Collaborative Governance Assessment Report

FOR THE LAKEVIEW STEWARDSHIP CFLRP

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SWERI SOUTHWEST ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION INSTITUTES
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Document Development: In FY21, the USDA Forest Service led a collaborative process to develop a CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy that will be required for all newly authorized and reauthorized 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 CFLRP is encouraging an effective and meaningful collaborative approach, a component of the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy. We developed an online, confidential survey that was administered to CFLRP project participants. With support from the USDA Forest Service Forest Management, Range Management, and Vegetation Ecology program, SWERI conducted regional webinars to introduce the assessment and identify project-level points of contact, which were followed by in-depth engagement with key contacts to determine recruitment strategies, administration timing, and project-specific questions. In FY22 and FY23, SWERI will be collecting baseline information for all newly authorized and reauthorized projects. SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects. The Ecological Restoration Institute at Northern Arizona University funded survey administration using state funding (Arizona Board of Regents through the Technology, Research and Innovation Fund), which was used as a match to annual federal appropriations to the SWERI.

Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI)
The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes include three university-based restoration institutes: the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI), the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI), and the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) in Arizona. These institutes were congressionally appointed in 2004 by the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act (PL 108-317), and the Institutes work together to develop a program of applied research and service to help create healthy forests, prevent uncharacteristic wildfires, sustain the resiliency of water supplies to wildfires, and create jobs. The SWERI receive funding from five primary sources: 1) federal appropriations; 2) additional federal funding (e.g., the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act); 3) state appropriations; 4) in-kind support from host universities; and 5) extramural funding such as grants and agreements. The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes receive federal appropriations under the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act administered through the USDA 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 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. Colorado State University (CSU) is a land-grant university with a mission to provide teaching, research, public service, and engagement that CFRI strives to uphold. CFRI was established by Congress as part of the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes to serve as a bridge between researchers, managers, and stakeholders working to restore and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems to wildfires in Colorado, the Southern Rocky Mountains, and the Intermountain West. CFRI leads collaborations between researchers, managers, and stakeholders to generate and apply locally relevant, actionable knowledge to inform forest management strategies. CFRI's work informs forest conditions assessments, management goals and objectives, monitoring plans, and adaptive management processes.

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

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

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Cover photo credit: Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP prescribed fire workshop with private landowners (Source: US Forest Service).

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Executive Summary

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

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

The SWERI administered an online survey to a subset of members of the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership working within the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP landscape (henceforth referred to as the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP) in Spring 2023.

The majority of respondents indicated that they agreed about key problems impacting their landscape, strategies to solve problems, and the purpose of their collaborative restoration project. A majority of survey takers agreed that collaboration between USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP met their expectations during planning, implementation, and monitoring. Respondents felt that the process has helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect of others' positions and interests, and they felt that participants were committed to the process. Survey respondents agreed that there were strong leaders who worked well across organizations and entities, communicated a collaborative vision, and motivated others to work together. A majority agreed that participants worked together to co-generate knowledge and solve problems. Knowledge and information were reportedly shared equally among participants. Respondents felt that the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP had adequate funding, knowledge, facilitation skills, and time to carry out tasks and accomplish work. Respondents also generally agreed that the USFS was responsive to collaborative input. While the survey results reveal the majority of respondents have favorable perceptions of the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP's collaboration dynamics overall, a few individuals suggested recommendations to improve the collaborative process through expanded decision space to inform the monitoring process, more inclusive stakeholder participation, engagement, and increased communication. One respondent acknowledged that, despite outreach, some groups and interests were missing from the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP. Another wanted to see more opportunities for collaborative engagement in the adaptive management process; another suggested improved communication through more frequent meetings and quarterly accomplishments reporting.

Survey results suggested that the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP, now entering its second decade as an authorized CFLRP project, has made progress on most social, economic, and ecological goals of the CFLRP. However, biophysical disturbances and frequent turnover combined with limited agency capacity for collaborative engagement challenged collaborative progress and performance.

The SWERI will continue to engage in assessing collaborative health and performance of CFLRP projects.

Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP prescribed fire workshop with private landowners (Source: US Forest Service)

Introduction

The Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) was passed in 2009 and established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLRP was to "encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes"[1] through a competitive funding program administered by the USDA Forest Service (USFS). In 2021, CFLRP coordinators, USFS 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 will be required for all newly authorized and reauthorized projects.[2]

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

To address this need, the USFS Washington Office requested assistance from the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) in developing and deploying an assessment tool to track collaborative governance.[3] 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). CFLRP practitioners, coordinators, and subject matter experts also emphasized the need for a tool that is straightforward, not time-consuming, easy to administer, and longitudinal.

We incorporated stakeholder feedback and questions of interest developed while drafting the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy to directly inform the components of the collaborative governance assessment. Our objectives are as follows:

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

The SWERI administered the collaborative governance assessment—an online survey—to the members of the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership (KLFHP) working within the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP landscape (henceforth referred to as the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP) in Spring 2023. The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP is set within a landscape that has a long history of collaboration. In 1998, the Lakeview Stewardship Group (LSG) was established to provide support and guidance to the Fremont-Winema National Forest (FWNF) on the management and monitoring of the Lakeview Federal Sustained Yield Unit. This Unit was the foundation of the Lakeview Stewardship Project, which was selected for funding under CFLRP in 2012, leading to the collaboratively developed *Lakeview Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Project Monitoring Plan* (Markus et al., 2015). The Lakeview Federal Sustained Yield Unit was decommissioned in 2020, after which the LSG merged with the KLFHP, an all-lands partnership

[1] PL 111-11 CFLRP Authorizing legislation - https://www.congress.gov/congressional-report/110th-congress/senate-report/370/1
[2] CFLRP National Core Monitoring Strategy - https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/documents/cflrp/CMS-Fact-Sheet-final-20221013.pdf
[3] Here, we define governance as "the system of institutions, including rules, laws, regulations, policies, and social norms, and organizations involved in governing environmental resource use and/or protection" (Chaffin et al. 2014).

established in 1993 that works at a larger landscape scale commensurate with the entire National Forest. The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP was reauthorized for extension in 2022 and is now guided by the *Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership All-lands Monitoring Plan* (Markus, Olszewski, Huber-Stearns, and Ellison, 2021). Much of the work of collaborative planning and prioritization for the project area was completed prior to the most recent CFLRP award, beginning in 2014 with an Accelerated Restoration and Priority Landscape document developed by the FWNF, followed by selection of cross-boundary landscape-scale restoration projects in Lake and Klamath Counties by the KLFHP (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2021a). The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP is now focused primarily on implementation and monitoring. It is led by a subcommittee within the KLFHP and co-facilitated by all members.

The report herein summarizes findings from the collaborative governance assessment. We have also integrated, where appropriate, information from reports and meetings with key points of contact for the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP. We briefly describe the approach, share a baseline assessment of findings, and document recommendations from respondents to improve the collaborative process.

Approach

We developed an online survey to assess:

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

Framework

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

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

Principled engagement refers to ensuring the right people are involved, i.e., a representative cross-section of people and entities who have a stake in the issue 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 the sub-components mutual trust, understanding, and commitment. It is often referred to as social capital, or the "glue" that holds groups together through networks, norms, rules, and trust that promote collective action (Pelling and High, 2005). This glue is crucial for effective collaboration; social capital is built through investments in social relationships and can be expressed through mutual commitment of individuals and groups to common collaborative goals.

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

In a collaborative setting, participants should work together to co-create and co-develop shared understanding and knowledge through social learning; knowledge and information should be equally accessible to all members of the collaborative; and learning and knowledge should be used to inform flexible, adaptive management (Emerson and Gerlak, 2014). Social learning occurs through repeated interactions and joint problem solving among participants. It emphasizes testing, monitoring, and reevaluating participants'

assumptions and understanding of ecosystem responses and feedbacks to learn and adapt management actions (Folke et al., 2005; Lebel et al., 2010; Sharma-Wallace et al., 2018). Collaboratives often pool and share resources to accomplish tasks and get work done, 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, purpose and objectives of the group, among others (Imperial et al., 2016).

Perceived outcomes – Our assessment focuses both on perceived "process" outcomes (e.g., did the collaborative process reduce conflict, or increase the ability to plan at a landscape scale?) and socio-economic and 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.

Challenges or disruptions that affect collaborative performance and durability – Disruptions—i.e., personnel turnover, legal or policy changes, and biophysical disturbances like wildfires or insect outbreaks—can happen at any time. These disruptions may impact collaborative progress and performance, and/or force groups to adapt. We developed a list of common challenges that CFLRP projects and other landscape scale forest collaboratives reported in: 1) breakout group discussions and focus group sessions at the 2020 SWERI Cross-boundary landscape restoration workshop (SWERI, 2020) and the 2020 Idaho forest collaborative shared stewardship workshops; 2) the 2020 CFLRP Collaboration Indicator Survey administered by the National Forest Foundation[4]; and 3) a survey administered to USFS 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.

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

Data Collection and Analysis

We developed a standardized survey in the online survey tool Qualtrics that consisted of 21, mostly closed-ended statements using a Likert scale. SWERI piloted the assessment with and elicited feedback from the Northern Blues All-Lands Restoration Partnership and Northern Blues CFLRP project participants (n=37), as well as participants of the Colorado Front Range CFLRP (n=3) in FY21 (Beeton et al., 2022). SWERI and the USFS held regionally-focused webinars to introduce the assessment and identify key points of contact for each newly authorized and reauthorized project. SWERI then engaged with individual CFLRP project points of contact to recruit participants, schedule the assessment, and identify project-specific questions of interest that were appended to the standardized survey, which is outlined in our standard operating procedures document.[5]

The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP coordinator provided support in recruiting participants and administering the survey through the KLFHP listserv in April 2023. The KLFHP is an all-lands umbrella collaborative that includes the project area covered by the CLFRP project, but the project area involves only a subset of the KLFHP's members. The survey included a map of the CFLRP footprint and asked that recipients complete the survey only if they were involved in the CFLRP. The survey was open for 3 weeks. We received 16 usable responses, representing 27% of the population. We used the statistical software program Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) to document mean responses and variation in responses. Open-ended questions were analyzed using a thematic analysis (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Small sample sizes prohibited further statistical analyses, though this will be possible when more data has been collected.

Findings

Our results are organized as follows. The first section includes responses related to respondents' affiliations, motivations for being involved in the CFLRP project, level of engagement, and the degree to which respondents felt the project was collaborative. We then provide a description of findings related to collaboration dynamics (i.e., **principled engagement**, **shared motivation**, and **capacity for joint action**). We provide a short description of each collaboration dynamic construct

[4] https://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Collaboration-Indicator-Survey-Results-2020-publish.pdf
[5] https://cfri.box.com/s/hfu5cdk599j5gp5ixphm2qj7gdp4h1ef

in italics to orient the reader. We follow with findings on perceived outcomes, disruptions that are challenging collaborative progress and performance, and recommendations to improve the process. Key points of contact for the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP chose not to append additional questions to tailor the survey to local conditions, an option that was presented to all CFLRP projects in the study. For scale items (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree, progress scales), figures depict the percentage of survey participants that somewhat agree to strongly agree. This was done for consistency in visualization and ease of interpretation. For clarity, we describe majority or strong majority results as greater than or equal to 60% agreement and slight majority as greater than 50% agreement.

Introductory questions

The majority of participants represented non-governmental organizations (NGO), local government agencies, universities or research institutes, and the USFS (Figure 1). The most frequently reported motivations for being involved in the CFLRP project were to restore forest resiliency (71%), reduce community wildfire risk (59%), increase the pace and scale of work (53%), and improve relationships and mutual trust among stakeholders (73%) (Figure 2). The level of engagement in the CFLRP project during the past 12 months varied between participants – 69% reported that they were moderately to highly engaged, while 31% reported low engagement, and none reported that they were not engaged (Figure 3).

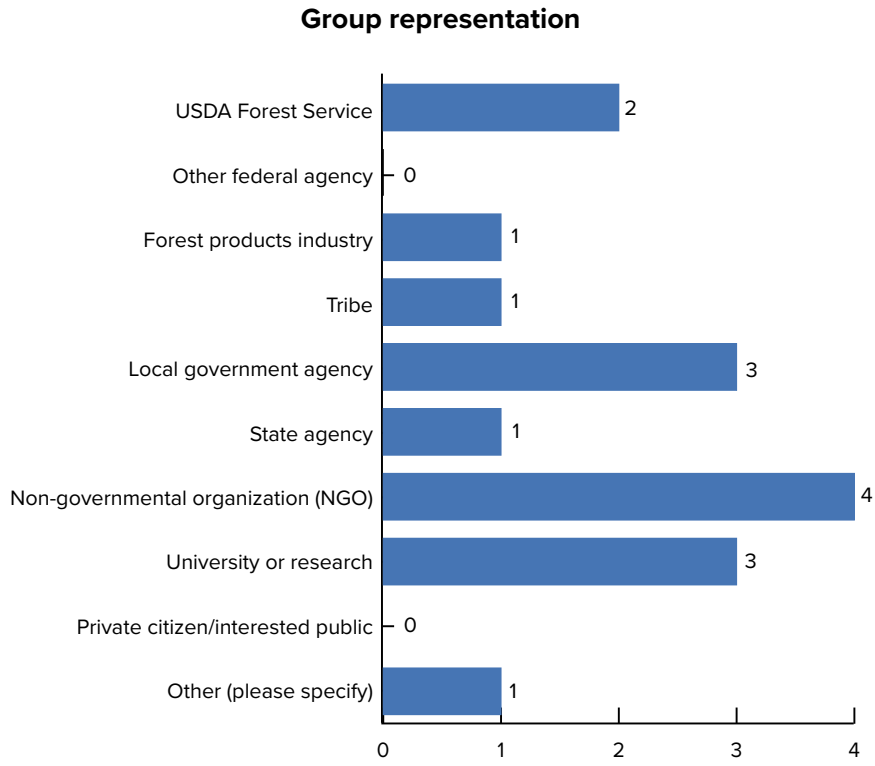

Figure 1: Respondents' self-identified representation with associated organizations.

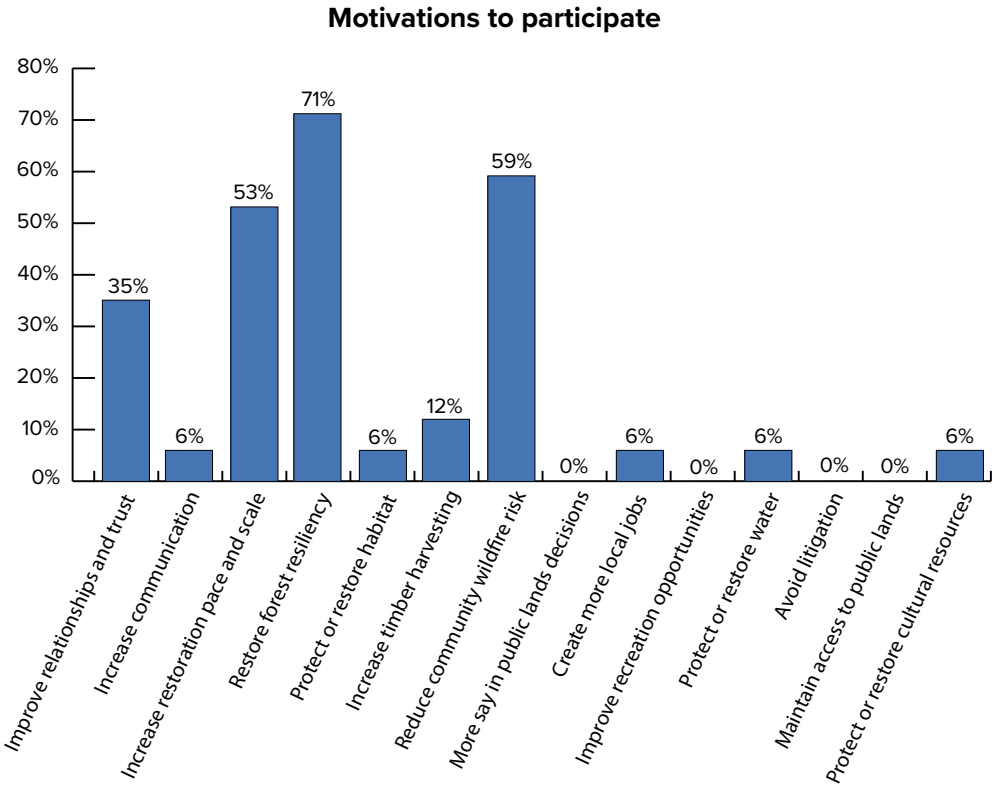

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who identified the associated motive as reason for their participation in the collaborative. Note – respondents were able to select multiple motives.

We asked respondents to reflect on the degree to which they thought the CFLRP project was collaborative (on a scale from not collaborative at all to very collaborative), 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 majority of respondents (94%) indicated the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP has been collaborative to very collaborative (Figure 4).

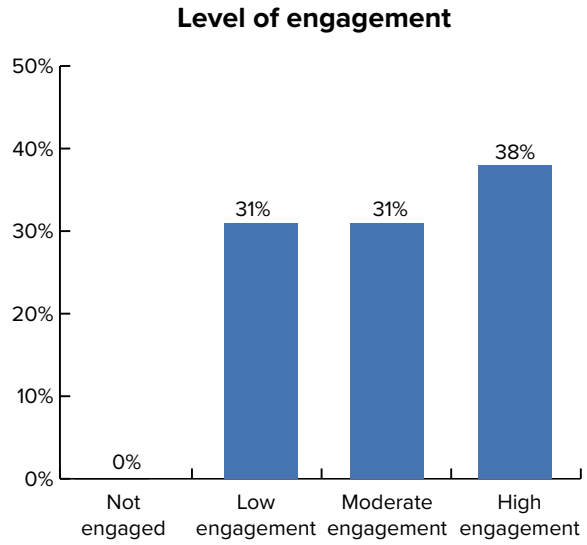

Figure 3: Percent of respondents who rated their involvement in this project as "Not engaged," "Low engagement," "Moderate engagement" or "High engagement."

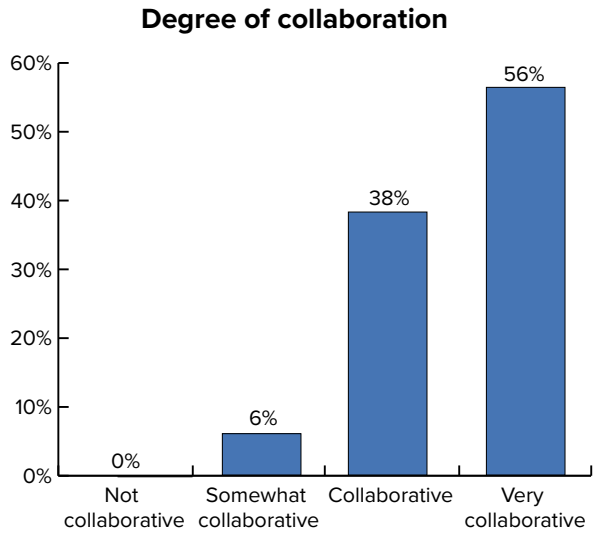

Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who reported this project to be "Not collaborative," "Somewhat collaborative," "Collaborative" or "Very collaborative."

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 majority of respondents (88%) agreed to strongly agreed that a representative cross-section of individuals who have a stake in the issues and outcomes of the project were involved (Figure 5). A majority of respondents (87%) agreed to strongly agreed that participants worked together to identify shared interests and concerns, and a majority (75%) felt the collaborative process created a neutral space for CFLRP participants to openly discuss controversial issues (Figure 5).

A majority of respondents indicated that participants had a shared understanding of the problems that impact their landscape (81%), the strategies to solve those problems (73%), and the purpose of the CFLRP project (82%; Figure 6).

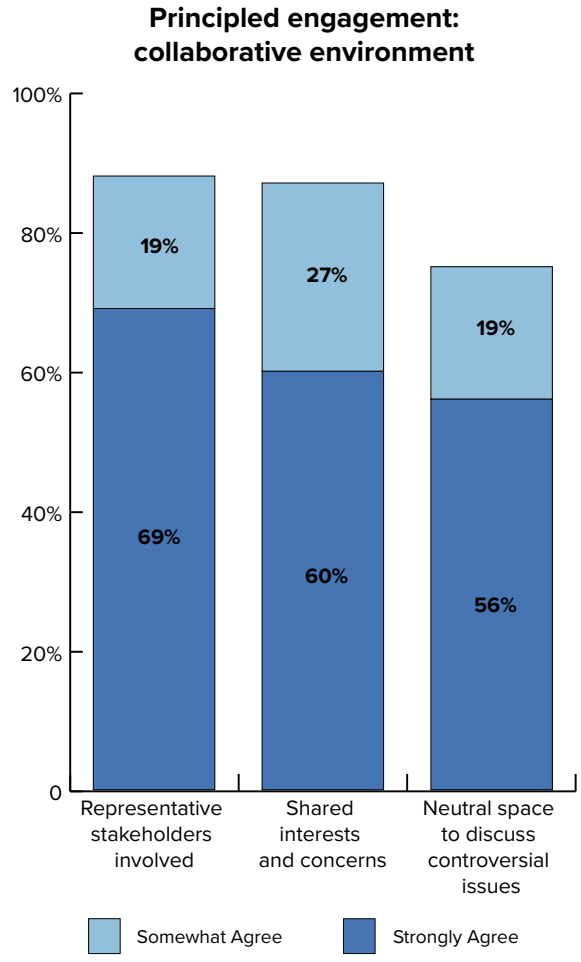

Figure 5: Percentage of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that representative stakeholders are involved, stakeholders have shared interests and concerns, and the collaborative is a neutral space to discuss controversial issues.

A majority of respondents felt that the level of collaboration between the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP and the USFS met their expectations during planning (67%), implementation (71%), and monitoring (80%; Figure 7).

Shared Motivation

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

A strong majority of participants agreed the collaborative process helped build trust in each other (85%), relationships (80%), and mutual respect of others' positions and interests (87%; Figure 8). Also, a strong majority of participants trusted in the group's ability to achieve desired actions and outcomes (80%; Figure 8). Respondents indicated that they themselves (82%), the USFS unit level staff (70%), and other project participants were committed to the collaborative process (80%; Figure 9).

Capacity for Joint Action

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

Leadership

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

A strong majority of respondents agreed that the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP had leaders who worked well with other people (80%), maintained and communicated a common vision and direction (80%), and motivated others to work together (73%; Figure 10).

Knowledge and Learning

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

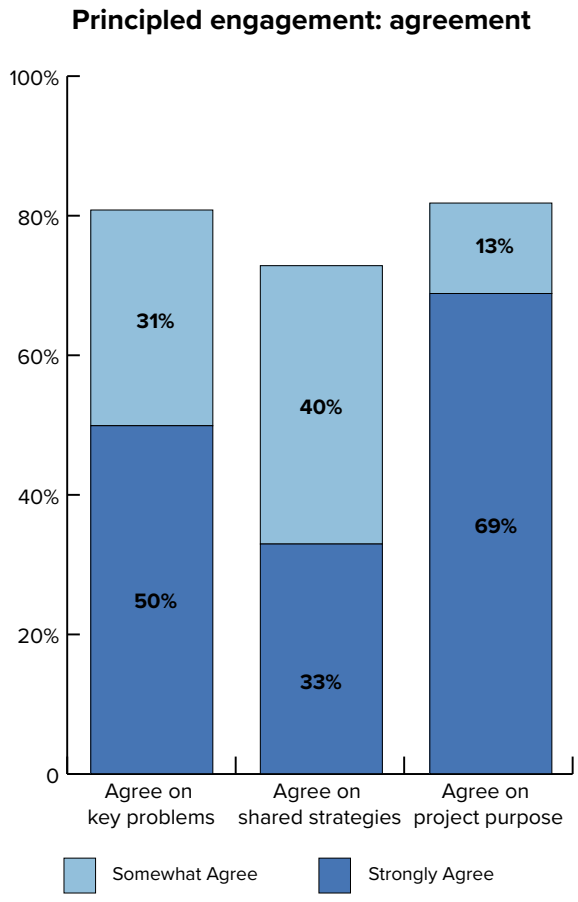

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" on the key problems that impact the landscape, strategies to solve problems, and purpose of the collaborative.

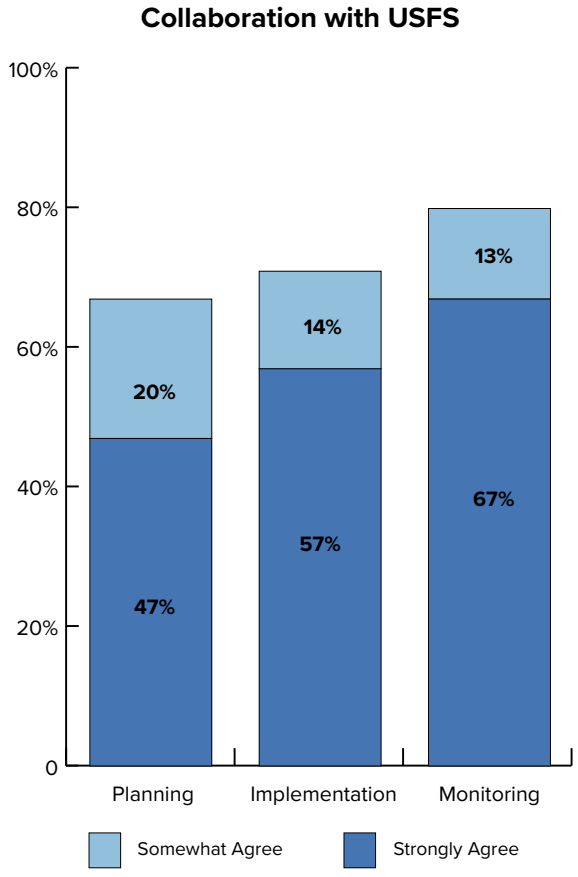

Figure 7: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the USFS collaborates during planning, implementation, and monitoring stages.

For the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP, a majority of respondents somewhat agreed to strongly agreed that the CFLRP process provided opportunities to co-generate knowledge to learn and solve problems together (80%), that knowledge and information were shared equally among participants (69%), and that participants were committed to informing adjustments to management practices based on learning and feedback, i.e., adaptive management (73%). A majority felt that participants had the flexibility to alter course when landscape conditions change (e.g., wildfire affects a planning unit; 87%), and 61% felt they had the flexibility to alter course when the collaborative changes (e.g., new faces or priorities; Figure 11). While still a majority, this relatively lower percentage of participants who felt the collaborative could be flexible may be related to the fact that the group is now in its second decade as a CFLR Project; emphasis has shifted from collaborative deliberation processes (such as engaging a wide range of stakeholders in prioritization) to implementation and coordination among implementing partners (personal communication in meeting, July 13, 2023).

Resources

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

A strong majority of participants somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the project had adequate access to funds (73%), technical expertise (67%), and facilitation skills (80%) to get work done. Meanwhile, only a slight majority (58%) somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the group had adequate time to carry out tasks and accomplish their work (Figure 12).

Institutional Arrangements

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

A strong majority of survey respondents somewhat to strongly agreed there were protocols in place (e.g., decision

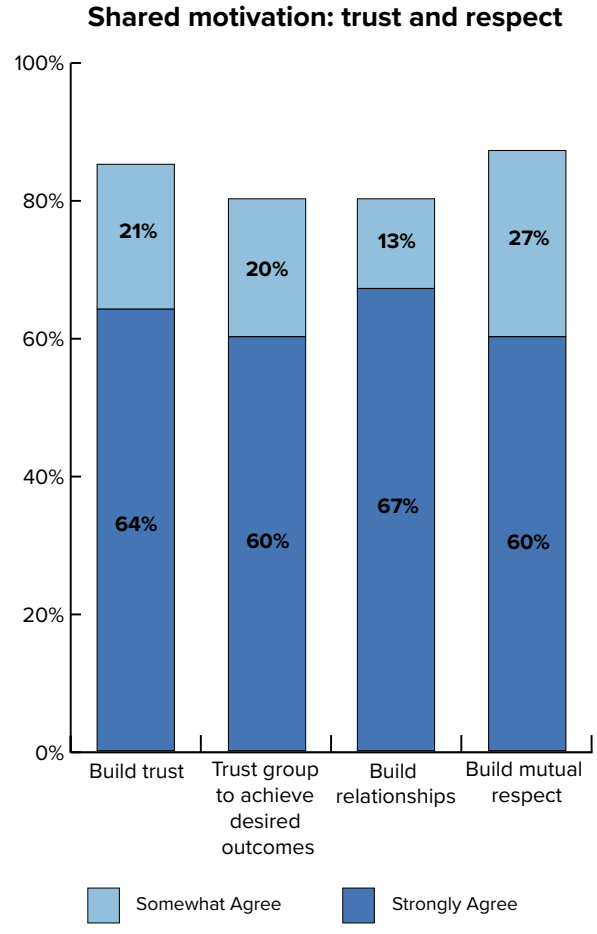

Figure 8: Percentage of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the collaborative process has helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect, as well as the extent to which participants trust the group to achieve desired outcomes.

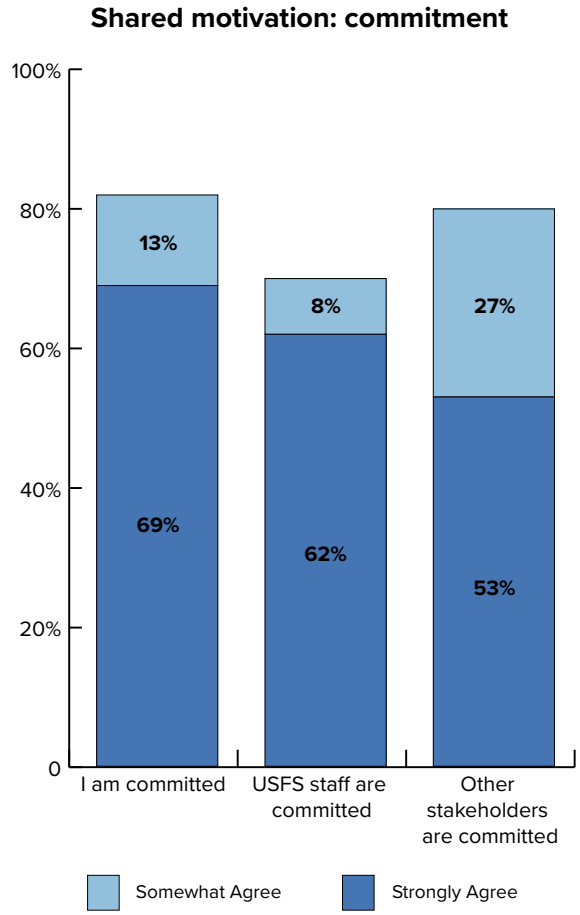

Figure 9: Percentage of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they, the USFS, and other stakeholders are committed to the process.

rules, charters, memoranda of understanding) that promote accountability among CFLRP participants (78%), and between the USFS and CFLRP project participants (77%; Figure 13). Similarly, a strong majority agreed those protocols were clearly understood among participants (72%), fair and equitable (85%), and used appropriately (77%; Figure 13).

A strong majority of respondents felt that project participants understood when and what collaborative input was useful to inform USFS decisions (86%). Further, a majority reported the USFS was responsive to collaborative input (61%), and agreed the agency was clear with CFLRP project participants about the decisions they make and why they make them (67%; Figure 14).

Outcomes

We assessed perceived progress on process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes for the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP.

A strong majority of respondents agreed to strongly agreed that the collaborative process enhanced communication among participants (86%), enabled landscape-scale planning (94%), minimized litigation (77%), and enhanced planning across boundaries (92%; Figure 15). Also, a majority agreed that the process has led to enhanced decision making (i.e., a more transparent, equitable, and fair process; 73%), has minimized conflict among stakeholders (72%), and included diverse perspectives (69%; Figure 15). A strong majority reported moderate to substantial progress in meeting the ecological goals of improving restoration pace and scale (87%), restoring old growth (79%), reducing fuel hazards (80%), improving fire use (64%), improving habitat for focal species (79%), improving watershed function (73%), and controlling invasive species (64%; Figure 16). In terms of socio-economic goals (Figure 17), a strong majority agreed that moderate to substantial progress has been made in reducing community wildfire risk (73%), supporting local employment and training (80%), and accomplishing more work on adjacent lands (85%). However, less than half of the respondents (47%) reported progress in offsetting treatment costs with restoration byproducts.

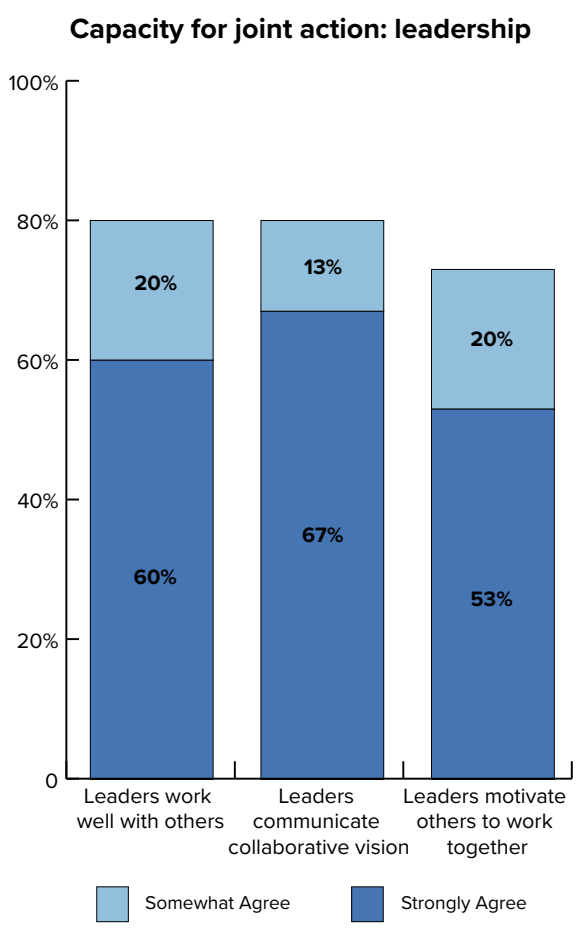

Figure 10: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the leaders work well with others, communicate a common vision and direction, and motivate others to work together.

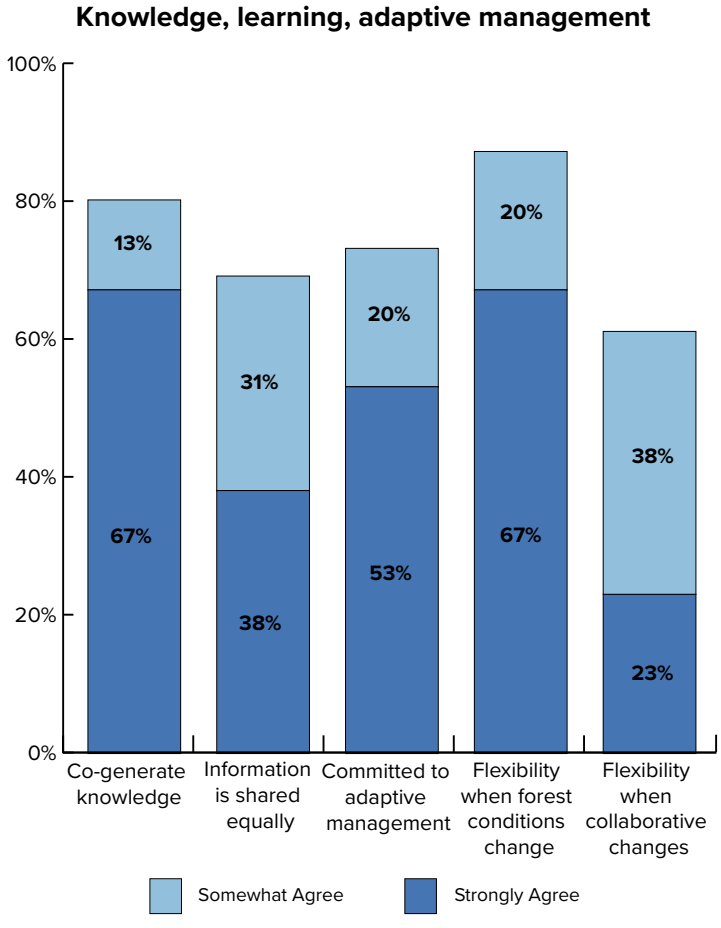

Figure 11: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that knowledge and information is co-generated by participants, shared equally, and used by participants to adjust management practices.

Disruptions

We developed a list of common challenges CFLRP project participants and other landscape-scale forest collaboratives reported in forest collaborative meeting breakout groups (SWERI, 2020) and in the literature (Schultz et al., 2018). Based on that list, biophysical disturbances (100%) and frequent turnover in agency personnel and/or project participants (73%) were the most substantial challenges the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP faced at the time of this survey (Figure 18). According to the CFLRP Extension Proposal (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2021b), the original project area was affected by multiple large wildfires which posed challenges to restoration objectives and shifted focus to post-fire recovery in some areas. Open-ended responses elaborated on other challenges related to capacity and funding. For example, a respondent reported that a "tremendous challenge is the limited capacity to work with hundreds of local small private forest landowners… [which] takes time, patience and multiple visits…" Other respondents pointed to challenges with the timing of dispersed funds—specifically delayed disbursements—as having caused a disruption to capacity. This was addressed by elevating and communicating the urgency of correspondence to the US Forest Service office where processing was held up. Implementation is well underway for the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP, but respondents noted that implementation progress has been constrained by "limited windows and capacity to use prescribed fire," to which the group has responded by encouraging increased capacity to utilize this tool. Another noted constraint was inability "to utilize carbon markets to increase treatments," which the respondent suggested should be explored further with a pilot study). While 76% of respondents saw conflict among participants as a nonexistent to minor challenge, one respondent noted the potential for increased conflict in the future associated with proposed Eastside Screens amendments to diameter caps for Region 6 forests east of the Cascades, which would lift a ban on cutting old trees over 21 inches.

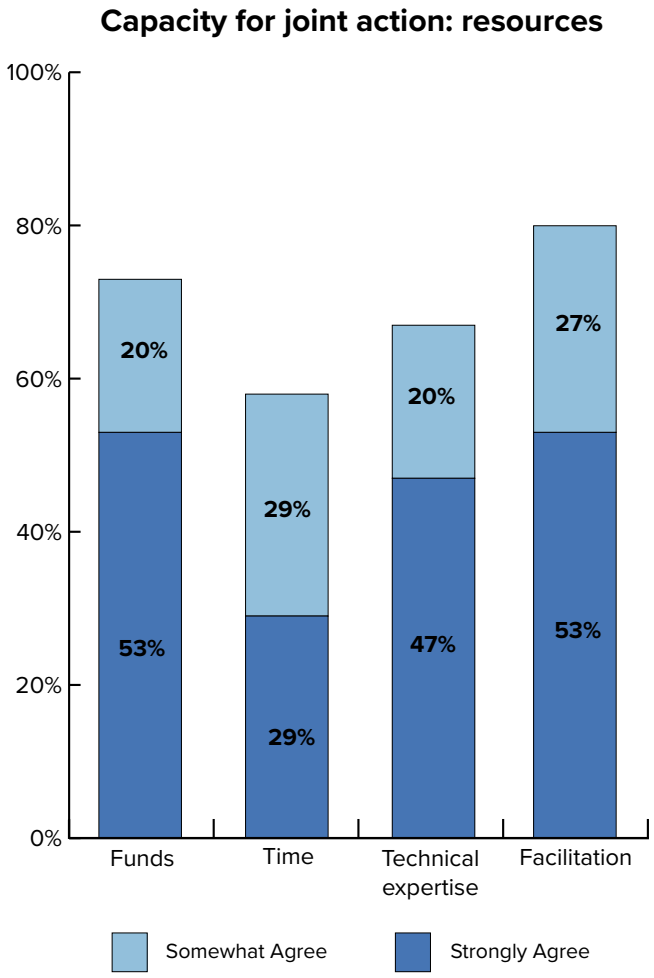

Figure 12: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the collaborative has adequate: funds, time, technical expertise, and facilitation skills to accomplish work.

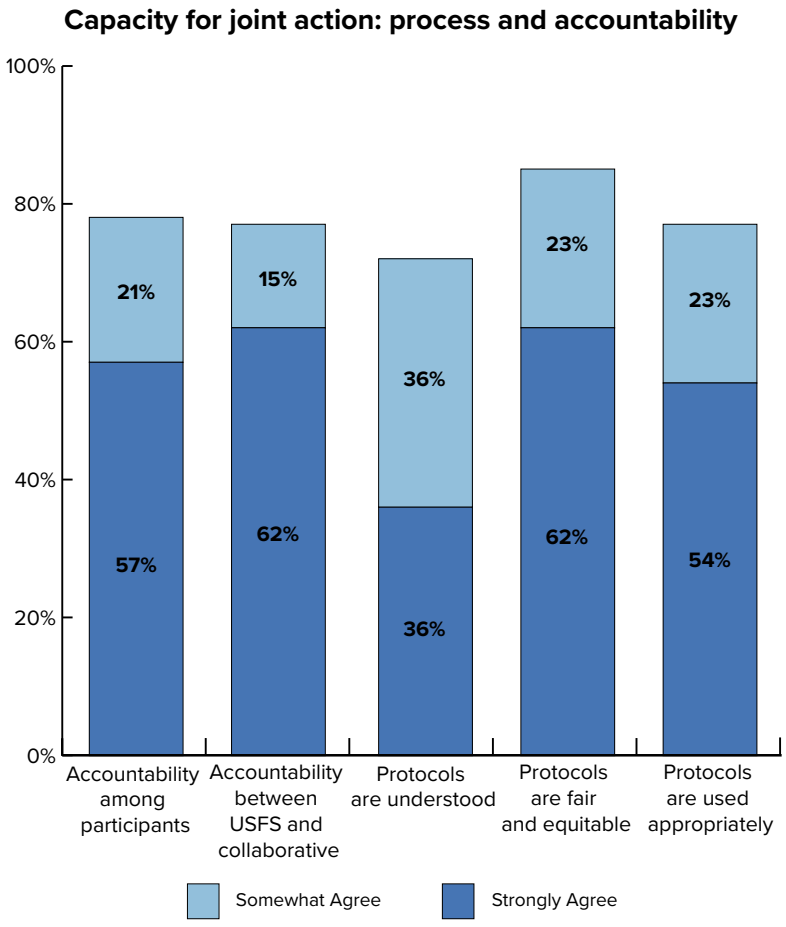

Figure 13: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that protocols promote accountability among participants, between USFS and the collaborative, and that protocols are understood, fair and equitable, and are used appropriately.

Recommendations to Improve the Collaborative Process

We asked participants to suggest recommendations to improve collaborative process, durability, and performance. There were too few responses for robust thematic analysis, but open-ended responses and the data reported herein pertained to recommendations for expanded decision space in the monitoring process, inclusive stakeholder participation, engagement, and communication. Suggestions to enhance communication included more frequent meetings, quarterly reporting on accomplishments, and increasing clarity around cost share funding. One respondent expressed a desire for greater decision space to inform the monitoring process:

> *"…[T]he main input I get is from the [US]FS. I would love to invite other voices to speak to the monitoring process. The [US]FS facilitates the collaborative, but that doesn't mean the [US]FS should necessarily have the final say in making decisions regarding the collaborative. Our only direct access with other voices in the collaborative is when we present data."*

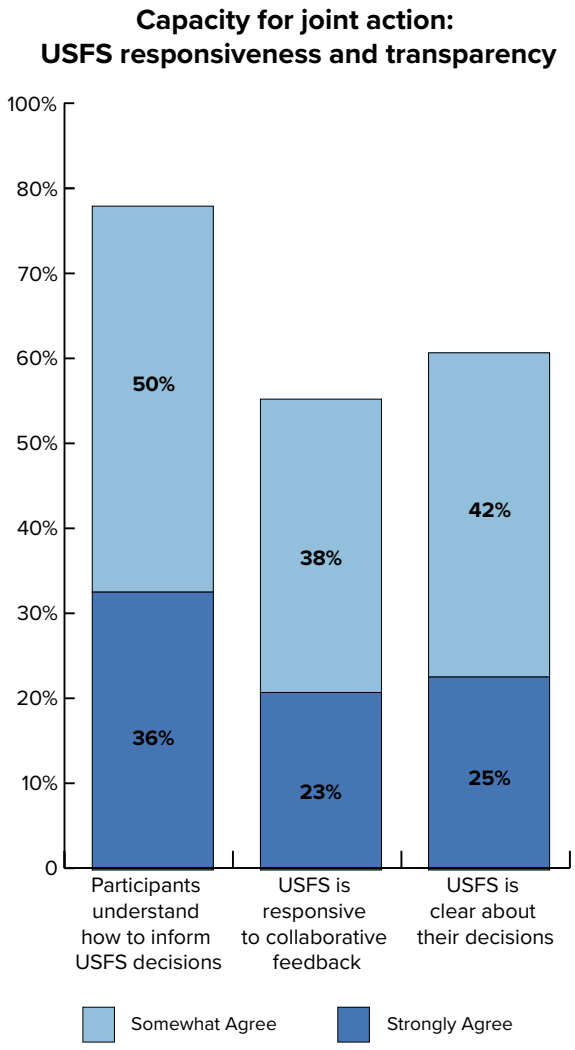

Figure 14: Percent of respondents who either "Somewhat Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that they understand how to inform USFS decisions, the USFS is responsive to feedback, and the USFS is clear about their decisions.

Providing non-USFS partners with more opportunities to inform monitoring questions or improve the process, rather than just the opportunity to react to results, was recommended. An additional recommendation not related to collaborative process was a suggestion that the group take advantage of the opportunity to learn from backlogged monitoring data, stating "[we] have an extensive monitoring program, a lot of [it] has not been analyzed. [I] wonder if we are not missing the opportunity to learn more from what has been collected."

One respondent suggested better collaborative engagement with local governments. Another expressed frustration at the challenges to achieving inclusive stakeholder participation during project review, particularly with well-established environmental groups and Tribes, who instead "communicate independently and directly with the USFS rather than collaboratively with the local Partnership" for various reasons. The respondent continues:

> *"Both groups have been invited to work with the local Partnership in reviewing USFS projects but have chosen to address public land input separately. It is unclear how to mitigate this. In my experience, well established environmental groups still hold the prerogative to file litigation if project decisions land outside their desirable decision space. In contrast, one of the sole objectives of the local Partnership is to forward recommendations on cross boundary work on state, private and federal lands to build resiliency and avoid litigation. Almost all USFS proposed projects have goals that align with the present day focus of building landscape resiliency from wildfire and insects and sustaining local communities on all lands."*

While this quote is more of a comment than a recommendation, it implies a need to address issues of shared motivation for stakeholders beyond the usual Partnership participants. Invitations and outreach may not be sufficient to achieve more inclusive participation of Tribes and environmental groups, who have strong mechanisms to achieve their objectives outside of collaboration (i.e., government-to-government relations and litigation, respectively). An analysis of stakeholder interests, power, or conflict could help the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP identify the rationale for groups who do not participate and generate insights for improving participation.

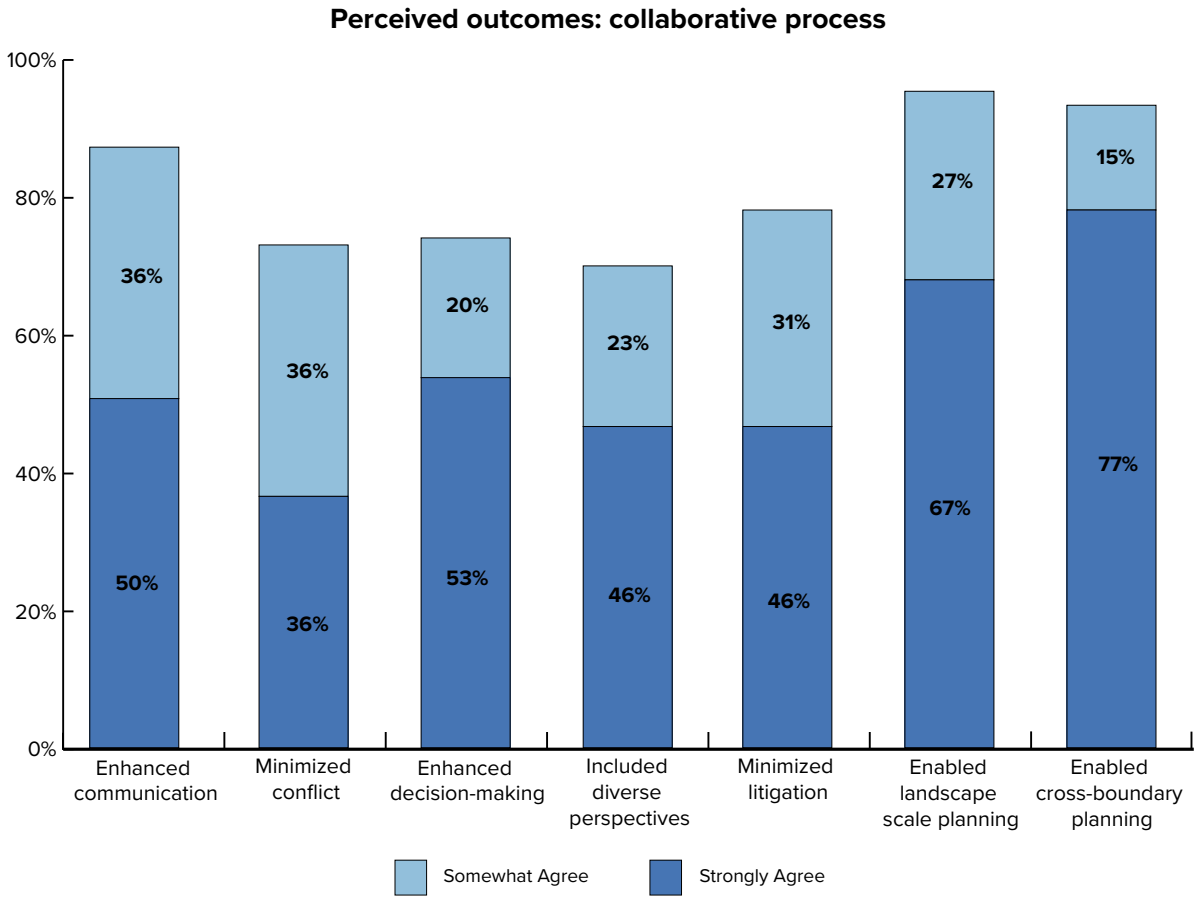

Figure 15: Percent of respondents who either “Somewhat Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative.

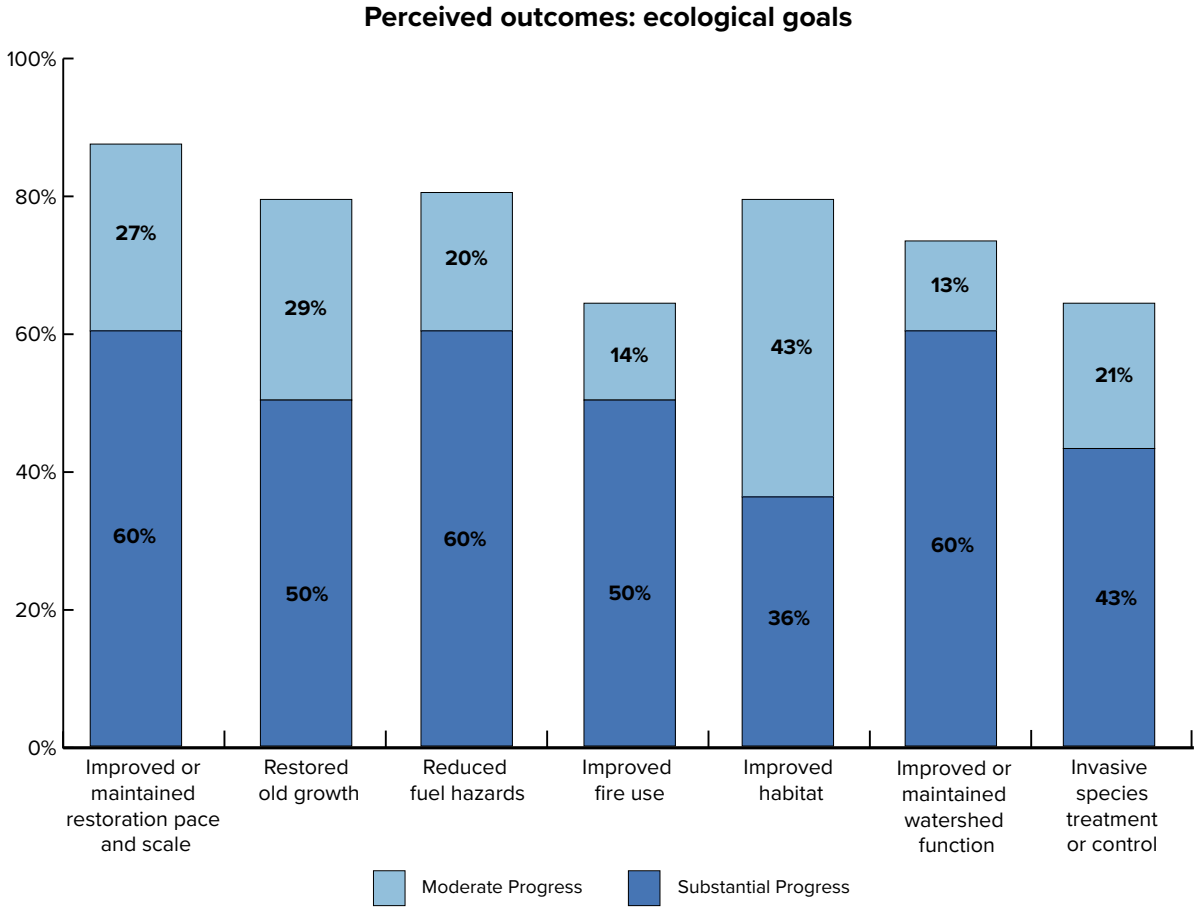

Figure 16: Percent of respondents who reported “Moderate progress” or “Substantial progress” towards ecological goals.

The quantitative results described earlier indicate that the majority of respondents agreed to strongly agreed with statements about the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP's collaboration dynamics (principled engagement, shared motivation, and capacity for joint action), and these favorable views were elaborated further in the additional comments from survey takers. For example, one person indicated general satisfaction with the group's leadership: "I trust the leadership that they continue to look at large scale restoration projects that help our communities, provide for a resilient landscape, use the latest science to make good decisions…" Another expressed that "[t]he funding has been effectively and efficiently used."

Respondents also emphasized that the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP is accomplishing needed work in and around communities and achieving desired outcomes, with one stating:

> *"Overall, the Lakeview collaborative has been working as designed treating thousands and thousands of acres successfully working with key federal, state, NGOs, and large and small forest landowners. The collaborative is working!!!"*

These comments support the high percentage of agreement that the collaborative process has built trust in the group's ability to achieve desired actions and outcomes (80%).

Discussion and Conclusions

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) deployed a collaborative governance survey to a subset of members of the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership (KLFHP) working within the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP landscape in Spring 2023 to assess collaborative health, function, and resilience, as well as perceived outcomes of collaborative work. Specifically, we assessed: whether the CFLR project exhibited characteristics generally associated with healthy, well-functioning, and resilient collaboratives; the extent to which the project has made progress on meeting process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes; what challenges or disruptions affected collaborative performance and durability; and actionable recommendations to improve the collaborative process from respondents' perspectives. The collaborative governance assessment serves as the collaboration assessment for the CFLRP Common Monitoring Strategy (question #12).

The majority of respondents indicated that they agreed about key problems that have impacted their landscape, strategies to solve problems, and the purpose of their collaborative restoration project. Also, a majority of respondents agreed that the process has helped build trust, relationships, and mutual respect of others' positions and interests even when they were different from their own. A majority agreed that they themselves, other organizations, and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) were all committed to the process. Mutual commitment, especially among those with decision-making authority, is critical for collaborative durability. The USFS retains decision-making authority in treatment planning and implementation on USFS-managed land. The agency also gives substantial discretion in decision-making to local units; thus, it is often up to USFS unit-level line officers to make collaboration a priority by providing staff, resources, etc., or not (Beeton et al., 2022).

Survey respondents emphasized that there were strong leaders who worked well across organizations and entities, communicated a collaborative vision, and motivated others to work together. Often, groups benefit from multiple collaborative leaders who represent a diversity of interests across organizational and institutional levels, and provide a variety of functions (e.g., coordination, expertise/experience) (Emerson and Gerlak, 2014; Ryan

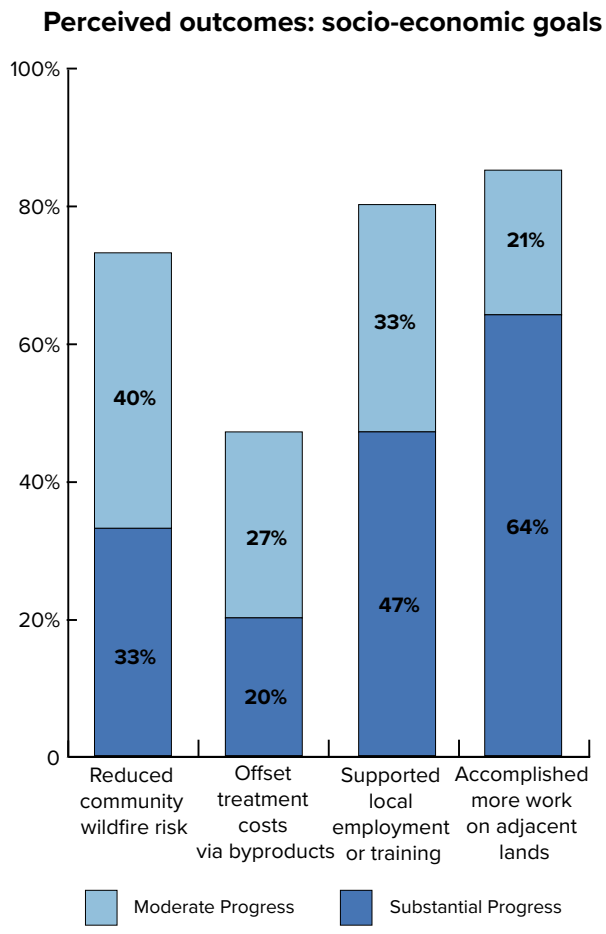

Figure 17: Percent of respondents who reported "Moderate progress" or "Substantial progress" towards socio-economic goals.

and Urgenson, 2019). Having diversity and redundancy in leadership roles is critical for continuity through personnel turnover.

Respondents felt the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP had adequate funding, technical expertise, facilitation skills, and, to a lesser extent, time to carry out tasks and accomplish their work. They generally agreed that participants understood when and what collaborative input is useful to inform USFS decisions. A slightly less robust majority agreed that the USFS was clear about the decisions they made and that the USFS was responsive to collaborative input. A majority of respondents agreed that participants worked together to co-generate knowledge and solve problems together, and that knowledge and information were shared equally among participants. Collaboratives can use a number of activities to support social learning and co-development of knowledge, including field trips, multi-party monitoring, and joint fact-finding missions. Field trips are a critical component of social learning because they provide opportunities for groups to let their guard down and come to common understandings. Field trips can help illustrate how restoration principles translate to operations on the ground and allow collaborative groups to provide feedback on restoration treatments. Joint fact-finding—where affected entities work together to co-generate local knowledge and translate it into decision-making—provides opportunities to develop contextual understanding of local landscapes to support decisions. Documenting this learning and knowledge exchange is critical to maintaining transparency, equity, and institutional knowledge (Beeton et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2015).

Now in its second iteration of CFLRP funding, the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP has moved well beyond the 'storming and norming' phases of collaboration and is now focused on 'performing' to achieve project objectives and monitor the ecological and social-economic outcomes of those projects (Markus et al., 2021). As one participant noted, collaboration has become more "standardized" as the group has shifted to implementation (personal communication in meeting, July 13, 2023). While the accumulated trust and experience of the group has yielded greater efficiencies in accomplishing work,

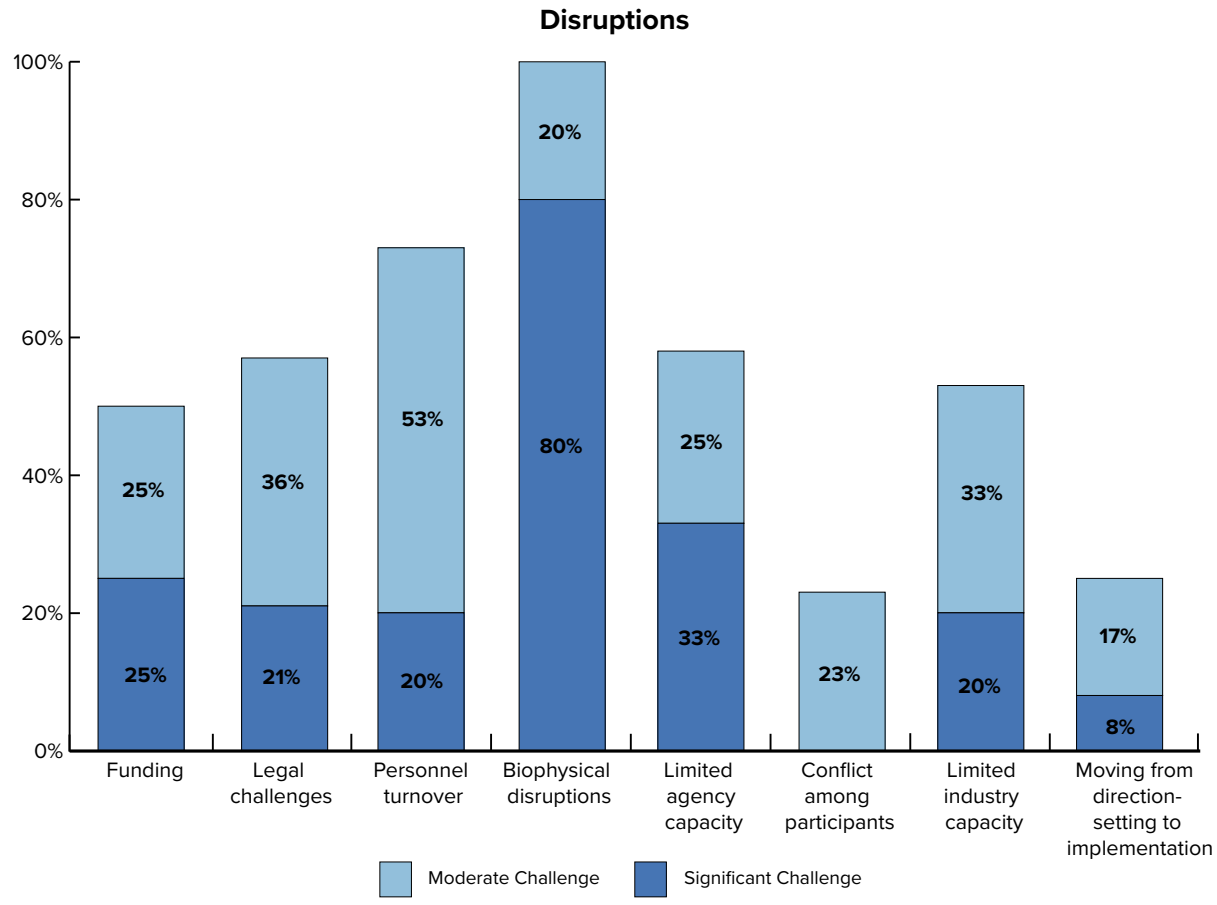

Figure 18: Percent of respondents who reported disruptions posed "Moderate challenges" or "Substantial challenges" to collaborative performance and durability.

it may be beneficial for regular participants to reflect periodically to ensure that efficiency doesn't come at the expense of inclusive collaborative engagement and flexibility to adapt to new faces or new priorities. That said, the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP is part of the larger KLFHP collaborative, which may offer additional avenues for collaborative engagement in cross-boundary planning, implementation, and monitoring.

While the survey results reveal the majority of respondents have favorable perceptions of the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP's collaboration dynamics overall, a few individuals suggested recommendations to improve the collaborative process through expanding decision space to inform the monitoring process, more inclusive stakeholder participation, engagement, and increased communication. One suggested more frequent meetings and quarterly accomplishments reporting to improve communication. One respondent wanted to see more opportunities for collaborative engagement in the adaptive management process. Another acknowledged that some interests, specifically environmental groups and Tribes, were still missing from the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP, despite efforts to engage with them. Recognition of and outreach to key stakeholders (i.e., those with decision authority over, the potential to influence, or potential to be influenced by, decisions affecting the resource) by the conveners of collaboration are necessary, but not the only factors that determine participation. Participation may be facilitated or constrained by resources available to participate, expectations of collaboration, aspects of process design (like meeting timing or location), or how the content and issues of collaboration are framed and prioritized (Purdy, 2012). Lack of trust and access to alternative mechanisms (like litigation or government-to-government relations) may lead key interests to circumvent the collaborative process. Conflict and power distributions are key contextual factors that affect all aspects of collaboration dynamics, i.e., shared motivation, principled engagement, and capacity for joint action (Bryson, Crosby, and Middleton-Stone, 2006; Emerson et al., 2012). Attention to power relations and conflict may lead to improvements in process design and implementation to achieve more representative and inclusive participation long-term (see for example the power framework proposed by Purdy, 2012).

Survey results also indicated that the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP has made progress on most process, socio-economic, and ecological goals of the CFLRP, in keeping with the extended timeframe of the project. An overwhelming majority of respondents reported: enhanced communication, increased landscape-scale planning, and enhanced planning across boundaries for process goals; progress reducing fuels and maintaining or increasing the pace and scale of restoration for ecological goals; and progress accomplishing more work on adjacent lands for socio-economic goals. The only goal that the majority agreed the group had made minimal to no progress on was offsetting treatment costs with restoration byproducts. Many of the desired outcomes of the CFLRP may take years to realize.

Biophysical disturbances and frequent turnover were the most substantial challenges the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP faced at the time of the survey. The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP is no stranger to major biophysical disturbances—the 2012 Barry Point Fire burned four years of "shovel-ready" ecological restoration projects and necessitated revisions to the original CFLRP proposal to adapt to changed conditions in the forest. Despite the challenges caused by the Barry Point Fire, the group was able to develop consensus around controversial post-fire salvage operations, quickly identify a new planning unit, agree on revisions to the original proposal's timelines, scheduling, and funding for reforestation, and submit their revised proposal in 2013 (Spaeth, 2014). As of 2021, combined impacts from Barry Point and subsequent large wildfires had altered 25% of the original project area, resulting in a proposed expansion of the project area by almost 200,000 acres to meet restoration objectives (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2021b). The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP illustrates how flexible institutions and arrangements—i.e., the ability to identify alternate planning units, amend the scope of work, or adjust timelines and funding schedules to meet changed conditions—can support adaptation to biophysical disturbance (Folk et al., 2005; Spaeth, 2014). Another adaptation is capacity to live with and learn from disturbance. The Lakeview Stewardship Group (the precursive collaborative to the Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP) had been learning from experience with fires even before the Barry Point Fire, and they worked closely with the Fremont-Winema National Forest (FWNF) to develop a robust monitoring program and adaptive management plan to incorporate new information into decision making (Spaeth, 2014). Lastly, strong working relationships with the US Forest Service can improve the ability of a collaborative to adapt following a disturbance (Beeton et al., 2022). The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP has enjoyed strong support from the FWNF and close partnerships between the Forest and (initially) the LSG, and now the KLFHP (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2021b; Spaeth, 2014).

Turnover can undermine relationships and trust, slow progress, and lead to lost institutional knowledge (Beeton et al., 2022; Coleman et al., 2020). Collaborative

engagement is often not part of primary job duties for agency staff; when combined with vacant positions and multiple, sometimes conflicting mandates and priorities, agency staff may not have the capacity to engage to the extent that stakeholders expect or desire (Beeton et al. 2022). The Lakeview Stewardship CFLRP faced some turnover as old champions retired or moved on following the termination of the Federal Sustained Yield Unit, but the merger with the KLFHP provided an opportunity to expand the geographic scale of restoration efforts and leverage capacity (Fremont-Winema National Forest, 2021b). Still, the high level of agreement about turnover disturbance and the open-ended comment about the need for more capacity to engage with landowners suggests that capacity remains a challenge. The group may want to dig deeper into these findings with participants to identify more specific capacity needs and how they might address turnover challenges through new or expanded partnerships.

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

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NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY
Ecological Restoration Institute

New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute