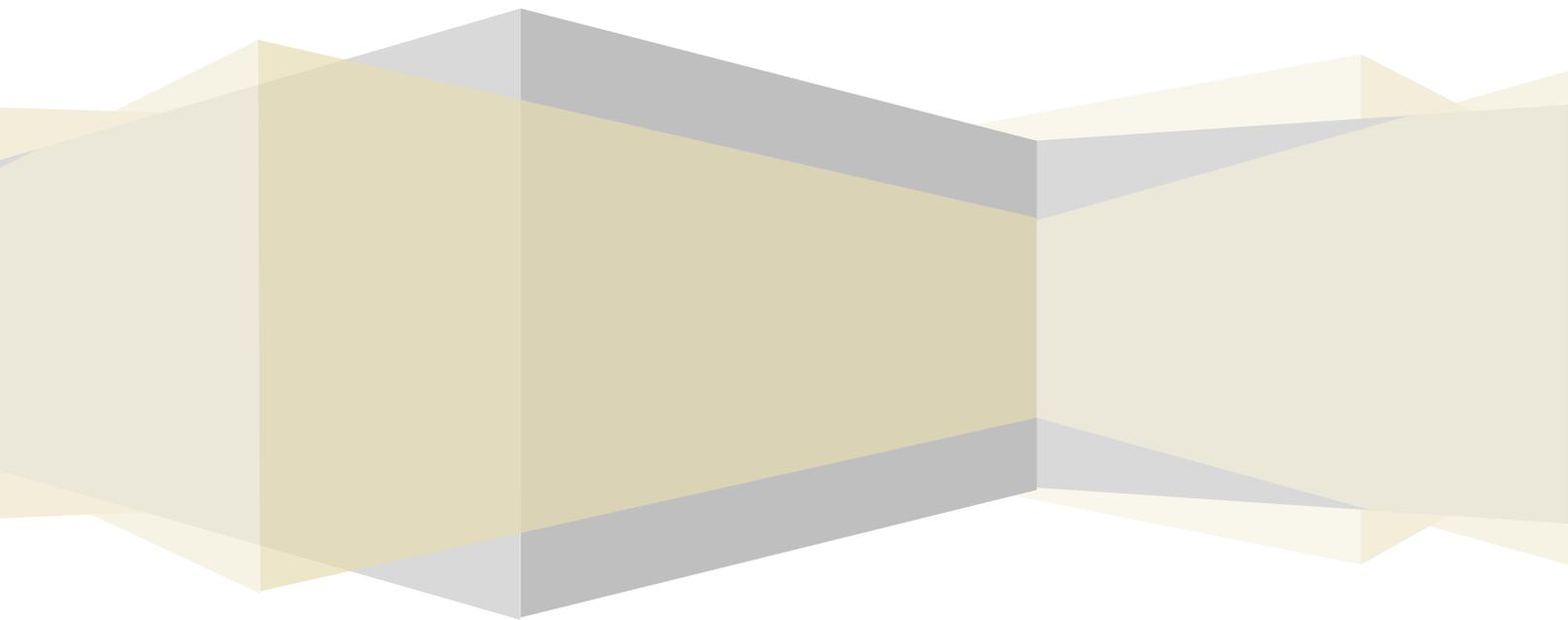


Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative

Operations Manual

Organizational Structure,
Communication, and Decision
Making Process

Published June 2014



Operations Manual

I. OVERVIEW

This document presents the *Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative* (WRCFC) process for working together. Members of this collaborative group developed this document together, modeling the collaborative and consensus-based approach they aim to use in advancing their mission. They have agreed to honor and adhere to this document. This is also a ‘living manual’, and as the group evolves, and needs and opportunities change, so will this document. The document will be reviewed annually for changes; if the group agrees that changes need to be made before the annual review, they can be made by consensus.

II. INTRODUCTION, MISSION, VISION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Introduction

Curry County, Oregon is in the process of redefining the community’s role in forest management. Opportunities exist to address ecological restoration and stewardship needs while providing quality local jobs and restoration byproducts including merchantable timber and biomass feedstocks. Accomplishing this requires a new approach to natural resource stewardship: one that is locally-supported, incentive-driven and that relies on the power of solutions that integrate the environmental, economic and social needs of communities. Collaboration between diverse stakeholders, and with the land management agencies, is an essential tool in this approach. The trust that is developed through collaboration will also lead to stable, long-term solutions that will hold through the shifting political winds.

Formed in 2012, the *Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative* is a partnership of diverse local and regional interests who have come together to address and resolve the impassioned social gridlock and controversy surrounding natural resource management in the region. This group, is committed to the collaborative process as identified in this document. It is a crucial and exciting time to build positive, forward momentum to address the critical issues of public forest land management. Through regular meetings, field trips, project planning, and other activities, this group is building trust and relationships, identifying common interests, and advancing an agenda defined by restoration and collaboration.

Mission

The *Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative* is a diverse group of stakeholders who work together to create and implement a shared vision to protect and improve the resilience and well-being of watersheds, the forests they contain, and communities in and around the National Forest system lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Tribal Lands held in trust for the exclusive and beneficial uses of Tribes, public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other state, county and private lands within the Wild Rivers Coast geographic region. We will provide education on watershed processes and functions, ecological restoration and ecosystem conservation, coastal forest processes and functions, community and economic well-being, and forest products and their management. The WRCFC is a member-driven organization with clear codes of governance of its own operations and the working relationship with the all partners listed above.

Vision

The *Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative* (WRCFC) represents a broad constituency of stakeholders interested in healthy forest ecosystems, economic vitality, wildfire mitigation, and quality of life in The Wild Rivers Coast Region. We work together to develop potential projects across a multitude of interests and ownerships within the Wild Rivers Coast geographic zone. We support the utilization of forest resources and related opportunities to strengthen local communities.

Operations Manual

- We will have vibrant, sustainable and diverse environments, economies, and communities.
- We will have a sustainable and predictable supply of timber products.
- Our forests will be resistant and resilient to both anthropogenic and natural disturbances.
- Our homes, properties and communities will be well protected and prepared for disturbances such as fires and floods.
- The world class biodiversity of our region will be enhanced and actively managed.
- We will have ecological system processes that support healthy and sustainable species.
- We will have high quality, abundant and sustainable recreational opportunities and infrastructure in our forests.
- We will have well protected Tribal sacred sites.

Guiding Principles

- The WRCFC engages with the USFS, Tribes, BLM, States, Counties and private landowners and industries to support efficient and timely progress of projects through selection, planning, execution and monitoring phases.
- The focus of projects is to support steady progress towards the long term goal of the Forest as a healthy, diverse ecosystem that is resilient to natural and human disturbance.
- Activity in the forest, use of forest resources, and a predictable and sustainable timber harvest are foundational to the economic vitality and the quality of life of our local communities, fostering a diversity of business and employment opportunities, and supporting the infrastructure to capitalize on the natural resources available from the forest.
- The WRCFC relies on science and education to advance achievement of its vision. Further, the WRCFC utilizes science and education to restore and enhance the sustainability of ecosystems and communities in the Wild Rivers Coast region.
- Every effort should be made to foster participation of our diverse stakeholders; the process will encourage participation, and be open and inclusive.
- Decision-making processes for the group should focus on producing outcomes that strive to meet the needs of all participants.
- Project scope, complexity and objectives should be appropriately scaled.
- Projects will be selected that are of mutual concern and are agreed upon by the group.
- Projects will include a monitoring component.
- The WRCFC looks to and relies on local knowledge, empirically-based scientific information, and other Forest Collaboratives in its understanding of the concepts of forest health and resilience.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The WRCFC will actively seek to involve representatives of diverse perspectives, needs, and expertise. Each stakeholder group will have one representative and one alternate. Representatives will reside within the Wild Rivers Coast region, or will represent an organization that includes the Wild Rivers Coast region within its sphere of responsibility.

Operations Manual

Stakeholder groups:

- **Federal and State Agencies**
 - USFS
 - BLM
 - Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
 - Oregon Department of Fisheries and Wildlife (ODF&W)
 - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)
 - Redwood State & National Parks
 - Oregon Department of Agriculture
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - US Fish & Wildlife Service
 - Oregon Department of Transportation
 - California Department of Forestry
 - Regional Solutions
 - DLCD
- **Community nonprofit support organizations**
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - South Coast Development Council
 - Watershed Councils/SWCDs
 - Sustainable NW
- **Counties**
 - Curry County Commissioner/emergency services/road dept
 - Del Norte County Supervisor
 - Coos County Commissioner
 - Douglas
 - Economic Development Department representatives
- **Forest Industry**
 - Restoration, Harvest, Fire, and Timber/Road building Contractors
 - Private Industrial Forestland owners and managers
 - Special forest products
 - Biomass interests
- **Businesses**
 - Timber Products End User Businesses
 - Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative
 - Recreational Tourism/Fishing guides/water users, OHV
 - Commercial Fishing interests
 - Developers/Residential land uses
 - Mining
- **Academia**
 - Oregon State University
 - Humboldt State University
 - Southwest Oregon Community College
 - University of Oregon
 - High Schools
- **Environmental/Conservation Groups**
 - Oregon Wild
 - Kalmiopsis Audubon Society
 - KS Wild

Operations Manual

- Trout Unlimited
- TNC
- Smith River Alliance
- Wild Salmon Center
- Friends of Elk River
- Wild Rivers Land Trust
- Oregon Coast Alliance
- **Federally Recognized Tribes**
 - Smith River Rancheria
 - Coquille Indian Tribe
 - Elk Valley Rancheria
 - Confederated Tribes of the Siletz
- Non-Federally Recognized
Tolowa
- **Non-Profit/Funding groups**
 - Wild Rivers Coast Alliance
 - Ford Family Foundation
 - Swindels Foundation
 - Wild Rivers Community Foundation
 - National Forest Foundation
 - Meyer Memorial Trust
 - Oregon Community Foundation
 - Climate Trust
 - Many others...
- **Other**
 - Transportation
 - Other elected officials or their representatives
 - Interested community members/Public-at-large
 - Private Landowners (small woodlands association)
 - Recreation interests
 - Youth training and development interest (Youth category, along with schools)
 - Wildfire Prevention/Preparation/Protection organizations (CFPA)
 - GAG – Gorse Action Group (env. conserve)

Stakeholder groups should include functional groups representing the broad range of interested individuals, groups and businesses.

Alllow participants to self- select initially and if balance becomes a concern, we'll revisit approach. Based on meeting sign in/attendance, after 3 meetings, become a voting member.

A) Full Group

The full group consists of all the voting members of the collaborative. Their responsibilities include participation in meetings and committees, election of Operations Committee, overall collaborative decision-making, and defining strategic priorities. See “voting member” below for individual responsibilities.

Operations Manual

B) Operations Committee

The operations committee is elected by the full group. The committee provides: direction to the Facilitator and the staff, leadership on strategic priorities, communication to full group, and collaboration with committee chairs.

Potential members:

Facilitator

US Forest Service – Tina Lanier, Kim Hunter, or Clint Emerson

BLM - Kathy or Todd

ORREC - Chip Weinert or Paul Smith

South Coast/Lower Rogue Watershed Council (Harry Hoogesteger/Kelly Timchak)

TU – Dean Finnerty

Curry County Commissioners office – Commissioner Smith or Summer Matteson

Sustainable NW – Andrew Speith

WRCA - Jim Seeley or Marie Simonds

South Coast Lumber Co. - Kevin Adamek

Tribes – To be determined

Decision to ensure notes taken and distributed. Explore opportunity to utilize BLM RAC grant and WRCA funds to support administrative functions including minutes. Consider AmeriCorps, RARE or other youth programs. Operations committee will have responsibility of guiding expenditure of funds.

C) Wild Rivers Coast Collaborative Facilitator

- ✓ Plan and coordinate meetings
- ✓ Prepare meeting agendas
- ✓ Responsible for overall communications of the collaborative
- ✓ Take, distribute, and archive meeting minutes
- ✓ Maintain accurate contact lists of members
- ✓ Support outreach and recruitment activities

D) Voting Members

- ❖ Agree to operate under guidelines outlined in the operations manual
 - ✓ Sign the Declaration of Commitment
 - ✓ Maintain “active” status
 - ✓ Member are considered “active” if they have attended at least one meeting in the previous three months
 - ✓ After 3 months on “inactive” status individual will be removed from the voting member list
 - ✓ Must be in “active” status to vote at current meeting
 - ✓ Provide input from each individual constituency; communicate back to constituents and organization; resolve internal conflict with other members of the representative’s organization (to avoid two opposing opinions from one member organization)

Operations Manual

- ✓ Suggest ideas or initiatives
- ✓ Offer to take leadership on ideas and initiatives
- ✓ Provide technical resources
- ✓ Commit to long-term involvement by partner or their representative

E) Federal Partners

- Serve as non-voting members
- Be committed to collaborative process and maintain active engagement at meetings, project planning, etc.
- Offer resource information
- Share historical data
- Share technical resource and expertise
- Are not bound by what the group recommends
- Participate actively in project discussions; clarify scope of recommendations acceptable to the agencies early on and consistently

F) Guests/Community

- Information will be made available to guests on background of collaborative
- Guests will be introduced and identified as non-voting participants at each meeting
- Abide by the ground rules
- Listen
- Share experience and expertise during the Public Comment period at the end of each meeting

G) Media

- Information will be made available to media on background of collaborative
- Full disclosure to media at each meeting
- Abide by ground rules
- Listen
- Share experience and expertise
- No individual will represent the collaborative when talking to the media unless given permission by the Chair of the Operating Committee or his/her designee.

○ IV.COMMUNICATION

A) Basic Rules for Collaboration

- Respect each other in and outside of meetings.
- No backroom deals.
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- The personal integrity and values of participants will be respected.
- Stereotyping will be avoided.
- Commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept; agreements will be honored.
- Disagreements will be regarded as “problems to be solved,” rather than as “battles to be won.”

Operations Manual

- Participants are representative of a broad range of interests, each having concerns about the outcome of the issues at hand. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.
- Participants commit to keeping their colleagues/constituents informed about the progress of these discussions.
- Participants commit to stating interests, problems, and opportunities. Not positions.
- Participants will air problems, disagreements and critical information during meetings to avoid surprises.
- Participants commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. The creativity of the group can often find the best solution.
- Participants agree to verify rumors at the meeting before accepting them as fact.

B) Meeting Behavior - all participants will:

- Come to meetings prepared
- Respect the basic rules of collaboration (as stated above)
- Voice their concerns during meetings and take the time to resolve those issues
- Refrain from side conversations during the meeting
- Participants will make sure only one person speaks at a time – let individuals finish their thoughts and then take a deep breath before responding
- Respect the facilitator and the meeting agenda

C) Meeting planning and coordination

- As a general rule, full group collaborative meetings will be held once a month
- Meetings where key decisions will be made will be announced well in advance (2 weeks)
- Meetings will be announced via email (or by phone and/or mail for members who do not have email)
- Meeting agendas will be sent out approximately 10 days prior to the meeting to allow for group input and suggestions.

D) Record keeping

- Minutes will be taken at each meeting and shared with members who are on the list serve or have requested them by mail no later than 2 weeks following any meeting.
- Minutes from the prior meeting will be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting and any issues (clarifications, other) will be discussed; meeting minutes will be approved.
- Member organizations and representatives will be listed in minutes, with information indicating their presence or absence.

E) Meeting Protocols

- Meetings will be open to the public but comments from the public and inactive members will only be allowed during the 20 minute public comment period at the end of each meeting.

Operations Manual

- Information about the collaborative will be made available to external stakeholders via the website and other venues as appropriate; all efforts will be made to ensure that the group's work remains transparent to external audiences.

V. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Goal: to come to a decision that group members can support following a respectful hearing of all concerns.

The Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative will make decisions by **consensus**.

Consensus is defined as decisions that all parties can support, or ***at a minimum, agree to live with.***

A) Reaching Consensus

Project-related decisions will be made first by the project subgroup. Decisions made during project subgroup meetings will be recorded in the meeting minutes and distributed within a week of the meeting to all subgroup members, and any other WRCFC member that requests them in advance. Each subgroup or full group meeting will begin with a brief review of the decisions made during the previous meeting.

Subgroup members are encouraged to prioritize attending meetings in person. If this is not possible, members are encouraged to ensure a proxy is in attendance (see section 2 for proxy definition), or to submit written input to the subcommittee chair ahead of time. Subgroup and full group agendas should note if the group will be asked to make a decision during that meeting. Materials and information that will help inform subgroup or full group member decision-making should be distributed at least a week before the group is asked to discuss it.

Decisions made during meetings will not be revisited by the subgroup unless significant new ecological or economic information that may affect the decision becomes available. The subgroup will present their recommendations and rationale to the full group for discussion and final ratification.

There will be a minimum of two weeks between the meeting when a subgroup makes a decision and the meeting where the full group is asked to make a decision. This requirement is to ensure that subgroup members that were unable to attend the meeting have time to develop and share their viewpoints with the subgroup or the full group before the full group makes its decision.

As decisions are being made by either a project subgroup, or the full group, meeting participants will be asked to indicate their support either by a show of hands or verbal confirmation. Each participant has the ability to disagree with elements of decisions as they're being developed, but must offer a constructive alternative that seeks to meet the needs of all participants involved.

Consensus on a decision about a project, recommendation, or action the group plans to take will be reached when all meeting participants can make one of the following statements about a decision:

Operations Manual

- I agree with the decision and will publicly support it
- I agree with the decision but will refrain from publicly supporting it
- I can live with the decision (and won't disparage it in public)

Once the full group has ratified a decision, a report will be given to the managing agency or organization for their consideration as decision makers for the lands they manage.

B) Inability to Reach Consensus

Subgroups and the full group will make every effort to reach consensus within the given timeframe (as laid out in the project timeline developed at the outset of a project) for making decisions. As stated above, there will be a minimum of two weeks between when the subgroup makes a decision and the decision is brought to the full group for discussion and ratification (see "Reaching Consensus" for interim steps).

If the subgroup cannot reach consensus during a subgroup meeting, members are encouraged to continue the conversation via conference call, email discussions, in-person meetings, or whatever format is most effective, in between meetings in order to function most effectively.

If a time comes when the subgroup or full group is unable to reach consensus the following actions will be taken:

- A vote will be taken of all the active members of the Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative. The vote will carry if 80% or more of the active members in attendance vote on one side or the other of the issue being considered.
- Areas of agreement and disagreement will be clearly recorded in writing
- Majority and minority reports will be written to address the areas of disagreement.
- Each of these documents will include:
 - ✓ The name of the lead author and names of all who agree with the report
 - ✓ A description of their proposal and the rationale used to develop it
 - ✓ What group members in the majority and minority anticipate doing if their proposal is chosen by the managing agency or organization (i.e. defend it in public), or not chosen (i.e. file an objection, appeal, litigate, etc)
- The majority and minority reports will be given to the managing agency for their consideration as decision makers for the lands they manage.

Operations Manual

C) Decision-making Participation

A group member must be an active member (see Membership/Active Participation above) to be able to participate in decision-making.

Participating group members can send proxies to participate in subgroup and full group meetings. Proxies must be an informed affiliate or member of the organization, business, or entity being represented, and be able to represent the active member in decision making.