



Collaboration Successes, Challenges
and Comparisons in Eastern
Washington National Forests

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Introduction: First of all, since my presentation is about Eastern Washington, I would like to welcome everyone to our Eastern Washington Landscape. I hope you are enjoying the scenery. It is much more enjoyable now since the air has finally cleared up.



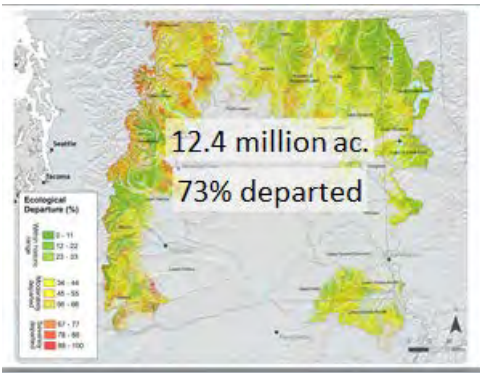
We have been severely smoked out for over 6 weeks from intense wildfires. We just went through 88 days without rain all the way to mid October. The trend toward larger, hotter fires in the West, including this part of the country is becoming the new normal.



Past management, including fire suppression, has created conditions where forests are not resilient. This is especially true with trends in a changing climate.



Our State Commissioner of Public Lands last spring issued a forest health warning for the dry forests of Eastern Washington due to an increasing trend of mortality from insects and disease epidemics in our overstocked forests.

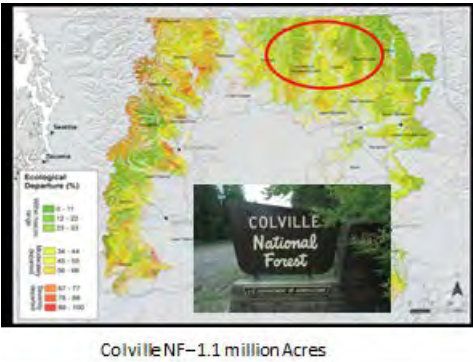


There are over 12 million acres of forested lands in Eastern WA as shown on this map. About 73% of these lands are departed from the natural range of variability. With that background, I will describe how our Collaborative efforts on two Eastern Washington National Forests are working toward managing for forests that are resilient.

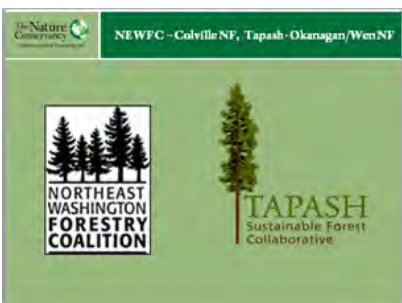
Collaboration Goals

- Collaboration serves to provide social, technical and financial support for forest restoration and, at the project level, brings diverse stakeholders together early in planning to avoid appeals and ultimately support project implementation at the appropriate pace on our National Forests.

First, I want to share with you what I believe to be the commonly agreed upon goals for collaboration. Collaboration helps provide social, technical and financial support for forest restoration and, at the project level, brings diverse stakeholders together early in planning to avoid appeals and ultimately support project implementation at the appropriate pace on our National Forests.



The two National Forests that I will speak about in E WA are the OK-Wen NF and Colville NF. The Ok-Wen NF is 4 million acres and the Colville NF is 1.1 million acres.



CFLR

Both forests have a supportive collaborative group. The Northeast Washington forestry Coalition is on the Colville NF and The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative on the southern portion of the Ok-Wen NF.

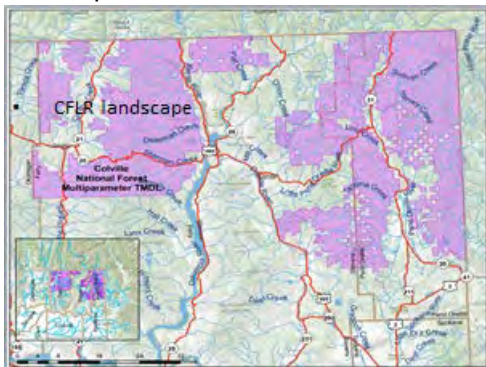
1. Both Collaboratives, in partnership with their National Forests, created successful CFLR proposals with fully funded projects.
2. Ok-Wen NF was selected in 2010. Colville NF was selected in 2012. (High Priority Landscape)



3. The Tapash CFLR landscape is 1.6 million acres including The Yakama Tribal Nation and other State and private ownerships.



The Tapash Landscape is receiving an average of \$2.5 million annually in CFLR funds for the NF lands within this landscape.



Colville NF awarded \$970,000 per year in CFLR funds on 900,000 acres CFLR Landscape



4. The Colville CFLR landscape is 900 thousand acres including a portion of the Colville Confederated Tribal Nation and other land ownerships.

The Colville NF CFLR Landscape receives \$968,000 annually in CFLR funds for the NF lands within this landscape.

I. Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (NEWFC)



- A. NEWFC was formed in 2002 out of conflict between timber and conservation interests and came to a head after the closing of the Vaagen Bros. Lumber Company in Republic, WA.

NEWFC Mission

- To demonstrate the full potential of restoration forestry to enhance forest health, public safety and community economic vitality.
- B. Conservation Leaders and forest Industry owners came together and found workable solutions and a common understanding on National Forest issues.
 - C. Membership expanded to include local gov't, businesses, tribal and recreation representation.

- D. The mission became to demonstrate the full potential of restoration forestry to enhance forest health, public safety and community economic vitality.
- E. In 2004, NEWFC became a 501c3 non-profit with an Executive Committee and a 14 person board of directors.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
USDA FOREST SERVICE, COLVILLE NATIONAL FOREST
and the
NORTHEAST WASHINGTON FORESTRY COALITION

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) is hereby entered into by and between the USDA Forest Service, Colville National Forest, hereinafter referred to as the Forest Service, and the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, hereinafter referred to as the Coalition.

A. PURPOSE: The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework of cooperation and to facilitate community-based collaborative processes for forest health restoration activities on the Colville National Forest between the Forest Service, the Coalition, and the public. Further purposes of this MOU are to foster trust, clarify roles, assist in finding common ground in the management of natural resources on the Colville National Forest, and to collaborate while successfully achieving shared community, economic, and forest health objectives in a timely manner. This cooperation serves the mutual interest of the parties and the public.

- F. In 2005 an MOU was agreed upon and signed between NEWFC and CNF leadership formally documenting the collaborative partnership.

NEWFC Successes

1. Over 30 large scale Stewardship Projects
2. Collaborative Guidelines and Policies
3. Active Management Blueprint
4. Maintaining Support for Forest Infrastructure

Forest Restoration Projects

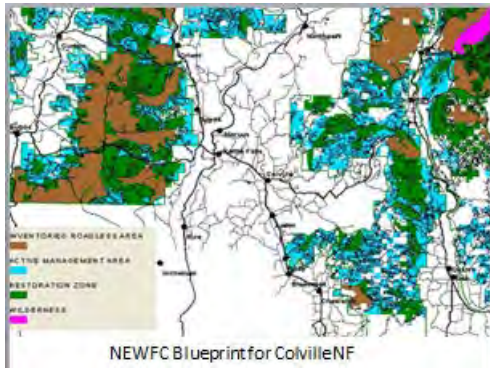
- NEWFC has collaborated on over 30 stewardship projects totaling over 150,000 acres treated to date
- Minimal appeals or litigation since Coalition was formed
- Shortened NEPA time lines have been achieved

- 1. Over 30 large scale restoration stewardship projects have been collaboratively implemented and monitored on over 150,000 acres with no appeals and high levels of support from NEWFC.

Progressive Agreements are forged from Project Collaborations

- Commercial Thinning Guidelines
- Regeneration Harvest Guidelines
- Old Growth Commercial Treatments Policy
- Road Construction and Obliteration Policy
- Post Fire Harvest Policy

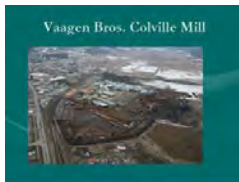
2. Prescription guidelines and policies have been jointly agreed upon between the FS and NEWFC that are short cuts for collaboration. No need for collaboration if treatments meet guidelines



3. Blueprint for agreed upon active management areas, gives certainty for stakeholders as to treatment locations and what areas will be left protected in a natural condition.



4. Collaborative efforts have successfully maintained a diversified forest products infrastructure.



Challenges

NEWFC Challenges

- Bringing in all interested stakeholders
 - CFLR funding is not additive
 - Colville NF staff turnover
-
1. Leaving groups behind can be a real problem especially when collaborating on contentious issues such as potential wilderness recommendations. Bringing all stakeholders into a collaborative forum is a challenge.
 2. CFLR funds have not been fully additive to the restoration program as intended. FS programmatic funding has been declining. CFLR funds have only made up for some of the forest funding cutbacks.
 3. Turnover on the Colville NF is a continuous challenge. At least 15 key staff personnel will be retiring by the end of 2012.

II. Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative



- A. The Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative emerged from efforts in 2003 to coordinate the sale and transfer of 10,000 acres of Plum Cr. Timber checker boarded lands to the WA State DFW.

Tapash Mission

- To improve the ecosystem health and natural functions of the landscape through active restoration projects backed by best science, community input and adaptive management.
- B. That initial effort has expanded into a regional partnership with a mission to improve the ecosystem health and natural functions of the landscape through active restoration projects backed by best science, community input and adaptive management.

Tapash Landowners MOU

- Between 5 landowners all with leadership on the Executive Board
 - Okanagan-Wenatchee National Forest
 - WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife
 - WA State Department of Natural Resources
 - The Nature Conservancy
 - Yakama Nation
- C. That partnership consists of 5 large forest landowners: OK-Wen NF, WDFW, DNR, TNC and Yakama Nation. Leaders from these 5 landowners make up the Executive Committee that sets strategic direction for the Tapash working groups.
- D. In 2007 a formal MOU between these 5 landowners was signed to document their combined commitments.



The name "Tapash" comes from Yakama Nation Sa-Hap-Tin dialect and means "Ponderosa Pine"

- E. The name Tapash came from the Yakama Nation and is sa-hap-tin word for Ponderosa Pine.

Successes

Tapash Successes

- Cross-Boundary Planning and Resource Sharing
- Large Land Acquisitions
- Forest Restoration Strategy

1. Improved cross-boundary efficiencies and resource sharing is showing some success as the five large landowners coordinate their restoration efforts.



Large Land Acquisition

- [Naches Forest Restoration Project 2011](#)
Consolidation of 10,000 acres of Plum Cr. lands transferred to WDFW Ownership/Mgt.
- [Tieton Forest Restoration Project 2003](#)
Consolidation of 10,000 acres of Plum Cr. lands purchase by TNC and later sold to WDFW Oak Cr. Wildlife Area, TNC coordinating the restoration project

2. Large land acquisitions have successfully blocked up parcels to allow for broader landscape restoration planning and implementation and reduce the problems associated with land fragmentation.
3. Also, the Tapash Collaborative provides support for the OK-Wen NF Forest Restoration Strategy and is the basis for the Tapash CFLR proposal.



Forest Restoration Strategy

- Emphasizes defined ecological outcomes
- Not driven by production targets
- FRS describes more efficient project area identification and planning
- FRS increases size of restoration footprint
- FRS identifies project areas within HUC 5 watershed planning areas from 70,000 to 100,000 acres

This formal strategic process emphasizes defined ecological outcomes that drive the development and implementation of projects. This strategy contrasts with the previous paradigm in which project design is often driven more by production targets than restoration needs. The Forest Restoration Strategy analyzes 70 to 100 thousand acre watersheds from which more efficient project area identification and planning occurs.

Challenges

Tapash Challenges

- Achieving successful CFLR projects has been challenging to implement and track with the Landowner instead of stakeholder collaborative structure
 - Coordinating the timing of cross-boundary projects
 - CFLR funding is not additive
 - Lack of Forest Products Infrastructure
1. Achieving successful CFLR projects has been challenging to implement and track since the landowner led collaborative structure does not fit well into the CFLR model of stakeholders collaborating on NF landscape restoration projects. A process is currently being developed.
 2. Coordinating the timing of cross boundary projects has been challenging as each landowner has different hoops to jump through that requires different time frames for implementation.
 3. CFLR funding has not been fully additive and is only making up for some of the shortfall from general funding.

4. No Local Forest Products Infrastructure currently exists which means long haul distances for forest products.

III. Contrasts

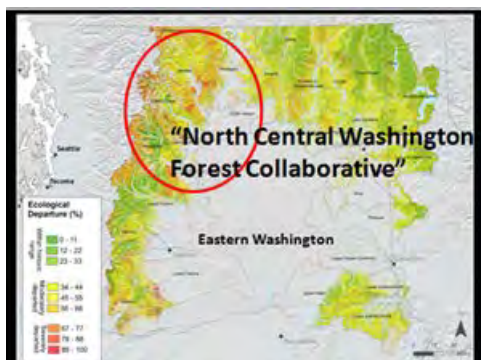
NEWFC	Tapash
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grass roots stakeholders 2. Grass roots driven 3. Diverse Forest Industry 4. Focus on CNF only 5. Project level planning 6. No land acquisition component 7. Wilderness component 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Five Large Landowners 2. Agency Driven 3. Lacking Forest Industry 4. Focus on multiple lands 5. Higher level planning 6. Land acquisition component 7. No Wilderness component

The contrasts between these two collaborative approaches and the available resources on each NF are significant. A few examples of the contrasts are:

1. NEWFC is made up of grass roots stakeholders whereas the Tapash is made up formally of 5 landowners and their personnel.
2. NEWFC is independent from agency leadership, whereas 3 of the 5 Tapash executive committee members are leaders from agencies.
3. Colville NF has a diverse forest products infrastructure. Ok-Wen NF has lost almost their entire forest industry infrastructure. 200 miles east or west are the closest mills.
4. NEWFC focuses on the entire CNF but not on any other landowner. Tapash focuses on cross-boundary multiple ownerships but only on 2 of the 7 ranger districts of the Ok-Wen NF.
5. NEWFC focuses on FS project level restoration. Tapash focuses on broader strategic goals and to date, has not engaged deeply on FS projects except cross-boundary discussions.
6. Tapash brings land acquisition to the collaborative partners, NEWFC does not.
7. NEWFC engages in Wilderness discussions, Tapash does not.

Both collaboration groups have their strengths. Both have similar goals for forest restoration and resilience, but significantly contrasting approaches. I am finding that approaches to collaboration are, and should be, heavily tied to the individual landscape and the associated communities. This place based approach will guide how collaborative groups should be structured and who should be participating. No two collaborative groups are the same across the U.S. but I am finding that there is high value in tracking accomplishments and for all groups to share their stories, challenges and successes. This sharing will help each landscape reach their goals sooner and increase restoration scale and efficiencies on all landscapes.

- IV. The Eastern Washington Forests Program of The Nature Conservancy is currently using this approach with partners as we are taking leading roles in forming two new collaborative groups. One is a new Forest Health Collaborative in NC WA that will cover the 5 northern ranger districts of the Ok-Wen NF. The second is a Washington State Prescribe Fire Council. I will give you a brief description of both collaboratives.



- V. As we work to form The North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative, we are examining other collaborative models from across the western U.S. to find similar issues with ours and identify their

keys to success. We are combining the best organizational structures and successful tools and partnerships and try to avoid pitfalls others have faced. TNC and our core partners hope to bring in broader participation and expertise that will work collaboratively to improve the health and resilience of the forests, watersheds and communities in North Central Washington.



Increasing Restoration Footprint Will Add Jobs and Infrastructure

We are finding from other collaborative models in the west that if we can significantly increase the footprint of forest restoration treatments of all types, forest products investors will return to our landscape which will provide jobs and economic return to our counties and communities. We all know forest products infrastructure provides valuable funding to pay for restoration projects.



Washington State Prescribe Fire Council
www.waprescribedfire.org

- VI. Prescribe fire and use of fire to meet management objectives is also key to forest restoration success in the western U.S. Fire has not always been seen as a tool to meet resource objectives in our Evergreen State, thus the capacity and coordination between private, state, and federal agencies to enable the safe use of prescribed fire has room to grow and be a bigger part of the solution in managing for resilient forests. To meet such ends, the Washington State Prescribe Fire Council is forming. The goal of this collaborative group is to protect, conserve, and expand the safe use of prescribed fire in Washington State.



Last March, 130 prescribe fire practitioners, researchers and regulators attended the WA State Rx Fire Council Conference and a steering committee of 30 representatives has been formed.



- VII. So, in conclusion, I strongly recommend that the Society of American Foresters should be well represented in these collaborative forest restoration efforts across the country. As forestry professionals, your expertise and leadership skills are urgently needed. Providing sound science and public education is our opportunity as we work with partners to use traditional and new ways of managing for resilient forests into the future.

VIII. Many resources are available to make connections with forest collaborative groups in your area.



www.nationalforests.org
kdibari@nationalforests.org

I recommend the National Forest Foundation Website as one source. Their staff is able to provide valuable contacts and facts about collaborative successes and challenges across the country.



Questions?

I will gladly take any questions you have at this time. Thank you.

