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Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to identify opportunities to enhance the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Region 6 Network. The study was conducted in partnership with Sustainable Northwest and Oregon State University. It was designed to meet the following objectives: (1) to assess the needs identified by network participants, specifically regarding how to maintain and increase partnerships and peer learning, and (2) to provide information to Sustainable Northwest to guide recommendations for development of CFLRP Network activities.

Overview of Main Messages

Key Findings

- Participants said the greatest benefit of the Region 6 CFLRP Network and annual meetings is the opportunity to connect with other groups to exchange information and ideas.
- Participants desire strengthening communication amongst groups throughout the year, but felt that increasing the number of CFLRP workshops would not be beneficial.
- Network participants prefer interactive, participatory formats for activities. Specifically, they prefer informal group discussion, problem-solving, brainstorming, and interactive discussions about approaches to land management issues.
- Members reported concerns that increased activities would strain the capacity of members who struggle to balance resources between collaborative activities and land management. Therefore, participants desire collaborative activities that maximize capacity.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to encourage interactive formats that members desire while minimizing strains on capacity. Interactive formats for sessions at the annual meeting were the most common suggestion from members. Other recommendations include developing interactive online tools, as well as helping groups to develop a shared vision for collaboration through finding agreement about what it means to collaborate.

Recommendation #1: Include more opportunities for informal discussion, networking, and peer learning at the annual meeting.

- At the annual meeting, prioritize engaging, interactive formats that encourage peer learning, brainstorming, and open discussion.
- Set more time aside at the meeting for unstructured, informal networking interactions that can continue outside of sessions.
- Minimize meeting formats that encourage passive learning.
- Help groups start conversations that can continue outside of sessions and last throughout the year.
- Focus discussions on monitoring and reporting, independent contractors, public engagement, Forest Service turnover, pace and scale of restoration, local needs, and the post-CFLR funding period.
- Consider adopting activities modeled after the National Forest Foundation’s Peer Learning Network.
Recommendation #2: Develop an online tool to increase the ease of access of information and resources available through the network.

- In order to minimize demands on capacity, information should be made easily and readily accessible through Sustainable Northwest, and participants should be made aware of where and how to access this information.
- Assess and develop tools that can be compiled into a single convenient, easily accessible online source that serves as a central, one-stop hub for Network information.
- The tool will ideally allow Sustainable Northwest to communicate with Network members while also allowing members to collaborate with each other and update information about their groups.

Recommendation #3: Periodically check in with Network members to update them about resources.

- Keep contact information in the CFLR Network database current to ensure that everyone is receiving information and can contact members when needed.
- Periodically check in with individuals on the CFLR Network list and others who participate in CFLR activities to update them on new resources and opportunities available through the Network and to remind them of how to find information through the Network.
- Updates should include information about what other groups are currently working on, information about efficient planning, changes in contact information, information about “hot topics,” and stories about how collaboratives have dealt with specific challenges.
- Funding issues can be addressed with information and resources to increase awareness of funding opportunities, to clarify funding allocation, or to share information about outside funding sources.
- Updates can be distributed either periodically (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) or as information becomes available. It can be distributed through e-mail or through a central source as discussed in Recommendation #2.

Recommendation #4: Encourage groups to develop a shared vision for collaboration.

- Help groups develop shared central goals for collaboration to prevent disagreements that could disrupt collaborative work.
- Use the opportunity for personal interactions at the annual meeting to help groups foster a shared vision for collaboration.
- Discussions about collaboration should help to clarify expectations, roles, and responsibilities; identify the expected level of participation for collaborative partners; and identify key elements for successful collaboration.
- These discussions should minimize future conflicts by providing an objective guide for expectations which can be deferred to during times of conflict.
Introduction

Background
The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) was established by Congress in 2009 to create a venue for public and private stakeholders to work collaboratively towards scientifically based landscape-scale ecosystem restoration. Forest Service Region 6 consists of five CFLRP projects in Oregon and Washington. The CFLRP Region 6 Network (Network), convened by Sustainable Northwest, meets annually for a workshop. This meeting provides a forum for discussion and an exchange of information, problem solving, and networking ideas. At the end of the 2015 CFLRP Network meeting, an evaluation was given to participants. The evaluation responses suggest that participants had a positive experience at the meeting, but they also indicated that participants are interested in increasing the impact and opportunities available through the Network. In preparation for the 2016 meeting, Sustainable Northwest partnered with Oregon State University to assess participant interest in potential peer learning and collaboration opportunities and to work toward developing activities based on these interests.

Purpose Statement
The objective of this report is to identify areas of need and potential areas of development for future workshops, peer learning, and collaboration for the CFLRP Network, as identified by network participants during the study, with a specific focus on how to maintain and increase partnerships and peer learning. This information is provided to Sustainable Northwest to guide recommendations for future development of CFLRP Network programs.

Findings
Overall, participants feel the purpose of collaboration is to improve restoration work. Findings indicate that participants are highly motivated to collaborate in order to improve landscape
restoration, but that restoration and collaboration are limited by several factors, which are outlined in the following sections. These sections include purpose of collaboration, meeting issues, restoration needs, conflict, and communication.

**Purpose of Collaboration**

This section highlights why participants want to collaborate and what they hope they can accomplish through collaboration. The intended purposes of collaboration fall into one of several interconnected categories: 1) improving landscape restoration; 2) facilitating communication, information sharing, and peer learning between groups; 3) preventing conflict; 4) addressing funding and capacity issues.

Participants wanted to find common ground through collaboration in order to work together towards the common goal of more effective restoration, as well as to prevent conflict; increase the pace, scale, and effectiveness of restoration; and enable more efficient uses of resources. In other words, participants feel that collaboration should provide tools and create conditions to improve restoration work. Participants also expressed that collaboration is necessary for effective restoration. One participant said, “Collaboration [is] the only way to leverage and get really good landscape restoration work done on all lands.” Barriers to effective collaboration and opportunities for improvement are discussed later in this section.

**Networking**

**Annual Meeting**

According to participants, the meeting should advance the purpose of collaboration, which is effective restoration. Accordingly, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the greatest benefit of the annual meeting is the opportunity to interact with other groups through informal networking and open discussion. Of the eight participants who attended the meeting, all of them said that the opportunity for networking was the greatest resource and the greatest benefit of the meeting. As one
participant stated, “The value in the networking comes when a bunch of us get together in a room, and we have varied topics and some guiding questions, and we sit down and really think through the problems we’re facing together.”

Members also agree about the importance of continued networking throughout the year. Participants expressed an appreciation for activities that encourage lasting connections that enable them to contact other members of the Network throughout the year. Participants said that connecting with other members is important for addressing restoration and monitoring needs.

Seven respondents indicated that the annual meeting created new relationships. An eighth respondent who did not attend the meeting strengthened existing relationships through involvement with the Network, and a ninth respondent expressed an interest in enhancing connections through the Network. Respondents indicated that relationships added value to their work through opportunities for sharing information, addressing issues at a landscape scale, and increasing the variety of experts with knowledge of innovative approaches to restoration and monitoring.

According to one participant, the opportunity to form and strengthen relationships, “broadens my knowledge base and my ability to solve problems and to look at things differently and see another way to get something done that might have been outside of my normal thinking process.” Another participant highlighted the value of a broader knowledge base: “The real value has come from really sitting down and talking with people in a more applied fashion so I could take the information and start using it.” As a result of involvement with the network, “We opened channels of communication so things could change in the future.”

Six participants indicated that non-CFLRP forests and collaborative groups should be encouraged to attend the annual meeting, two participants indicated that they should not be encouraged to attend the meeting, and two gave ambiguous responses. Reasons for encouraging
non-CFLRP forests and collaborative groups to attend the annual meeting included the similarity of issues and opportunities for non-CFLR groups to learn from CFLR groups. Respondents also cited benefits that non-CFLR groups bring to the meeting, such as new ideas and new information. Respondents also emphasized that CFLR and non-CFLR groups do have different issues, and two participants suggested offering breakout sessions specific to CFLR and non-CFLR groups at the meeting. Alternatives to non-CFLR groups attending the meeting were also suggested, such as encouraging CFLR sites to attend non-CFLR workshops; or suggesting existing non-CFLR venues.

Increasing the number of meetings was seen as unnecessary for maintaining and increasing partnerships and peer learning. Despite the desire among participants for opportunities to network, all eight participants who attended the annual CFLRP meeting agreed that increasing the number of meetings would not be beneficial. In fact, when asked, “Should the Region 6 CFLRP Network offer more activities, outside of the annual meetings in Hood River, to increase collaboration?” seven out of 11 participants responded to this question by stating that one annual meeting is adequate, even though this question does not explicitly ask about increasing meetings. A few participants expressed interest in additional local meetings throughout the year to address local needs.

**Opportunities and Challenges**

As mentioned in the previous section, all eight participants who attended the Region 6 CFLRP annual meeting indicated that the most valuable resource of the meeting is the opportunity for networking. In fact, participants indicated that the biggest problem with the meeting is that it does not provide enough time for informal networking, peer learning, and open discussion. Of the eight individuals who attended the meeting, four spoke at length about the format of meeting sessions. They expressed a preference for informal, interactive, and engaging networking activities at the meeting, as well as a desire for learning about “what other groups are doing.” One participant pointed out that engaging formats facilitate creativity, which is necessary for problem-solving. These
interactive formats get to the heart of the purpose of collaboration. They allow people to find common ground; share information; work together towards common goals in order to increase the pace, scale, and effectiveness of restoration and other “on-the-ground” work; minimize conflict; and enable more efficient uses of resources.

Several participants expressed concern that the meeting agenda could detract from peer learning opportunities by limiting the availability of time for open discussion and informal networking. One participant stated, “The best ideas and the best discussion…is when we’re having a group conversation about a common threat, challenge, [or] opportunity.” Five individuals indicated that meetings can be difficult to attend due to strained capacity, time commitments, traveling, other meetings, duties, outside obligations, or financial hardship. They indicated that these difficulties can be more easily justified and better overcome by 1) focusing on current and emerging issues or “hot topics” and local issues at the meeting, 2) ensuring that the meeting helps to solve the issue of strained capacity, and 3) reconsidering the date of the meeting. Participants emphasize that formats that encourage open discussion and informal networking allow for the meeting to achieve the first two objectives listed above, making the added demands on capacity seem more worthwhile.

**Restoration Needs**

**Funding**

Nine individuals mentioned funding. Of these individuals, four made comments related to the CFLR funding period. Concerns included the financial sustainability of Network, collaboration, and monitoring programs after CFLR funding ends, as well as concern for how resources will be obtained for the cost of data collection, field trips, travel, partnership coordination, and event coordination after the funding period. One participant said that additional outside funding is available for these activities, but that in order to take advantage of this funding, collaboratives need to be given opportunities to increase their awareness of what funding sources exist.
Other funding concerns raised by three individuals were related to the allocation of CFLRP dollars. Responses indicated CFLRP funding is too limited regarding planning, NEPA, and coordinator/facilitator needs, and that there is not enough flexibility to allocate funding to areas of greatest need. Although funding falls outside the scope of this report, this issue could possibly be improved through peer learning or through periodic e-mail updates from Sustainable Northwest to clarify funding allocations and to share information about funding sources.

**Capacity**

Six participants used the word “capacity” when discussing needs, but it was apparent that “capacity” had many meanings. This could indicate that although capacity might be a good “hot topic” discussion point at future meetings, it is important to define what aspect and what type of capacity participants would like to address.

The term “capacity” was used to encompass many factors, including individual member capacity; organizational capacity; local contractor and partner capacity; and capacity limitations caused by funding issues, time restraints, and range of duties. Capacity was also discussed in the context of the need for funding to hire a facilitator or coordinator for collaborative activities. Strained capacity affected groups’ ability to balance collaborative networking activities with “on-the-ground” work such as developing monitoring protocols, collecting and entering data, doing community outreach, and planning. Capacity for restoration work can also be strained by commitments to meetings and workshops or policy requirements.

Responses also seem to indicate a concern for balancing resources between collaboration activities and restoration work. There is a need for careful resource investment so that resources used for collaboration will further the goals of restoration. To illustrate, one participant said, “[Some] places are still struggling with the amount of time they’re putting into collaboration versus
getting work done on the ground,” and continued, “If it’s not achieving your goal of getting work done on the ground or increasing pace and scale, then something’s not working right.” Another participant spoke of the importance of balancing resource investment: “That should be the number-one priority – getting these forests back to a healthy condition.” Ideas to address capacity and resource investment are discussed in the “Recommendations” section.

Other Restoration Needs

This section discusses the following additional needs related to restoration work:

1) pace and scale of restoration,
2) monitoring efficiency and consistency,
3) material and personnel needs, and
4) local contracting.

Three individuals indicated that the current pace and scale of restoration is inadequate given the increasing urgency of restoration work due to stressors such as climate change and uncharacteristic wildfires. The issues listed above deserve prioritization in order to make the best use of existing resources so that the effectiveness of restoration can be optimized.

Although participants indicated that Sustainable Northwest makes reporting requirements and guidelines easily available, monitoring was identified as an issue. Two participants indicated that groups would benefit greatly from increased efficiency in the process of monitoring and entering data, as well as greater consistency in the monitoring and reporting process across CFLR groups. Several other participants indicated that groups should share more ideas for monitoring programs.

Four participants identified needs that are limited by funding. Material needs include mill infrastructure, LIDAR to improve data collection, lower-impact forestry equipment, and equipment to dispose of woody biomass. Three participants emphasized the importance of funding for a
coordinator or a facilitator that crosses agency boundaries. This person would increase successful collaboration by communicating between forests and partners, assisting with the collaboration process, and coordinating planning and collaborative activities. Despite the immediate costs of these resources, they were described as worthy investments to increase long-term effectiveness and efficiency of restoration.

Three participants identified local contractors as important for sustainable restoration work, but indicated that it has become more difficult to attract local contractors. It was suggested that CFLRP introduced additional steps to working with forests, which act as barriers to small contractors when signing up for contract work. One participant said, “The complications of getting online and getting certified…is horrendous. Most [independent contractors] can’t go through it.”

Conflict

Participants showed concern about unproductive conflict that is not conducive to restoration work. Several factors that may lead to conflict were identified. Six participants indicated that a lack of shared goals, a lack of trust, and difficulties with formalizing relationships through policy can all result in conflict. Four participants said that litigation is an issue as well. Responses indicate that there is a foundation of built trust among members, but as one participant stated, “Trust is a challenge.” There is also a desire for greater trust-building, as reflected in the statement, “We’ve got to stop stonewalling each other.” Another participant pointed out that the transition from informal, grassroots collaboration to the formalized CFLR program fundamentally changed the nature of collaboration, and stated that before the transition, “We were pretty efficient in getting through the process without a lot of conflict… It was more about the collaboration.”

These issues of conflict may occur as a result of the following factors identified by participants: differing needs or conflicting values amongst groups; differing levels of engagement
with and commitment to collaboration efforts amongst members; high turnover rates of personnel in the Forest Service; a lack of opportunities for trust-building and communication; a lack of clarity and agreement in terms of expectations, roles, and responsibilities for collaborative partners; and a shift in the focus of collaboration as a result of formalization of the collaborative process.

**Communication**

Improved tools for communication was frequently cited as a solution to conflict. According to four respondents, communication needs to be strengthened between groups to focus on strategies and ways of tackling issues collaboratively on a landscape scale. Participants also wanted to strengthen communication at the ground level, between the Forest Service and the public, including private lands and national forest lands. Participants were most interested in communicating about methods and strategies other groups are using that could be adapted to their groups throughout the year, especially regarding more efficient ways to do restoration work and monitor and report findings. They also expressed a desire to problem-solve and brainstorm with other groups using interactive online tools throughout the year.

Participants indicated that tools and resources used to foster communication should be made readily available and easily accessible due to limitations on capacity. To minimize demands on capacity, participants seemed to favor venues and formats that required smaller time commitments, smaller investments, and less effort. Accordingly, online formats were seen favorably for their ability to address needs with minimal resources. While 5 out of 6 participants saw webinars as beneficial, they were also seen as potentially less convenient and less engaging than other online formats. Therefore, participants agreed with the idea of more webinars, but only if they are designed for convenience and interaction with the audience about new ideas and current needs.
Participants expressed a desire for more information from Sustainable Northwest and suggested periodic e-mail updates, databases, or other platforms for information about issues that other groups are working on and strategies that are being used. Several people indicated that the Sustainable Northwest web site is a convenient platform for this information. Additional ideas for improving communication without straining capacity are discussed under the “Recommendations” section.

Additionally, despite most participants indicating that they received information from Sustainable Northwest and found that information useful, responses revealed that not all participants receive the same information from Sustainable Northwest throughout the year, nor were all participants equally aware of resources that are available through Sustainable Northwest. While some participants expressed that reporting guidelines, requirements, and information about other groups is readily available through Sustainable Northwest, others indicated that they did not receive this type of information. For example, one participant said, “Sustainable Northwest does a pretty good job of linking folks to that information, so I haven’t run into the situation where I’m trying to get information and don’t have anywhere to turn.” Another said, “My one-stop shop would be Sustainable Northwest’s web site.” But another participant said, “I get things from the National Forest Foundation…but I don’t think I get anything from Sustainable Northwest.”

**Recommendations**

These recommendations are generated with the goal of minimizing added strains on capacity while maximizing the restoration benefits of partnerships and peer learning. Participants felt that interactive and engaging online activities would minimize commitments that strain capacity, but the benefits of in-person meetings cannot be replaced with these formats. Therefore, the following recommendations focus on improving both the meeting agenda and available technologies.
Recommendation #1: Include more opportunities for informal discussion, networking, and peer learning at the annual meeting.

Minimize sessions at the meeting that encourage passive learning in favor of formats that are engaging and interactive. Sessions should be designed to prioritize engaging, interactive formats that encourage more open discussion, peer learning, and brainstorming solutions to current problems, as opposed to more structured discussions, lectures, and passive learning. Meetings should also be designed to prioritize and set more time aside for unstructured discussion and informal networking opportunities. This could be done by scheduling more time during the meetings for open discussion led by a discussion leader, or by scheduling longer breaks after sessions during which individuals can continue conversations that started during sessions.

Schedule more time in the annual meeting to allow informal discussion both outside of sessions and during sessions. Encourage conversations to start through prompts and by grouping members with similar interests into the same sessions for brainstorming. Allow time after sessions for unstructured discussions to continue from the more structured brainstorming sessions.

These informal discussions can be led by a discussion facilitator who encourages people to use creative thinking to identify common issues and think through problems, as well as revisit common issues that were discussed in the past, and compare how groups have tried to tackle these similar problems. Also, allow meeting formats that can be adapted to current and local needs. Some participants also expressed interest in adopting quarterly activities modeled after the National Forest Foundation’s Peer Learning Network.

Potential discussion topics for the annual meeting include ensuring efficiency and consistency in the monitoring and reporting process, attracting independent contractors, working with and engaging the public, dealing with Forest Service turnover, increasing pace and scale of
restoration, developing activities to collaborate on a local scale, and preparing for the post-CFLR funding period.

**Recommendation #2: Develop an online tool to increase the ease of access of information and resources available through the network.**

Participants emphasized that the less activities and resources strain capacity, the more likely they are to use them. Therefore, information should be made easily and readily accessible through Sustainable Northwest, and participants should be made aware of where and how to access this information. Assess how resources that are currently available to members outside of the meeting can be compiled into a single, easily accessible source, such as a central forum or message board, web site, SharePoint site, a Wiki, or an online space hosted in-house. While assessing potential interactive venues for online collaboration, check into developing and centralizing resources that may already be in use by the network, as well as potential new tools that have not been used previously by the network.

New tools or online venues should be selected for their potential to allow for easily accessible, engaging interactions. Potential uses include allowing members to update information to inform others, posting messages and questions for other members, spreading information about innovative and effective methods that groups are using to get work done on the ground, and keeping information as current as possible. This venue should include a platform for groups to actively collaborate by sharing their projects with those who are interested in learning from or contributing to these projects. The tool or venue should not diversify ways to share information, but should instead serve as a centralized, one-stop hub for information one might want to obtain through the network.
Recommendation #3: Periodically check in with Network members to update them about resources.

Keep the CFLRP Network database current by staying up-to-date with contact information. Remove old contact information and add new information to make sure that everyone is receiving updates from Sustainable Northwest and that members can be contacted when needed.

Periodically check in with individuals on the CFLRP Network list and others who participate in CFLRP activities to update them on new materials, tools, and resources that are available through the network, to make them aware of new opportunities for learning or networking, and to remind them of what information is available through Sustainable Northwest and how to find it. Other updates could include information about what groups are currently working on, information about efficient planning, changes in contact information, information about “hot topics,” and stories about how collaboratives have dealt with specific challenges such as staff turnover. Funding issues can also be addressed by providing information and resources to increase awareness of funding opportunities, to clarify funding allocation, or to share information about outside funding sources.

Participants expressed support for the idea of periodic updates ranging from weekly to quarterly. However, updates could be distributed periodically, as information becomes available, or on an as-needed basis. For greatest convenience, this information can be distributed either through e-mail or through a central online source as discussed in Recommendation #2.

Recommendation #4: Encourage groups to develop a shared vision for collaboration.

Several members indicated that a lack of shared vision for collaboration can lead to conflict that disrupts collaboration. Sessions during the annual meeting could be used to help groups define what they mean by “collaboration,” possibly even doing group work on developing a collaboration
framework, in order to foster a shared vision for collaboration. Definitions for collaboration should help to clarify expectations, roles, and responsibilities for those who are involved with collaboration and for collaborative partners. This discussion should also identify the degree to which collaborative partners should interact, identify key elements for successful collaboration, and focus on a central goal that groups agree on.

Additionally, focusing on common problems and common goals and using time during the meeting to help groups come together over these issues can help members to develop a shared vision for collaboration. Clear expectations and a shared vision, built through personal interactions at the meeting, may also help with the issue of trust-building among all members, which is essential for effective collaboration. It may also minimize the amount of resources that are used when conflict occurs by providing an objective guide for expectations which can be deferred to during conflicts.

**Conclusion**

This report identifies areas of need and potential areas of development for future workshops, peer learning, and collaboration for the CFLRP Network, with a specific focus on how to maintain and increase partnerships and peer learning, in order to guide recommendations for future development of CFLRP Network programs. The report is based on responses provided by eleven CFLRP Region 6 Network participants who volunteered to participate in an interview.

Findings show that while participants are highly motivated to collaborate in order to improve landscape restoration, balancing the needs of collaboration with restoration may be challenging. To improve partnerships and peer learning, participants desired interactive and engaging online formats; active problem-solving, discussion, and brainstorming sessions with other groups with similar issues at the annual meetings; and a way to stay informed about other groups’ activities and opportunities for networking throughout the year. Regarding factors that disrupt effective
collaboration and restoration, conflict and miscommunication were common themes. Participants felt that improved communication and expectations would be beneficial in preventing strains on capacity caused by conflict.

Based on the considerations outlined above, recommendations include the following: 1) Include more opportunities for informal discussion, networking, and peer learning at the annual meeting; 2) Develop an online tool to increase the ease of access of information and resources available through the network; 3) Periodically check in with Network members to update them about resources; 4) Encourage groups to develop a shared vision for collaboration.

These recommendations were designed to minimize added strain on capacity while also improving collaboration. They were designed with the ideal that improvement of collaboration should naturally lead to improvement of restoration, so it should not be necessary to balance limited resources between collaboration and restoration.

The next steps should involve consideration of how to integrate the recommendations listed above. For example, it would be worth conducting a small follow-up survey to gauge interest in specific meeting topics mentioned in this report. A pilot study could help to determine what types of online formats would be most convenient for participants based on what they are already familiar with and what types of information they would like to share, considering what types of technology are already available to the Network and what types of technology could be used.

Issues that were outside the scope of this study include funding limitations, issues of working with local contractors, limitations of building trust in a new paradigm, and equipment needs. Follow-up studies can focus on determining how to address one or all of these issues in the future.
Appendices

Appendix I: Methodology

Interviews
To assess the needs identified by network participants, semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with eleven CFLRP Region 6 Network participants (See Appendix III: Interview Guide). Nine interviews were conducted one-on-one, and two individuals from the same organization were interviewed during a tenth interview. Interviews occurred between August 26, 2015, and September 30, 2015. The average duration of interviews was 31 minutes, with a minimum duration of 15 minutes and a maximum of 42 minutes.

Participant Selection
Key participants were selected through a purposive sampling method. E-mails asking individuals for phone interviews were sent to approximately 30 CFLRP Network participants, including both Forest Service personnel and collaborative organization staff. Participants were recruited for interviews until data saturation was reached.

Data Analysis
Audio recordings and written notes were collected during the interview process. Research memos were utilized during data collection and transcription to assist with stimulating insights and identifying themes in the data. Audio recordings were transcribed thoroughly to maximize accuracy while editing for clarity and relevance. Transcripts were cross-referenced with written notes for consistency. Transcripts, written notes, and research memos were initially coded for themes tied to the research questions and responses to interview questions, but additional themes emerged from the data through a grounded analysis method as coding progressed.

My grounded analysis process involved systematically identifying every problem or issue discussed by participants, then grouping similar problems and issues according to themes that
emerged. Problem and issue themes tended to fall into one of several categories which eventually guided the format of the “Findings” section.

Coding was done in Microsoft Excel, which was used for both the initial coding and the thematic coding, as well as to quantify interview responses. Once findings were summarized in written form, these summaries were cross-referenced with the original transcripts and coded Excel files to ensure accuracy.

Limitations of this study are that the sample was not randomly drawn from the population of CFLRP Network participants. Certain groups in the CFLRP Network are over-represented, while other groups are not represented at all, which is likely due to the timing of the study, which coincided with the height of forest fire season. Another limitation of this study is that it operates from within the constraints of the CFLR program, which greatly limited what recommendations could be made to address a very broad range of issues that were revealed in the study.

Appendix II: Research Questions
The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1) How can the CFLRP Network effectively facilitate increased communication and collaboration beyond the annual workshop?
2) What types of peer learning and collaboration activities or resources do participants desire from the Network?
3) Which of these activities or resources do participants feel will have the greatest impact on advancing collaborative forest management?
4) Which venues and formats (e.g., webinars, peer tours) are participants most likely to use?
5) What specific benefits, opportunities, and challenges do participants anticipate from increased collaboration and peer learning activities?
Appendix III: Interview Guide

Interview Guide: Assessing Needs for the CFLRP Region 6 Network

Stephanie Shepard, MPP student and Sustainable Northwest Intern

August 17, 2015

[INTRODUCTION] Before we get started, a bit about me; I am a graduate student at Oregon State University and an intern with Sustainable Northwest. I'm from West Virginia, and I came to Oregon State to study environmental and natural resource policy. I'm especially interested in collaborative natural resource management, so that’s how I got involved with doing an evaluation of the Region 6 CFLRP Network with Sustainable Northwest.

[GOALS] As I described in my first email, this evaluation is being done to help generate ideas for peer learning opportunities among CFLRP participants across the region. As a result of this evaluation, I’ll be making a report that will be available this fall.

[CONFIDENTIALITY] I also like to let you know that this is an independent evaluation, so what that means is that your identity will be kept confidential, and nothing we discuss today will be linked to your name or organization in any reports.

[RECORDING] If it’s okay with you, I’d like to record our conversation so I can refer back to it later. Is it all right with you if I record our conversation?

[LENGTH & QUESTIONS] The interview should take between 20 to 40 minutes. Before we get started, do you have any questions for me?

Questions:

First we'll start by talking about your role in collaboration.

1) Can you tell me a little bit about your position and how collaboration fits into your role?
2) Can you tell me about how you got involved in forest restoration and collaboration?
   What keeps you involved?
3) What are you hoping to get out of collaboration?
4) What are some of the other needs the collaborative group(s) that you work with? (types of resources, skills, monitoring needs, capacity…)

The next set of questions I have will ask you about the Region 6 CFLRP Network.

5) Have you attended the Region 6 CFLRP Network annual meetings in Hood River before?
6) During the meeting, what types of information or resources did the CFLRP Network make available to you?
   a. What resources/information have been most useful to you?
   b. Of the CFLRP network resources available outside of the meeting, what do you find the most useful?
7) Have you (your organization or you personally) formed new relationships as a result of your involvement with the Region 6 CFLRP Network?
   a. If YES: How have this opportunity to reconnect and strengthen relationships added value to your work?
   b. If YES: Going forward, How can the network and Sustainable Northwest improve and continue to facilitate this information sharing? these relationships?
   c. If NO: How could the network, and Sustainable Northwest, help to better connect you with the people, expertise, or relationships that you would find most helpful?

8) Do you feel that non-CFLRP forests and collaborative groups should be encouraged to participate in the annual meeting or other peer learning opportunities?
   a. Why or why not?
   b. Positives or negatives?

9) Should the Region 6 CFLRP Network offer more activities, outside of the annual meetings in Hood River, to increase collaboration?
   a. What kinds of activities do you think might be most beneficial?
   b. What challenges do you anticipate the network might encounter if it tried to encourage those activities?
   c. Can you expand on this?

10) Can you think of any other topics or issues I should have asked about?
11) Is there anything else you’d like to share?

Probe/follow-up questions:
   a. Can you expand on…
   b. Could you say more about…
   c. Do you have an example of…
   d. Do you mean that…