation:

*The creation of a safe group situation where all opinions are valued has been very beneficial.*

*The funding has allowed many people to devote the time needed to do the work.*

*A long-term commitment by individuals and trusted third party facilitation for contentious issues were at the root of our success.*

### Acceptability of Management Strategies

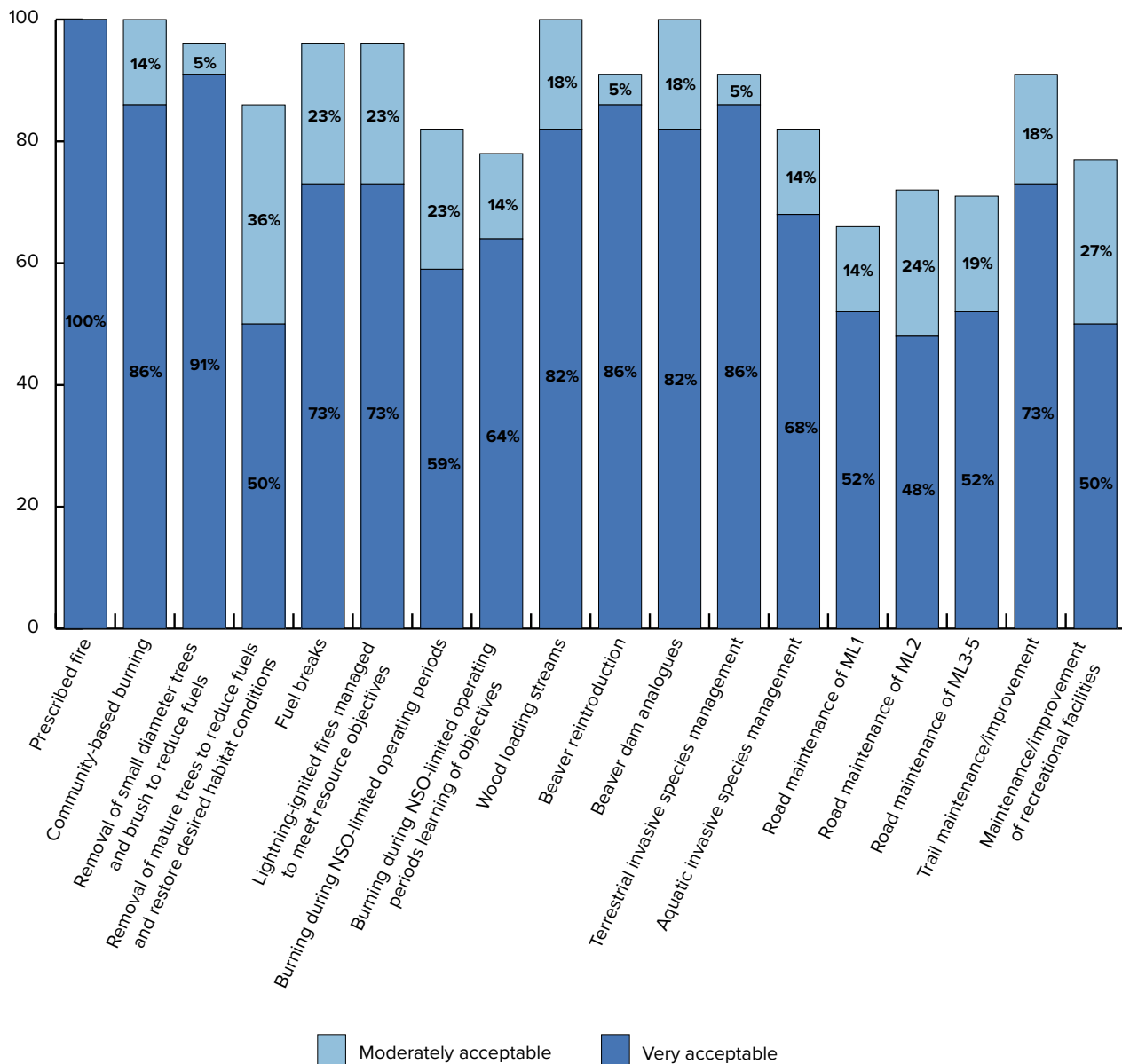


Figure A3: Percent of respondents who reported that certain forest management practices were either “Moderately acceptable” or “Very acceptable.”

**SWERI** Southwest Ecological  
Restoration Institutes

Colorado State University | New Mexico Highlands University | Northern Arizona University



COLORADO FOREST  
RESTORATION INSTITUTE  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

NORTHERN  
ARIZONA  
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Ecological  
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New Mexico  
Forest and Watershed  
Restoration Institute