

SUBLETTE COUNTY FOREST COLLABORATIVE
Group Charter
Draft 5

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SUBLETTE COUNTY FOREST COLLABORATIVE

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1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Involve diverse interests to learn and listen together in order to create recommendations to federal, state and private landowners and managers regarding fuel reduction and other forest management and restoration activities in Sublette County to protect wildland urban interface areas and watershed health while benefiting recreation, wildlife and livestock.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sublette County Forest Collaborative is to provide the federal, state and private land managers with recommendations to assess and address the forest health issues on forests throughout Sublette County. It will accomplish this through mutual education; transparency in process; fostering communication between constituents and governmental agencies; and identifying, evaluating, and recommending options that meet the needs of the many stakeholders involved.

3. PRODUCTS AND OUTCOMES

The Collaborative will develop near and long term strategies, recommendations and measurable actions that federal, state and private land managers can implement. Recommendations will be submitted to the land managers who can accept, reject, or modify the recommendations. Recommendations may also be shared with local governments, the Wyoming Legislature, and other interested parties and stakeholders.

4. GEOGRAPHIC AREA

This effort will be limited to developing recommendations pertaining to the forests in Sublette County.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FOREST COLLABORATIVE

a) Conduct of Forest Collaborative Members

Forest Collaborative members will engage in open communication at the meetings. This means disclosing interests, needs, actions, and issues in a timely manner and committing to the purpose of the Forest Collaborative. The primary responsibility of the Forest Collaborative is to balance the interests related to forests throughout Sublette County in providing advice and recommendations to federal, state and private land managers. Forest Collaborative members will endeavor to act in good faith to develop recommendations that are satisfactory to all Forest Collaborative members.

Forest Collaborative members will ensure that an integrated approach is taken in formulating recommendations by meeting together as needed to assure strong communication and collaboration among Forest Collaborative members.

b) Keeping Constituents Informed

Forest Collaborative members will engage in active communication with their constituents about actions and outcomes of the Forest Collaborative. Active communication can include written, verbal, and electronic means of communicating. Members will have meeting summaries available to them for keeping constituents informed.

c) Representing Constituents

In developing recommendations, Forest Collaborative members will consider the interests of other group members as well as their own particular interest group when reviewing issues and recommendations. Forest Collaborative members will invite proposals from their constituents to present to the Forest Collaborative and will provide proposals from the Forest Collaborative to their constituents for feedback and input.

d) Attending Meetings

Each Forest Collaborative member is expected to attend and fully participate in each meeting, which includes being present for substantially all of the meeting. Forest Collaborative members shall read appropriate materials and arrive prepared to work. Materials presented for discussion should be distributed at least one week in advance of the meeting or longer, as is practical.

In the event that neither the primary Forest Collaborative member nor the alternate Forest Collaborative member is able to attend a meeting of the Forest Collaborative, and the primary Forest Collaborative member is not in agreement with any actions taken by the Forest Collaborative during his/her absence, that member has until the meeting summary review at the next meeting to register his/her dissatisfaction with actions taken. A reasonable amount of time will be devoted to old business at meetings. Email may be used to expedite this process.

e) Understanding and Abiding by the Charter

Forest Collaborative members are expected to read, fully understand, and conduct themselves in accordance with the requirements of this charter.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITATORS

The Forest Collaborative will be facilitated by faculty and staff of the Ruckelshaus Institute at the University of Wyoming. The roles and responsibilities of the Facilitators include:

- Facilitating meetings in a manner consistent with interest-based negotiations and this charter;
- Keeping meeting attendance records of all Forest Collaborative members;
- Helping the Forest Collaborative stay on task and on process;
- Protecting Forest Collaborative members and their ideas from attack while ensuring that provocative issues are not avoided, but are discussed in a candid and respectful manner;
- Helping Forest Collaborative members to concisely describe their interests;
- Helping Forest Collaborative members find innovative and workable solutions by engaging subject matter experts, consultants and state office or other as needed;
- Helping Forest Collaborative members reach consensus;
- Providing for equitable participation by all Forest Collaborative members;
- Working, both at and between meetings, with Forest Collaborative members to assist in the free exchange of ideas between the Members and to resolve any impasses that may arise;
- Periodically surveying Forest Collaborative members to assess fairness, meaningfulness and efficiency of the process;
- Maintaining a list of significant topics on which the Forest Collaborative has reached consensus or have failed to reach consensus.
- Hosting a website for information.

In addition to the Ruckelshaus Institute, Richard Stem will aid the Forest Collaborative. His responsibilities include:

- Providing management advice/ guidance regarding procedures, polices, and protocol.
- Assisting with connections, actions, and interpretations of the appropriate persons within legislative and administrative levels, including Congressional, Regional Offices, Washington DC offices, and Department levels.
- Providing technical expertise on laws, regulations, processes, and tools available to the Forest Collaborative.

7. DECISION PROCESS

The Forest Collaborative will operate using consensus building approaches with all members represented at the meeting. Consensus is the decision rule that allows collaborative problem solving to work. It is a way for more than two people to build consensus and possibly reach agreement. Consensus prevents domination by the

majority, allows building of trust and the sharing of information, especially under conditions of conflict. Consensus does not mean that everyone will be equally happy with the decision, but all do accept that the decision is the best that can be made at the time with the people involved.

Consensus requires sharing information, which leads to mutual education, which provides the basis for crafting workable and acceptable options. Consensus promotes joint thinking of a diverse group and leads to creative solutions. Also, because parties participate in the deliberation, they understand the reasoning behind the recommendations and are willing to support them.

In making decisions, each Forest Collaborative member will indicate his/her concurrence on a specific proposal using a five-point scale. The scale allows Forest Collaborative members to clearly communicate their intentions, assess the degree of agreement that exists, and register their dissatisfaction without holding up the rest of the Forest Collaborative. The five-point scale is as follows:

1. Endorsement –Member likes it.
2. Endorsement with Minor Point of Contention – Basically, member likes it.
3. Agreement with Minor Reservations – Member can live with it.
4. Stand aside with major reservations – Formal disagreement, but will not block the proposal/provision
5. Block – Member will not support the proposal.

Indecision – If members cannot make a decision without more information the member must specify what information is needed, and re-vote once that information has been obtained. The Ruckelshaus Institute will make every effort to secure additional information rapidly so that decisions do not linger. Alternatively the Ruckelshaus Institute may obtain the information using a joint-fact finding process with a diverse sub-group of the Collaborative. Based on the input from the diverse members of the sub-group the Ruckelshaus Institute will find speakers who can address subjects and/or find documentation that provides clarification, which will be made available to the Collaborative participants and to the public on the website. Facilitators will measure and record the Forest Collaborative's consensus on a given proposal by open polling of the members present. The levels of consensus are:

- Consensus - All Forest Collaborative members present rate the proposal as a 1, 2 or 3.
- Consensus with Major Reservations – All Forest Collaborative members present rate the proposal as a 1, 2 or 3, except at least one Forest Collaborative member rates it as a 4.

- No Consensus - Any Forest Collaborative member present rates the proposal as a 5.

Any Forest Collaborative member that rates a significant proposal (i.e., a proposal that involves significant discussion and has the support or qualified support of a majority of Forest Collaborative members) as a 5 is required to specify their dissent in a written statement for inclusion in the final written report. Dissenters who share the same basic concerns can use a single dissent statement. Dissenters will also identify themselves by name and organization on their dissent statements. Any Forest Collaborative member that rates a proposal as a 4 is also required to specify their reservation in a written statement for inclusion in the final written report.

8. FINAL REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ruckelshaus Institute will draft a final report of Forest Collaborative recommendations to be submitted to federal, state and private land managers. The report will contain a detailed description of Forest Collaborative recommendations. Final recommendations submitted to the federal, state and private land managers will include only the consensus recommendations with votes of 4 and above. Each recommendation will be provided a score that reflects the level of consensus of the Forest Collaborative members present. In cases where a member rated a particular proposal as a 4, their reservation statement will be included with the recommendation. The report will also contain the significant proposals that did not gain the consensus of the Forest Collaborative. These proposals will be listed separately from the Forest Collaborative recommendations and will be labeled as such. Forest Collaborative member dissent statements will be included with these proposals.

9. AD HOC GROUPS

Ad Hoc subcommittees may be formed in order to address specific topics or issues. Work generated from these subcommittees will be reported back to the full Forest Collaborative. Subcommittees will follow the same ground rules for interaction as the full Forest Collaborative. Subcommittees may choose to bring in subject matter experts for a particular topic, but must first inform the Forest Collaborative steering committee before doing so. An example of such a subcommittee would be for the purpose of joint-fact finding.

10. GROUND RULES FOR INTERACTION

In order to have the most efficient and effective process possible, Forest Collaborative members will follow these basic ground rules:

Discussion Ground Rules During the Meetings

- Raise hand to be recognized by the Facilitator.

- Speak one at a time in meetings as recognized by the Facilitator. Everyone will participate, but none will dominate.
- Be concise and stick to the topics on the meeting agenda. Honor a two-minute time limit for statements and responses unless the Facilitator allows more time.
- Speak only on one topic per entry (no laundry lists).
- Speak to the whole group when talking.
- Avoid side conversations.
- Avoid off-topic questions.
- Treat each other, the organizations represented on the Forest Collaborative, and the Forest Collaborative itself with respect at all times.
- Refrain from interrupting.
- Monitor your own participation – everyone should participate, but none should dominate.
- Adhere to the agenda and time schedule with diligence.
- Put cell phones on “vibrate” and leave the room when a call is received.
- Be prepared to start on time.
- Recognize that everyone’s interests are important.
- Avoid repetitiveness (i.e., one-track-mind behavior).
- Agree that it is okay to disagree, and disagree without being disagreeable.
- Avoid “cheap shots” and/or sarcasm.
- Refrain from hostility and antagonism.
- Leave personal agendas and “baggage” at the door; put personal differences aside in the interest of a successful Forest Collaborative.
- Focus on the problem, not the person.

Process Ground Rules throughout the Stakeholder Process

- Adhere to the charter.
- Review information and stay informed.
- Work as team players and share all relevant information. Ask if you do not understand.
- Encourage free thinking. Offer mutually beneficial solutions.
- Encourage candid, frank discussions. Be honest and tactful. Avoid surprises.
- Openly express any disagreement or concern with all other Forest Collaborative members. Focus on the problem, not the person.
- When communicating with the media, Forest Collaborative members will treat each other, the organizations represented in the Forest Collaborative, and the Forest Collaborative itself with respect.
- Actively strive to see the other points of view.
- Follow through on commitments.

- Share information discussed in the meeting with the organizations/ constituents represented and bring back to the Forest Collaborative the opinions and actions of your constituencies as appropriate.
- Communicate the requirements of this charter with the organizations you represent to minimize the possibility of actions contrary to the charter.
- Commit to issues in which you have an interest.
- Support and actively engage in the Forest Collaboratives' decision process.

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT GROUP MEETINGS

All Forest Collaborative meetings are open to observation by the public. Members of the public attending the meetings may comment during the specified time at each Forest Collaborative meeting. Public comment periods will be specified in advance. Speakers will have time limits set by the Facilitators to allow as much participation as possible within the allotted time. The Forest Collaborative will not normally attempt to respond to public or media comments or questions at the meeting in which they were made. The Facilitators have the right to deny the floor to public speakers who are simply repeating previously delivered messages or who are unruly.

Final summaries of Forest Collaborative meetings will be available to the public upon request and will also be available on the Ruckelshaus Institute's website.

12. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Forest Collaborative members are free to speak with the media. When speaking to the media, members must make it clear they are representing themselves and not the Forest Collaborative at-large. If the Forest Collaborative member feels uncomfortable speaking with the media, they may refer the media spokesperson to Michael Henn, Sublette County Conservation District.

Meeting notes will be generated by the Ruckelshaus Institute after each meeting, summarizing the discussion and any decisions made. These can be used as talking points and may be helpful in communicating with the media, as well as constituents.

13. SCHEDULE AND DURATION

The Forest Collaborative will meet periodically at times and locations determined by the group. The intent of the Forest Collaborative is to provide advice and recommendations to federal, state and private land managers. Duration of the Forest Collaborative is scheduled for one year. If additional time is needed this can be considered by the Conservation District and Forest Collaborative members.

14. AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER

Changes to the charter can be made at any meeting of the Forest Collaborative by consensus.