

Capacity and Interest in Siuslaw Forest Wide Collaboration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Siuslaw National Forest has been home to successful Stewardship Groups for the past twenty years. Recently, a variety of stakeholders engaged with the Siuslaw National Forest have begun to consider the formation of a new collaborative group that would provide a platform to engage with the Forest at a forest wide scale. Based on this stakeholder driven interest and the emergence of stakeholder groups wishing to engage in Forest processes, Cascade Pacific obtained grant funding and contracted with researchers at Oregon State University to explore the capacity for and support of a potential forest wide collaborative. Additionally, Cascade Pacific asked that researchers examine existing Stewardship Groups and the potential usefulness of Zones of Agreement, as well as current perceptions of the Siuslaw National Forest. The following report begins with a summary of primary takeaways. The next section explains the methods in which researchers collected and analyzed interview data. The findings section summarizes interviewee responses in regards to the existing Stewardship Groups, Zones of Agreement, perceptions of the Siuslaw National Forest, and a potential forest wide collaborative. Following the findings section, the summary provides three alternative paths forward for the Siuslaw National Forest community, as well as examples of forest collaborations operating at a variety of scales.

Primary takeaways

- Almost all Stewardship Group participants view the groups as effective at allocating funds to accomplish off-forest restoration projects. While some stakeholders expressed interest in expanding the scope and role of Stewardship Groups, almost all stakeholders agreed that any expansion should not detract from the capacity of Stewardship Groups to continue effectively allocating funds.
- The Stewardship Group model primarily engages entities who are applying for project funding, including representatives of organizations such as watershed councils, environmental nonprofits, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The model does not create an appropriate venue for participation or engagement by broad stakeholder interests including recreation, timber, and local government.
- Forest Service staff generally do not view Stewardship Groups as a venue for collaboration, but as a platform for information sharing and competition for funding.
- Concerns raised by the Adaptive Management Group demonstrate a perception that there is a lack of open and transparent venues for discussions about new science and broad-level management priorities and values.

- Views on Stewardship Group roles and effectiveness differed between those who have been involved in stewardship since the beginning compared to those who are new to the Groups. Those who have been involved since the beginning frequently stressed the need to communicate history effectively.
- There was not an urgently expressed need for formalizing Zones of Agreement for the Stewardship Groups, but many participants viewed this as a potentially valuable but time consuming process that could facilitate future dialogue, especially if the role of Stewardship Groups expands or a forest wide collaborative forms.
- Most non-agency interviewees repeatedly stressed a need for clarity and vision from the Forest Service in defining the role of a collaborative and how it would interact with and influence Siuslaw National Forest planning processes.
- Capacity limitations and staff turnover were the most frequently cited barriers to effective relationship building, collaboration, and engagement.
- Alongside any structural changes, outreach efforts will be key to ensure broader representation and to engage unrepresented stakeholders.
- There was no clear consensus in regards to the correct collaborative venue for forest wide discussion. That being said, interviewees mentioned the potential for a forest wide collaboration, a broadening role of existing stewardship groups, or no action as possible next steps.
- There was a clearly expressed desire from the Forest Service interviewees to establish an engagement venue at the forest wide scale.
- Any changes made to current engagement opportunities or processes should be done through a collaborative process that engages stakeholders in making decisions and designing structures.

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METHODS

Interview questions and protocol for this project were developed through meetings with Cascade Pacific and the US Forest Service. The interview guide is attached as an appendix. Cascade Pacific and the Forest Service also developed an initial list of stakeholders to interview based on assessed interest at stewardship group meetings. Our project and methods were approved by the OSU Institutional Review Board.

Interviews took place between March and June 2019, over the phone and in person when logistically feasible. Interviews typically lasted between 30 and 90 minutes, and were semi-structured in that the interview guide was followed, but follow-up questions were often asked for clarification and expansion on certain topics. Only Stewardship Group participants were questioned about Stewardship Group processes and the possibility of formalizing Zones of Agreement.

Each interviewee was asked to recommend additional individuals to interview. Any recommended individuals were contacted in an additional round of solicitations. We conducted one formal focus group with Forest Service staff at the Corvallis headquarters which included four individuals. We conducted one group interview with Forest Service staff at the Waldport office. We also facilitated an informal discussion at the Stewardship Group Annual Meeting in April 2019, and used points from this discussion as supplemental information. All points brought up in this discussion also came up in interviews.

25 individual interviews were conducted, and six Forest Service staff participated in the two group interviews/focus groups, resulting in a total of 31 individuals represented in the study. Those interviewed represent environmental and conservation organizations, watershed councils, timber companies and associations, private landowners, community members, recreationists including off-road vehicle riders and mountain bikers, and Forest Service staff from the Forest central office as well as district representatives. The data demonstrates an array of perspectives that exist, but may not represent a complete summary of all perspectives nor accurate proportions of perspectives including support and opposition toward a forest wide collaborative.

All interviews were transcribed and then coded in NVivo software based on identified variables, such as goals of stewardship groups, represented stakeholders, efficacy of engagement venues, and support for a forest wide collaborative. This data was then analyzed for patterns and themes across different stakeholder interests and types of participants, including stewardship group participants, non-participants, agency representatives, and Adaptive Management Group.

The final report includes summaries of these patterns and themes, describing general trends as well as outlier perspectives. Due to the close-knit nature of the population interviewed, there may be cases in which individuals would be able to easily attribute quotes to a known individual. For this reason we have not incorporated direct quotes into the report in order to maintain anonymity.

FINDINGS

Stewardship Groups

Goals and Roles of Stewardship Groups

In general, Stewardship Group participants across all groups referred to allocating retained receipts funding toward restoration projects as the primary goal of the groups. Participants voiced satisfaction, and often pride, in the effectiveness of this model in accomplishing restoration and stewardship activities on off-Forest projects. Some participants voiced that Stewardship Groups could be more involved in influencing decisions about on-Forest projects, which is not currently an active role of the groups. Participants also noted that the Stewardship Groups serve as a space for information sharing and communication. However, some individuals, including environmental stakeholders and Adaptive Management Group members, expressed a desire for the Stewardship Groups to get more involved in influencing Siuslaw National Forest decision making and management activities. There was almost uniform acknowledgement that any possible changes to the structure of the Stewardship Groups should serve to expand their activities, rather than diminish their current role and structure of allocating retained receipts to stewardship projects.

Many interviewees stressed the importance of understanding the history of stewardship contracting on the Siuslaw National Forest. Individuals expressed pride in the work that has been accomplished and the ways in which the Siuslaw National Forest has pioneered stewardship contracting as a model that has been used widely in other regions and forests. Some who have been involved since the inception of the groups noted changes in their goals over time, including that during the early years, some groups worked more on influencing Forest Service management through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, but over time, the focus shifted toward only making decisions on allocating retained receipts to restoration projects. Some interviewees perceived this shift occurring due to the increase in retained receipt dollars which prompted a larger effort devoted to making decisions about these projects. Several individuals mentioned that the current model functions best for off-Forest projects, and that the Stewardship Groups have less influence on projects that take place on the National Forest. A few also mentioned that early on, there was some discussion of the groups working on community and economic development, but this component dropped away as the Wyden Authority formalized, solidifying the Groups' role. Some Forest Service interviewees suggested that the early success of Stewardship Groups on the Siuslaw National Forest led to a more rigid and long lasting structure whereas National Forests that began collaborating more recently have developed more flexibly and changed more over time, and have more influence on Forest Service activities.

When asked about specific actions or accomplishments of their Stewardship Groups, participants mentioned fish passage and habitat improvement projects, invasive species management, prairie restoration, culvert replacements, large wood installations, and snag creation. Some participants also mentioned that supporting their local economy through these restoration projects has been a major achievement. Generally participants feel that the Stewardship Groups create a space for education and outreach around restoration and stewardship and that this has been successful. Timber interest representatives expressed that they participate in order to create face to face engagement with other stakeholders, in order to foster relationships and a greater understanding of the timber perspective.

Some interviewees who identify as environmentalist referenced an additional goal of the Stewardship Groups as influencing Forest Service management on a larger scale. Generally these environmental or conservation oriented stakeholders are not satisfied with the extent to which they as individuals and as Stewardship Group participants are influencing Siuslaw National Forest management. They would like to see more action directed toward providing concentrated input on forest management planning. Several Forest Service staff expressed that they do not view the Stewardship Groups as collaborative by nature, but rather a place for information sharing, and allocation of funding. Some felt that not all participants are consistent in what they want out of Stewardship Groups and that there is a need for clarity in terms of goals, expectations, and roles within the stewardship group structure. Some viewed the legally mandated restrictions on retained receipts funding as a barrier because it cannot be used for different types of projects such as recreation or education. Some also mentioned capacity limitations on the part of the Forest Service, as well as frequent staff turnover and a lack of leadership as barriers in accomplishing more. One environmental stakeholder voiced an interest in seeing the Forest Service conduct more monitoring of stewardship projects, but viewed funding and capacity as a barrier. Some interviewees mentioned geography as a logistical issue, with the Siuslaw National Forest covering an expansive region, making it difficult for participants of different Stewardship Groups to meet with one another and with Forest Service representatives. One interviewee also mentioned hesitation toward the stewardship group participating in NEPA as a unified voice, given the diverse interests and organizations represented, and expressed an interest in a better structure to engage in NEPA as a group, such as a forest wide collaborative.

In summary:

- There is widespread agreement that the Stewardship Group model is successful at allocating retained receipts funds to achieve restoration goals and implement local-scale projects.
- There is strong interest in, at a minimum, preserving the current model as a successful process for accomplishing local-scale restoration and stewardship projects. However, at least five Stewardship Group participants voiced interest in expanding stewardship group activities to engage more with the Forest Service and on-Forest projects.
- There is a need to more clearly define the role of Stewardship Groups and expectations of what they can accomplish.

- A focus on history suggests a desire for a more robust system of onboarding new participants and agency representatives that communicates the history of stewardship on the Siuslaw National Forest so that all participants are on the same page.

Diversity of Stewardship Group Participants

In general, the most actively involved participants in the Stewardship Groups are restoration practitioners, including watershed councils and Soil and Water Conservation districts, because they use the Stewardship Groups to apply for funding for their projects. Stakeholders representing environmental interests, including organizations such as Oregon Wild and the Audubon Society, are prominent participants. Some interviewees referred to an array of “concerned citizens” not representing an official organization but promoting their own perspectives in the group. A few Stewardship Groups see participation from small timber companies including Hampton and Freres Lumber Companies, as well as the American Forest Resource Council, although they are not always consistent participants. Some non-timber interviewees thought that timber representatives only attend meetings when they are involved in thinning projects being discussed, but one timber representative noted that frequent participation was important for building relationships over time. Some groups also see local landowners participate, who tend to be less active or vocal, mainly attending to receive information. City government also occasionally participates, such as the City of Corvallis on the Mary’s Peak Stewardship Group. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) make up the largest participating group by proportion. Agency representatives stated that they attend Stewardship Groups primarily to share information, and seek to maintain a lack of bias and an impartial role in the process of decision making on retained receipts allocation. Some environmentalist stakeholders perceived this role as insufficient, expressing frustration that agency representatives are not listening to or considering their concerns.

Various interviewees expressed that recreation interests are not well-represented on Stewardship Groups. One Forest Service staff described inviting a recreation group to participate on the Hebo Stewardship Group, but that it was not the appropriate platform to engage in recreation issues due to the nature of the group’s scope in dealing solely with restoration. A representative of Save the Riders Dunes, an off-road vehicle organization that advocates for dunes restoration and greater recreational access, mentioned participating in Stewardship Groups in the past, but not having time anymore, especially given that recreation is not generally a topic of discussion at group meetings. Mountain biking representatives have participated on the Hebo Stewardship Group but are not a well-represented stakeholder group across all Stewardship Groups. Interviewees highlighted hunting and fishing as an unrepresented interest. Interviewees noted that tribal representatives occasionally participate but not frequently, likely due to capacity. Interviewees also mentioned county and city governments, land trusts, and industrial timber as stakeholder groups not currently represented. Multiple interviewees perceived that industrial timber in particular does not have an interest in participating in Stewardship Groups due to the scope of action and discussion of the groups. One Forest Service representative referenced “the missing middle,” or a subset of the general public that is not typically involved or engaged in forest management, as an underrepresented population that could be

targeted for outreach, especially when projects will affect their communities or places where they recreate.

Interviewees of various Stewardship Groups mentioned that membership has declined, especially in recent years. Some remembered that at the beginning, their group brought participation from 20-30 non-agency individuals regularly, and now that number has dropped to just a few. Some attributed this decline to the fact that the scope of the Stewardship Groups has narrowed over time and now meetings only attract individuals who have a direct interest or stake in accessing funding. Others felt that the Stewardship Groups have entered a state of complacency with the status quo and so stakeholders do not feel a sense of urgency around attending meetings. Some stakeholders mentioned this lack of representation and low attendance as having a negative impact on the effectiveness and functioning of the group. However, one stakeholder who has been involved since the beginning of Stewardship Groups described that while the number of active participants has declined, there exists a large number of inactive participants who would get involved if they needed to at a given time, and saw this as an effective structure given individuals' capacity restraints.

While some interviewees described that some participants are more vocal than others or dominate the conversation, almost all felt that the culture of Stewardship Groups allows any participant to feel comfortable sharing or participating. In one instance, a timber representative mentioned experiencing animosity from an environmentalist participant on a field trip, but felt this conflict dissipated quickly. According to multiple interviewees, strong personalities, especially those who have been involved for an extended period of time, tend to be more vocal on the groups, as well as representatives of watershed councils and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, given their position as competing for funding. Some interviewees expressed that facilitation by Cascade Pacific has been effective at fostering trust, establishing common ground, and generally creating a positive culture of interaction. There is a sense that the individuals who have been involved since the beginning have strong relationships with one another. Despite the fact that participating groups are often competing for the same funding sources, many interviewees expressed that this competition is congenial and relatively cooperative.

In summary:

- Watershed councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, environmentalists, agency representatives, and concerned citizens are the most active and represented stakeholders currently on the Stewardship Groups.
- There is a lack of diversity of participants on the Stewardship Groups, not attributed to exclusivity but due to the scope of Stewardship Groups not being relevant to other interests including recreation and timber.

- Any attempt to increase diversity and bring in new types of stakeholders will likely need to be met with ensuring that the Stewardship Groups cover topics and processes that are relevant to these unrepresented stakeholders.
- The lack of conflict among Stewardship Groups may also be attributed to the lack of diversity, and increasing the scope and diversity may lead to greater conflict or friction, requiring careful facilitation, process, and dialogue.

Information Channels

Interviewees responded that they receive the majority of their information about Stewardship Group activities from Cascade Pacific communication, including through email and in person at the Annual Meeting and Round Table. Cascade Pacific sends out notices of NEPA announcements to ensure that Stewardship Group members receive this information. Some interviewees mentioned that they read the minutes from meetings that they did not attend to stay up to date with Stewardship Group activities. Some interviewees described that they use direct individual contacts with members of other Stewardship Groups to get information about other groups' activities.

A representative of Cascade Pacific described that there is no direct or formalized mechanism for a participant of one Stewardship Group to contact participants of another group. Other interviewees also felt that there was not enough communication between the different groups. Cascade Pacific representatives also referred to the challenge of traveling to all the meetings across a large geographic area and that capacity continues to be a problem.

In summary:

- Cascade Pacific serves a critical role in facilitating information sharing.
- More direct forms of information sharing between Stewardship Groups may help facilitate relationships and dialogue, especially if a new forest wide collaborative structure is created.

Zones of Agreement

While no one felt there was an urgent need for establishing formal Zones of Agreement (ZOA), most interviewees expressed support for engaging in this process. Most interviewees felt that their Stewardship Group operates under implicit, and sometimes explicit, ZOA, including supporting habitat for native species, creating resilient forests with old seral habitat, providing clean water and healthy fisheries, supporting recreation opportunities in a sustainable manner, addressing climate change and long-term sustainability, ensuring the welfare of local landowners, addressing invasive species, and reducing road densities according to the Northwest Forest Plan and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) recovery plans. Most interviewees responded that these overarching objectives are generally reflected by the decisions and actions taken by the Stewardship Groups. However, the threat

of litigation expressed by some environmentalist stakeholders implies that their objectives are not being met by broader Forest Service decision-making.

Some interviewees felt that these areas of agreement are relatively broad or vague, and that more disagreement and conflict exist when it comes to the details of how these objectives are achieved, and assigning priorities to different projects. The interpretation of new science, general frameworks for species management as well as specific thinning and management regimes for stands occupied by threatened and endangered species, the mechanics of road decommissioning and desired densities, and the use of herbicide all came up as points of disagreement or conflict among Stewardship Group participants.

Interviewees supportive of undergoing a process to formalize ZOA felt that this would help guide discussions at meetings, and help with continuity as participation fluctuates and staff turns over. Some interviewees expressed concern that this process would take a lot of time, and could unearth conflict that is currently not causing any problems, including representatives of the Mary's Peak Stewardship Group and Alsea Stewardship Groups. Some felt that this process would be unnecessary given that the current model is functioning effectively, and that many of the groups are small and participants are on the same page. One representative of the Alsea Stewardship Group thought that the group had already created ZOA during the initial formation of the group. Two interviewees from the Alsea and Siuslaw Stewardship Groups recommended using past meeting minutes and records of decision to determine past de facto ZOA and then engaging in dialogue as to whether those principles are still valid for the current composition of the group, and ultimately formalizing that dialogue into updated ZOA as a more streamlined process. One interviewee expressed that identifying ZOA might be beneficial only if the group increases in size, which he viewed as a possibility given that the Mary's Peak Stewardship Group has recently expanded its area of jurisdiction. One timber representative expressed concern that if a majority process was used for ZOA, minority perspectives might be lost which could cause certain stakeholders to leave the group.

Due to the variation in perspectives on the efficacy of formalizing ZOA, these discussions should take place in the context of each individual Stewardship Group. We do not have enough representation in our data to point to which Stewardship Groups have the most need for formalizing ZOA. Additionally, the meaning of Stewardship Group ZOA may change if a forest wide collaborative is created, which would potentially have its own ZOA. Discussions on formalizing ZOA should therefore continue as discussion moves forward on creating new engagement structures on the Siuslaw National Forest.

In summary:

- Implicit areas of broad agreement already exist on all of the Stewardship Groups which is reflected by a general lack of conflict among participants.

- While there does not appear to be an urgent desire to formalize ZOA, this could be a useful process, especially in the context of other changes to process and structure that occur in the future.
- There is concern that formalizing ZOA would be a time consuming process, which could be alleviated by drawing from past meeting notes and documents.

Current Siuslaw National Forest Engagement

Current Forest Service Stakeholders

Overall, interviewees had trouble determining who is or is not represented in Siuslaw National Forest processes. Sometimes interviewees expressed this uncertainty as a result of the structure of Forest Service engagement processes and NEPA, in which it is difficult to know the extent of the influence that a participating stakeholder has on ultimate decision making and management planning. That being said, interviewees listed stakeholder groups representing industry, environmental interests, local collaboratives, stewardship, tourism, research, recreation, science, tribes, watersheds, and state agencies as currently represented in Siuslaw National Forest processes. Interviewees were not able to specify if that representation was adequate. Many interviewees referenced nonprofits and businesses which represent a group of individuals with a shared interest such as Oregon Wild or the American Forest Resources Council. Some stakeholders also noted that any members of the public on the Siuslaw National Forest email list are informed about ongoing processes and have access to participate. There was a general consensus that local community members participated in Siuslaw National Forest projects when they affected specific sites of local interest.

While some Forest Service interviewees felt that all members of the public could participate by reaching out to the agency or utilizing currently provided engagement opportunities, other interviewees noted that it has been challenging to reach out to unrepresented stakeholder groups. Some Forest Service employees noted that it was especially difficult to identify stakeholders from the “missing middle” and find ways to involve them in Forest processes. Interviewees identified unrepresented stakeholder groups including State agencies, municipalities, elected officials, recreation groups including mountain bikers, birders, hikers, hunters, and anglers, people who live in urban areas, diverse ethnic groups, chambers of commerce, counties, tourists, locals, and nongovernment agencies such as Trout Unlimited. In addition to those identified groups, interviewees indicated that while currently represented through some engagement venues, both tribes and timber industry could be represented in more Forest processes.

In summary:

- Many interviewees found it difficult to determine which stakeholders are represented on a forest wide level.
- Interest groups and communities participate when projects affect specific sites of local interest.

- While all members of the public are welcome to participate in the process, it has been challenging to find ways to reach and engage underrepresented groups.

Engagement Opportunities

Many interviewees were able to identify multiple ways in which they currently engage with the Siuslaw National Forest. Interviewees listed engagement opportunities such as the NEPA process, field trips, public meetings, Stewardship Groups, the youth employment program, educational opportunities, email chains, district meetings, community meetings, administrative appeal, and partnerships. In addition to those listed engagement opportunities all of the interviewees representing organizations described engaging one on one with the Forest Service. The Forest Service employees interviewed also described educational programs as engagement opportunities. Additionally, a few interviewees who had taken part in place-based planning at Cascade Head cited potential for those engagement opportunities in the future. Some Adaptive Management Group members listed litigation as a potential way to engage with Siuslaw National Forest processes. One Forest Service employee explained recent Forest efforts to pull together local collaboratives to work alongside NEPA processes.

While some interviewees offered that they were satisfied with the provided engagement opportunities, other stakeholders noted that engagement opportunities were not accessible to all groups, and that the Forest Service tends to rely on processes like NEPA to provide opportunities for public input. One Forest Service employee expressed concern that the current engagement opportunities create a system that empowers some entities while leaving others behind. Other employees commented that the agency is listening to those that are loudest or feel they want to be most engaged but that other stakeholder groups seem left out of the process. Many interviewees noted a desire for increased public engagement opportunities and cited examples of requests they had made to the Forest for specific field trips or meetings. Forest Service Employees from the districts mentioned that they felt overworked and unable to provide some of the engagement opportunities requested. Forest Service employees from the headquarters office noted a desire to provide more engagement opportunities for the public. Some interviewees who represent organizations noted their ability to engage more with the Forest due to their paid trained staff. Multiple interviewees mentioned a fatigue factor for volunteers or members of the public who wish to engage with Siuslaw National Forest processes. Additionally, Forest Service staff from one district explained their frustration when they provide public engagement venues that are not well attended. Some public stakeholders echoed this sentiment asserting that the processes seem open to all but not all people chose to participate.

Multiple members of the public and Forest Service employees cited the Indian Creek NEPA process in their interviews. Interviewees from the public noted that they did not feel they were informed about engagement opportunities and felt confused about the process leading up to the decision. Forest Service employees from the Forest Supervisor's office noted that there was a missed outreach opportunity and that much of the engagement opportunities for the NEPA process were aimed

at the Stewardship Groups. However, the district office noted that they extended the scoping timeline to provide more than two-dozen public engagement events which were not well attended.

No stakeholder group felt that they had influence over Forest Service decision-making. However, some stakeholders mentioned that they do direct Forest Service employee time by requesting information or engagement opportunities. There is a general sense that stakeholders engage with the Forest when it will benefit their interest group. Well-organized groups such as Oregon Wild, American Forest Resource Council, and the Audubon tend to be most engaged in the process. A select few members of the Adaptive Management Group felt like the Forest Service did listen to their group but did not include them in decision-making, and expressed varying degrees of frustration about this. Timber industry interviewees generally felt that stakeholder groups should not influence Forest Service decision-making and were concerned that collaboration causes the Forest Service to cater to environmental interests. The Forest Service employees had the most to add to the topic of engagement overall. Most employees expressed that it would be against the law for a specific public group to have influence over Forest Service decision-making. Overall timber stakeholders felt there was enough engagement, Stewardship Group members felt the engagement was satisfactory but would like more, and Adaptive Management Group members felt there was not enough engagement opportunity.

In summary:

- Interviewees were able to identify a variety of engagement opportunities.
- However, the engagement opportunities seem to favor well-organized vocal members of the public or groups.
- There is a desire from the public for more engagement but some Forest Service employees have voiced concern in terms of capacity to provide these opportunities.
- There has been recent conflict over an engagement opportunity and Forest Service transparency.
- No one group felt they or other stakeholders had greater influence over Forest Service decision making but that their requests for information and engagement directed the agency in some ways.

Sources of Conflict

Some interviewees expressed that they felt the terms “competing interests” or “conflict” were too strong to describe the interactions between different interest groups on the Forest. That being said a group of stakeholders involved in current issues with the Forest readily spoke about conflict. One interviewee offered that stakeholders are more in concert than in conflict because most Forest projects tend to focus on restoration rather than harvest. Timber industry interviewees described ongoing conversations with the Forest over thinning and cut practices. Interviewees also described conflict around local designations for contracting labor, with a timber representative describing the expansion of the local designation as a success, while a Stewardship Group participant described this as a move in the

wrong direction away from supporting local economic livelihoods. They also noted that environmental groups and the Adaptive Management Group had differences of opinion about harvest practices. One timber industry stakeholder also expressed a dislike for stewardship contracting viewing it as a biased system that caters to environmental interests and making it more difficult for timber companies to operate successfully. Some recreation stakeholders mentioned a potential conflict between Off-Highway Vehicle users and environmentalists but also mentioned that conflict has been avoided due to participation in the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaboration by both interest groups. Some stakeholders also described a tension between expanding recreation opportunities and an environmental interest in reducing road density.

By far, interviewees most frequently mentioned the conflict regarding the use of new scientific information, Threatened and Endangered Species, and the designation of late seral habitat. Specifically, interviewees noted that some members of the public believe that the Forest Service is not utilizing the best available scientific information regarding these species and habitat. Most interviewees who mentioned this conflict were members of the Adaptive Management Group or Forest Service Employees. That being said, environmental groups and the timber industry also noted conflicting perspectives regarding harvest practices. In summary, members of the Adaptive Management Group feel that the Forest Service has not listened or incorporated the new scientific information that their group has provided. Members feel that they need to be more involved in Forest Service Processes. Some interviewees mentioned the potential for litigation in the near future. Forest Service employees offered two opinions in regards to the Adaptive Management Group. On the one hand, interviewees felt that the Group currently provides the best forest wide perspective. That being said Forest Service Employees all noted concern that this group represented only one interest and that the agency must balance all input from the public rather than prioritizing one group's perspective.

Some interviewees noted that the Siuslaw National Forest tends to address conflict through one on one interactions with a given interest group. For example, the Siuslaw National Forest might meet with Adaptive Management Group members to discuss their concerns about late seral habitat, discuss similar topics in a separate meeting with timber representatives, and that there is no opportunity for both stakeholder groups to engage in dialogue together. That being said, some members of the public noted that collaboratives like the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative have served as a public forum for conflicting interests to come to creative resolutions.

In summary:

- There are ongoing conversations about thinning practices and local designations for contracting of timber companies and labor on restoration projects.
- Some stakeholders are concerned about the Forest Service's use of the latest scientific information in forest management.
- There is an existing threat of litigation.

- Currently the Siuslaw National Forest meets one on one with conflicting interest groups.

Information Channels

Interviewees listed mailing lists, individual emails, educational events, meetings, Cascade Pacific emails, announcements, informal conversations, the Forest Service website, press releases, social media, flyers, Save the Riders Dunes Facebook page, Stewardship Groups, other stakeholders, universities, newspapers, and nonprofits as sources of information. Many interviewees expressed that they feel well informed about Siuslaw National Forest activities. Other interviewees noted that they were not necessarily well informed about forest wide activities but that it was due to their own interest-level and not an issue of access to information. Interviewees typically did not feel that new information sources were required but that the Forest Service and public could strengthen existing types of information sources. For example, one interviewee expressed that the Federal Register is not a user-friendly source of information about planning processes, and that many people do not know to look there.

Some members of the public expressed a few specific challenges with Siuslaw National Forest information sharing at this time. Most frequently noted, interviewees cited turnover of Forest Service staff as a challenge in regard to information channels. Interviewees noted a lack of clarity around who their contacts were and a lack of institutional knowledge amongst newer Forest Service employees. Stakeholders noted again the time commitment required to stay up to date on Forest activities. Forest Service employees generally expressed that they felt they were doing what was required in terms of information sharing but that more could be done.

While some interviewees felt that the Siuslaw National Forest is more transparent than most National Forests, others provided examples of ways in which the Forest could be more transparent. Generally, public stakeholders expressed a desire to understand Forest Service processes more fully. Both Forest Service employees and members of the public cited the usefulness of understanding Forest Service processes to alleviate current conflict around the incorporation of new scientific information into forest practices. Two interviewees noted specific instances when they had requested information from the Forest and did not receive that information. Another interviewee spoke of a time when they requested information from a Forest employee and found out some time later that the employee was on an extended leave of absence. One interviewee suggested providing an updated organizational chart to address recent turnover and allow the public a clear path to reaching out to the proper Forest Service employees. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders that felt the Siuslaw National Forest was not transparent were members of the Adaptive Management Group.

In summary:

- Interviewees listed information sources such as email updates, flyers, and Facebook pages as current sources of information.

- Many interviewees felt that while there were enough different types of information sources, they would like to see them used more often.
- Forest Service employee turnover was cited as a challenge by many interviewees who were uncertain of who to contact in regard to specific topics.
- Some interviewees cited occasions in which the Forest Service did not respond to information requests.

Forest Wide Collaborative

Support

There were mixed views on the support or opposition to the idea of a forest wide collaborative. However, six interviewees were opposed to the formation of a forest wide collaborative. Most of the opposition was spread out amongst differing stakeholder groups but there was some concentration amongst timber interviewees. No Adaptive Management Group members were in opposition to a forest wide collaborative and only one stewardship group participant was opposed to the group. Some of the reasons for opposing the formation of the collaborative were that it could create more conflict, that it was redundant given the Stewardship Groups, that there was no clear purpose, that the forest wide collaborative decisions would be weaker, and that it might create fatigue or reduce effectiveness of stakeholders who participate in Forest processes. Some interviewees also felt that it was not the role of the public to participate in this manner. One concern expressed by interviewees was that a group such as this collaborative would be used to elevate specific stakeholder voices rather than diverse perspectives.

11 interviewees expressed explicit support for a forest wide collaborative. Overall the Forest Service interviewees were in support of the collaborative. Stewardship Group participant interviewees largely supported the collaborative with the stipulation that they would not support a group that detracts from Stewardship Group work. It was unclear if Adaptive Management Group members support the formation of a collaborative. Some interviewees who represent larger groups were excited about the idea as a way to interact with the Forest at a larger scale. Interviewees cited an interest in engaging in planning for larger scale projects, having a platform to discuss issues with each other, and getting out of individual or local silos as reasons why they would support the creation of forest wide collaborative.

Almost all interviewees expressed stipulations for their support of the creation of the collaborative. Interviewees cited that roles would need to be clearly defined and that the group would need to agree on a structure for meetings. Some stressed that the group needed to be transparent, open, and truly representative of broader interests, rather than just engaging with the same individuals who are already on Stewardship Groups and the Adaptive Management Group. Many interviewees said they would join only if there was a need for the group to exist that was expressed clearly and agreed upon by all those involved. Some interviewees asked that the Forest Service be clear about how they

would interact with a collaborative and what the public can expect from the agency, including a statement from the Forest Supervisor in support of the group.

In summary:

- While not all interviewees expressed explicit support or opposition to the idea of a forest wide collaborative, 6 interviewees voiced opposition and 11 interviewees voiced support. Those who did not express support or opposition were able to offer ideas about what the group might look like but were not certain about their support due to the uncertainty about group structure and role.
- Interviewees opposed to the formation of a collaborative cited increased conflict, meeting fatigue, and no clear purpose as reasons for their position.
- Interviewees supportive of the formation of a collaborative cited the ability to discuss larger scale projects, a platform for dialogue, and working across boundaries as reasons for their position.
- Most interviewees mentioned stipulations for support of a forest wide collaborative including the need for a clearly defined role and structure, a true representation of broad interests, and a clear need for the group.

Role

Interviewees provided a wide-range of potential topics and current issues that a forest wide collaborative would be suited to address. Some interviewees suggested planning related topics such as NEPA processes, forest plan revision, and Northwest Forest Plan discussions as potential focuses for a forest wide collaborative. Other interviewees offered specific topics such as Threatened and Endangered species management, monitoring, road decommissioning, thinning regimes, recreation opportunities, large-scale restoration, and climate change adaptation as potential topics for this group to address. Some interviewees suggested that a collaborative could address current issues on the forest related to the Adaptive Management Group, but provide a more open and transparent forum. A handful of interviewees from both the public and the Forest Service offered that the group could serve as a discussion space and a place to clarify the role of public input in forest activities. Interviewees had trouble identifying the types of actions this group would take and mentioned influencing state and local management practices only when prompted by an interviewer.

When asked about whether a forest wide collaborative might come to decisions or present recommendations most interviewees responded that they did not believe it was legal for a group to make decisions regarding the Forest Service. However, many interviewees felt that the group could produce recommendations that the Forest Service would strongly consider and in some instances implement. Some interviewees felt strongly that the Forest Service would need to clearly communicate exactly how they were interpreting and utilizing the collaborative's recommendations so that expectations were met. Some Forest Service employees felt a collaborative might better serve as a place

for discussions to occur rather than a place to decide on or recommend specific actions. One interviewee suggested the group could also serve to monitor outcomes of previous Forest management. High level Forest Service employees expressed comfort with a well-balanced and functioning collaborative making decisions that the Forest Service would act on, but that this would be something to consider after a forest wide collaborative was established. There were mixed sentiments shared amongst Forest Service interviewees toward the influence a forest wide collaborative could have. While some felt that the Forest should try to steer clear of “old forest” management styles and be proactive in soliciting this type of public participation, others worried about potential conflicts that could occur if the Forest did not act in the way a collaborative would like.

In summary:

- Interviewees identified a wide variety of potential topics and current issues that a forest wide collaborative could address.
- Some interviewees had trouble identifying specific actions the group would take.
- Most interviewees felt that the group would provide recommendations rather than decisions to the Forest Service, some also voiced that the group could serve in an advisory role to the Forest Service.
- The Forest Service interviewees provided mixed responses in regards to how much they believe a collaborative could influence the Forest.

Structure

Most interviewees in support of a forest wide collaborative suggested one main collaborative group and subcommittees that would address specific topics or projects. Some Forest Service interviewees expressed concern, however, that committees could become dominated by certain voices or interests, and care should be taken to structure committees in such a way that would ensure balanced participation. That being said, some interviewees felt that the structure of the group should be determined by the collaborative participants themselves after they have been brought together. Some interviewees suggested alternating months of meetings for a forest wide collaborative and Stewardship Groups. Other interviewees felt the collaborative should only meet every quarter. Interviewees provided a mix of perspectives about who would bring topics and information to this group. Some felt that the collaborative would be a platform for the Forest Service to present topics and get feedback while others suggested that any participant should be able to bring an issue up for discussion. Most interviewees recommended the group be organized by a neutral facilitator and that the collaborative would require funding of some sort. A few interviewees mentioned funding sources such as the Forest Service, grants, or utilizing some of the retained receipts money. There were a variety of suggestions provided for housing a paid facilitator. Interviewees cited Cascade Pacific, Sustainable Northwest, and Oregon State University as potential organizations to hire a facilitator through. No interviewees felt strongly that the group use a consensus process and some interviewees felt strongly that consensus not be utilized. In particular, some timber representatives described that consensus processes have often resulted in the

“lowest common denominator” as an outcome for harvesting levels, as environmentalists will continue to block consensus rather than compromise until the harvesting level meets their interest.

Some interviewees offered that evening meeting times, provided food and child care, and translation services would create a more open environment allowing for diverse participation. Overall, interviewees provided a wide-range of ideas regarding the structure of a potential collaborative and felt that the group itself would need to begin by formally defining its role and interpretation of what collaborative means before beginning any work.

Interviewees suggested a list of potential participants almost identical to the Siuslaw National Forest stakeholders identified earlier in this report. However, in addition to the previous list of stakeholders, some interviewees also named the Sierra Club, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, The Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siletz, and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI), non-timber forest product collectors, equestrian organizations, Cape Perpetua interest groups, and individual landowners as potential participants of a forest wide collaborative. Interviewees did not mention local government, counties, elected officials, or state agencies as potential collaborative participants. One interviewee felt that the collaborative should only include scientific stakeholders such as forest ecologists, hydrologists, fisheries biologists, and species specialists. Some interviewees were concerned with broadening the scope of participation too wide because they felt it might invite conflict or individuals who intend to block group progress. Some interviewees expressed doubt that creating a forest wide collaborative would necessarily increase representation, without an extensive and thoughtful outreach strategy. Some felt that increasing representation in Stewardship Groups would need to go hand in hand with inviting broad representation into a forest wide collaborative.

Almost all interviewees felt that if a forest wide collaborative was created, the Stewardship Groups should continue as they currently operate. Some stakeholders vaguely mentioned integrating Stewardship Groups into a collaboration but did not provide concrete examples of how this would be done. Some interviewees referenced declining levels of participation in Stewardship Group meetings as evidence that Stewardship Groups might not need to meet as frequently, which could free up capacity for a forest wide collaborative to meet. One interviewee suggested that the Stewardship Groups and forest wide collaborative could work around each other logistically. Some interviewees expressed that the collaborative might take some of the capacity of Stewardship Group participants but others felt that the participants were getting enough out of Stewardship Group meetings that they would continue to be active participants. Interviewees recommended that a forest wide collaborative set clear boundaries so as not to overlap with Stewardship Group roles.

All interviewees who commented on tribal involvement in a forest wide collaborative stated that it would be up to the tribes regarding how they would participate in such a group. Some expressed that tribes are important partners with a lot of value to add to collaborative partnerships. Most Forest Service interviewees who spoke on this topic also offered that their involvement in a forest wide

collaborative would not impact their government to government relationship with the Forest Service. Some interviewees on the coast noted that tribes have a lot of their own forest management work, but that CTCLUSI has been involved in collaborative projects on the Forest in the past.

Forest Service interviewees identified that they would need to be very clear about their expectations and role within a forest wide collaborative. They also suggested that there was a need for internal restructuring to allow for the capacity to work with a group like this. Some Forest Service interviewees also noted that a paid position such as a Stewardship and Collaboration Coordinator would be very useful. They also cited staff such as Line Officers and Specialists that would need to attend these meetings. Some Forest Service interviewees identified that a forest wide collaborative could reduce some work load for the agency by creating a space for stakeholders to talk to each other and the Forest Service rather than many one on one conversations that the Forest Service then distills. Forest Service interviewees cited that their role in a collaborative would be to help keep momentum by providing opportunities, supply information and field trips, show data and explain knowns and unknowns, inform stakeholders about laws and regulations, answer questions, and be supportive of the public. Multiple interviewees expressed that explicit support of a collaborative by the Forest Supervisor was integral.

In summary:

- The majority of interviewees in support of a forest wide collaborative suggested a structure in which there is a main group and topical subcommittees.
- It was also common for interviewees to suggest that the structure be determined after the stakeholders have convened.
- Interviewees identified a wide range of potential participants but some suggested that the group would need an outreach strategy to diversify participation.
- Most interviewees felt that Stewardship Groups should remain as they are regardless of the formation of a collaborative.
- Forest Service interviewees expressed the need for the Forest to communicate clear roles and expectations to a potential collaborative.

Capacity

Most interviewees mentioned that they currently feel busy with existing meetings. That being said, interviewees also expressed that they would participate if a forest wide collaborative seemed to be productive. A small amount of interviewees mentioned that they might feel pressured to participate if the group was successful in generating recommendations to the Forest Service because they would not want to be left out of that work. One interviewee mentioned that a collaborative could allow Stewardship Groups to only focus on off forest projects and retained receipts. Interviewees offered that online options, resources, and support for participants who are not paid for their time working with the group could be ways to alleviate some capacity concerns. Some organizations mentioned appointing a staff member to be responsible for attending meetings. Other organizations such as Watershed Councils

or Soil and Water Conservation Districts might not currently have sufficient staff time available to participate.

Interviewees mentioned a wide range of logistical barriers that would present challenges in the formation of a forest wide collaborative. Meeting fatigue, workloads, funding, travel, participation, structure, location, child care, language barriers and meeting time were noted as potential barriers. Additionally, interviewees mentioned that location specific interests, unclear roles, trust, and presentation of topics would be challenges that a collaborative would need to address early in its formation.

Many interviewees mentioned that Forest Service staff changes presented challenges such as a lack of institutional memory, trust, and a consistent commitment to collaborate. Some interviewees specifically cited that they felt uncertain about whether the current Forest Supervisor supports collaboration and asked for him to clarify his position in regards to collaboration. Some members of the public mentioned that they felt that Forest Service employees might be too overworked to fully participate in a forest wide collaborative. Forest Service interviewees generally felt that the Siuslaw National Forest culture was ready to collaborate on this scale but that the structure of the Forest would need to shift to allow for staff to properly engage in this way. Some Forest Service interviewees mentioned that they did not want to operate like the “old school Forest Service” and wanted to be proactive about soliciting feedback and recommendations from the public early in the process. Forest Service interviewees did mention that it is challenging for agency staff to accept some scientific information provided by public stakeholders because they must use Best Available Science as defined by the agency. This has led to tension between members of the public that provide this information and the Forest Service.

In summary:

- Interviewees generally feel busy with existing meetings but most felt that if a collaborative had purpose they would make time for some meetings.
- Logistical barriers such as funding, travel, and meeting location were listed by most interviewees.
- Forest Service interviewees generally felt that the Forest was ready to shift towards new processes that would allow for support of collaboratives but that it would be challenging.

ALTERNATIVE PATHS FORWARD

Based on analysis of interview responses, we propose three alternatives as potential paths forward for Siuslaw National Forest stakeholders. The alternatives are: no action, establish a forest wide collaborative, or strengthen Stewardship Groups and place-based collaborative structures. All three alternatives are described along with implementation actions, possible benefits, and potential concerns.

Do Nothing Alternative

This alternative is to implement no changes to structures of engagement and collaboration on the Siuslaw National Forest, and allow the Stewardship Groups to continue functioning business-as-usual, with Cascade Pacific continuing to play a key role in communication and engagement across Stewardship Groups. The following is a list of possible benefits based on interview responses of choosing this alternative.

- Stakeholders who find the Stewardship Group model to be effective and meeting their needs will continue to be satisfied.
- Organizations and agencies that are already limited in capacity to attend Stewardship Group meetings will not need to find ways to increase capacity to attend more meetings.
- There would be no up-front cost of creating a new structure.
- NEPA would continue to be the primary site of forest wide planning, reducing concerns around conflicts of interest and how the Forest Service is and is not able to engage in collaboration.

The following is a list of possible concerns that may come up related to this alternative based on interview responses:

- There would be a continued lack of representation of certain stakeholder groups as described in the interview findings.
- There would be a continued lack of effective engagement venues for dialogue around forest wide issues and Forest plan revisions.
- Environmental stakeholders may continue to grow dissatisfied with engagement opportunities and pursue other means including objections, appeals, and litigation.
- Active participation in Stewardship Groups may continue to decline and structures may weaken.
- Continued frequent turnover among Forest Service staff may weaken relationships in the absence of formal collaborative structures.
- As new science and issues continue to come up, including exacerbated impacts of climate change, there will not be an effective space for dialogue.

Create a Forest Wide Collaborative

This alternative is to establish a new forest wide collaborative group, in order to create a space for forest wide discussions that involve stakeholders from across the forest. This alternative reflects a voiced desire to create a new group that would allow stakeholders to work with the Forest at a larger scale and address topics such as planning, new science, recreation, timber sales, and NEPA processes. The alternative creates a space that does not exist under the current Stewardship Group model and

presents an engagement opportunity for stakeholder groups not currently captured in Stewardship. This alternative also reflects the desired outcome expressed by many Forest Service interviewees.

The following is a list of potential steps to implement this alternative:

- Identify a funding source and organization to house a neutral facilitator and collaborative coordinator.
- Task the facilitator/coordinator with developing a public outreach strategy.
- Convene a group of stakeholders who are interested and invested in a forest wide collaborative.
 - Develop a structure, operating protocols, and clear roles with the stakeholders and facilitator/coordinator.
 - Come up with a system of consensus or compromise that all stakeholders agree to.
 - Work with the Forest Service to establish their role within the collaborative, their support for the collaborative, and expectations of the collaborative and the Forest Service, including what role the collaborative will play in providing recommendations or informing planning processes.
 - Determine how stakeholder groups will be represented, and outreach to groups not currently represented.
- Determine standing meeting time and location.
 - Consider rotating meeting location, and allowing for virtual meetings.
 - To ensure the collaborative is welcoming, provide food, child care, and translation service as necessary.
- Select short and long term goals for the collaborative.
- Delegate projects and tasks to subgroups within the collaborative.
- Host field trips and scientific presentations at meetings to foster discussion and information sharing.

The following is a list of possible benefits to choosing this alternative based on interview responses:

- May create a platform for a diverse range of stakeholders to discuss forest wide topics and projects.
- Could offer a space in which to alleviate across-forest conflict or hold a two way dialogue between the Forest Service and multiple stakeholder groups.
 - Could create a proactive platform to address conflicts that have gone unaddressed previously.
- Could provide an opportunity to involve a more diverse range of Forest stakeholders than has historically engaged in Forest processes.
- May create capacity to engage with forest level planning in a meaningful way.
- May create accountability for both stakeholder groups and the Forest.

The following is a list of concerns that may come up related to this alternative based on interview responses:

- Could further strain capacity of existing stakeholder groups to participate in meetings.
- May present a logistical challenge that would result in barriers for some stakeholders to participate such as distance of travel to meetings or time commitment.
- May result in the Forest Service dedicating more time to engaging with this group and less in one on one relationships with stakeholders.
- Could result in a non-representative group.
- May result in disappointing outcomes for stakeholders or the Forest Service if roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined.
- Would require up-front time and resources to design and implement the structure.
- Could generate or exacerbate conflict among stakeholders by engaging with more contentious issues and bringing together stakeholders who lack existing relationships and local connections with one another.

Strengthen Stewardship Groups and Place-based Collaboration Structures

This alternative involves potential changes to structures and processes that would be folded into the existing model of Stewardship Groups, in order to create venues for dialogue on forest wide issues, planning processes, new science, recreation and timber concerns, among other topics. One possibility listed as an option under this alternative would be to also create place-based collaboratives that would operate on a local scale alongside Stewardship Groups, so the current model of Stewardship Groups would not be affected in any way. This alternative reflects voiced concerns that capacity to travel to meetings in centralized locations is limited, that a forest wide collaborative would not necessarily bring broader representation, and that collaboration tends to be most effective on a local scale. However, it is important to note that many interviewees expressed that the stewardship model is effective and should not change, and only 5-6 interviewees stated explicit support for expanding stewardship group activities. Any implementation of these options should thus likely involve care to not detract from the effectiveness of the existing stewardship group structures.

The following is a list of steps to implement this alternative. These options should be interpreted as menu options that could be selected rather than treated as a bundle.

- Create space at Stewardship Group meetings and the Annual Meeting for dialogue on forest wide issues.
 - Facilitated discussions w/ neutral facilitator (E.g. MAMU, late seral habitat, road densities)
 - Round tables on upcoming NEPA projects

- Presentations by Forest Service, scientists, others
- More field trips (For individual SGs and also for multiple SGs to come together)
- Once new structures are in place, conduct targeted outreach efforts to bring in unrepresented groups including recreation, timber, local community members, government.
- Formalize Zones of Agreement to facilitate more effective dialogue around forest wide issues and allow Stewardship Groups to make unified statements or recommendations to the Forest Service.
- Ensure strong leadership from the Forest Service and clear statements about the role and influence of Stewardship Groups and other engagement venues.
- Create a committee structure to deal with specific topics or issues that need to be addressed at the forest wide scale, and have each SG send a liaison to the committee and report back. Topics could include threatened and endangered species management, roads, fish passage, climate change, etc.
- Increasing online communication and engagement strategies.
 - Create online forums and groups that allow stewardship group participants to communicate with participants of other groups on relevant topics
 - Continue to build and encourage the use of the ESRI Story Map
- Designate place-based collaboratives with boundaries defined such that the entire Forest is covered, and use these structures for engagement on local NEPA projects as well as forest wide planning discussions.
 - *Note that place-based collaboratives did not come up as an option in interviews, thus interviewees did not directly respond to this topic. This idea emerged from discussion among the research team as a possible path forward based on information and concerns expressed in some of the interviews.

The following is a list of possible benefits to choosing this alternative based on interview responses:

- Could build upon the already effective Stewardship Group model and take advantage of locally-based relationships and connection to place.
- Could create structures that would motivate currently unrepresented stakeholders to get involved in Stewardship Groups and give them a place to engage in the Forest.
- Could support Adaptive Management Group's interest in having a place for discussing science without a drastic change in structure, but making these discussions open and transparent.
- Could offer local and flexible meeting options for those who lack the capacity to travel far for meetings.

The following is a list of concerns that may come up related to this alternative based on interview responses:

- Could put a strain on Stewardship Groups and their ability to continue to function on Wyden Authority projects, unless effort was made to increase capacity (a new staff position, AmeriCorps, Forest Service staffing changes)
- Could bring more conflict into Stewardship Groups as more heated topics are opened for discussion.
- Would take a strong outreach effort to access groups or individuals who had already become disenchanted by stewardship group meetings to bring them back in.
- Could be unclear how these structural changes would translate into influence on Siuslaw National Forest decision-making, would require clear and open communication from Forest Service about how they would be interacting with the groups in this new capacity.

Examples of Place-Based Collaboratives and Forest Wide Collaboratives

While not the focus of this report, 12 interviewees and 2 focus groups referenced the structures and scales of forest collaboratives on other National Forests during their interviews. Some interviewees also stressed that the Siuslaw National Forest is unique and that collaborative structures might need to be different than in other places. Here, a few of the forest wide, and place-based collaborations referenced in interviews are summarized. Multiple interviewees recommended that prior to forming a forest wide collaborative, stakeholders and Siuslaw National Forest employees examine potential models for a collaboration of this scale. Unlike the early success of Stewardship Groups on the Siuslaw National Forest, some Forest Service interviewees felt that other National Forests that adopted collaboration more recently have been more flexible in their structure and formation. Some of the Forest Service interviewees mentioned that they had observed more collaborative groups on other National Forests and voiced excitement about what that type of engagement could mean for the Siuslaw National Forest.

Established collaborative groups have noted different dynamics between local, informal collaboration and relationships, and larger scale formalized structures of collaboration. Formalized collaboration is similar to the concept of a forest wide collaborative being discussed in this report. These groups are typically well established and can lead to increased stability and capacity but may create institutionalized power dynamics that reduce the capacity for a community to adapt. Alternatively, informal collaboration is often referred to as “acting collaboratively” through organic dialogue at a local level. While informal collaboration may not result in the formation of groups, it still leads to increased levels of engagement and trust building. Both established and informal collaboration are important to a forest community’s success and resilience and play a role depending on the goals of the Forest at the time. With that in mind, three forest collaborations across the west operating at a variety of scales from largest to smallest, and two existing collaborative groups on the Siuslaw National Forest, are described below.

Four Forest Restoration Initiative

The [Four Forest Restoration Initiative](#) (4fri) formed in 2009 and is the largest forest restoration project in the country covering a 2.4 million-acre swath of forest including four National Forests: Kaibab, Coconino, Apache-Sitgreaves, and Tonto. 4fri is also a Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project. The goal of 4fri is to restore Arizona's ponderosa pine forests at the landscape scale. An interviewee with previous experience working with this group described it as comprising of over 30 stakeholder groups, a Board and Charter, as well as at least five workgroups such as communications and monitoring. The group completes large scale restoration projects including EIS and NEPA processes in partnership with the National Forests. They are also partnered with the Forest Service in the Stewardship Contracting Process. The Forest Service provides monthly updates for 4fri to highlight the progress for mechanical thinning and prescribed burning across the project area.

Blue Mountains Forest Partners

[The Blue Mountain Forest Partners](#) (BMFP) emerged out of a discussion between an environmental attorney, Grant County Commissioner, and diverse individuals from the community in regards to the Malheur National Forest and surrounding area. Sustainable Northwest provides assistance to this group, which is a 501(c)(3). Stakeholder groups represented on the BMFP include: loggers, environmentalists, ranchers, landowners, timber industry, elected officials, and federal land managers. The group has developed zones of agreement for forest restoration. BMFP operates with a Board and committees. The group also has an Operations Manual, Communication Protocol, Bylaws, Strategic Plan, and Zones of Agreement. One Forest Service interviewee also noted that the Malheur National Forest has a position tasked with engaging with collaborative groups. In a [2018 assessment](#) of the BMFP, researchers found that the group's successes have occurred in stages during which the group first builds trust and then moves towards agreements and restoration outcomes. Researchers concluded that some of the challenges the BMFP faced were unstable funding, interpersonal challenges caused by Forest Service and stakeholder group turnover, antagonism from outside entities, larger projects, and coordinating between agencies and the collaborative.

Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative

The [Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative](#) formed in order to address economic decline by promoting restoration-based approaches to ecological and economic community issues in the Southern Middle Fork District of the Willamette National Forest. Some identified goals are to support the community firewood program, address recreation needs and goals, and to add value to forest restoration projects. The Collaborative has a steering committee consisting of nine diverse stakeholders and two dedicated staff who coordinate, facilitate, and conduct outreach for the group. In addition to the steering committee, the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative is made up of committees and projects which draw interested stakeholders to participate. The group also serves in the role of Stewardship Group, determining the use of off-forest retained receipt dollars. In a [2015 report](#), researchers summarized Stewardship Contracting trends on the Siuslaw National Forest at the request

of the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative, which was interested in understanding the history and trends of the timber sales in their region. A Forest Service interviewee cited this group as a successful example of a partnership between a National Forest and community collaborative. Recently, the collaborative worked alongside the Forest Service to engage in a NEPA process, holding eight field trips and involving the Supervisor and District Ranger.

Existing Collaboratives on the Siuslaw National Forest

While the Siuslaw National Forest does not currently have a forest wide collaborative or place-based collaboration outside of the Stewardship Groups, there are examples of collaboration occurring across the forest. It can be extremely beneficial to look at existing collaboration on the Siuslaw National Forest because these groups have emerged in the specific historical context of the region. Unlike many National Forests, the Siuslaw has great success with restoration projects in great part due to the success of the Stewardship Groups. The Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative is an effort to preserve the sand dunes of the Siuslaw National Forest. The group is comprised of diverse stakeholder groups including tribes, elected officials, environmental nonprofits, federal land management agencies, state agencies, watershed councils, and members of the public. In addition to regular stakeholder meetings, the group holds volunteer days meant to engage the general public. Interviewees gave mixed responses in terms of the sustainability and cohesion of the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative but many pointed to it as an example of a place-based collaboration on the National Forest. Interviewees also mentioned a local collaboration forming in Cascade Head and a forest wide collaborative group that may have existed in the past but were unable to provide details about either group.

Conclusion

The Siuslaw National Forest holds a rich history of engaging diverse stakeholders in collaborative decision making, and transforming conflict into an opportunity for new paradigms of management and stakeholder engagement. There is much to learn from the successes and challenges of other examples of forest collaboratives, while it is also important to take into account the unique qualities of the Siuslaw National Forest, its history, and its successful stewardship contracting model. The findings presented are intended to provide a launching point for future dialogue on how to move forward with possible new structures, venues, and processes for collaboration on the Siuslaw National Forest. Interviews revealed that stakeholders generally feel invested and involved in Siuslaw National Forest management planning and would like to be involved in the process of designing new collaborative structures. Throughout the process, clear, open, and transparent communication and frequent involvement of stakeholders will help generate solutions that function for all those involved, while fostering the trust and buy-in necessary for long-term implementation. We have identified the following immediate next steps following the completion of this report:

- Disseminate this report widely to agency staff, Stewardship Group participants and other interviewees.

- Facilitate discussions on the report findings among agency staff and Cascade Pacific to determine logistical steps that would need to be taken to implement alternatives.
- Facilitate discussions among Stewardship Groups on the report findings to gauge support for the different alternatives.
- Consult with organizations that may have the capacity to contract and support a neutral facilitator.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Stewardship Groups

- Goals/role of stewardship groups
 - What are the main goals of your stewardship groups?
 - Which goals are most important to you?
 - How well are those goals being achieved?
 - How does the stewardship group benefit your stakeholder group?
 - Why are certain goals not being achieved?
 - What are the barriers?
 - Are there competing interests among participants of your stewardship group?
 - How are they currently being resolved?
 - What should your stewardship group be doing that they're not currently doing?
 - What are some of the timber sales and restoration projects that your stewardship group has completed?
 - What are some unanticipated benefits or consequences that this stewardship group has had?
 - Has the group had any impact on local or state policy? Forest management? Other collaborations? Economics? Culture?
- Diversity of stakeholders
 - Of the stakeholders represented in your stewardship group, which are most vocal or active?
 - Which stakeholders are least vocal or active?
 - Which stakeholders are not represented? Do you think they should be represented?
 - Are there certain stakeholders that currently have a strong influence on stewardship group decisions and processes?
 - Why do you think they have this influence?
 - Are there certain stakeholders that play a large role in deciding what topics are discussed in your stewardship group?
 - Is there a time when you did not feel comfortable sharing your concerns or opinions in the stewardship group?
 - *To tribal affiliated only:*
 - How does working with the stewardship group benefit your tribe?
 - Is traditional ecological knowledge utilized or incorporated in the activities and decisions of the stewardship group? If so, in what ways?

Siuslaw National Forest at large activities

- Represented stakeholders
 - In the context of the Siuslaw National Forest what stakeholder/interest group do you identify with or belong to?
 - Which stakeholders are represented in Siuslaw NF decision-making?

- Which stakeholders are not represented in Siuslaw NF decision-making?
 - Do you think they should be represented?
- Can you identify specific individuals or organizations, who are not current Forest Service employees, that have influence on Siuslaw NF decision-making?
- Are you aware of recent USFS decisions on the Siuslaw NF?
 - Do you think that recent USFS decisions on the Siuslaw NF reflect your needs as a stakeholder?
- Do you think that members of the public have equal access to Siuslaw NF decision-making processes?
 - How do members of the public have access to Siuslaw NF decision-making processes?
 - Which members of the public have the most/least access in your opinion?
- Information channels
 - Where do you get your information about Siuslaw NF management activities from?
 - Is this sufficient to meet your needs?
 - Do you feel well-informed?
 - Where do you get your information about stewardship group activities from?
 - Is this sufficient to meet your needs?
 - Do you feel well-informed?
- Engagement opportunities
 - In which venues do you participate in Siuslaw NF decision-making?
 - Do you submit public comments? Attend meetings?
 - How well do these venues address your needs as a stakeholder?
- Sources of conflict
 - Can you identify any competing interests on the Siuslaw NF?
 - How are they currently being resolved?

forest wide collaborative

Read: An idea has been proposed to create a forest wide collaborative on the Siuslaw National Forest which would include stakeholders from across the region and members of the U.S Forest Service.

- Are you familiar with this idea?

If not familiar, provide further description of what is a forest wide collaborative: A forest wide collaborative might include stakeholders from the U.S. Forest Service, private industry, non-government agencies, state and local government, special interest groups, and general members of the public. They might convene to discuss issues and management of the Siuslaw National Forest at the broad scale. This group could serve as a decision-making or recommendation providing body.

- Role
 - What issues do you think a forest wide collaborative could address?
 - Are there any current issues on the Siuslaw National Forest that a forest wide collaboration would address?
 - What kinds of decisions or recommendations would this group produce?

- Do you envision a forest wide collaborative impacting any of the following: local policy, state policy, local collaboration, forest management, restoration, the local economy, local culture?
 - What type of impact would this group have on the categories you identified?
- Structure
 - What structures/formats would need to be in place for a forest wide collaborative to be effective in addressing the issues/actions you have identified?
 - Who do you envision participating in a forest wide collaborative?
 - *[For USFS staff only]* How do you think tribes should be involved in a forest wide collaborative in ways that are different than other stakeholder groups?
 - *[For stewardship group participants and USFS only]* How do you envision stewardship groups working alongside a forest wide collaborative?
 - How might a forest wide collaborative impact your stewardship group?
- Support
 - Would you support the creation of a Siuslaw forest wide collaborative?
 - Why/ why not?
 - Under what stipulations?
- Capacity
 - Would you participate in a forest wide collaborative?
 - What challenges do you foresee in the formation and administration of a forest wide collaborative?

(If the interviewee is not a current stewardship group participant proceed to “Final Questions”. If the interviewee is a current stewardship group participant skip to the sections “Zones of Agreement” and proceed.)

Final questions:

- **Question** : Is there anything else you would like to add about XXX
- **Question** : Who else would you recommend we speak to for this research?

Read: Thank you for volunteering your time to participate in this research. Upon completion of data analysis and summary we will share generalized results to all interview participants. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns.

(The following section of questions titled “Zones of Agreement” should only be administered to current stewardship group participants.)

Zones of agreement:

Read: Some forest collaboratives have established zones of agreement that help their group reach consensus. Zones of agreement are simply areas of shared interest that the stakeholders of your group all agree to. They can serve as a guide during complex decision-making processes. We are NOT

attempting to formalize a zones of agreement document for your stewardship group, these questions will be used to inform our analysis of the current state of the five stewardship contracting groups.

- Agreement
 - Can you identify broad issues or topics that you think all participants agree upon?
 - Are these agreed upon issues or topics reflected in the decisions of X?
- Disagreement
 - Can you identify specific issues or topics that you think there is current disagreement over?
 - Can you identify specific issues or topics that you think could be cause for future disagreement?
- Blocking issues
 - What are some of the things that have blocked your stewardship group from reaching consensus?
- ZOA
 - Do you think X would benefit from a process of defining zones of agreement?
 - Why/ why not?

Final questions:

- **Question** : Is there anything else you would like to add about XXX
- **Question** : Who else would you recommend we speak to for this research?

Read: Thank you for volunteering your time to participate in this research. Upon completion of data analysis and summary we will share generalized results to all interview participants. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns.