

# CFLRP collaborative governance assessment: Summary of findings for the Rogue Basin Landscape Restoration Project

The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) developed a collaborative governance assessment as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Common Monitoring Strategy.<sup>1</sup> The collaborative governance assessment was designed to evaluate collaborative health, function, resilience, and perceived outcomes of collaborative work. The SWERI administered an online questionnaire to members of the Rogue Basin Landscape Restoration Project in the spring of 2023, the first year of funding for the CFLRP project. We received 22 usable responses, representing 39% of those who were contacted to take the survey. Figure 1 illustrates what groups were represented in the questionnaire. The purpose of this brief is to:

- summarize high-level findings from the collaborative governance assessment; and
- document participants’ recommendations to improve the collaborative process and progress.

## Findings

What has worked well for the Rogue Basin CFLRP?

A strong majority of respondents felt that there was a representative cross-section of interested and affected entities involved in the collaborative and they share similar interests and concerns. A strong majority also 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 respondents felt the collaboration between the CFLRP and the Forest Service met their expectations during the monitoring phase. 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. Respondents emphasized that there were strong leaders who worked well across organizations and entities, communicated a collaborative vision, and motivated others to work together (Figure 2). Moreover, a strong majority of respondents felt that the Rogue Basin CFLRP worked together to co-create knowledge and information and had adequate funding, technical expertise, and facilitation skills to carry out tasks and accomplish work. Finally, a strong majority felt there were mechanisms of accountability between the collaborative and the Forest Service, and that collaborative protocols were used appropriately.

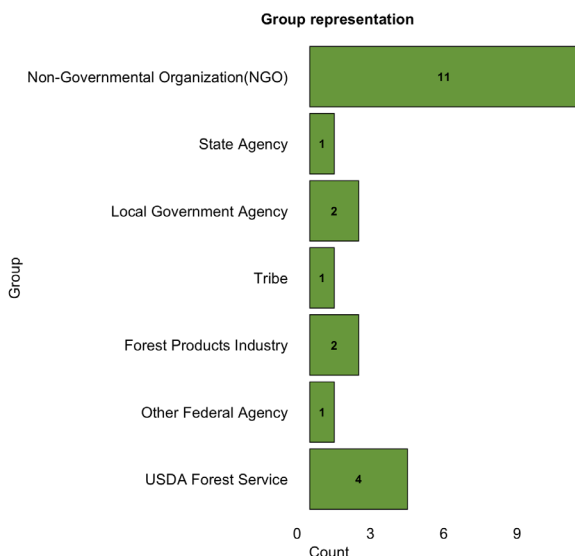


Figure 1: Respondents’ self-identified representation with associated organizations.

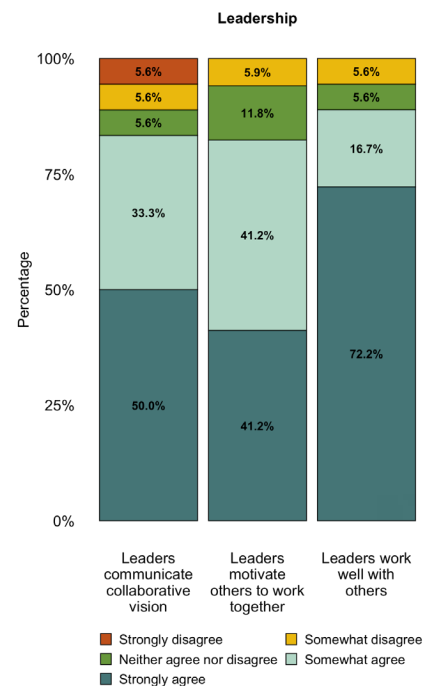


Figure 2: Percent of respondents who disagreed to agreed that the leaders communicate a common vision and direction, motivate others to work together, and work well with others.

<sup>1</sup>USDA Forest Service Common Monitoring Strategy - <https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/documents/cflrp/CMS-Fact-Sheet-final-20221013.pdf>

What disruptions and challenges have affected collaborative progress and performance?

Respondents noted several areas for improvement. Only a slight majority felt there were neutral spaces to discuss controversial issues. Around half of the respondents indicated collaboration between the Rogue Basin CFLRP and the Forest Service met their expectations during planning and implementation. A slight majority felt information was shared equally, and that participants were committed to adaptive management and had the flexibility to respond to changing conditions. A relatively large proportion of respondents felt there could be improvements to protocols for accountability between CFLRP members, and that the protocols could be fairer and more transparent. A slight majority felt participants knew how and when to inform Forest Service decisions and felt the Forest Service was responsive to collaborative feedback. Notably, less than half of the respondents felt the Rogue Basin CFLRP had met their expectations, suggesting some room for documenting and aligning expectations for collaborative engagement and outcomes. Limited agency capacity, frequent turnover, and biophysical disruptions also posed challenges to collaborative progress and performance.

## Recommendations to improve the collaborative process and performance

These areas for improvement and challenges were generally reiterated in the open-ended section on recommendations to improve the collaborative process:

- Diverse and inclusive representation and engagement throughout the process – Participants particularly recommended the inclusion of tribes, more commitment from Forest Service staff and leadership, broader collaborative engagement in determining funding decisions and work priorities, and funding to support meaningful collaborative engagement from direction setting to implementation.
- Shared learning, monitoring, and adaptive management – Participants indicated the need for improvements to long-term effectiveness monitoring and the requisite funding and personnel to design, collect, analyze, and share data for adaptive management. They also suggested additional opportunities to share success and challenges in peer-learning venues.

Other recommendations included funding for implementation, iterative analysis of group representation, and the inclusion of private lands in wildfire mitigation strategies.

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

A majority of respondents indicated that the Rogue Basin CFLRP has moved toward achieving a variety desired collaborative process (Figure 3), ecological, and socio-economic goals, including:

- Enhanced communication and decision-making while minimizing conflict and enabling landscape-scale planning across boundaries.
- Reduced fuel hazards and improved wildlife habitat.
- Accomplished more work on adjacent lands and supported local economies through employment and training.

It is important to note that the assessment was administered during the first year of funding for the Rogue Basin CFLRP. Many of the desired process, socio-economic, and ecological outcomes may take time to achieve.

## Next steps

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

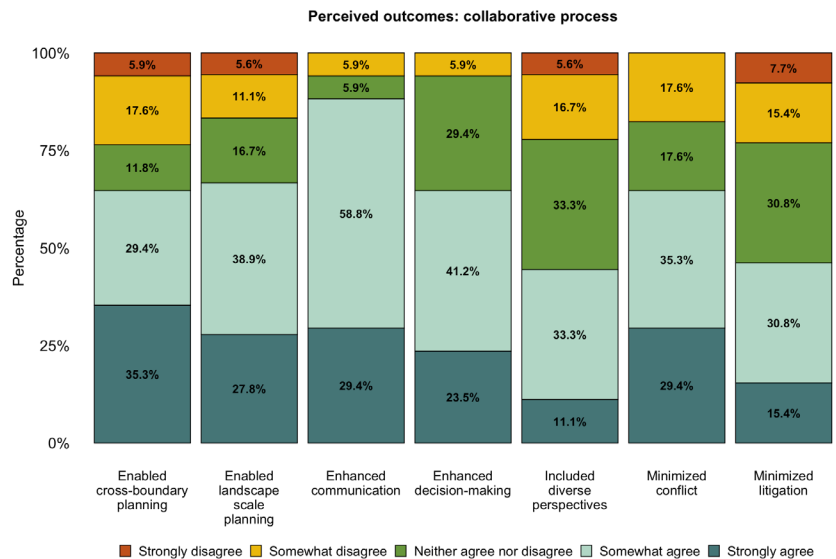


Figure 3: Percent of respondents who agree or disagree that the collaborative process has impacted the function and capacity of the collaborative.