



Briefing Paper: Administrative and Facilitation Support to Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project Groups in U.S. Forest Service Region 5

The Sierra Cascades All Lands Enhancement (SCALE) is an effort to advance the implementation of effective triple bottom-line work through a partnership with the three federally funded Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) projects in the United States Forest Service (USFS) Region 5: Amador Calaveras Consensus Group, Burney-Hat Creek Community Forestry and Watershed Group, and the Dinkey Collaborative. In partnership with federal and state agencies, these CFLR groups are working to effectively leverage resources and improve inter-jurisdictional planning and landscape scale restoration across the region through the sharing of knowledge, information, and lessons learned. The triple-bottom line approach means that environment, economy, and community, including equity concerns, are simultaneously advanced.

The purpose of this briefing is to share information from Sierra Institute for Community and Environment's inquiry into administrative and facilitation support for CFLR groups in Region 5. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of six collaborative members including two members from each of the three CFLR groups. Findings suggest that there are disparities in both the structure and funding of administrative and facilitation support. This brief first reviews facilitation and support services for each CFLR group, and then highlights region-wide challenges as well as opportunities to ensure consistent and reliable support services.

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

In 2013, the ACCG was awarded a National Forest Foundation (NFF) grant to provide collaborative capacity building and administrative support services for approximately one year. The ACCG contracted the Amador Fire Safe Council to provide these services. The NFF grant ends in August of 2014 and at present there are no funds secured to support administrative services beyond August. The ACCG has kept costs low, in part, by relying on individual group members, who volunteer to facilitate meetings, which according to group members has contributed to enhanced buy-in, support, and capacity within the collaborative. The group estimated that the minimum annual financial support required to provide basic administrative services, not including facilitation, is \$24,000.

Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

The Shasta County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provided financial support for collaborative facilitation and some administrative support services in the past,

but that funding source has decreased over time. Most recently, a \$15,000 contract was awarded to the University of California-Davis to provide facilitation and some administrative services, but this funding ended in June of 2014. Although various committees of the Burney-Hat Creek Group provide some administrative support services as outlined by their newly approved charter, according to members of the collaborative, providing consistent facilitation and administrative support is recognized as one of the biggest challenges the group faces at this time.

Dinkey Collaborative

Consistent and reliable administrative and facilitator support services for the Dinkey Collaborative are provided by the Center for Collaborative Policy at Sacramento State University through a partnership between the USFS and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR). The request for proposal for these services was first developed by the USFS following CFLR designation on the Dinkey landscape. The USFS awarded this contract to USIECR which then conducted a competitive bid and application process. The Center for Collaborative Policy was awarded a three-year, \$400,000 contract to provide services. This relatively high level of financial support, provided in large part through CFLR dollars, covers a breadth of meeting facilitation and administrative support services and has provided the collaborative with the means and expertise to develop burgeoning committees, robust capacity, and highly functional and productive dialogue and action.

Key Considerations for Collaborative Partners

At the most basic level, facilitation and administrative support for the collaborative groups involves agenda development, taking meeting minutes and distributing them, recruitment and organization of speakers and presentations, and communication management including the maintenance of membership lists, coordination of information sharing among partners, drafting letters of support, coordinating field tours, and relaying information between members of the collaborative. The following list includes the key challenges and opportunities that were mentioned by group participants who were contacted for this review.

- Consistent and reliable support services are critical to ensuring that collaborative groups maintain and develop the capacity to build consensus and work to increase the pace and scale at which restoration activities and socioeconomic development occur across the landscape.
- A neutral facilitator, one that does not represent himself or herself as a member of the collaborative or any special interest, is helpful in moving conversations forward, especially those that are contentious.
- The respective USFS Ranger Districts have supported collaborative groups through the provision of administrative services including, but not limited to office supplies, printed materials, and communication infrastructure. Further, in many cases, the USFS coordinates, conducts, and participates in field tours; gives presentations and provides expertise; and drafts letters of support that directly relate to the work of the collaborative.

- Individual group member contributions, whether volunteer or in-kind, are often important, and sometimes critically so, in ensuring administrative services are covered. Yet, reliance on individual member support can lead to inconsistencies over time as individual circumstances change and organizational capacity, financial situations, and membership or job responsibilities change.
- Consistent, professional support services can be critical to maintaining and building collaborative capacity. The Dinkey Collaborative is an example of this in which members have identified effective and consistent services as contributing to the building of group capacity and improving the ability of the collaborative to more effectively address ecological and socioeconomic issues.

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