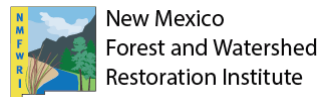


# Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program Collaborative Governance Assessment

## A NATIONAL BASELINE SYNTHESIS FOR THE COMMON MONITORING STRATEGY

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**Document Development:** In FY21 (July 2021-June 2022), the USDA Forest Service led a collaborative process to develop a Common Monitoring Strategy that is required for all newly authorized and extension projects under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The USDA 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 the CFLRP is encouraging an effective and meaningful collaborative approach, a component within the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. For this assessment, SWERI 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 survey recruitment strategies, administration timing, and project-specific questions. In FY22 and FY23 (July 2022-June 2024), SWERI collected and analyzed baseline information from the survey for 15 CFLRP projects authorized or extended after FY21, and developed project-level reports for each CFLRP project. Project-level reports can be found here: <https://sweri.org/cflrp-collaborative-governance-assessments/>. This document aggregates all the project-level data to provide a program-level baseline assessment of collaborative governance across the 15 newly authorized and extension CFLRP projects. Note that two projects, the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction and the Pisgah Restoration Initiative CFLRPs, were authorized in 2023 after SWERI completed survey administration, and thus, were not included in this assessment. 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 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 (NMFWR), the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI), and the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) in Arizona. These institutes were congressionally authorized 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).

#### **Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI), Northern Arizona University (NAU)**

The Ecological Restoration Institute is nationally recognized for mobilizing the unique assets of a university to help solve the problem of unnaturally

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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.

#### **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 (CSU). 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 SWERI to serve as a bridge between researchers, managers, and stakeholders working to restore and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems in response 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:** NAU 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:** CSU 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.

**Acknowledgments:** The authors would like to acknowledge Hannah Brown for her insightful feedback on an earlier draft and Angela Hollingsworth for designing the layout of this report. We thank Lindsay Buchanan and Bryce Esch, Forest Service, for their support in coordinating and facilitating regional webinars to introduce the assessment to regional and project-level CFLRP leads. We would like to thank the [Institute for Research in the Social Sciences \(IRISS\)](#), and especially Kate Oviatt, Juliet Lee, Sid Shakya, and Brendan Brundage, for data analysis, data visualization, and interpretation support. We would also like to thank all the participants for taking the time to fill out the online survey, as well as project points of contact for their support in survey recruitment and administration. Funding for this white paper was provided by CFRI and ERI through the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act. Survey recruitment and administration were supported by funding from the Arizona Board of Regents through the Technology, Research and Innovation Fund (TRIF).

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## Executive summary

The U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#) (CFLRP) in 2009, which seeks to “encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.”<sup>1</sup> The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a collaborative governance assessment as part of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy, a set of ecological and socio-economic monitoring questions and indicators that are required of all currently authorized CFLRP projects. The collaborative governance assessment was designed to address the following questions:

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

For this assessment, the SWERI administered an online survey to members of all newly authorized or extension CFLRP projects between 2021 and 2023. The survey received 396 usable responses, representing a 27% response rate. More than half of the respondents represented non-governmental organizations or the USDA Forest Service. Respondents’ primary motivations for engaging in CFLRP projects were to restore forest resiliency, reduce community wildfire risk, increase the pace and scale of restoration, and improve relationships and trust. The majority of respondents reported that they were engaged with their CFLRP and found the project to be collaborative to very collaborative.

Results identified areas **where collaboration is functioning well across CFLRP projects**. A majority of respondents indicated:

- A representative cross-section of partners were included in their CFLRP project.
- Participants worked together to identify shared interests and concerns in neutral venues where a wide range of issues were discussed.
- Participants agreed about key problems affecting their respective CFLRP landscapes, strategies to address

problems, and the purpose of the project.

- Participants agreed the collaborative processes had helped build trust, relationships, and legitimacy as they worked to achieve desired outcomes.
- Participants were committed to the collaborative process and felt their collaborative partners were as well.
- CFLRP projects had key leaders who communicated a shared vision, motivated others to work together, and worked well across partners.
- Partners worked together to co-develop knowledge and information, and were committed to adaptive management.
- There was sufficient technical expertise and facilitation in their collaborative.
- Collaborative protocols helped establish accountability within CFLRP projects.
- Collaborative protocols were fair and equitable and used appropriately.
- The Forest Service was responsive to feedback from the collaborative.

Respondents also suggested **opportunities to improve** the collaborative process. Some respondents indicated:

- Room for improvement in aligning expectations for collaborative engagement with the Forest Service throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Their projects did not have flexibility to adapt when conditions changed within the collaborative (e.g., new people or priorities within the CFLRP project) or forest (e.g., effects of wildfire on a planning unit).
- They wanted to see jointly developed knowledge and information shared more equitably.
- A lack of funding and time to carry out work challenged progress and performance.
- Improvements in accountability and understanding between CFLRP project members and the Forest Service were needed, particularly regarding how Forest Service decision-making works, and how collaborative members can inform decisions.

Respondents reported **progress on collaborative process, ecological, and socio-economic outcomes**, including:

- Enhanced communication and decision-making between collaborative members, inclusion of diverse perspectives, minimization of conflict and litigation, and more effective landscape-scale and cross-boundary planning.
- Reduction in fuel hazards, maintained or increased fire use, improved fish and wildlife habitat, increased restoration pace and scale, and restoration of old-growth

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

forests and watershed function.

- Reduction in community wildfire risk and increased support of local employment or training opportunities.

Less progress was reported towards accomplishing work on adjacent lands and offsetting treatment costs via byproducts. The collaborative governance assessment was administered during the first year of CFLRP funding for newly authorized projects. Therefore, progress on several of the social, economic, and ecological goals may take years to realize.

**Disruptions** such as personnel turnover, limited agency capacity, biophysical disturbances, limited industry capacity, and the timing and amount of financial resources further challenged collaborative progress and performance. Yet, participants indicated they were taking a number of actions to address disruptions and continue making progress toward desired objectives and outcomes.

**Recommendations to improve the collaborative process** included that:

- Broad inclusion is necessary and requires adaptive management.
- Early and frequent collaborative engagement, from direction setting to implementation is needed to align decision space, authority, and objectives.
- Developing the ability to anticipate, plan for, and respond to inevitable change is necessary for collaborative durability and resilience.
- Supplemental funding is needed to support the collaborative capacity building that is critical for collaborative durability and resilience.
- Promoting an agency culture of collaboration is critical to successful cross-boundary forest management.

The SWERI will continue to assess collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects, with the goal of gauging capacities and identifying areas for improvement as CFLRP projects adapt and evolve.



Photo credit: North Yuba Forest Partnership field tour, October 2019 (Source: Alex Boesch, Yuba Water Agency)

## Introduction

The U.S. Congress authorized the creation of the [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program \(CFLRP\)](#) in 2009. The purpose of the CFLRP was to “encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes”<sup>2</sup> through a competitive funding program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service). In 2021, CFLRP coordinators, Forest Service personnel, and partners led a collaborative process to develop the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy, a set of ecological and socio-economic monitoring questions and indicators that will supplement local project multi-party monitoring plans and be required for all newly authorized and extension projects.<sup>3</sup>

One core component of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy relates to monitoring collaborative governance.<sup>4</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 a CFLRP project. This has resulted in a multitude of collaborative structures, processes, and practices implemented in diverse social and ecological contexts across the country. Collaborative groups are nested within and impacted by changes that occur within those groups, external changes in social and ecological conditions, and fluid institutional environments, 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. Systematic evaluation could lead to better understanding of what factors promote or challenge collaboration across different contexts, what kinds of targeted 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, coordinators, and subject-matter experts expressed interest in documenting collaborative health, function, and resilience, as well as performance (perceived outcomes). They also emphasized the need for an assessment tool that was straightforward, not time-consuming, easy to administer, and longitudinal.

The SWERI incorporated feedback and questions of interest gathered while drafting the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. The following questions were then designed to be addressed in the collaborative governance assessment:

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

The SWERI conducted the collaborative governance assessment via an online survey administered to 15 newly authorized and extension (projects that received CFLRP funding previously) projects in accordance with the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy ([Figure 1](#)). The report herein summarizes national program-level findings from this assessment. Appendix 1 includes a high-level summary of findings that accompanies this report. However, it is important to note that responses varied by project. Reports were also produced for each of the 15 projects, which can be found [here](#).

## Assessing collaborative governance and adaptability

To assess collaborative dynamics, the SWERI operationalized the Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance ([Emerson et al., 2012](#)). The framework links collaborative dynamics to

<sup>2</sup> PL 111-11 CFLRP Authorizing legislation - <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/110th-congress/senate-report/370/1>

<sup>3</sup> CFLRP National Core Monitoring Strategy - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/documents/cflrp/CMS-Fact-Sheet-final-20221013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Collaborative governance is defined as “the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private for-profit, and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished” ([Emerson et al., 2012](#), p. 2).

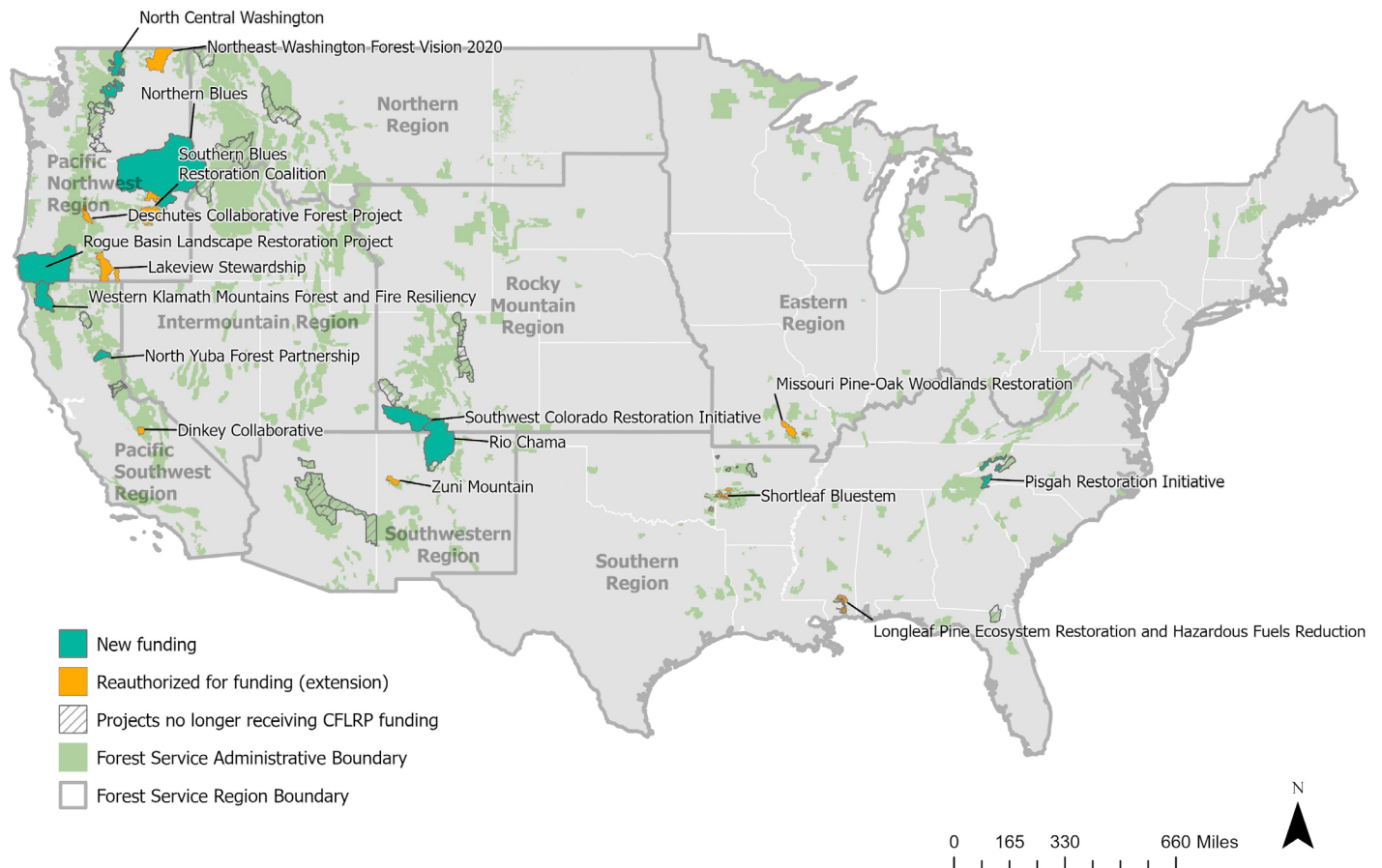


Figure 1: Map of authorized CFLRP projects.

socio-economic and ecological outcomes, promotes assessment of collaboratives across settings and time, and incorporates multiple components of collaborative governance that are grounded in collaborative practice: 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 participate. 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 four sub-components: mutual trust, legitimacy, 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, or types of capacity: *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. Leaders 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, including 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, and purpose and objectives of the group, among others (Bryson et al., 2006; Imperial et al., 2016).

The collaborative governance assessment also collected information on perceived progress towards **collaborative process, socio-economic, and ecological 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.

The assessment also considered how **disruptions** challenged collaborative progress and performance. Personnel turnover, legal or policy changes, and biophysical disturbances like wildfires or insect outbreaks can happen at any time. Such disruptions may impact collaborative progress and performance, and/or force groups to adapt. The SWERI 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; 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 towards solutions to maintain collaborative performance and durability. Finally, the assessment captured participants' **recommended actions and adaptations** to improve the collaborative process and progress.

## Approach

The SWERI developed an online, confidential survey using the software program Qualtrics and administered this survey to 15 newly authorized and extension CFLRP projects (Table 1). The Longleaf Pine and Pisgah CFLRP projects were authorized for funding in 2023 after the SWERI completed survey administration and are not included in this report. The survey consisted of: 62 fixed-response items using a four- or five-point Likert response scale (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree). Most items included a “don't know/not applicable” response option. The survey also included one multiple choice question (i.e., primary motivations for engaging in collaboration) and four open-ended questions (Appendix 2). The survey was developed using concepts from the Integrative Collaborative Governance Framework (Emerson et al., 2012), collaborative 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). Where appropriate, survey items were adapted from other relevant surveys found in the peer-reviewed and grey literature (Appendix 3).

The SWERI piloted the assessment prior to administration. The assessment was administered to members of the Colorado Front Range CFLRP (n=3 respondents, authorized in 2012) and Northern Blues CFLRP (n=5 respondents, authorized in 2021), as well as national CFLRP coordinators from June-October 2021. Responses and structured feedback from the pilot were used to refine and adapt the survey. The SWERI developed a standard operating protocol to support survey recruitment and administration.<sup>5</sup> From November 2021- June 2023, the SWERI administered the survey to 15 newly authorized and extension CFLRP projects. During this implementation phase, the SWERI and the Forest Service first held regionally focused webinars (n=4) to introduce the assessment and identify key points of contact for each newly authorized and extension project. The SWERI then held multiple meetings with key points of contact (e.g., facilitators, coordinators, steering/ leadership committee members) to support survey recruitment and administration. The SWERI worked with contacts to administer the survey to all project participants to capture the variability in perceptions about the collaborative process and progress. The number of respondents recruited from each project ranged from 37 to 205.

<sup>5</sup> SWERI CFLRP collaborative governance assessment standard operating procedures (SOPs) - <https://cfri.box.com/s/hfu5cdk599j5gp5ixphm2qj7gdp4h1ef>

The survey was administered to project participants through project email listservs at the discretion of points of contact. The SWERI left the survey open for several weeks depending on project-specific needs and response rates. Updates about response rates were provided to points of contact, who then sent periodic email reminders to participants to complete the survey. Out of a total of 405 responses, 396 were usable, representing a 27% response rate, which is a typical response rate for similar social science studies ([Kapucu et al., 2013](#); [Ulibarri, 2015](#)). Response rates by project are listed in Table 1.

The SWERI used the statistical software programs Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and R to conduct all analyses and develop figures. Figures report the percentage of respondents in each response category (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree). Open-ended questions were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach ([Ryan and Bernard, 2003](#)).

Table 1: CFLRP project characteristics, sample size, and response rate.

Project Name	New or extension	State(s)	Forest Service Region(s)	# of Forest units	CFLRP Acres	% Forest Service-managed land	n	Response Rate
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project	Extension	OR	6	1	257,548	80%	38	45%
Dinkey Collaborative	Extension	CA	5	1	154,000	84%	25	15%
Lakeview Stewardship	Extension	OR	6	1	859,288	77%	16	27%
Missouri Pine Oak Woodlands Restoration	Extension	MO	9		444,879	28%	18	49%
North Central Washington	New	WA	6	1	1,148,355	Majority Forest Service	23	44%
North Yuba Forest Partnership	New	CA	5	2	356,000	74%	23	40%
Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020	Extension	WA	6	1	916,000	55%	16	27%
Northern Blues	New	OR; WA	6	2	10,426,560	37%	39	38%
Rio Chama	New	CO; NM	2, 3	4	3,773,247	51%	47	23%
Rogue Basin Landscape Restoration Project	New	OR; CA	6	1	4,561,094	40%	22	39%
Shortleaf Bluestem	Extension	AR; OK	8	1	569,458	64%	28	29%
Southern Blues Restoration Coalition	Extension	OR	6	1	1,035,022	85%	23	14%
Southwest Colorado Restoration Initiative	New	CO	2	1	1,909,586	91%	35	32%
Western Klamath Mountains Forest and Fire Resiliency	New	CA	5	2	1,197,720	98%	28	27%
Zuni Mountains	Extension	NM	3	1	253,464	70%	15	17%

## Results

The first results section below includes responses to introductory questions related to respondents' affiliations, motivations for being involved in the CFLRP project, and level of engagement, as well as the degree to which respondents felt the project was collaborative. Next are findings related to collaborative dynamics (i.e., principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action), along with short descriptions of each collaborative dynamic component in italics to orient the reader. The final sections provide findings on perceived outcomes, disruptions that challenged collaborative progress and performance, and recommendations to improve the collaborative process. For clarity, strong majority results are reported as  $\geq 75.0\%$  agreement (agreement includes those who somewhat to strongly agree), notable majority results as  $\geq 60.0\%$  agreement, and slight majority as  $\geq 50.0\%$  agreement. Results with notable disagreement ( $\geq 15.0\%$  somewhat to strongly disagree) are also highlighted. Each survey item related to collaborative dynamics, outcomes, and disruptions were voluntary and included a "don't know/not applicable" response option. Those who chose not to answer are not included in the number of respondents for each item indicated in the figures below.

### Introductory questions

Of the 396 individuals who participated in the survey, the largest groups represented were from non-governmental organizations and the Forest Service (Figure 2). These two groups accounted for more than half of all respondents. Respondents' primary motivations for participating in the CFLRP projects included restoring forest resiliency (63.1%), reducing community wildfire risk (34.6%), increasing the pace and scale of restoration (34.1%), and improving relationships and trust (26.0%; Figure 3). Participants were also asked to reflect on their level of engagement in the CFLRP projects. Response options included a spectrum from not engaged to high engagement. Not engaged referred to "Not attending meetings, field trips, or other

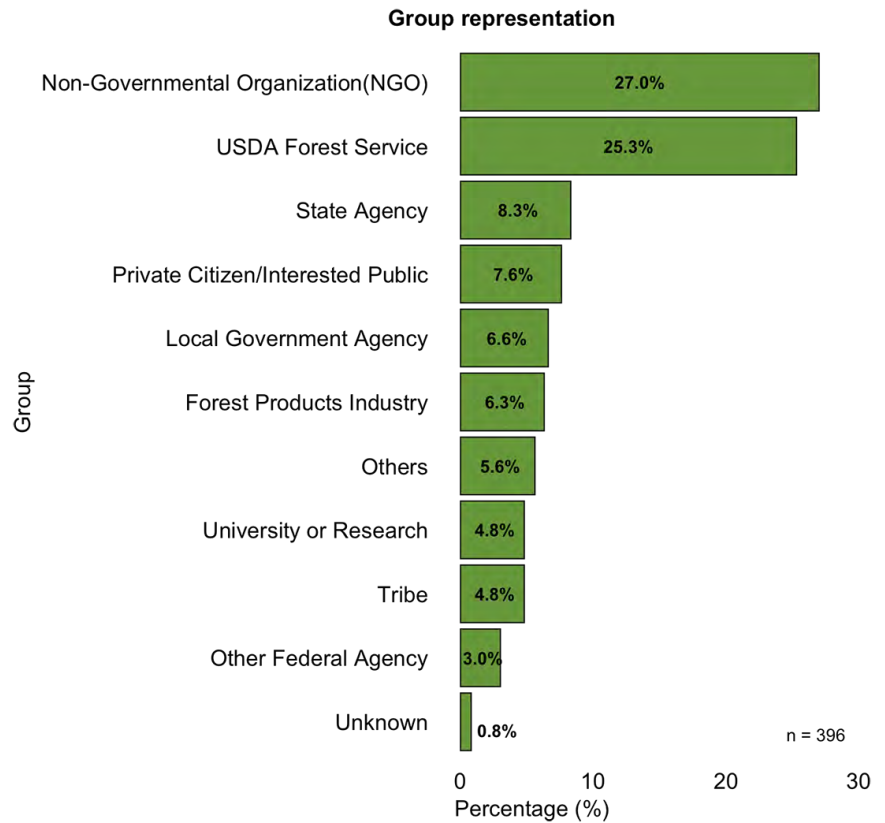


Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who self-identified representation with associated group type; three respondents did not answer this question and have therefore been categorized under "unknown."

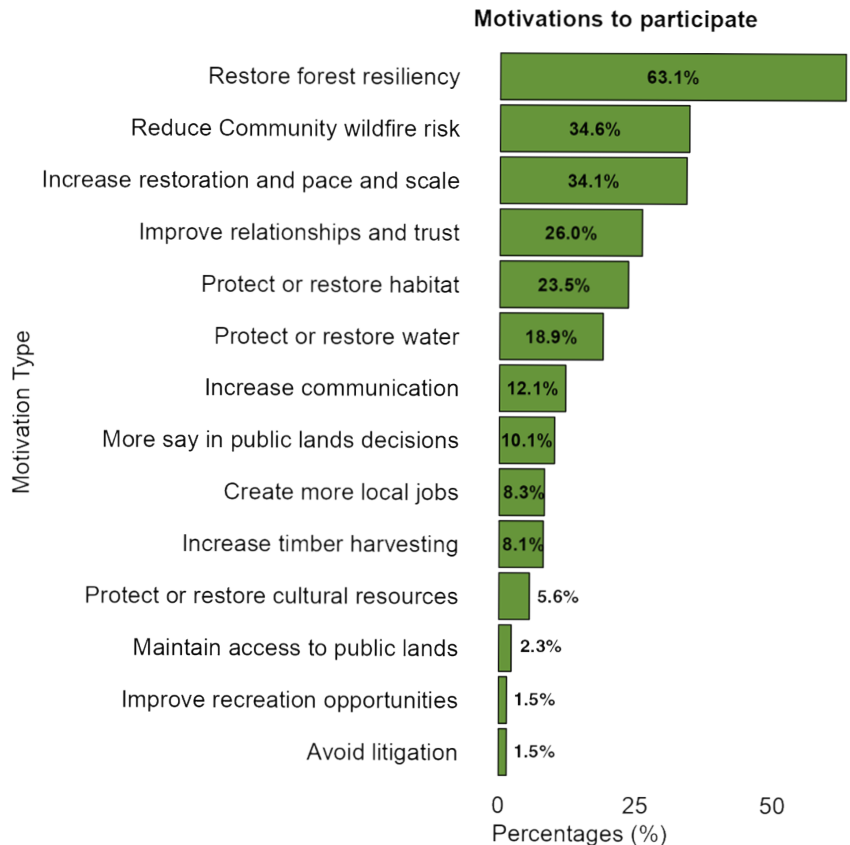


Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who identified the associated motive as reason for their participation in the collaborative. Note - respondents were able to select multiple motives and hence the total n is different for each motivation.

events, and not being well apprised of project activities.” Low engagement referred to “Keeping up with project notes and activities, but infrequently attending meetings, field trips, or other events.” Moderate engagement referred to “Attending meetings, field trips, or other events but not serving in a leadership or coordination capacity, and/or not participating in work or sub-groups.” Finally, high engagement referred to “Attending nearly all meetings, field trips, and other events and participating in work or sub-groups or serving in a leadership or coordination capacity. A strong majority (77.2%) of respondents reported they were moderately to highly engaged in the CFLRP project, while 21.6% reported low engagement, and 1.1% reported they were not engaged (Figure 4).

Respondents indicated the degree to which they thought the CFLRP project was collaborative (on a scale from not collaborative at all to very collaborative). As defined in the survey, “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 reported the CFLRP project was collaborative to very collaborative (76.6%; Figure 5). A notable minority (21.1%) reported the project was somewhat collaborative, while a small minority (2.3%) reported the project was not collaborative (Figure 5).

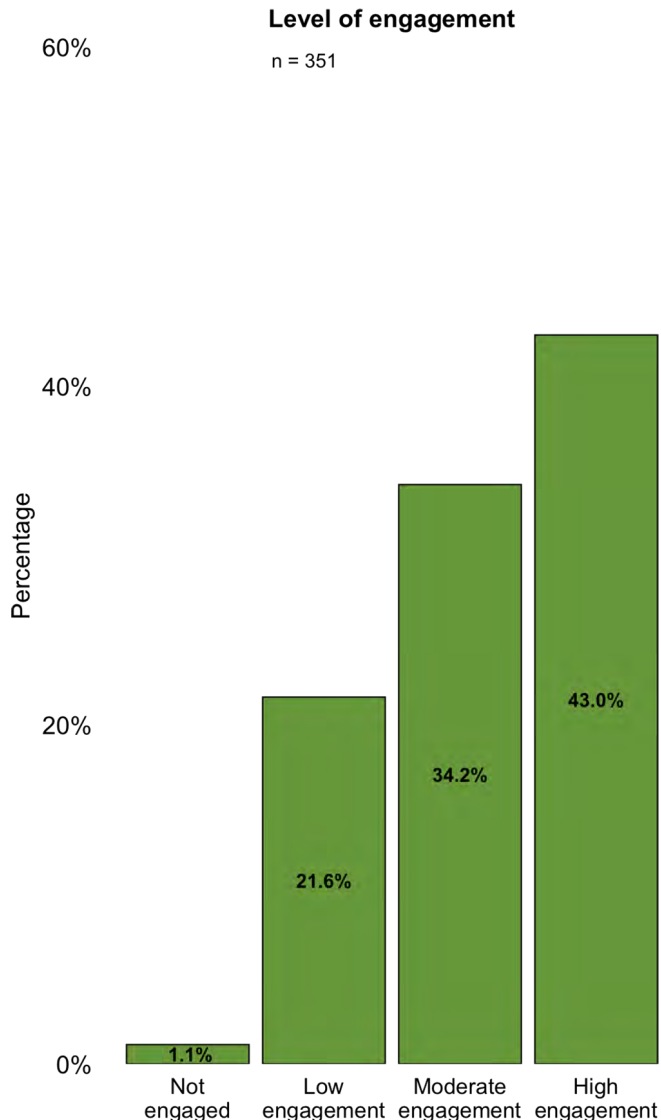


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who rated their involvement in this project as “Not engaged,” “Low engagement,” “Moderate engagement,” or “High engagement.”

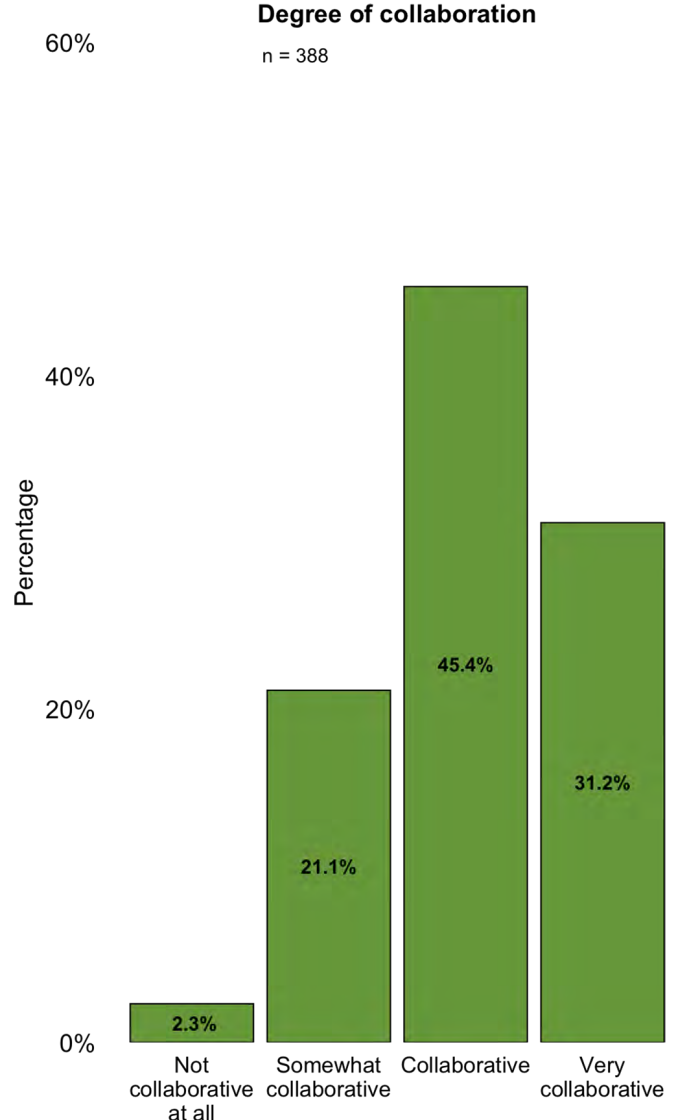


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who reported this project to be “Not collaborative,” “Somewhat collaborative,” “Collaborative,” or “Very collaborative.”

### 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 somewhat to strongly agreed that their collaborative involved a representative cross-section of individuals (80.1%) and that participants worked together to identify shared interests and concerns (85.3%; Figure 6). A notable majority also agreed the collaborative process facilitated a neutral space to discuss controversial issues (71.8%; Figure 6).

A strong majority of respondents felt there was agreement among partners about the key problems that affected their landscape (79.0%) and on the purpose of their respective

CFLRP projects (82.3%; Figure 7). A notable majority also felt that there was agreement on the shared strategies to address problems (72.0%), although a notable proportion of respondents also disagreed with this statement (14.9%; Figure 7).

A notable majority of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that collaboration between CFLRP participants and the Forest Service met their expectations during planning (66.1%), implementation (63.6%), and monitoring (64.0%; Figure 8). Still, a relatively large proportion of respondents (≥15%) somewhat to strongly disagreed that collaboration between the Forest Service and partners met their expectations throughout the restoration process (Figure 8).

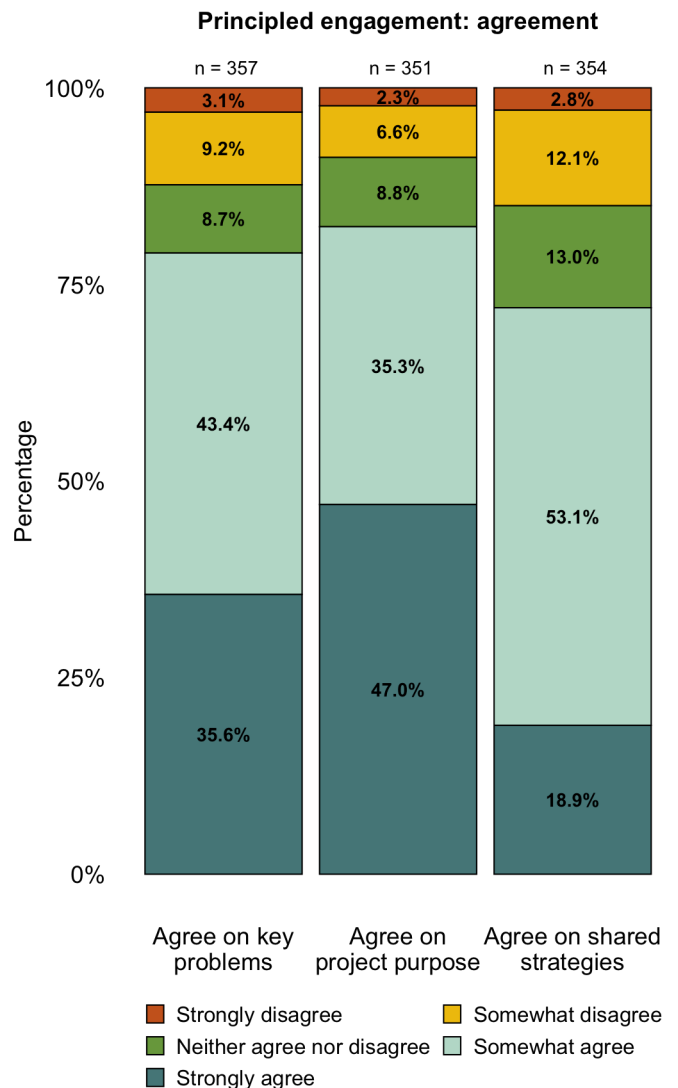
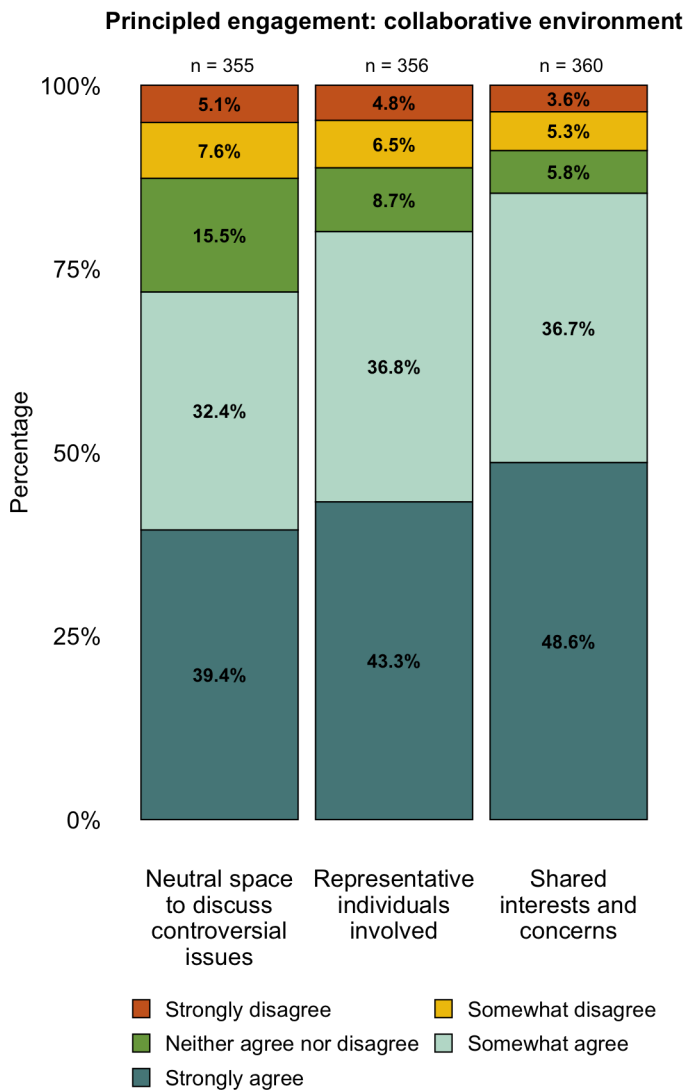


Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the collaborative process has created a neutral space to openly discuss controversial issues, that a representative cross-section of individuals who have a stake in the issues and outcomes are involved, and that participants work together to identify shared interests and concerns.

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that participants agree on the key problems that impact the landscape, the purpose of the collaborative, and the strategies to solve problems.

### Shared motivation

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

A strong majority of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that the collaborative process helped participants build mutual respect of others’ interests (84.8%), personal and/or working relationships (88.2%), and trust in each other (86.5%; Figure 9). A strong majority also reported they trusted the group to achieve desired actions and outcomes (83.1%; Figure 9).

A strong majority of respondents reported they were committed to the collaborative process (91.5%; Figure 10). A strong majority also somewhat to strongly agreed that other collaborative participants (82.8%) and the Forest

Service (79.3%) were committed to the collaborative process (Figure 10). These results indicated a tendency to view oneself as more committed than one’s peers.

### 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 of collaborative governance. Leaders are needed to convene partners, communicate a shared vision, and motivate people to work together.

Respondents had a favorable view of CFLRP leadership - a strong majority agreed they had leaders who communicated a common collaborative vision and action

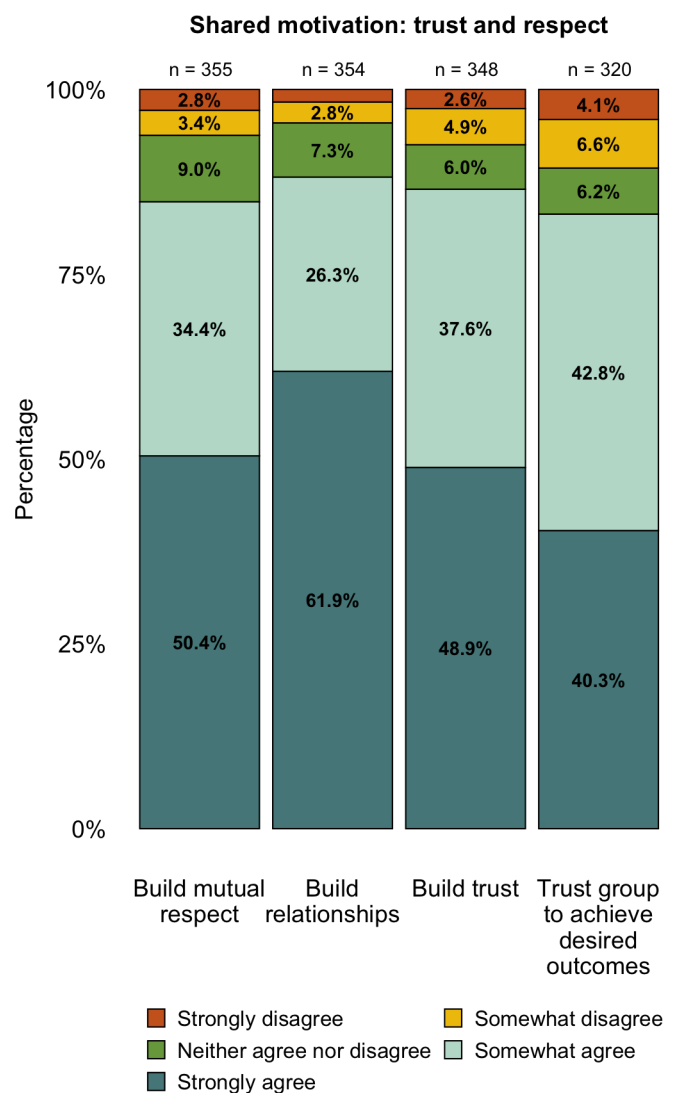
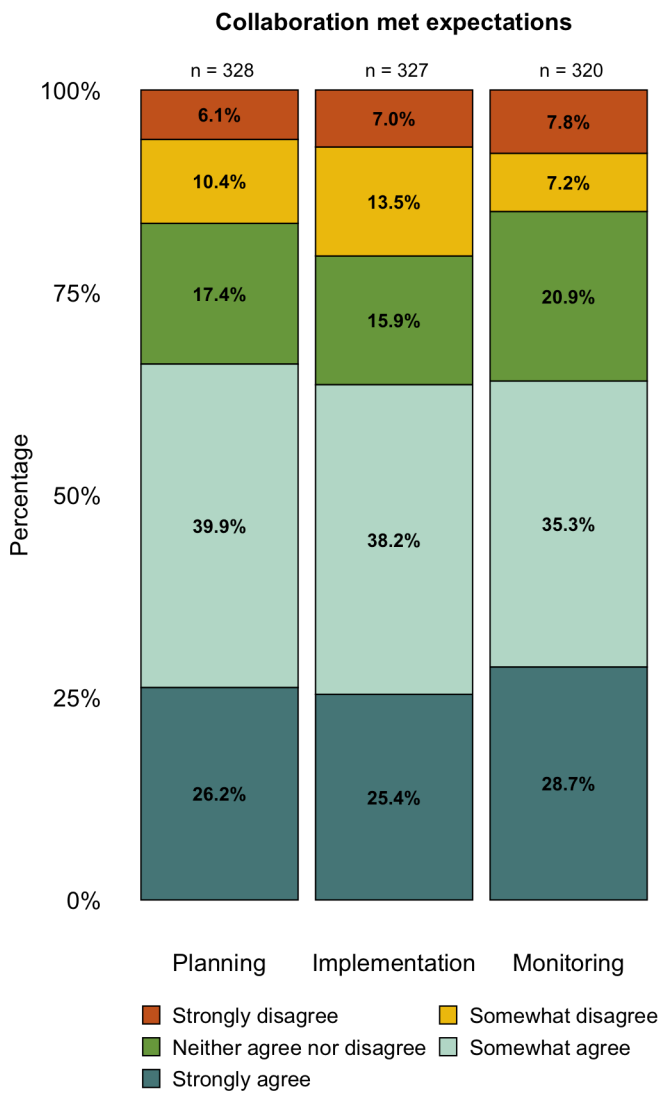


Figure 8: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that collaboration between CFLRP participants and the Forest Service has met their expectations during planning, implementation, and monitoring stages.

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the collaborative process has helped build mutual respect, personal and working relationships, and trust in each other, as well as the extent to which participants trust the group to achieve desired actions and outcomes. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

(83.0%), motivated others to work together (78.0%), and worked well with other people and organizations (90.4%; Figure 11).

### 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 somewhat to strongly agreed that project participants co-created knowledge to learn and solve problems together (81.4%; Figure 12). A notable majority somewhat to strongly agreed that knowledge and information were shared equally among project participants (74.0%), participants were committed to adaptive management (73.5%), and there was flexibility

to address changing collaborative dynamics (e.g., new people or priorities within the CFLRP; 65.6%) or forest conditions (e.g., wildfire effects on a planning unit; 68.9%; Figure 12). However, a notable minority disagreed they had the flexibility to adapt under changes to the collaborative (15.3%) or forest conditions (14.8%), and that knowledge and information were shared equitably (17.5%; Figure 12).

### 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 respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that their collaborative had sufficient facilitation skills (80.3%) and technical expertise (78.4%) to carry

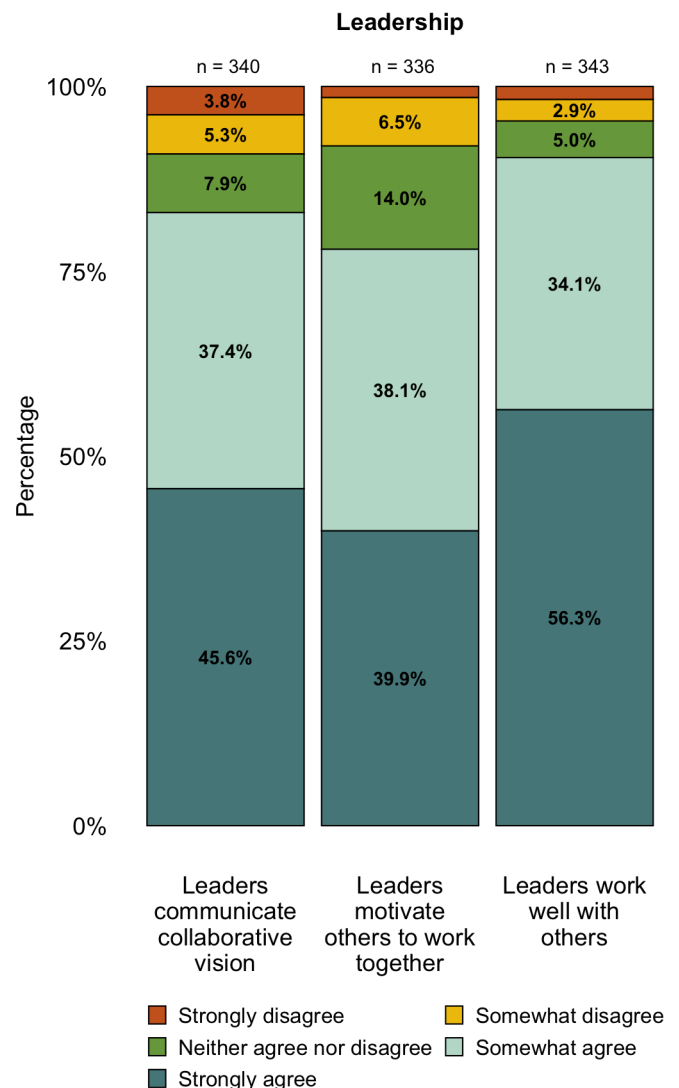
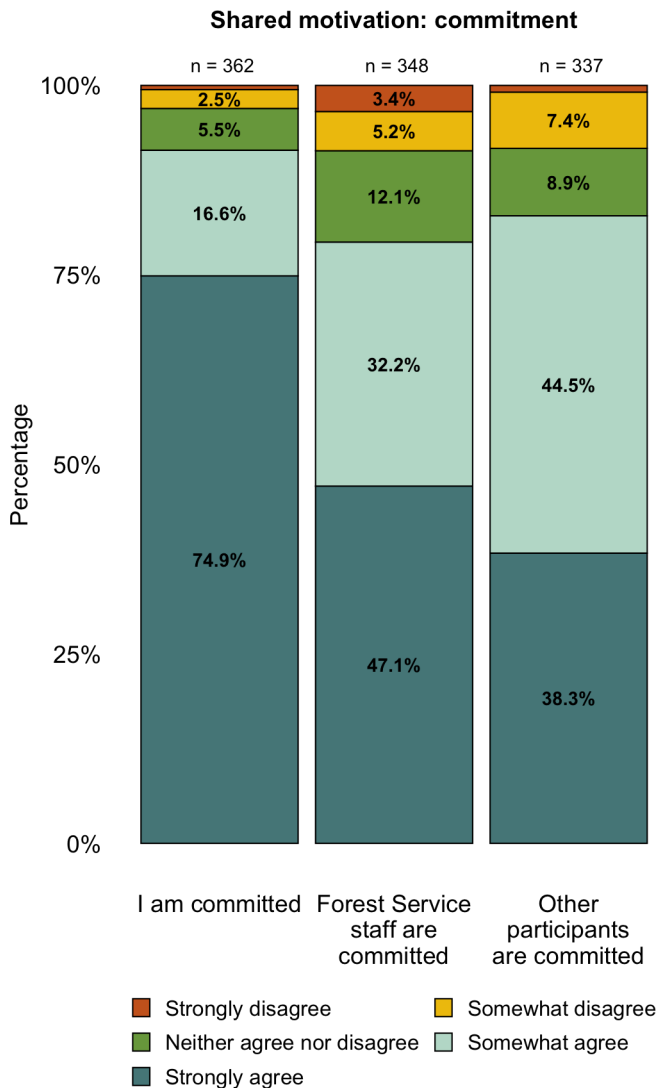


Figure 10: Percentage of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that they, Forest Service staff, and other project participants are committed to the collaborative process. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

Figure 11: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the leaders work well with other people and organizations, maintain and communicate a common vision and direction, and motivate others to work together. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

out tasks and complete their work (Figure 13). A notable majority also felt the collaborative had adequate funds (70.0%; Figure 13). However, less than half of respondents agreed that they had enough time to get the work done (49.0%), while a notable proportion of respondents indicated that there were inadequate amounts of both time (30.8%) and funding (18.9%) to accomplish work (Figure 13).

### 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.*

It is important to highlight that there was no strong majority agreement with statements that assessed the accountability, responsiveness, and transparency within and between CFLRP participants and the Forest Service (Figures 14 and 15). Yet, a notable majority of respondents indicated that there were protocols that promoted accountability among collaborative participants (e.g., decision rules, charters, memoranda of understanding; 73.5%), and between collaborative participants and the Forest Service (66.0%; Figure 14). A notable majority also

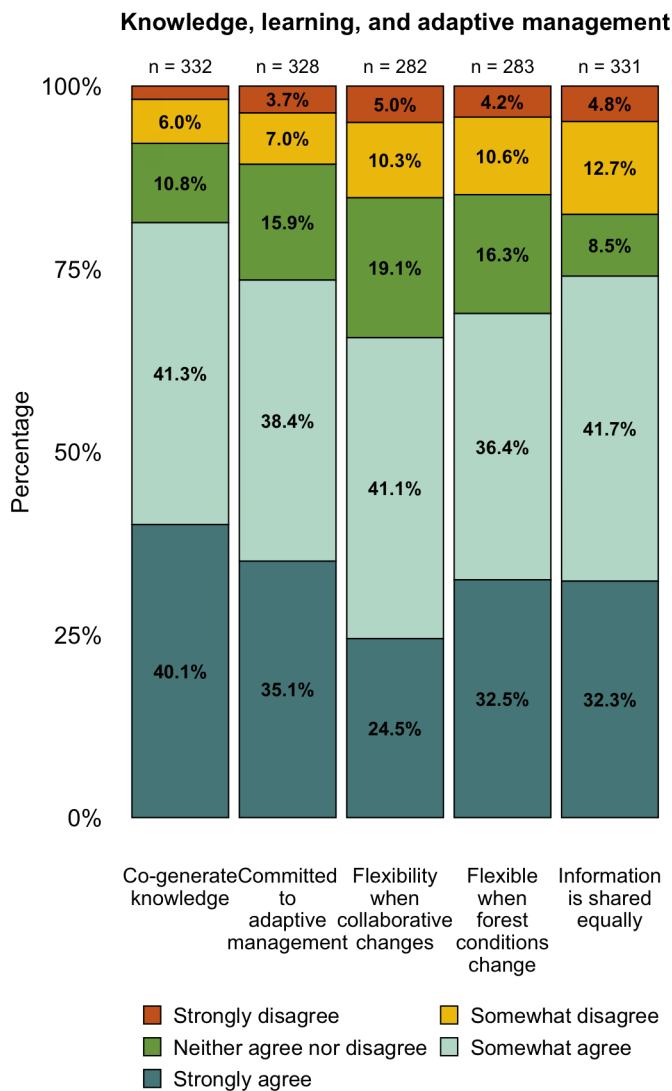


Figure 12: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that knowledge and information is co-generated so that participants can learn and solve problems together, and shared equally among project participants, as well as that there is commitment to informing adjustments to management practices and flexibility to adjust when forest or collaborative conditions change. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity. Note: Northern Blues was not asked about the flexibility to adapt to changing forest and collaborative conditions, so their responses to this question are not reflected.

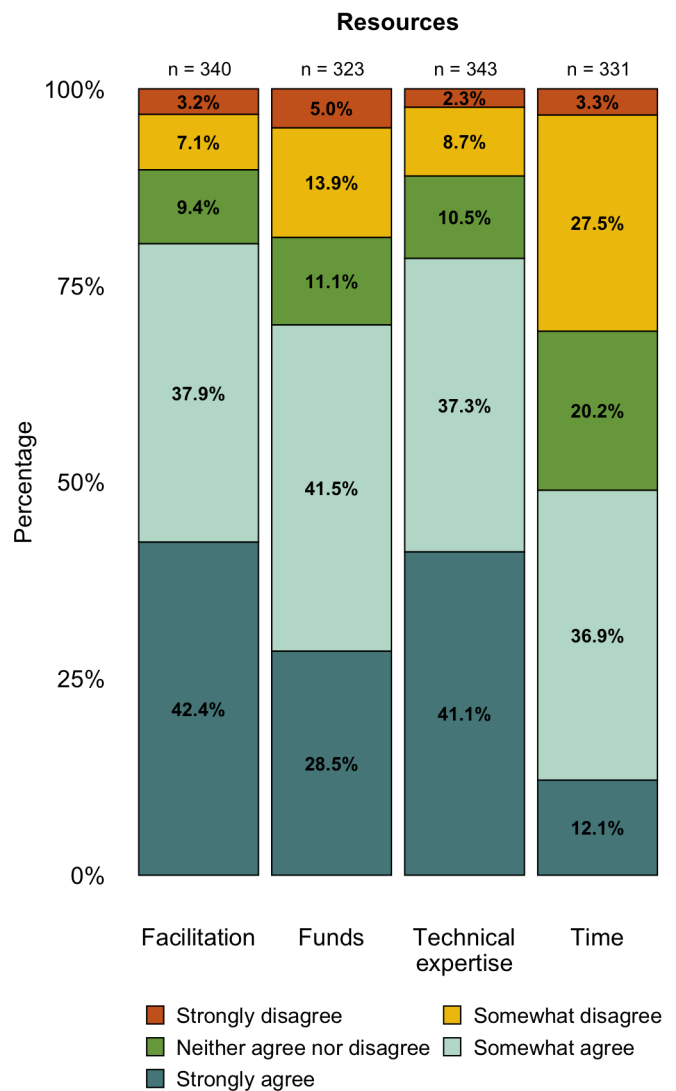


Figure 13: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the collaborative had adequate facilitation skills, funds, technical expertise, and time to carry out tasks and accomplish work.

reported collaborative protocols were fair and equitable (71.7%), transparent (65.1%), and used appropriately (73.7%; Figure 14). Still, a relatively high number of respondents disagreed that there were mechanisms for accountability between the collaborative and the Forest Service (18.4%; Figure 14).

A notable majority of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that the Forest Service was clear with participants about their decision-making (68.9%), responsive to collaborative feedback (73.8%), and that CFLRP partners understood how to inform Forest Service decision-making processes (62.8%; Figure 15). However, a notable proportion did not understand how and when to inform agency decision-making (21.1%) and felt that the Forest Service was unclear about how decisions were made (17.0%; Figure 15).

### Perceived outcomes

The SWERI assessed perceived progress towards collaborative process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes. The outcome metrics chosen for evaluation were derived from the intent of the FLRA and the CFLRP, and conversations with local, regional, and national CFLRP coordinators while developing the Common Monitoring Strategy. Notably, the assessment was administered during the first year of authorization for several projects (n=7; Table 1), and thus some socio-economic and ecological outcomes may not be realized for several years after implementation.

### Collaborative process outcomes

A strong majority of respondents somewhat to strongly agreed that the collaborative process enabled partners

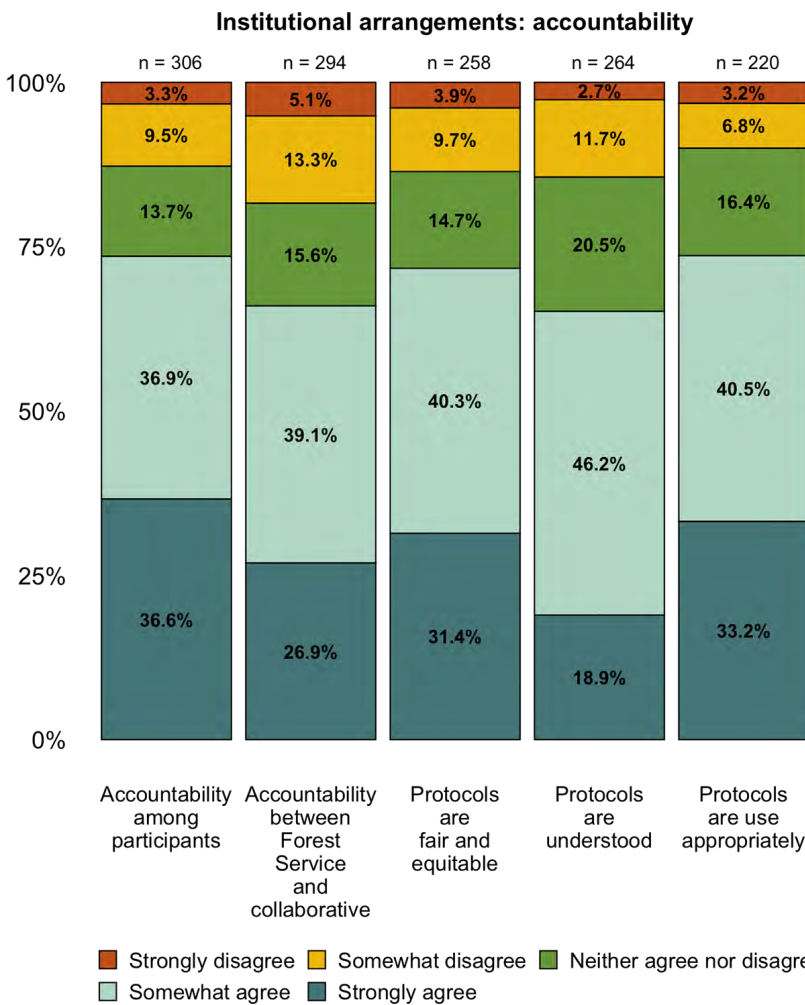


Figure 14: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that protocols promote accountability among participants, between Forest Service and the collaborative, and that collaborative protocols are fair and equitable, understood by participants, and are used appropriately.

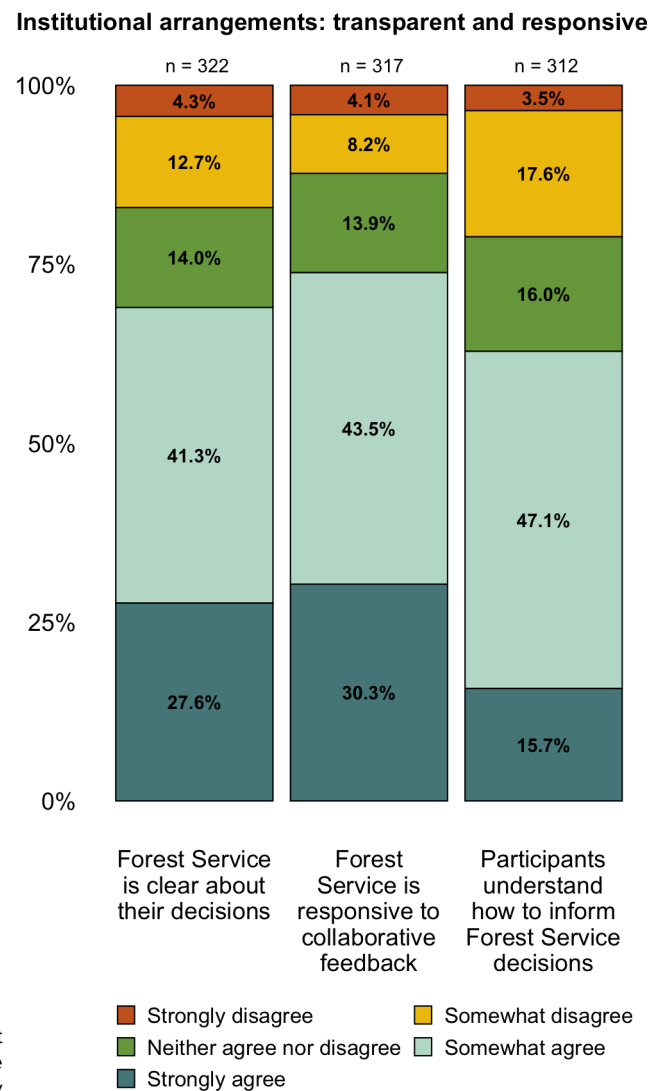


Figure 15: Percent of respondents “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the Forest Service is clear about what decisions they make and why, the Forest Service is responsive to project participant feedback, and that they understand when and what input is useful to inform Forest Service decisions.

to plan at the landscape scale (82.3%) and enhanced communication between collaborative participants (83.4%; Figure 16). A notable majority also agreed that the collaborative process enabled cross-boundary planning (72.8%), enhanced decision-making (73.9%), included diverse perspectives (72.9%), and minimized conflict (69.8%) and litigation (66.8%; Figure 16). A notable minority of respondents indicated the CFLRP project had not helped minimize conflict (15.6%; Figure 16).

### Socio-economic and ecological outcomes

A notable majority reported that their project had made moderate to substantial progress on the socio-economic outcomes of reducing community wildfire risk (65.4%) and supporting local employment or training (e.g., forest products industry, youth/citizen science; 66.4%), while just over half reported moderate to substantial progress on doing more work on adjacent lands (e.g., Tribal, state, private lands; 52.7%) and on offsetting treatment costs via byproducts (e.g., woody biomass; 50.7%; Figure 17).

Regarding ecological outcomes, a strong majority reported moderate to substantial progress on reducing hazardous fuels (82.9%), while a notable majority reported their CFLRP project had improved fire use (e.g., prescribed or managed; 64.8%), habitat (65.7%), the pace and scale of restoration work (74.6%), watershed function (e.g., aquatic habitat, water quality, soil productivity; 71.5%), invasive species control (60.2%), and the restoration of old growth (62.1%; Figure 18).

### Disruptions

At the time of the survey, disruptions that posed the greatest challenges to collaborative progress, performance, and durability were personnel turnover (75.7%), limited agency capacity (61.1%), biophysical disruptions (e.g., wildfire, insects, disease, etc.; 57.1%), limited industry capacity (55.9%), and funding challenges (52.8%; Figure 19).

Respondents were asked in open-ended questions to further reflect on how their CFLRP had experienced and responded to disruptions.<sup>6</sup> Most respondents elaborated

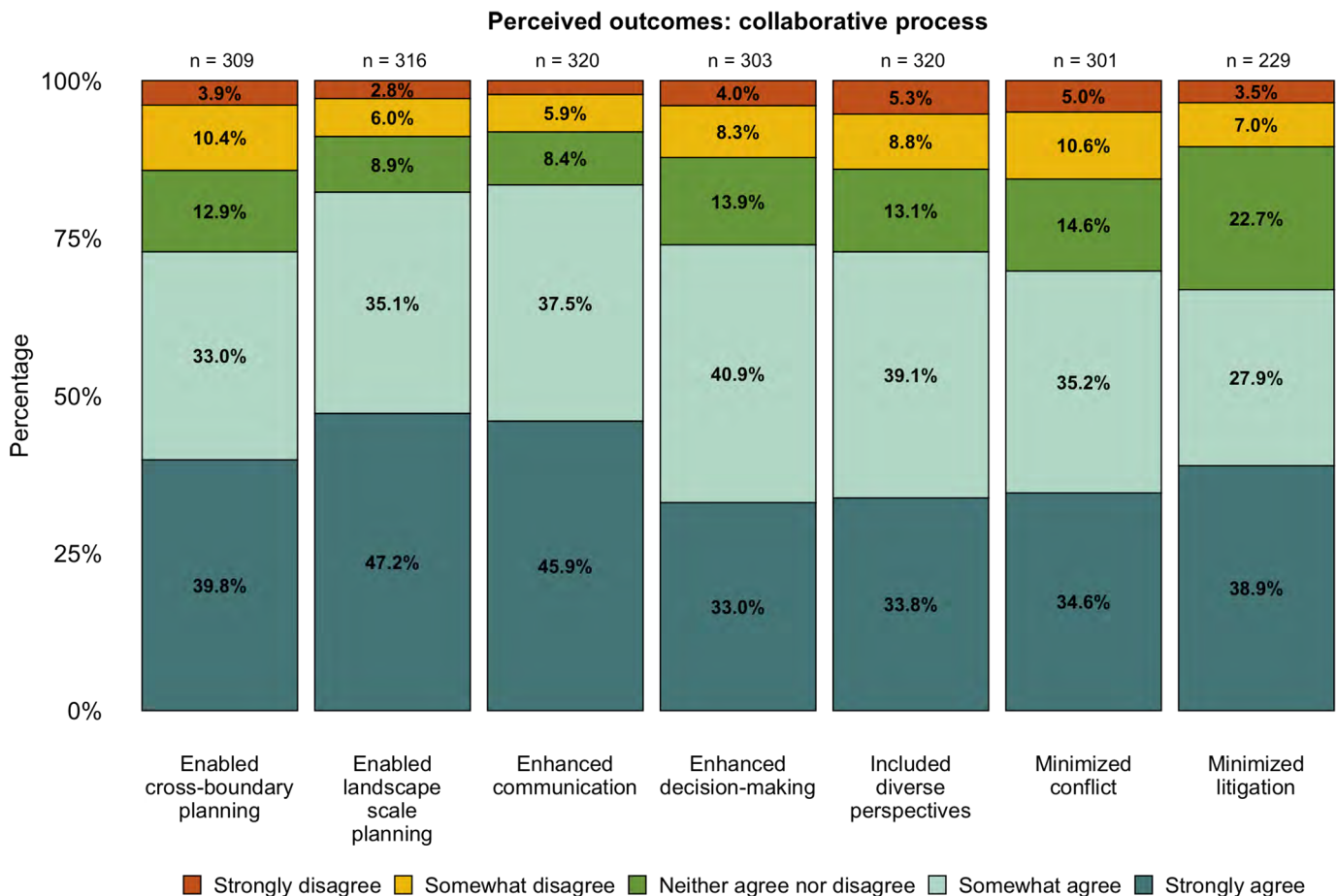


Figure 16: Percent of respondents who “Strongly disagreed” to “Strongly agreed” that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

<sup>6</sup> Participants from the Northern Blues CFLRP were not asked to answer open-ended questions about disruptions or their responses to disruptions, so this section does not include the experiences from the Northern Blues CFLRP.

on the disruptions listed in Figure 19. Just under half (44.2%) of respondents mentioned that they or their project dealt with multiple disruptions, which showed that disruptions consistently co-occur and may result in compounding impacts to collaborative progress and performance.

The intersection of *personnel turnover* and *limited agency capacity* disrupted collaborative progress and performance. Most notably, personnel turnover within the Forest Service led to unfilled positions, which reduced agency capacity to get work done. Insufficient administrative support and a lack of planning for employee turnover contributed to this issue from inside the agency. Burnout, low morale, reductions in trust, and breakdowns in communication were all mentioned as ramifications of reduced agency capacity from turnover. CFLRPs responded to these issues by creating

new protocols to facilitate employee transitions, and by restructuring leadership and subcommittees.

*Biophysical disruptions*, such as wildfires and pest and pathogen disturbance also impacted progress and performance. Wildfires pulled resources away from projects and, at times, suspended work. Changes in the timing and persistence of fire windows also challenged planning and implementation of prescribed fire.

To respond to wildfire disturbance, CFLRPs identified alternative treatment units, and facilitated shared learning processes to create prescribed fire plans and scale up implementation. For example, one group performed a visioning exercise to co-create a 20-year strategy for resilience to catastrophic wildfire. Another group created a prescribed fire association to expand opportunities to increase prescribed fire. Drought, temperature and seasonality changes, and tornadoes also caused challenges, and necessitated the redesign of operation plans to work around different biophysical disruptions as they arose.

The *timing and amount of funding* created issues with timely hiring, pay, and project implementation. To mitigate this, groups identified alternative funding sources to support project capacity and implementation. *A lack of investment and capacity in the forest products industry and insufficient workforce and infrastructure* slowed project implementation.

Other disruptions mentioned by respondents were moving from direction-setting to implementation, conflict among participants, and legal challenges. Challenges with *moving from direction-setting to implementation* affected collaborative progress. This was connected to timing issues, particularly with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and long lag times from the beginning to the end of a project, which could diminish interest and engagement. Conflicting priorities among collaborative members also caused problems when moving from direction-setting to implementation. To streamline environmental planning and analysis and mitigate conflict, respondents said that their CFLRPs had hired NEPA planners, Forest Service project planners, and representatives for interested and affected parties, while one completed an After-Action Review to discuss lessons learned throughout the restoration process. Vocal individuals with dissenting opinions led to *conflict among participants* and disrupted collaboration. Bringing in facilitators helped collaborative members navigate interpersonal issues. Respondents also noted circumstances in which conflict can lead to positive outcomes if managed well. *Legal challenges* came from collaborative participants or local to national entities and

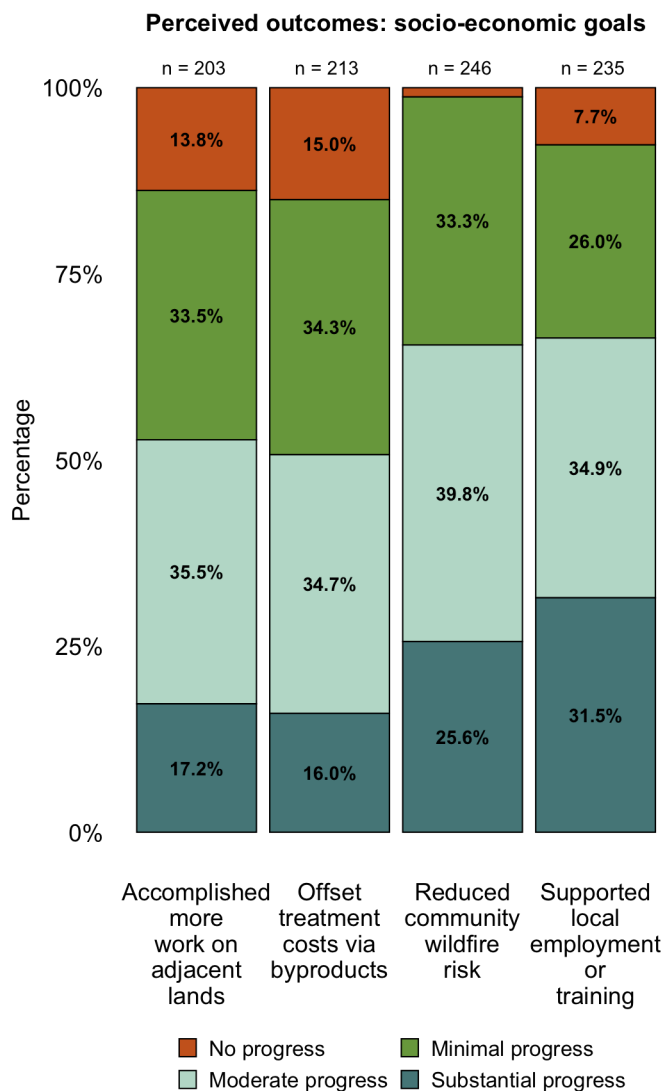


Figure 17: Percent of respondents who reported “No progress,” “Minimal progress,” “Moderate progress,” or “Substantial progress” towards socio-economic goals. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

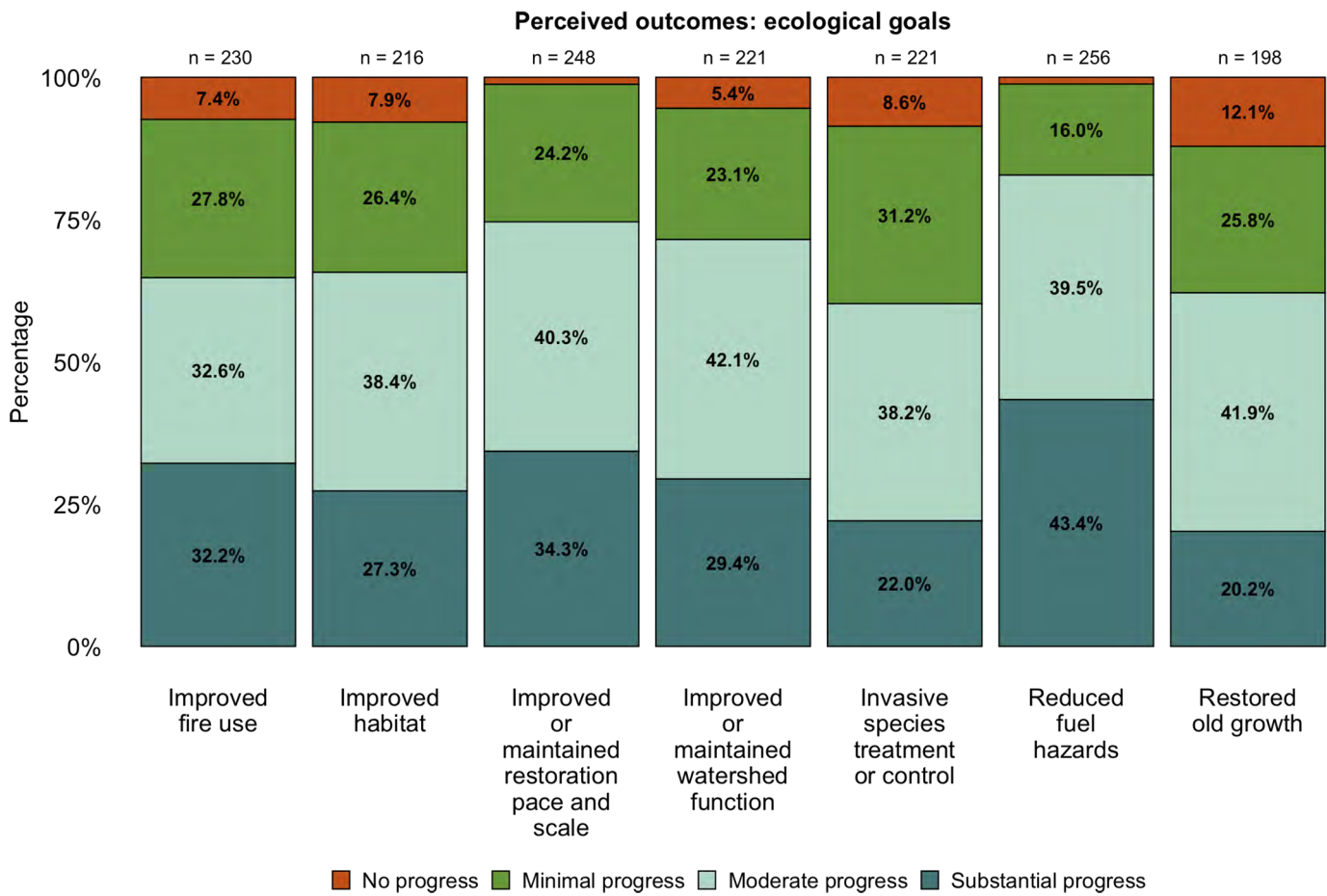


Figure 18: Percent of respondents who reported “No progress,” “Minimal progress,” “Moderate progress,” or “Substantial progress” towards ecological goals. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

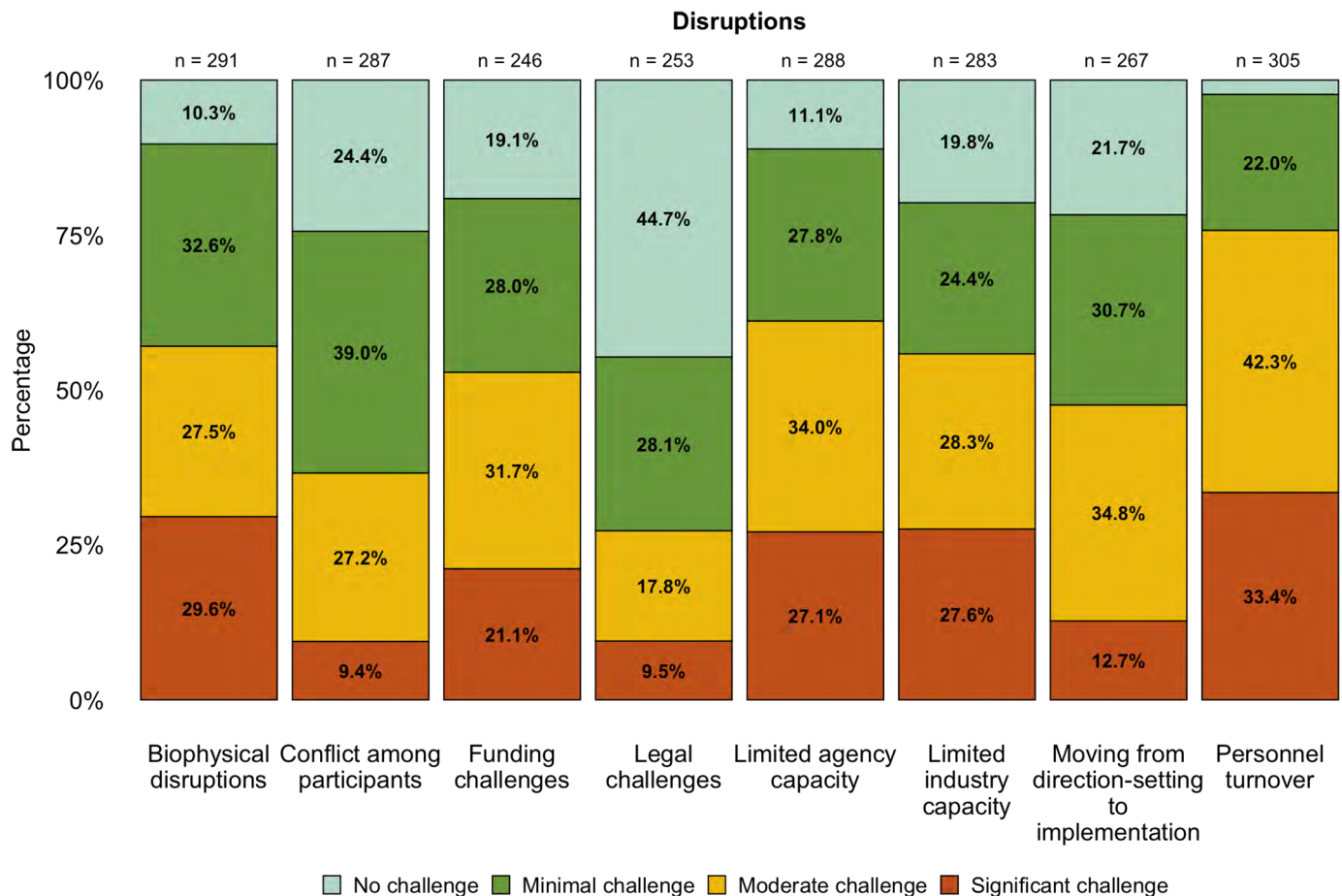


Figure 19: Percent of respondents who reported disruptions posed “No challenge,” “Minimal challenge,” “Moderate challenge,” or “Significant challenge” to collaborative performance and durability. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed for visual clarity.

organizations. Larger-scale legal issues were also imposed on collaboratives (e.g., Mexican Spotted Owl injunction). To respond to litigious participants, collaboratives were restructured, while larger injunctions were addressed by shifting work to new locations that were not subject to restrictions.

Finally, two other disruption themes emerged through the open-ended questions that were not part of the fixed response items:

- *Collaborative process and structure* – This disruption included difficulties with working across large, complex collaboratives and the uneven distributions of knowledge that sometimes resulted. To deal with these challenges, collaboratives created work groups to tackle specific problems and aligned redundant planning efforts utilizing the knowledge and experiences of participants and other collaboratives.
- *Lack of representation* – Difficulties stemmed from the large size of CFLRPs, which include interested and affected parties from different communities, counties, and National Forests. To respond, CFLRPs facilitated workshops that fostered connection between collaborative members and created documents to remind members of the expectations for collaboration.

### Recommendations to maintain and improve collaborative progress and performance

Respondents were asked to recommend actions or adaptations needed to improve the collaborative process and continue making progress towards desired objectives. Below, five key recommendations are summarized based on survey responses and practice-based knowledge of the authors. Where applicable, possible actions and relevant resources are also included to help collaborative partners address challenges.

**Broad inclusion is necessary and requires adaptive management.** Collaborative process and performance benefit from inclusion of diverse perspectives and interests. Respondents recommended increased engagement with Tribes, land grant universities, and historically underrepresented groups, as well as a broader coalition of interest-based groups, including those affiliated with recreation, cultural heritage and resources, and fish and wildlife. Work could be done to facilitate broader engagement among the full spectrum of interested and affected entities to meet the broad intent of the CFLRP and FLRA. Yet, there are many factors that determine whether an entity engages, including resource availability and varying incentives, and broad inclusion may increase transaction costs and reduce efficiencies. See Box 1 for actions and resources to support broad inclusion.

### BOX 1: ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT BROAD INCLUSION

- Inclusion should be managed based on local context, collaborative history, current and expected needs, and objectives. [Stakeholder analyses](#) can help identify underrepresented or overlooked groups and assess their interest in and commitment to collaboration.
- Local champions or community-connected partners could help facilitate meaningful and appropriate engagement.
- There are a number of resources for engaging with Tribes in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways. See a toolkit prepared by the [Center for Collaborative Conservation](#). Also, see the new Forest Service [action plan to strengthen consultation and Nation-to-Nation relationships](#). Local training in effective Tribal engagement and listening sessions on Tribal needs, priorities, and objectives for engagement in places where projects intersect with Tribal reserved or ancestral lands are also important for facilitating co-management with Tribes.

**Early and frequent collaborative engagement from direction setting to implementation is needed to align decision space, authority, and objectives.** A key challenge noted in the assessment was that Forest Service decision rationale and decision space were not well understood or articulated, which made efficient and meaningful engagement difficult, especially considering the Forest Service has management authority and discretion on projects implemented on Forest Service-managed land. Specifically, respondents wanted more clarity around funding resources and timelines, as well as the process for integrating collaborative feedback in project planning, prioritization, and implementation. They expected more engagement in the decision-making process, including more opportunities to co-develop desired conditions, zones of agreement, and project plans through NEPA, learn from management actions, and adapt actions when warranted. From direction setting to implementation, there is a need for early and frequent collaborative engagement to document decision space and authority, build trust and shared understanding around management goals, help participants understand how and when to inform decisions, and articulate what decisions are made and why.

Additionally, findings suggested there was room for improvement in meeting expectations for collaborative engagement through planning, implementation, and monitoring, and for greater commitment to the collaborative process. Interested and affected entities come to the collaboration table with variable and changing commitments, expectations, and

accountabilities with regard to their organization, funders, and the collaborative process. Time available to dedicate to collaborative work is often limited for partners and agency staff. Further, existing commitments to place-based collaborative pursuits, or other Forest Service-administered programs, including the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Strategy and the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, may limit engagement. When parties are unable to commit in ways that meet partner expectations, trust and relationships may erode. Hence, there is a need to document and align expectations, commitments, and capacities for engagement throughout the collaborative process. Box 2 includes actions and resources to support early and frequent collaborative engagement to align decision space, authority, and objectives.

**Developing the ability to anticipate, plan for, and respond to inevitable change is necessary for collaborative durability and resilience.** Disruptions and changes are fundamental and recurring aspects of collaboration. Turnover can erode trust and stall progress; new faces can alter expectations, commitments, or capacities to engage; policy changes can shift priorities; and wildfires or other biophysical changes can divert resources. These and other disruptions were reported by respondents as impacting collaborative progress and performance. Adequate preparation for disruptions can help maintain collaborative progress. Box 3 includes actions and resources to anticipate, plan for, and respond to inevitable change.

### BOX 2: ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EARLY AND FREQUENT COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Hosting annual workshops or field reviews supports social learning about how management actions are implemented, their impacts, and whether actions are meeting desired objectives.
- Determining and communicating clear points of engagement would be useful for explaining how collaborative input informs subsequent prescriptions, planning, and modifications to management actions.
- Relevant resources for understanding, engaging in, and informing Forest Service planning, implementation, and monitoring, include guidance documents for [collaborating in the NEPA process](#), [engagement in the judicial and review process](#), and [participating from planning through implementation](#).
- Spatial fire planning tools and frameworks, such as [quantitative wildfire risk assessments](#), [Potential Operational Delineations](#), and [scenario investment planning](#), can support collaborative cross-boundary planning and prioritization of work to mitigate risk to communities and other critical values and assets of importance, promote safe and effective fire response, and contribute to forest health and resilience.
- The [National Forest Foundation](#), [Center for Collaborative Conservation](#), [Network for Landscape Conservation](#), and [Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition](#) all maintain repositories of tools, best practices, and frameworks for effective collaboration.
- There are resources to help groups [clarify and align expectations](#), and document [roles and commitments](#). As people and priorities change, it is important to periodically re-assert and revise expectations, roles, and commitments as well.

### BOX 3: ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ANTICIPATING, PLANNING FOR, AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE

- *Develop transition strategies for changes in personnel* – Create onboarding workshops and/or documents for new personnel; establish redundancy in roles to reduce overreliance on individuals; develop mentoring programs to train newcomers; and/or leverage planning teams or contractors to fill gaps in personnel.
- *Develop contingency plans and learning opportunities in the event of disturbance* – Contingency planning for alternative treatment areas may help buffer impacts from wildfire, while wildfire or pest and pathogen disturbances may provide opportunities to learn about treatment effectiveness through monitoring and adaptive management.
- *Invest time and resources to collaboratively develop and periodically revisit documents that outline shared strategies and decision processes* – Collaboratively developed documents (e.g., science syntheses, restoration strategies, charters, memoranda of understanding, bylaws) can help institutionalize joint knowledge production, social learning, and accountability among collaborative members and between collaborative members and the Forest Service. In the case of the CFLRP, a Forest Service-administered program, collaboratively developed documents and collaborative procedures should be codified, when appropriate, within existing agency protocols (e.g., Record of Decision). This can help maintain momentum and commitment to shared strategies in the event of personnel changes or biophysical disturbances. Collaboratively developed documents should be periodically revisited and, if needed, revised.

**Supplemental funding is needed to support the collaborative capacity building that is critical for collaborative durability and resilience.** The CFLRP mandated collaboration throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring. Yet, CFLRP funds can only be used for a portion of treatment implementation and monitoring. Respondents stressed the need to fund third-party facilitators, technical experts, researchers, local leaders, and boundary-spanning individuals and entities (e.g., National Forest Foundation, Forest Stewards Guild) to perform critical functions for cultivating collaborative resilience, including coordinating activities, managing communication and conflict among participants, and facilitating social learning and collaborative adaptive management processes. Collaborative capacity building funding was earmarked in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, a testament to Congressional recognition and support for this need, and a portion of that funding directly supported the National Forest Foundation Collaborative Capacity Program. See Box 4 for actions and resources for supplemental funding to support collaborative capacity building.

#### BOX 4: ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

- A number of emerging programs may help bridge the funding gap and lend additional support to capacity building in the CFLRP, including the National Forest Foundation [Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests and Communities](#), the Forest Service [Community Navigators program](#), the [Network for Collaborative Conservation Catalyst Fund](#), and the [Coalitions and Collaboratives Action, Implementation, and Mitigation Program](#).
- CFLRP coordinators may help connect projects and partners to these programs.

**Promoting an agency culture of collaboration is critical to successful cross-boundary forest management.** A key barrier to collaborative governance and adaptability reported by respondents was frequent turnover and vacancy in key positions within the Forest Service, as well as limited agency capacity, direction, and incentives to commit to the collaborative process. Collaboration is often an add-on to primary job duties, not a key function of agency staff responsibilities. Further, existing responsibilities, performance targets, regulations, and mandates may not align with collaborative expectations and desired outcomes. Developing a culture of collaboration in the Forest Service, where agency staff have the capacity, direction, and incentives to commit to the collaborative process, may help sustain productive

forest and fire management across boundaries and over time. It is also a necessary change if the Forest Service continues to invest and rely upon collaboration to meet national forest and fire management objectives. Box 5 includes actions and resources to promote an agency culture of collaboration.

#### BOX 5: ACTIONS AND RESOURCES TO PROMOTE AN AGENCY CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

- Actions to promote this culture shift include dedicated training in collaboration for agency staff, promote-in-place opportunities (i.e., promotion without leaving your location or unit), hiring partnership liaisons whose primary responsibilities include collaborative engagement, and including collaborative activities in job requirements and evaluations.

### Discussion

This collaborative governance assessment was designed to capture best practices for effective and inclusive collaborative governance, as well as to develop a monitoring indicator for existing and future collaborative efforts. Respondents indicated their primary motivations for engaging in CFLRP projects included restoring forest resiliency, reducing community wildfire risk, increasing the pace and scale of restoration, and improving relationships and trust. Overall, a strong majority of respondents felt their CFLRP project had been collaborative to very collaborative.

Healthy and durable collaboratives engage the appropriate people who are interested in or affected by an issue ([Ansell and Gash, 2007](#); [Emerson et al., 2012](#)). Participants should be 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 (Daniels and Walker, 2001; [Emerson et al., 2012](#)). Most respondents felt partners worked together to identify shared interests and concerns in neutral venues where a wide range of issues was discussed. Most respondents indicated strong agreement about key problems affecting their respective CFLRP landscapes, strategies to address them, and the purpose of the collaborative effort. However, although the majority of respondents felt a representative cross-section of partners was included in their CFLRP project, open-ended responses suggested a lack of representation from all interested and affected entities, and the need for more inclusive engagement with those groups. Further, there was some room for improvement in aligning expectations for collaborative engagement among collaborative

partners and the Forest Service throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring. By strategically thinking about who is or is not included, participation and learning can be actively fostered through all aspects of a forest management process ([Ansell and Gash, 2007](#); [Gerlak and Heikkila, 2011](#)).

As entities work together, it is important to include processes to build trust, relationships, mutual understanding, internal legitimacy, and broad commitment among members ([Ansell and Gash, 2007](#); [Bryson et al., 2006](#); [Emerson et al., 2012](#); [Pelling and High, 2005](#)). Respondents largely agreed that their collaborative processes had helped build trust, relationships, and legitimacy as CFLRP project participants worked to achieve desired outcomes. Trust and relationship-building are fostered through repeated interactions, and trust is often considered the glue that holds groups together and allows collaboration to function ([Ansell and Gash, 2007](#)). Furthermore, strong trust and relationships among members can facilitate resource pooling, social learning, and knowledge exchange ([Engle and Lemos, 2010](#); [Pahl-Wostl, 2009](#)). Leaders are critical for bringing people together around a shared vision to complete joint actions ([Emerson et al., 2012](#); [Folke et al., 2005](#); [Olsson et al., 2006](#)). Most respondents thought their CFLRP projects had key leaders who communicated a shared vision, motivated others to work together, and worked well across partners. A key benefit of collaboration is the sharing of resources that otherwise would not be available when working alone. Most respondents also thought they had sufficient funds, technical expertise, and facilitation.

Durable collaboratives engage in knowledge generation and flexible social learning processes for joint action ([Emerson and Gerlak, 2014](#)). Through repeated interaction and joint problem-solving, groups jointly test, monitor, and then reevaluate preconceived understanding and assumptions ([Folke et al., 2005](#); [Lebel et al., 2010](#); [Sharma-Wallace et al., 2018](#)). Respondents mostly agreed that partners in their CFLRP projects worked together to co-develop knowledge and information, were committed to adaptive management, and had some flexibility to adapt when forest or collaborative conditions changed. Yet, a notable minority felt their projects did not have flexibility to adapt under change and suggested information could be shared more equitably among members, particularly between the Forest Service and their partners. CFLRPs are embedded within the hierarchical and bureaucratic organization of the Forest Service, which retains decision authority for management actions on Forest Service-managed lands. The latitude for adaptive management and flexibility in management actions is thus constrained by and must fit within existing management rules,

guidelines, and decision spaces ([Cheng et al., 2015](#)). CFLRP projects may benefit from documenting and understanding the allowable decision space and pre-identifying feasible and desirable actions in the event of change.

Collaboratively developed documents that outline collaborative structures and protocols (e.g., restoration strategies, charters, memorandums of understanding, etc.) may be necessary to manage collaborative participation and engagement ([Emerson et al., 2012](#); [Gupta et al., 2010](#)). Most respondents agreed there were collaborative protocols that established accountability within their CFLRP projects, and they overwhelmingly felt those protocols were fair, equitable, and used appropriately. Most respondents also felt the Forest Service was responsive to feedback from the collaborative. However, improving accountability and understanding between CFLRP project members and the Forest Service, particularly regarding how Forest Service decision making works and how collaborative members can inform decisions, was a noted area for improvement for several projects.

Respondents indicated that various internal and external disruptions further challenged collaborative progress and performance. These disruptions included personnel turnover, limited agency and industry capacity, biophysical disruptions, and uncertainty in the timing and amount of funding. It is worth noting that, although these disruptions could make collaborative functioning more difficult, they were not inherently negative, as the uncertainty and change they created also presented opportunities for learning and adaptation ([Folke et al., 2005](#)). CFLRP projects have adapted to disruptions by committing resources to hiring and retaining personnel, hosting informational onboarding workshops, shifting planning areas or treatment types due to biophysical or legal/political disruptions, establishing working groups to learn from disturbances, and securing supplemental funding streams to support industry capacity. Disruptions that pose persistent challenges need to be addressed to promote collaborative durability and resilience.

Respondents reported perceptions of their CFLRP's progress towards collaborative process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes. Many reported that their project had made progress on several ecological and social goals. Most respondents perceived that collaboration within the CFLRP enabled landscape-scale and cross-boundary planning, enhanced communication and decision-making between collaborative members, included diverse perspectives, and minimized litigation. A majority of respondents also reported progress on maintaining or

increasing fire use, fish and wildlife habitat, restoration pace and scale, old growth, and watershed function. They also reported progress on reducing fuel hazards and community wildfire risk and supporting local employment or training opportunities. There were, however, some opportunities for improvement identified as well, specifically in terms of accomplishing work on adjacent lands and offsetting treatment costs via byproducts. A small, but notable, minority also felt conflict among participants persisted.

Recommendations to improve the CFLRP collaborative process and support collaborative progress were identified based on survey responses and the authors' practice-based knowledge. First, respondents suggested the need for broad inclusion of interested and affected entities, and noted that the specific approaches to inclusion must be based on local context, collaborative history, and current and future needs. Second, respondents suggested the need for early and frequent collaborative engagement from direction setting to implementation to align decision space, authority, and objectives. Third, respondents emphasized the need to anticipate, plan for, and respond to inevitable change. This could include, but is not limited to: 1) developing transition strategies for changes in personnel; 2) developing contingency plans and learning opportunities in the event of disturbance; and 3) investing time and resources to collaboratively develop and periodically revisit documents that outline shared strategies and decision processes. Fourth, supplemental funding is needed to support the collaborative capacity building that is critical for collaborative durability and resilience. Fifth, promoting an agency culture of collaboration is critical to successful cross-boundary forest management.

Collaboration is a dynamic process that requires ongoing evaluation to maintain progress and meet performance objectives. As collaborative groups evolve and adapt, the value created, challenges faced, capacities needed, and outcomes produced will change ([Imperial et al., 2016](#)). There is a need for longitudinal assessments grounded in the science and practice of collaboration to track components of good collaborative governance, identify what is working well and what could use improvement, and align capacity investments with local priorities and needs. This collaborative governance assessment provides one diagnostic to monitor change through time and identify opportunities for improving collaborative process and performance. The SWERI intends to continue engaging in the ongoing evaluation of collaborative governance in the CFLRP. Other frameworks situated in the collaborative forest and fire arena include the [Stages of Collaborative Readiness Framework](#), which provides a

series of benchmarks and outcomes that may be used for self-assessment, articulating funding and capacity needs, and informing resource allocation relative to need.

While the CFLRP mandated collaboration throughout planning and implementation, groups have maintained their flexibility to adapt collaborative structures and processes to meet their unique historical, social, political, and ecological contexts. The findings herein emphasize that local context is important and one-size-fits-all solutions and practices may not be feasible, appropriate, or desired in all cases. CFLRP offers a unique opportunity to learn about challenges, successes, and best practices from a robust and diverse community of practice through time. Peer learning and training opportunities can help distill lessons learned, challenges, and best practices for long-term multi-party collaboration. Many of the recommendations presented here could provide the groundwork for such opportunities. For example, peer learning exchanges could focus on effective engagement with Tribes, spatial decision support tools for treatment planning and prioritization, effective collaboration during NEPA, and collaborative capacity building funding opportunities. A number of organizations provide peer learning forums, including the National Forest Foundation, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, Sustainable Northwest, the Joint Fire Science Centers, and Fire Learning Network, among others.

## Conclusion

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a program-wide, longitudinal collaborative governance assessment as part of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Common Monitoring Strategy. The SWERI deployed the assessment via an online survey to newly authorized and extension CFLRP projects (n=15) from November 2021-June 2023. This report provides a national synthesis of findings from this baseline assessment of collaborative health and performance among CFLRP projects. The SWERI will continue with this work, the primary objectives and next steps of which are to: 1) develop and maintain 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 CFLRP project-level engagement, reporting, and peer-learning to inform local collaborative work and adaptive management; and 4) contribute to the theory and practice of collaborative governance through the synthesis of findings and lessons learned. Additionally, 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 – High-level summary of findings for CFLRP collaborative governance assessment



# Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) collaborative governance assessment: Summary of findings for the Common Monitoring Strategy

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a program-wide, longitudinal collaborative governance assessment as part of the U.S Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)<sup>1</sup> Common Monitoring Strategy.<sup>2</sup> This assessment was designed to capture best practices for effective and inclusive collaborative governance, as well as to develop a monitoring indicator for existing and future collaborative efforts. This brief summarizes high-level findings from the CFLRP Collaborative Governance National Synthesis Report, including what is working well and recommendations to improve collaborative progress and performance.

### Approach

The SWERI administered an online survey to members of all newly authorized or reauthorized CFLRP projects (n=15; Figure 1) between 2021 and 2023. The assessment asked:

- Do participants feel the collaborative exhibits characteristics generally associated with healthy, well-functioning, and resilient collaboratives?
- To what extent do participants feel the project is meeting process, socio-economic, and ecological goals?
- What challenges or disruptions affect collaborative performance and durability and how have participants responded to disruptions?
- What do participants need or recommend to improve the process?

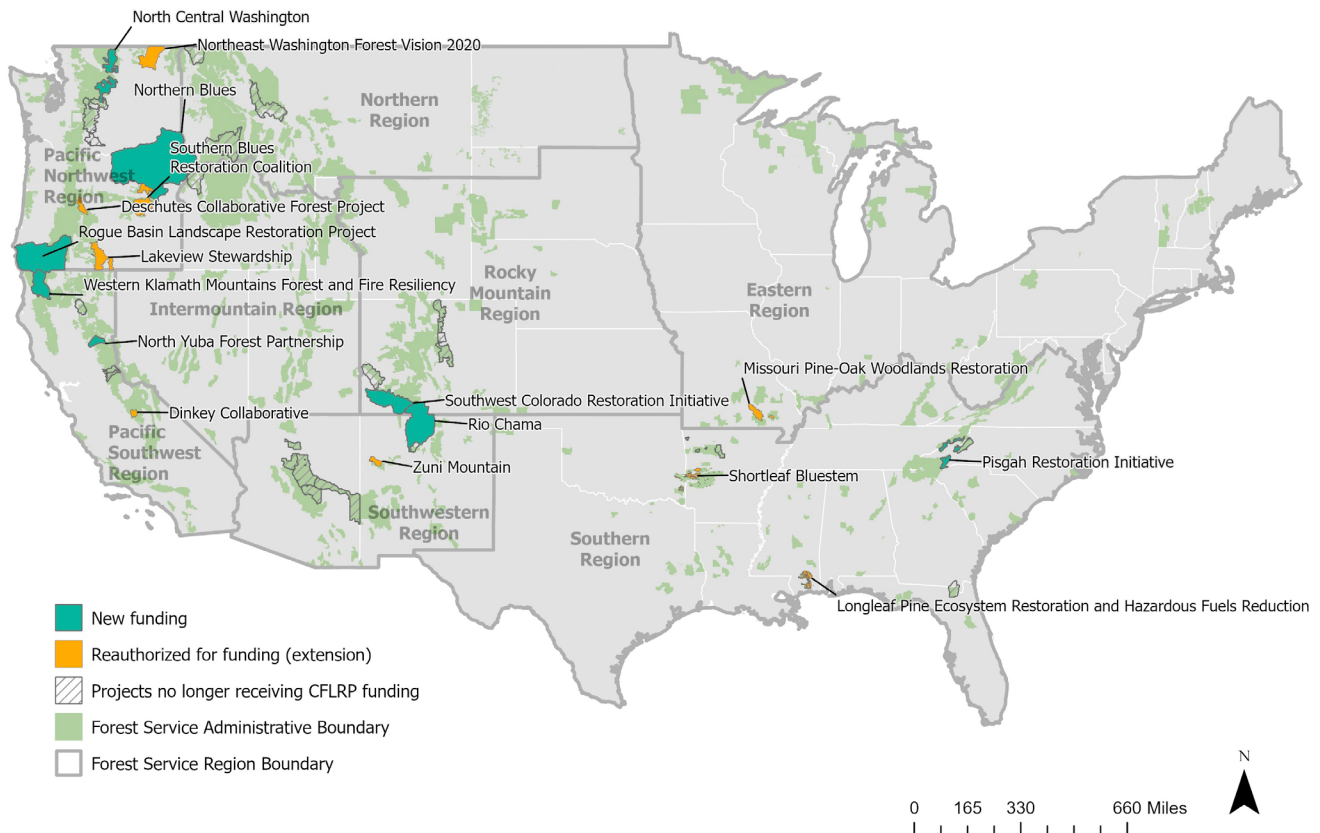


Figure 1. Map of authorized CFLRP projects.

1. CFLRP Collaborative Governance Assessment Project - <https://sweri.org/cflrp-collaborative-governance-assessments/>  
 2. USDA Forest Service Common Monitoring Strategy - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/documents/cflrp/CMS-Fact-Sheet-final-20221013.pdf>

The SWERI collaborative governance assessment received 396 usable responses, representing a 27% response rate. More than half of the respondents represented non-governmental organizations or the Forest Service, but all groups included in the survey were represented to some degree (Figure 2).

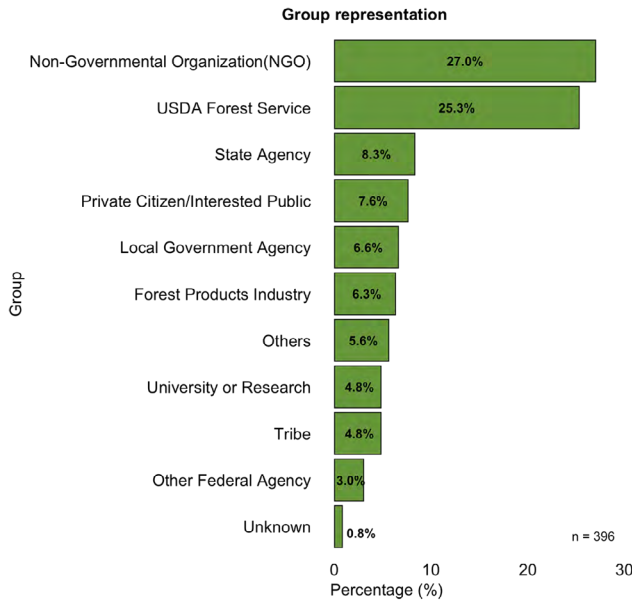


Figure 2. Respondents' self-identified representation with associated group type; three respondents did not answer this question and have therefore been categorized under "unknown" (n=396).

### Findings

The findings reported in this brief represent the consolidation of results from respondents across all 15 CFLRP projects. However, results varied for each CFLRP. Project level summaries can be found [here](#).

Respondents' primary motivations for engaging in their CFLRP were to restore forest resiliency, reduce community wildfire risk, increase the pace and scale of restoration, and improve relationships and trust. A majority of respondents reported that their CFLRP was collaborative or very collaborative.

### What is working well

Results indicated areas where collaboration seemed to be working across CFLRP projects. A notable majority ( $\geq 60\%$ ) or a strong majority ( $\geq 75\%$ ) of respondents indicated that they:

- Felt a representative cross-section of partners were included in their CFLRP project.
- Worked together to identify shared interests and concerns in neutral venues where a wide range of issues were discussed.
- Agreed about key problems affecting their respective CFLRP landscapes, strategies to address problems, and the purpose of the project.

- Agreed the collaborative processes had helped build trust, relationships, mutual respect, and legitimacy as they worked to achieve desired outcomes (Figure 3).
- Were committed to the collaborative process and felt their partners were, as well.
- Thought their CFLRP projects had key leaders who communicated a shared vision, motivated others to work together, and worked well across partners.
- Thought their CFLRP partners worked together to co-develop and share knowledge and information and were committed to adaptive management.
- Had sufficient technical expertise and facilitation in their collaborative.
- Had collaborative protocols that helped establish accountability within their CFLRP projects.
- Had collaborative protocols that were fair and equitable and used appropriately.
- Thought that the Forest Service was responsive to feedback from the collaborative.

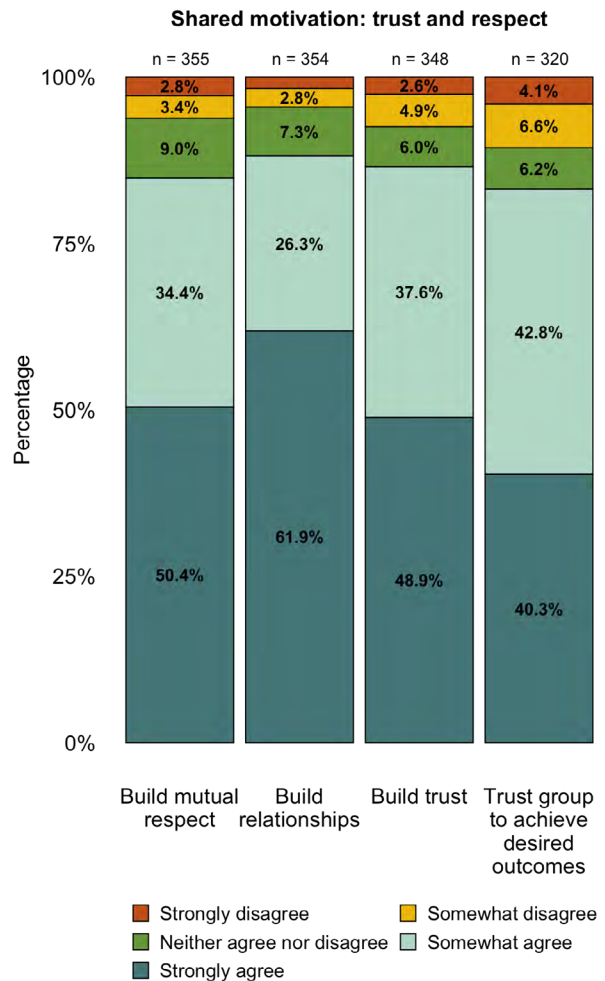


Figure 3. Percentage of all respondents who indicated whether they disagreed to agreed that the collaborative process contributed to relationships, trust, and respect. Percentage labels  $\leq 2\%$  were removed.

## What can be improved

Respondents suggested opportunities to improve the collaborative process. A notable minority ( $\geq 15\%$ ) of respondents indicated:

- There is room for improvement in aligning expectations for collaborative engagement with the Forest Service throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring (Figure 4).
- Their projects did not have flexibility to adapt when collaborative (e.g., new people or priorities within the CFLRP project) or forest (e.g., effects of wildfire on a planning unit) conditions changed.
- They wanted to see jointly developed knowledge and information shared more equitably.
- A lack of funding and time to carry out work challenged their collaborative’s progress and performance.
- There was a need to improve accountability and understanding of how Forest Service decision-making works, and how collaborative members can inform decisions.

Several disruptions also impacted collaborative progress and performance. Personnel turnover, limited agency capacity, biophysical disruptions, limited industry capacity, and the timing and availability of financial resources presented the greatest challenges across CFLRPs. Responses to open-ended questions indicated that other disruptions, like conflict, were particularly challenging to overcome.

## Outcomes

Many respondents reported that their CFLRP project had made progress on perceived collaborative process, ecological, and socio-economic outcomes. Respondents indicated that collaboration within the CFLRP enhanced communication, increased landscape-scale and cross boundary planning, and enhanced decision-making between collaborative members (Figure 5). Respondents also reported progress on ecological outcomes, including reduced fuel hazards, increased restoration pace and scale, and improved fish and wildlife habitat. Finally, respondents reported progress on the socio-economic outcomes of reduced community wildfire risk and support for local employment or training opportunities. Of note, the survey was administered during the first year of funding for newly authorized projects, and several outcomes may take years to realize.

## Recommendations to maintain collaborative progress and improve performance

Broad inclusion is necessary and requires adaptive management. Collaborative process and performance benefits from inclusion of diverse perspectives and interests. A key finding from the assessment was the desire for increased participation and engagement among Tribes, land grants, environmental groups, and other interest-based organizations. Yet, there are many factors that determine whether an entity engages, so work to increase partner participation should keep in mind local context, collaborative history, current and expected needs, and objectives.

Early and frequent collaborative engagement from direction setting to implementation is needed to align decision space, authority, and objectives. A key challenge noted in the assessment was that decision rationale and decision space were not well understood or articulated, which made efficient and meaningful engagement difficult. However, taking early and frequent action for collaborative engagement can build trust and shared understanding around management goals, help participants understand how and when to inform decisions, and articulate what decisions are made and why.

Developing the ability to anticipate, plan for, and respond to inevitable change is necessary for collaborative durability and resilience. Disruptions and changes are fundamental and recurring aspects of collaboration. As such, CFLRPs

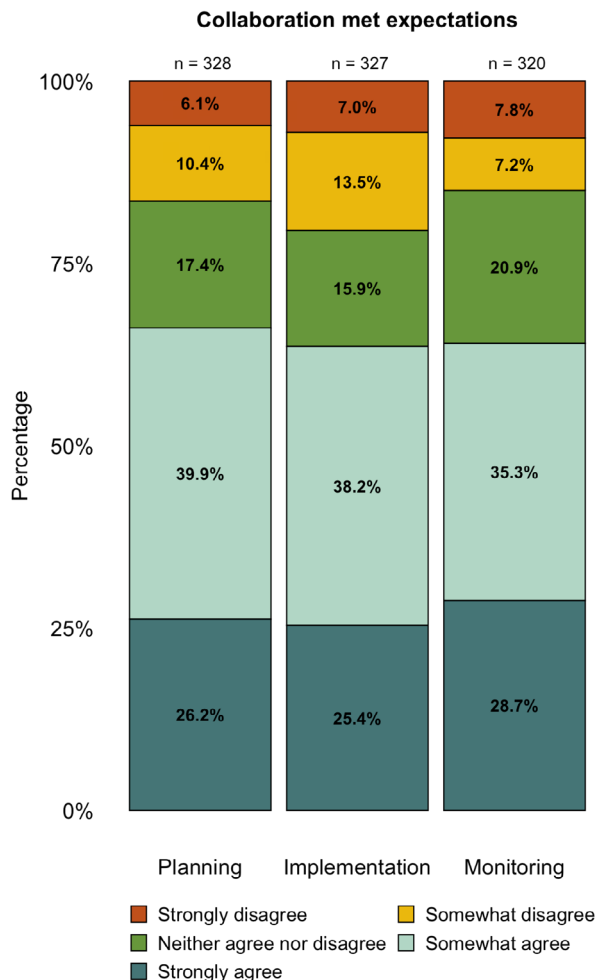


Figure 4. Percentage of all respondents who indicated whether they disagreed to agreed that collaboration between CFLRP participants and the Forest Service had met their expectations during restoration process stages.

should develop transition strategies, contingency plans, and other collaboratively developed documents. These should be periodically revisited to ensure governance processes continue to meet collaborative needs and achieve desired outcomes over time.

Supplemental funding is needed to support the collaborative capacity building that is critical for collaborative durability and resilience. Although the CFLRP mandated collaboration, these funds can only be used for a portion of treatment implementation and monitoring. Respondents consistently indicated that insufficient funds disrupted their ability to achieve collaborative goals. Specifically, there is a need to invest in third-party facilitators, technical assistance, researchers, and leaders to help coordinate activities, manage communication and conflict among participants, and facilitate social learning and collaborative adaptive management processes.

Promoting an agency culture of collaboration is critical to successful cross-boundary forest management. Developing a culture of collaboration in the Forest Service where agency staff have the capacity, direction, and incentives to commit

to the collaborative process may help sustain productive forest and fire management across boundaries and over time. Training in collaboration, providing promote-in-place opportunities, hiring partnership liaisons, and including collaborative activities in job requirements and evaluations are a few ways to promote the requisite competencies and commitment to collaboration.

### Conclusions and next steps

Collaboration is a dynamic process which requires ongoing evaluation to maintain progress and meet performance objectives. Rigorous, systematic, and longitudinal assessments grounded in the science and practice of landscape-scale forest restoration are needed to support collaborative practice. The SWERI is committed to ongoing assessment to monitor progress and document what is working well and what could use improvement, the ultimate goal of which is to align capacity investments with local priorities and needs.

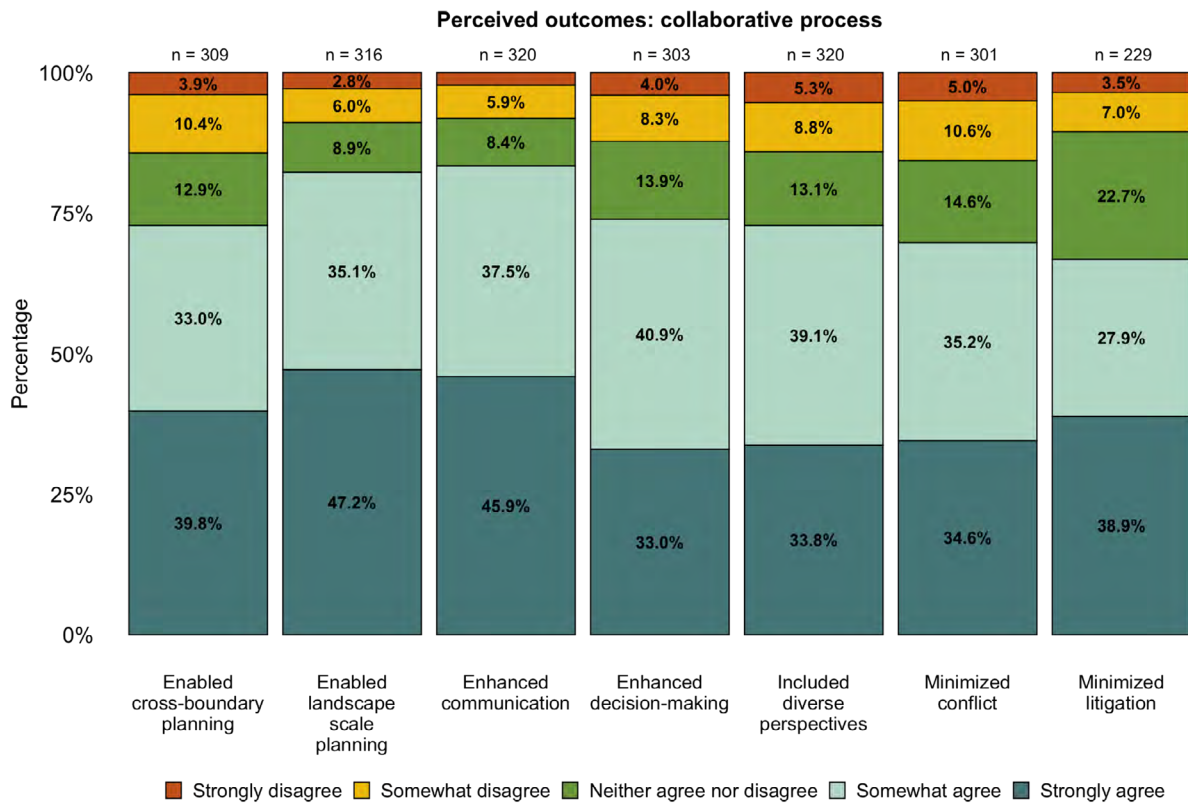


Figure 5. Percentage of all respondents who indicated whether they disagreed to agreed that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative. Percentage labels ≤2% were removed.

## Appendix 2 – CFLRP collaborative governance assessment: Survey instrument

### CFLRP Collaborative Governance Assessment - Common Monitoring Strategy

We are conducting an assessment of CFLRP projects to understand the extent to which they support an effective and meaningful collaborative approach to forest restoration. The goal of this assessment is to inform local collaborative processes and track performance as CFLRP projects progress and evolve.

1. Are you 18 years of age or older, do you consent to participate in this research, and do wish to continue on to the survey?
  - 1) Yes
  - 2) No

The set of standardized questions that follow, which should take about 20 minutes to complete, is required under the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. Please answer these questions according to your experience with, and involvement in, [name of project] CFLRP. We are collecting baseline information this year for a longitudinal evaluation based on your perspectives, and we will readminister this survey every 2-3 years to track collaborative progress and performance. Most of the questions are voluntary, and most questions include a "don't know" option if you feel that you do not know the answer.

2. What years have you been involved with this CFLRP project? (e.g., 2013-2015 and 2020-present)
- 

3. In this CFLRP project, I represent (select one option):
    - 1) USDA Forest Service
    - 2) Other federal agency
    - 3) Forest products industry
    - 4) Tribe
    - 5) Local government agency
    - 6) State agency
    - 7) Non-governmental organization (NGO)
    - 8) University or research
    - 9) Private citizen/interested public
    - 10) Other (please specify)
-

4. My primary motivations for being involved in this CFLRP project are (select up to three):
- 1) To improve relationships and mutual trust among stakeholders
  - 2) To increase communications and information sharing
  - 3) To increase the pace and scale of work
  - 4) To restore forest resiliency
  - 5) To protect or restore fish and wildlife habitat
  - 6) To get more timber supply off public lands
  - 7) To reduce wildfire risk to communities
  - 8) To have more say in public land management decisions
  - 9) To create more local jobs
  - 10) To improve recreational opportunities
  - 11) To protect or restore water resources
  - 12) To avoid litigation
  - 13) To maintain public access to public lands
  - 14) To protect or restore cultural resources
5. Select the option that best represents your level of engagement in the CFLRP project (select one option).
- 1) Not engaged (For example, I do not attend meetings, field trips, or other events, and am not well apprised of project activities.)
  - 2) Low engagement (For example, I keep up with project notes and activities, but infrequently attend meetings, field trips, or other events).
  - 3) Moderate engagement (For example, I attend meetings, field trips, or other events but do not serve in a leadership or coordination capacity, and/or I do not participate in work or sub-groups.)
  - 4) High engagement (For example, I attend nearly all meetings, field trips, and other events AND participate in work or sub-groups or serve in a leadership or coordination capacity.)
6. 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. Based on these characteristics of effective collaboration, to what degree do you think this CFLRP project has been collaborative (select one option)?
- 1) Not collaborative at all
  - 2) Somewhat collaborative
  - 3) Collaborative
  - 4) Very Collaborative

The following questions assess perceived representation in participation, and the extent to which people work together to identify a shared understanding, strategy, and purpose in the CFLRP project.

7. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements (select one for each statement).
  - 1) A representative cross-section of the individuals who have a stake in the issues and outcomes of this CFLRP project are involved.
  - 2) Participants work together to identify shared interests and concerns.
  - 3) Participants agree about the key problems that impact our landscape.
  - 4) Participants agree about the strategies to solve problems.
  - 5) Participants agree about the purpose of the CFLRP project.
  - 6) The collaborative process has created a neutral space where people can openly discuss controversial issues.
  
8. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree that collaboration between CFLRP participants and the USDA Forest Service has met your expectations during...(select one for each phase):
  - 1) Planning (e.g., environmental analysis, NEPA)
  - 2) Implementation (e.g., post-NEPA, operations)
  - 3) Monitoring

The following questions assess your agreement on how well the collaborative process of this CFLRP project has supported trust- and relationship-building, and led to mutual understanding, commitment, and internal legitimacy.

9. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements (select one for each statement).
  - 1) The collaborative process allows participants to build trust in each other.
  - 2) I have trust in our ability to achieve desired actions and outcomes.
  - 3) The collaborative process allows participants to build personal and/or working relationships.
  - 4) The collaborative process allows participants to build mutual respect of others' interests.
  - 5) I am committed to the collaborative process.
  - 6) USDA Forest Service staff are committed to the collaborative process.
  - 7) Other project participants are committed to the collaborative process.

The following statements assess your perception of the CFLRP project's capacity for joint action. Capacity for joint action includes four components: collaborative leadership, knowledge and learning, resources, and institutional arrangements that support fair governance (e.g., transparency, responsiveness, accountability).

10. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements (select one for each statement).

- 1) Leaders in our CFLRP project have good skills for working with other people and organizations.
- 2) Leaders in our CFLRP project maintain and communicate a common collaborative vision and direction.
- 3) Leaders in our CFLRP project can motivate others to work together.
- 4) Project participants co-generate knowledge to learn and solve problems together.
- 5) Knowledge and information are shared equally among project participants.
- 6) Project participants are committed to informing adjustments to management practices (i.e., adaptive management).
- 7) Project participants have the flexibility to alter course when landscape conditions change (e.g., wildfire affects planning unit).
- 8) Project participants have the flexibility to alter course when the collaborative changes (e.g., new faces, new priorities).

11. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree that the CFLRP project has adequate...(select one for each resource):

- 1) Funds to carry out tasks and accomplish work.
- 2) Time to carry out tasks and accomplish work.
- 3) Technical expertise to carry out tasks and accomplish work.
- 4) Skills to facilitate collaborative engagement activities.

12. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements (select one for each statement).

- 1) There are protocols in place that promote accountability (e.g., decision rules, charters, memoranda of understanding [MOUs]) among CFLRP project participants.
- 2) There are protocols in place that promote accountability between CFLRP project participants and the USDA Forest Service.
- 3) Collaborative protocols for this project are clearly understood by participants (select "don't know/not applicable" if there are no collaborative protocols).
- 4) Collaborative protocols for this project are fair and equitable (select "don't know/not applicable" if there are no collaborative protocols).
- 5) Collaborative protocols for this project are used appropriately (select "don't know/not applicable" if there are no collaborative protocols).
- 6) Project participants clearly understand when and what collaborative input is useful to inform USDA Forest Service decisions.
- 7) The USDA Forest Service is responsive to CFLRP project participant feedback.
- 8) The USDA Forest Service is clear with project participants about the decisions they make and why.

The following statements assess outcomes from the collaborative process, and your recommendations to improve the collaborative process and maintain collaborative progress.

13. Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree that the CFLRP collaborative process has...(select one for each option):
- 1) Enhanced communication among participants.
  - 2) Minimized conflict among participants.
  - 3) Enhanced decision-making (i.e., a more transparent, equitable, and fair process).
  - 4) Included diverse perspectives.
  - 5) Minimized litigation.
  - 6) Enabled partners to plan at a landscape scale.
  - 7) Enabled cross-boundary planning.

14. What recommendations do you have, if any, to improve the collaborative process and maintain collaborative progress?

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15. Has your CFLRP project started implementing restoration projects (select one option)?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No

The following statements assess cumulative progress towards meeting socio-economic and ecological goals of the CFLR program overall.

16. Please indicate whether the CFLRP project has made progress on the following ecological goals of the CFLR program (select "Don't know/Not applicable" if you don't know or it is not applicable to your project; select one for each goal).
- 1) Maintained or improved the pace and scale of restoration.
  - 2) Contributed to restoration of old-growth stands.
  - 3) Reduced fuel hazard through treatments (e.g., thinning, fuel breaks).
  - 4) Improved the use of planned or unplanned wildfire (i.e., prescribed or managed).
  - 5) Improved habitat for focal species or species of conservation concern.
  - 6) Maintained or improved watershed function (e.g., aquatic habitat, water quality, soil productivity).
  - 7) Contributed to treatment or control of invasive aquatic or terrestrial species.
17. Please indicate whether the CFLRP project has made progress on the following socio-economic goals of the CFLR program (select "Don't know/Not applicable" if you don't know or it is not applicable to your project; select one for each goal).
- 1) Reduced the risk of wildfire to communities.

- 2) Offset treatment costs with restoration byproducts (e.g., woody biomass).
- 3) Supported local employment or training opportunities (e.g., forest products industry, youth/citizen science).
- 4) Accomplished more work on adjacent lands (e.g., tribal, state, private lands).

18. In recent assessments and peer-learning activities, participants in CFLRP projects identified a number of disruptions that affected their collaborative performance and durability. Please indicate whether these disruptions currently pose challenges to your CFLRP project’s performance and durability (select one for each disruption).

- 1) Fewer funds than expected or changes in the timing of dispersed funds.
- 2) Legal challenges (e.g., appeals or litigation).
- 3) Frequent turnover in agency personnel and/or project participants.
- 4) Biophysical disturbances (e.g., wildfire, insects, disease) that impact project planning or divert resources.
- 5) Limited agency capacity for collaborative engagement.
- 6) Conflict among project participants.
- 7) Limited capacity of local wood products industry.
- 8) Moving from direction-setting/planning to implementation.

19. What, if any, additional disruptions have impacted collaborative performance and durability?

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20. What has your CFLRP project done, if anything, to respond to the disruptions you selected or mentioned above?

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### Appendix 3 – Relevant survey protocols used to inform CFLRP collaborative governance assessment

Author	Year	Title	Link (if applicable)
Douglas et al.	2020	Understanding Collaboration: Introducing the Collaborative Governance Case Databank	<a href="https://academic.oup.com/policyandsociety/article/39/4/495/6404009">https://academic.oup.com/policyandsociety/article/39/4/495/6404009</a>
National Forest Foundation	2020	Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program 2020 collaboration indicator survey results	<a href="https://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf">https://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf</a>
Plummer et al.	2017	Diagnosing adaptive co-management across multiple cases	<a href="https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol22/iss3/art19/">https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol22/iss3/art19/</a>
Evans and Guariguata	2019	A diagnostic for collaborative monitoring in forest landscape restoration	<a href="https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rec.13076">https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/rec.13076</a>
Santo et al.	2020	Implementing Outcome-Based Performance Measures aligned with the Forest Service's Shared Stewardship Strategy	<a href="https://static1.squarespace.com/static/562e839ee4b0332955e8143d/t/5f8e0dfb7b4bed21bccfb972/1603145298059/Performance+Measures_v4_10_13_20_web.pdf">https://static1.squarespace.com/static/562e839ee4b0332955e8143d/t/5f8e0dfb7b4bed21bccfb972/1603145298059/Performance+Measures_v4_10_13_20_web.pdf</a>
US Forest Service, National Partnership Office		US Forest Service Partnership Capacity Assessment Tool	<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd493263.pdf">https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd493263.pdf</a>
Ulibarri	2015	Collaboration in federal hydropower licensing: impacts on process, outputs, and outcomes	<a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15309576.2015.1031004">https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15309576.2015.1031004</a>
Biddle	2017	Improving the effectiveness of collaborative governance regimes: Lessons from watershed partnerships	<a href="https://ascelibrary.org/doi/10.1061/%28ASCE%29WR.1943-5452.0000802">https://ascelibrary.org/doi/10.1061/%28ASCE%29WR.1943-5452.0000802</a>
Lockwood et al.	2015	Measuring the dimensions of adaptive capacity: a psychometric approach	<a href="https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol20/iss1/art37/">https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol20/iss1/art37/</a>
Wyckoff	2020	Rogue Forest Partners Draft Evaluation Form	
Esch and Vosick	2016	Four Forests Restoration Initiative self-survey	<a href="https://cdm17192.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17192coll1/id/271/rec/12">https://cdm17192.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17192coll1/id/271/rec/12</a>
Thomas and Koontz	2015	Do Collaborative Groups Enhance Interorganizational Networks?	<a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15309576.2015.1031008">https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15309576.2015.1031008</a>

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