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The Public Land Manager in Collaborative Conservation Planing: A Comparative Analysis of Three Case Studies in Montana

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THE PUBLIC LAND MANAGER IN COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION

PLANNING: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE CASE STUDIES IN

MONTANA

By

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ABSTRACT

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Analysis of Three Case Studies in Montana

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  Collaborative Conservation Planning (CCP) has proven to create solutions to challenges
many Montana and Americans face with protecting or restoring their natural resources
and rural lifestyles from previous non-sustainable land use practices and rural land
development. This planning model has proven to be successful when organized groups
consisting of multiple stakeholders come together to find common ground and address
decreased biodiversity, fragmented habitat, threatened traditional farming, timber, and
ranching rural lifestyles through open space protection and restoration efforts.
  The Public Land Manager's (PLM) part in the CCP process is seemingly important
because of their influence and the unique and diverse roles they play as a stakeholder.
The planning processes and outcomes can be greatly affected by these factors. As PLMs
become more engaged in these collaborative planning endeavor a better understanding is
needed of the roles they play in such efforts. Therefore, this study investigates the various
roles PLMs play in CCP in the context of three different conservation initiatives in
Montana. These initiatives include The Blackfoot Challenge, The Madison Valley
Ranchlands Group, and The Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts. These three groups
represent different ownership compositions of the land with which they are concerned.
  A qualitative approach is used in this research. Interviews were conducted with
participants from each of the three collaborative groups. Through content analysis,
different themes emerged that bring to light relationships between individual PLMs, what
resources PLMs provide to collaborative initiative, agency structure, and the influence
these three factors have on collaborative processes and outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

"You cannot save the land apart from the people or the people apart from the land.

To save either, you must save both" (Wendell Berry 1995).

Problem Statement / Purpose of Study

Montanans face many challenges when it comes to conserving and protecting

their natural resources and rural lifestyles. Previous unsustainable land use practices

have decreased biodiversity and productivity in many areas. Industrial resource extraction

has polluted rivers, fragmented habitat, and exhausted timber supplies to the point that

local economies have failed in some regions of the state. Rural residential development

is also fragmenting the landscape, and at the same time it threatens the traditional

farming, timber, and ranching lifestyles to which many rural Montanans identify.

Feeling the pressures of these threats, individuals and groups have sought out

different methods for dealing with these challenges. One method that has proven to be

successful is Collaborative Conservation Planning (CCP) where organized groups

consisting of multiple stakeholders are formed to address the challenges they face.

Variously termed *"Community Based Environmental Planning," "Collaborative*

Community-Based Planning," "Civic Environmentalism" or *"Collaborative*

Conservation Initiatives," CCP can be broadly defined as a cooperative process

undertaken by the stakeholders of a given area in which they work together to resolve a

natural resource problem, create a new policy, or develop a management plan (Cestero

1999).

For the collaborative process to be successful, all stakeholders must be

represented and provided equal opportunities and voice. The Public Land Managers'

(PLM) part in the CCP process is seemingly important because of their uniqueness as a stakeholder, influence, and the diverse roles they play in a collaborative group. The planning processes and outcomes can be greatly affected by these factors. For instance, PLMs at times can act as facilitators for opposing groups in order to help them develop consensus on land management issues. PLMs can also help conservation organizations to procure funding for their work and are therefore essential to conservation strategies. Other times, organizations may work with PLMs in order to change a federal land policy. Additionally, PLMs have been active and equal stakeholders in conservation planning in cases where public lands have been included in conservation strategies. With more governmental actors and institutions at the federal, state, and local levels becoming engaged in collaborative environmental management, a better understanding of the roles they play in such efforts is needed (Koontz et al. 2004).

The purpose of this research is to help bring further understanding of the various roles of PLMs in CCP. These roles of PLMs are explored in the context of three different conservation initiatives in Montana. This study also examines the relationship between the "Individual" PLM, the resources they provide to collaborative initiatives, the agency structure are apart of, and the influence these three factors have on collaborative processes and outcomes.

Description of the Research

This research focuses on three placed-based conservation projects or initiatives by three different groups that have used CCP to develop conservation plans in response to the natural resource and development pressures mentioned above. The three groups are: The Blackfoot Challenge (TBC), The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group (MVRG), and

The Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts (YVCE). These three groups are rather different in terms of patterns of ownership (i.e., public vs. private) of the lands with which they are concerned (i.e., land ownership regimes). The lands falling under the MVRG's field of view are mostly private (though linkages to public lands are important), while those corresponding to the YVCE are mostly public land. In the case of the TBC, there is mixed ownership of both public and private lands. This array provides a unique platform to carefully examine overlapping and contrasting stakeholder perspectives concerning the role of the PLM within and between the groups. Additionally, these three groups have been successful in reaching decisions and in developing and implementing plans for the conservation of land and resources in rather different environments and landscapes.

This research employs a comparative case study focusing on the three conservation initiatives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five to six key stakeholders from each initiative to collect qualitative data concerning the role of PLMs in these projects. Transcriptions of the interviews were subjected to content analysis to identify similarities and differences in perceptions concerning the role of PLMs. The findings, suggest several lessons that can aid other similar conservation efforts and projects, as well as other PLMs engaged in such work.

Research Questions

Given the fact that CCP projects are multi-faceted, involve different sets and types of stakeholders, and can be affected by different factors, the role of the PLM may vary from one project to the next. To explore these dynamics and also to identify similarities between projects and/or groups some important questions concerning their

roles are considered here. These questions, which were incorporated into the interview

guide that was used in the interviews, include:

- What are stakeholder perceptions of what the role of PLMs should be in

  collaborative conservation planning?

- Why have PLMs participated in CCP?

- How has the PLM participated in the collaborative process?

- What are positive attributes or contributions of PLMs that have added to the

  successes of CCP?

- Where and how have the PLMs been the most useful in CCP?

- What challenges exist in working with PLMs in collaboration?

- How have PLMs affected the collaborative planning process and outcomes?

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter provides theoretical background and literature review on Collaborative Conservation Planning. In this, an explanation of the emergence of collaborative planning in public land management, a theoretical framework of collaborative planning, and definition of "community" and its relevance with collaboration is provided.

Emergence of Collaboration in Public Land Management

Collaborative Conservation Planning (PLM) is rooted in collaborative planning theory. Collaboration is associated with the communicative planning model that emerged in the 1960s in response to inadequacies in the modernist's planning approach with respect to dealing with economic, social, and environmental injustices (Sandercock 2004). Since its emergence, collaborative theory has evolved and is used in numerous applications, one of which is CCP. As a multitude of literature shows, many theorists have helped to develop this planning model by defining and interpreting its meaning and implementation. Today, CCP is being used to develop conservation strategies and land management decisions across diverse landscapes and property regimes that involve multiple stakeholders at the ecosystem and/or landscape levels.

The PLM has played an historic role in collaborative planning beginning with alternative models of public participation. Early models were less participatory in that the PLMs role was primarily to develop management plans and decisions using public comment. Later, the PLM became more of a participant and active stakeholder in citizen driven conservation initiatives. Thus, the role of the PLM has evolved from serving as an instigator of limited collaboration via congressional mandates to a role as an equal

stakeholder. Examples of both situations are still shown in practice today in all levels of government (i.e., local, state, and federal). A significant body of literature has developed regarding the PLM's role in CCP, and it is useful to explore this in order to better understand how they affect planning processes and outcomes in a collaborative setting. Additionally, this review of the literature aids in identifying areas requiring further research on this topic.

In the United States, agency practices and policies concerning how PLMs make decisions that affect land management have gone through a series of changes dating back to the late eighteenth century; these changes have led to using the collaborative planning process for such decisions. Federal policy shifted from land disposal in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to expert-led conservation and preservation during the progressive and modern eras, then to a process involving frequent litigation and court enforced regulation after 1970, and more recently to collaborative endeavors (Koontz et al. 2004). Though all of these layers in history aided in the development of the PLM's role in collaboration, a more direct correlation can be seen as a result of litigation stemming from the U.S. Forest Service's excessive timber harvesting practices [after 1970] (Koontz et al. 2004).

After much controversy and litigation over timber management, the U.S. Congress responded with three laws that opened federal land management to the public. The 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the 1973 Endangered Species Act, and the 1976 National Forest Management Act (NFMA) created a new body of law directing the Forest Service to incorporate environmental assessment and protection into its policies. Most significantly, though, these laws expanded the opportunity for the

public to affect Forest Service decision-making by inviting citizens to comment on plans, as well as creating avenues for appealing agency decisions (Koontz et al. 2004).

It was the power of legal appeals that the public was given and used in the seventies and eighties that later led to collaborative efforts. Environmentalists won major victories in courts, and ongoing battles among timber interests, environmentalists, and federal land management agencies over public land management created enormous conflict and administrative deadlock (Koontz et al. 2004). Administrative deadlock became unacceptable to some groups, and at the local level, collaborative groups began to emerge to find ways to move beyond conflict (Snow 2001; Brunner et al. 2002). In this new collaborative approach, environmental management shifted to combine multiple stakeholder interests, perspectives, preferences, and knowledge in arriving at collaborative decisions about public land management (Mullner et al. 2001). Following the lead of these localized community-based collaborations; in the early 1990s the Clinton administration began encouraging federal land management agencies to participate in these collaborative efforts (Koontz et al. 2004). Later, Congress provided authority and direction to federal agencies to collaborate with each other and with the public (Koontz et al. 2004).

Policies and the desire to reduce conflict have reshaped the way the PLM conducts business in land management by developing collaborative measures that enable them to be effective stakeholders. This reshaping requires the PLM to become even more involved in collaborative environmental management and move beyond simply seeking and analyzing public comment. Increasingly, the PLM is involved in a multitude of collaborative initiatives. However, this evolution has spread outside of public lands and

now collaborative efforts between PLMs with the public are being seen across multiple land ownership mixes of federal, state, and/or private lands resulting in sustainable solutions to social, economic, and environmental issues at the ecosystem and/or landscape scales. Together, stakeholders in these land ownership regimes are sharing values, land management objectives, and plans to address environmental, economic, and rural lifestyle concerns. In the three cases examined in this research, both public and private land management collaborative efforts are addressed In order to discover the differences and similarities in the PLM's role in each.

Theoretical Framework for Collaborative Planning

In response to perceived shortcomings of the modernist approach to planning and lack of effective public participation, a series of models were developed to bring social and environmental justice concerns to focus in the planning world where they had been previously overlooked or neglected. These included the advocacy planning model, the radical political economy model, the equity-planning model, the radical planning model, and the social learning and communicative action models (Sandercock, 2004). These models were successful in helping to fulfill the postmodernist's intentions of bringing equality, but was the social learning and communicative action models did the most to bring about collaborative planning and found a niche within natural resource management.

The communicative model, also referred to as the theory of communicative rationality, is mostly credited to the ideas of Jurgen Habermas a German philosopher and sociologist. Habermas was trained in the tradition of critical theory and American pragmatism; these represent the philosophical underpinnings of the communicative

model. In essence, Habermas regards human rationality as being dependent on necessary outcomes of successful communication. Healey (1996, 239) explains:

> A communicative conception of rationality…replaces that of self-conscious autonomous subject using principles of logic and scientifically formulated empirical knowledge to guide actions. This new conception of reasoning is arrived at by an inter-subjective effort at mutual understanding. This refocuses the practices of planning to enable purposes to be communicatively discovered.

Habermas expressed these ideals in 1981 in his book *The Theory of Communicative Action*. It was from this work that other planning theorists took communicative rational theory and applied it to a planning model.

Susan Fainstein describes the role or function of the planner within the communicative model as "primarily to listen to people's stories and assist in forging a consensus among differing viewpoints" (Fainstein 2000, 175). Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence. Leadership consists not in bringing stakeholders around to a particular planning outcome but in getting people to agree and ensuring that whatever the position of participants within the socio-economic hierarchy, no group's interest will dominate (Fainstein 2000).

The terms "communicative" and "collaborative" have arguably been considered to have the same meaning. Though subtle differences in the terms have been identified because of their general use and in-depth philosophical examination by Tedwr-Jones and Allemendiger in *Communicative Planning and the Post-Positivist Planning Theory Landscape* (2002), the meanings are generally the same. The term collaboration was frequently used in the past, but its popularity and use increased as more research and literature emerged in the 1990s.

The works of John Forester (1989) and Patsy Healey (1996), as well as Susan

Fainstein (2000), have added much to collaborative planning theory. One of the most

interesting and important is the concept of local knowledge and its role in planning

decisions and implementation. In the past, the only knowledge that was considered to be

useful was institutional scientifically based knowledge and fact grounded in an objective

approach to planning. Forester describes the approach to planning coming from the

collaborative model as a form of "critical listening." Healey adds to this the concept of

"empowerment" of local citizens in a planning process through people's involvement.

And Fainstein embellishes further by having planners listen and articulate (2000).

Together, the three touch on the use of subjective local knowledge in planning by

listening to local knowledge, using it, and in turn, empowering a community. This

approach can produce superb outcomes when it comes to achieving consensus and a

community's acceptance of a plan and overall sustainability.

Owing to the work of Forester, Healey, and others, the collaborative planning

model has made a quiet revolution in the planning world. The literature is filling with

articles, concepts, and case studies of its use in diverse applications ranging from

community to environmental contexts. However, the combination of community and

environmental planning together has proven time and time again to be an area where the

collaborative planning model is popular and successful. This has been shown in three

case study examples in this research where past non-sustainable resource extraction and

land use practices, as well as rural development, have resulted in associated

environmental impacts and cultural lifestyle changes. To mitigate such impacts and

balance viable rural economies that depend on natural resources is a planning challenge

for communities, planners, and government entities. Adding to this challenge is the

multitude of concerns and values that stakeholders of rural communities may express

concerning how their environments and landscapes should be planned for and managed

while at the same time balancing these ideas on a national level. In response to these

challenges, CCP has been utilized.

Defining "Community" In the Context of Collaborative Conservation Planning

In examining the literature on CCP with attention to how it is defined and how it

functions, one can see that many interpretations are dependent on the type of community

that is involved in the process, the mix of stakeholders, and how they both apply the

process to resolve issues. It can be shown that there is a strong correlation between type

of *community* and what the CCP process focuses on. For example, ranching communities

may address livestock impacts on the land while timber based communities may focus on

sustainably harvesting fiber, and communities that have witnessed years of

nonsustainable land use practices may have a strong focus on restoration. This, in effect,

may determine what role the PLM plays within this planning process. Community can be

a troublesome term to define because of numerous variables that determine its definition.

In the simple sense, community is a feeling of belonging. However, the manner

in which we define our community determines who is in and who is out (Cestero 1999).

Oxford University Press (2007) defines a community in general terms as "a group of

people living together in one place… the holding of certain attitudes and interests in

common." When researching CCP, the region in which it is being conducted needs to be

clearly understood; since CCP is typically employed in a community-based setting, the

scale of the "one place" and the "attitudes and interests in common" needs further

consideration. As Cestero points out, there are two ways of defining community that narrow the focus of these general descriptions as they are applied to CCP. They are "*community of place*" and the "*community of interest*" (Cestero 1999).

Community of place is described as the social, economic and environmental relationships that exist among people within a certain geographic area or place. It is not a homogenous community because geography only partly describes the associations that many experience as community (Cestero 1999). Community of interest offers another way of understanding what unites individuals. These communities are not rooted in geographic proximity, but instead are fostered through a shared identity derived from a common interest (Cestero 1999). Once the type of community is determined, the stakeholders and their input in the collaborative process can more easily be identified. Interactions of the community and stakeholders are what define the numerous interpretations of CCP. This may also help to define or determine the PLM's place in community based CCP projects.

During the progressive era, Benton MacKaye, was one of the first to attempt to introduce collaborative community-based processes, in the form of "community forestry", into the U.S.'s institutionalized land management framework. This came in response to the poor and harsh working conditions of forest workers and the excessive unsustainable cut-and-run logging practices at the time. In his article "Some social aspects of forest management" published in 1918 in the *Journal of Forestry*, MacKaye promotes the integration of community sustainability with the practice of forestry through the practices, goals, and objectives developed through community forestry to redress those issues. This involves community-based and participatory collective decision-

making processes, communal resource ownership, the development of local knowledge and its use in sophisticated resource management regimes, explicit linkages between collective identity and resource stewardship, and the search for equitable, just, and stable institutional arrangements for managing public forests (Baker and Kusel, 2003). These ideals of community forestry resonate with those of CCP given its social and environmental concerns. It was not until the shortcomings of the rational modernist planning model became apparent that these ideas came to fruition.

Defining Ecosystem Management in Relation to Collaborative Conservation Planning

It is hard to avoid the concept of ecosystem management when studying CCP especially where conservation efforts incorporate such a wide array of landowners who might have different management objectives for their lands. Ecosystems defy political and property boundaries; they ignore state, tribal, and municipal boundaries, private property lines, and agency jurisdictions. Collaboration is an approach to bridging the boundaries that subdivide ecosystems so that ecosystem management decisions can be informed and effective. Collaboration enables the solving of problems that one agency, landowner, scientist or group cannot solve alone, and it has proven to be a critical element of ecosystem management (Ecosystem Management Initiative 2008). However, in saying this, there are still the factors of social concerns and values as well as providing economically desirable outcomes for local communities embedded in ecosystems. The belief that social, cultural, and economic systems are intertwined with biological problems and their solutions is widely accepted by the conservation community (Keough et. al 2005).

Without addressing the socio-economic concerns of people within an affected area, sustainable ecosystem management decisions are challenging to reach because there is more likely than not a lack of acceptance from the populace of the area under consideration. The integration of social, economical, and ecosystem concerns are a difficult balancing act in that no one factor should dominate over the others. The basis of these three factors is the foundation of sustainability in today's terms. Creating balance in the sustainability puzzle has proven successful with the use of collaborative decision-making involving PLMs and non-PLMs alike. In addition to balancing ecological and socioeconomic factors, Meffe et al. (2002) argue that ecosystem management must include the 'institutional context." PLMs should strive for the "zone of win-win partnerships" through collaborative approaches, which they argue is the "fundamental challenge of ecosystem management" (Meffe et al. 2002). The end result can be sustainable stewardship of ecosystems through the use of consensus building and integration of multiple diverse partnerships incorporating social and economic values. Additionally, when local communities and other stakeholders are empowered through ongoing involvement in collaborative processes, participants can develop a sense of responsibility for the successful implementations to meet established goals (Kemmis 1990).

Referring to this research, the idea of integrating the three factors of sustainable outcomes (social, economic, and ecosystem) through collaborative planning fits well with the case studies examined in this research because they all aim at achieving unified conservation success across multiple property ownerships. The idea of ecosystem

management surfaces numerous times through the data analyzed and is sometimes referred to "The Big Picture".

Public Land Manager's Role in Collaborative Conservation Planning

Though PLMs have played a role in CCP since the early 20th century, literature that builds on the work of MacKaye and that specifically addresses CCP is limited. It is not until more recently that such literature has emerged, and though this is limited it still bears examination.

Tomas M. Koontz et al. (2004) have provided a contemporary perspective of the role of the PLM in collaborative environmental management. Their book *Collaborative Environmental Management: What Roles for Government?* (Koontz et al. 2004) provides a cross comparative case study involving government entities in collaboration, which identifies three different PLM roles in collaboration: "government as followers," "government as encouragers," and "government as leaders." Each role is examined in the context of each case (which include watershed, wildlife, and conservation planning projects throughout the U.S.) to determine the influence the PLM has over the total process. Findings show that governments, as actors and as institutions, have subtle but noticeable effects that influence issue definition, resources for collaboration, group structure and decision-making processes, and collaborative outcomes. The cases further indicate that the impact of governmental institutions and actors in the above factors vary depending on their role. All cases reveal several general patterns of the PLM. First, collaborations are subject to strong and pervasive influences from governmental institutions. Second, individual governmental actors can moderate some of the effects of governmental institutions. And third, governmental institutions also create parameters

that make it possible for governmental actors to temper the impact of institutions on these activities (Koontz et al. 2004). This research will add to Koontz et al.'s (2004) findings especially in regard to conservation planning in the Western U.S, but will add a more specific focus on the individual PLM.

In their book *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*, Julia Wondolleck and Steven Yaffee (2000) address many aspects of natural resource collaborative planning. Most relevant to this research is their acknowledgment of the need for a new efficient and effective means of natural resource management in which agencies must gain and employ knowledge based on a multitude of information and values in order to make "right choices." In respect to this research, these authors are supportive in that they note:

> one of the reasons that the public resource management agencies got into so much trouble in the 1970s and 1980s was that their expertise and values base became outdated…They [government agencies] need to update the skills of their current workforce by accessing a host of education resources, including those in universities and other agencies (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 41).

Interview responses in this research will answer Wondolleck and Yaffees' call by providing suggestions and recommendations that aim at making PLMs more effective in collaborative processes.

Wondolleck and Yaffee also provide perspective for agencies as a whole, and individual employee, as to what they may expect and how to be effective in a collaborative process. They give an objective description of what PLMs must go through, and commit to, in order to reach success. The authors note that agency leaders, by imagining collaborative possibilities, enabling and encouraging employees, evaluating efforts at building bridges, and being committed to the process, can provide a foundation

for a more effective and engaged relationship with the world around them. Each of these

elements needs to be adapted to an agency's specific management situation (Wondolleck

and Yaffee 2000). These ideas will be explored in the research in that new information

will be provided that bridges the works of Koontz and Wondolleck and Yaffee. In doing

so, this research will examine the "Individual PLMs," how they have participated in

collaborative processes, and the factors that define where and how much they can

participate in collaborative endeavors.

Barb Cestero, in her book *Beyond the Hundredth Meeting: A Field Guide to

Collaborative Conservation on the West's Public Lands* (1999), focuses on public land

initiatives because these are the efforts where collaboration seems to be the most

confusing and the most contentious. Her publication is a resource guide for PLMs, policy

makers, conservation organizations, resource users, charitable foundations, and

community leaders in collaborative and community-based approaches to land

management. It provides three key contributions to the literature on CCP. First the book

provides a taxonomy that differentiates between two categories of collaborative efforts

(place/community based and policy/interest based). Second, it offers a series of case

studies that illustrate the key characteristics of each type of public land collaboration as

well as important lessons learned. And finally, it offers a list of essential ingredients for

constructive collaboration involving public land issues.   Cestero (1999, 75) notes:

> Agency participation – but not dominations – is an essential ingredient of
> effective public land collaborations…While federal land managers must legally
> retain final decision-making authority for public land, they can be involved in a
> collaborative effort as an equal participant in order to shape a plan or project that
> meets their legal mandates.

The literature discussed here provides understanding of some of the ways PLMs interface with collaborative initiatives. This research will use these sources and build on them to provide further understanding on the subject at hand. The next section provides baseline information on the different case studies examined.

CASE DESCRIPTIONS

Case Study descriptions are provided in the following. They consist of The Blackfoot Challenge, The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group, and The Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts.

The Blackfoot Challenge

The Blackfoot Challenge (TBC) is situated in the setting of Norman McClean's (1976) *A River Runs Through It,* in the Blackfoot River Valley of Montana. TBC is a collaborative group whose purpose is "to coordinate efforts that will enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Blackfoot River Valley for present and future generations" (The Blackfoot Challenge, 2007).

The group was formed in response to historical land use practices that have led to degraded environmental quality. The area has a unique and abundant biodiversity that has endured a long history of poor mining, logging and grazing practices. The cumulative impact of such land-use activities has degraded water quality in the Blackfoot watershed, resulting in a declining fishery and reduced angling opportunities. Today, fragmentation of the landscape into subdivisions, summer home sites, golf courses, and other commercial developments poses a much more serious, long-term threat to the species and their habitat in this area (The Blackfoot Challenge, 2007). Adding to this threat divesture of thousands of acres of Plum Creek Timber Company's timberlands into the real estate market. This divesture and subsequent change in ownership has the potential to increase land fragmentation and restrict public access to the currently open timberlands.

Concerns over these impacts drew community members and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service together. A relationship between the agency and key community leaders

began. Community meetings were held to identify local resource concerns, priorities, and opportunities to work together. Short-term on-the-ground projects that addressed local resource concerns were established through the commitment of both the community and Fish and Wildlife Service. Eventually, the successes of this relationship went further by opening opportunities to create conservation easements on private land in order to protect important habitat from being fragmented by development. These easements also allowed landowners to continue their traditional agricultural lifestyle and maintain the rural character of the area.

As projects and potential partners grew, the need for a more coordinated strategy was identified; The Blackfoot Challenge organization was formed and guided by a diverse steering committee to represent all the interests in the watershed. Today, collaborative efforts have grown to include multiple federal agencies, local governments and their agencies, the Plum Creek Timber Company, and other non-profit organizations. Land ownership in the watershed is 49% federal, 5% State of Montana, 20% Plum Creek Timber Company, and 24% other private. Collaborative efforts aim at joining the interests of the representative land ownerships into sustainable solutions to issues the watershed faces.

The Blackfoot Challenge is a multi-layered organization with an executive committee, a board of directors, and six subcommittees that address specific resource issues in the watershed. The subcommittees consist of the Education, Conservation Strategy, Drought and Water Conservation, Habitat and Water Quality Restoration, Weed, and Wildlife Committees. Multiple federal and state public land management agencies participate in the collaborative efforts with the Challenge. Personnel from these

agencies are a part of and sit on these different boards and subcommittees. These

agencies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Federal and State agency participants in The Blackfoot Challenge

Federal Agencies	State Agencies
U.S Bureau of Land Management	MT Dept. of Agriculture
U.S Environmental Protection Agency	MT Dept. of Commerce-Travel Montana
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service	MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
U.S. Forest Service	MT Dept of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
U.S. Geological Survey	MT Dept. Natural Resources & Conservation
U.S. Natural Resources & Conservation Service	MT Dept. of Transportation
	MT Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission
U.S. National Park Service	MT Natural Resource Information Service

The accomplishments of TBC are impressive. The partnerships created through their

collaboration have had numerous successful outcomes including:

- **Weeds Managed** -- Over 380 landowners utilizing integrated weed management practices on over 45,000 acres of noxious weeds since 1997. GIS weed mapping on 474,727 acres with 34% under active weed and grazing management.
- **Large Landscapes Kept Intact** -- 89,000 acres of private lands under perpetual conservation easements.
- **Streams Restored** -- 39 tributaries including 38 miles of in-stream restoration and 62 miles of riparian restoration.
- **Habitat Improved** -- 2,600 acres of wetlands and 2,300 acres of native grasslands restored.
- **Water Conserved** -- Over 75 key irrigators & recreational outfitters participating voluntarily in emergency drought response efforts.
- **Fisheries Improved** -- Over 460 miles of fish passage barrier removal and 13 self-cleaning fish screens installed on irrigation ditches.
- **Community Shaping Its Future** -- Community-driven plan directing the resale of 88,000 acres of corporate timberlands.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflicts Reduced** -- 93 landowners participating with over 200 carcasses removed, 14,000 linear feet of electrified predator-friendly fencing, 60% of the apiary yards fenced, and 80 bear-resistant dumpsters in the watershed.
- **Schools Involved** -- Teachers and students from all schools in the Blackfoot are engaged in watershed education.
  Challenge Webpage and Newspaper Articles reach 2,759 households in Blackfoot and over 60 partners.
- **Lewis' Return Trail** -- Mapped and accessible through the Blackfoot, with three gateway kiosks. (The Blackfoot Challenge, 2007).
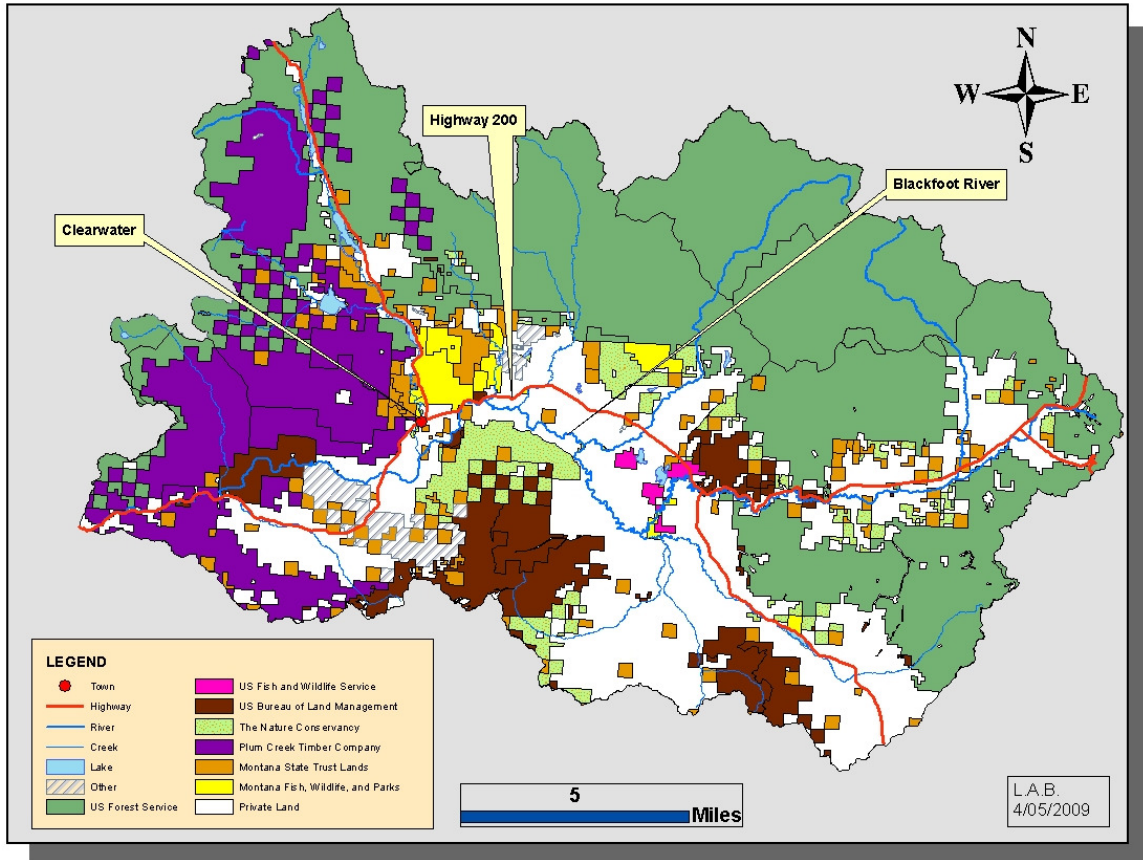
Figure 1. Map of The Blackfoot Challenge.

Source: Assembled by Author using geospatial data from Montana's Natural Resources Information System.

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group is situated in the Madison Valley in southwestern Montana. The primary use of the land is for cattle grazing and agricultural use, and the valley's landscape is characterized by wide-open rangelands and a strong ranching culture. Inappropriate development and poor land-use practices have partly compromised the integrity of the valley's rural ranching lifestyle as well as its ecosystem. Much of the agricultural countryside of southwest Montana is undergoing a transformation to resort and residential development. The combination of demand for scenic rural western properties and uncertain agricultural economics makes rural land vulnerable to liquidation and subdivision (MVRG 2007). Non-native plant species place additional stress on the terrestrial ecology of the area (The Greater Yellowstone Coalition 2007). With a slow cattle market and the temptation for ranch owners to sell off large tracts of land to bring in a different source of income. Seven families who own traditional ranches in the Madison Valley decided to band together in 1996 and form the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group (MVRG). The organization dedicated itself to preserving the valley's rural ranching way of life and the biologically healthy open spaces on which ranching depends (Backus, 2002).

The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group is a nonprofit organization that works to keep ranching as a way of life in the Madison Valley Area. It accomplishes this by developing ways to enhance the economic viability of family ranches; preserving traditional rural community and family ranch values; ensuring productive agriculture through the protection of private property rights and open space, as well as maintaining healthy grasslands, wildlife habitat, and watersheds; and working cooperatively with

groups, agencies, and individuals who share our goals and commitment to the land (MVRG 2007). Since 1996, the MVRG has developed to be a substantial collaborative group including stakeholders from all levels of government as well as multiple ranchers and landowners, and nonprofit organizations who are dedicated to solving land use issues through its established programs and cooperative efforts. Its programs include land stewardship, weed control, beef marketing, open space conservation, and wildlife issues.

The MVRG, through its various working committees, has a history of bringing people together to discuss issues surrounding the management of natural resources. This collaborative process has created a forum whereby those interested in the valley may express their concerns and ideas for promoting the valley's well being. The MVRG's committees include those focused on noxious weeds, wildlife, and population growth. Further, the MVRG pioneered a coordinated grazing program with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Montana State University where livestock move across the valley in an effort to reduce the winter feed bill, improve rangeland health, and improve wildlife habitat (Madison Valley Expeditions 2007).

Other projects have included the creation of a Growth Management Action Plan developed by a Growth Solution Process. Through the citizen-driven, collaborative Growth Solutions process, valley residents have come together to develop a series of recommended actions to manage growth into the future with the aid and recommendations of federal and state land management agencies. Led by the MVRG, the Growth Solutions process includes a broad array of valley residents and stakeholders, united in their concern for the future of the valley (Greater Yellowstone Coalition 2007).

LEGEND
- Town
- Other Road
- State Highway
- Interstate
- Creek
- Madison River
- Lake
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks
- MT State Trust Lands
- US Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- Private Land

5 Miles

Ennis Lake

Ennis

Madison River

Highway 287

L.A.B.
4/05/2009
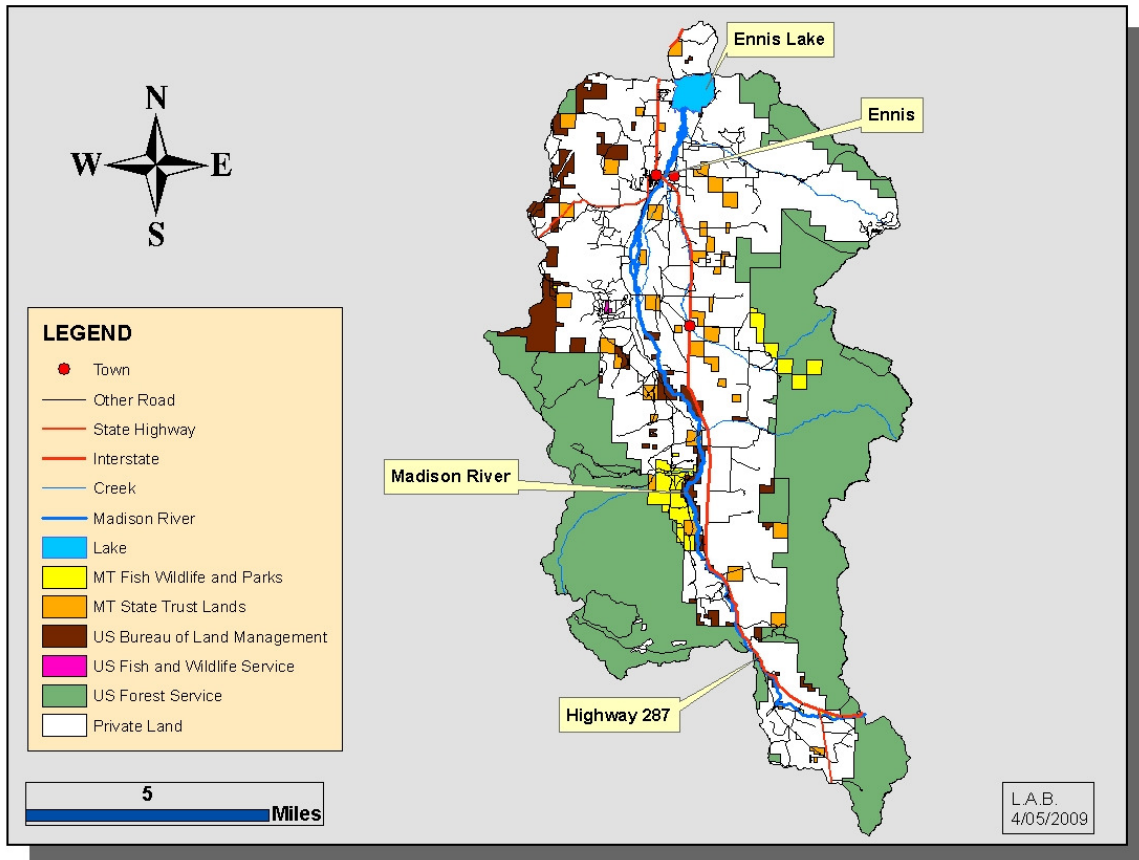
Figure 2. Map of The Madison Valley Ranchlands Group.

Source: Assembled by Author using geospatial data from Montana's Natural Resources Information System.

The Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts

The Yaak Valley is located in the northwest corner of Montana. Landownership is composed of 97% federal lands (U.S. Forest Service) and 3% private ownership. The Kootenai National Forest, which has a long history of excessive timber extraction, administers these Forest Service lands. The Kootenai is known for harvesting more board feet of timber than any other forest in Region One of the Forest Service. This forestry regime has led to many environmental impacts and has threatened many roadless and proposed wilderness lands with being converted to timberlands as well as other associated impacts (YVFC 2007).

In 1997, local residents grew concerned with the health and management of the forestlands in which they reside and formed the Yaak Valley Forest Council (YVFC). Prior to the establishment of the YVFC there had never been an organized effort of area residents to advocate for and implement conservation and restoration programs in the valley's eco-region. Presently, the YVFC is well established and has developed a strong and growing conservation presence within the valley and the region. The YVFC is led by residents of the Yaak Valley who know the landscape intimately, have a high level of field experience, and who have developed strong collaborative projects with other grassroots groups, as well as county, state, and federal officials, for habitat conservation, restoration, and connectivity, as well as community economic development programs. The board of directors, staff and supporters share a commitment to the valley that consistently requires sacrifice and tenacity to help ensure that present and future resource management of the Yaak Valley continues to move away from the resource extraction paradigm and toward a new local paradigm based increasingly on stewardship principles

of forestry, including habitat conservation and restoration of the Yaak's roadless areas through the Wilderness Act of 1964 (YVFC, 2007). Active stakeholders include the board of the Yaak Valley Forest Council, US Forest Service, county and local government, and local citizens.

Numerous collaborative projects are ongoing in the Yaak Valley area that the YVFC help initiate and what this project focuses on. Two that are addressed in this research are The Three Rivers Challenge and the Lincoln County Stakeholders Group. For the most part, this research has focused on the Three Rivers Challenge, although the Lincoln County Stakeholders Group surfaces time to when study participants provide examples in their responses or in their explanation of process underway.

The Three Rivers Challenge is a legislative approach to resolving a locally historic conflict between motorized recreation on public lands, wilderness protection, and sustainable timber harvesting. It came about as a result of members of the YVFC wanting permanent protection of specific lands in the area and realizing that in order to accomplish this, the needs of the motorized community and timber interest in the area must also be met. Additionally, permanent protection can only be established through a Congressional decision via the 1964 Wilderness Act. With this in mind, members of the YVFC approached a diversity of other local citizens in the Yaak area including local government, motorized use enthusiasts, small local businesses, and local timber industry representative to name but a few. Together, they worked to develop a "Map of Common Ground" that designates areas for motorized and non-motorized recreation, wilderness, and fuels reduction on National Forest Land.

The Three Rivers Challenge has been an experiment in solution finding and community building and has resulted in the assembling of a piece of federal legislation, the Three Rivers Challenge Cooperative Stewardship, Restoration, and Conservation Act of 2008, that would create wilderness, help dying timber mills, and allow legal, legitimate motorized use in certain areas. Working with the U.S. Forest Service, the collabortive group mapped 125,000 acres of highest-priority forest in need of thinning for wildfire fuels reduction next to towns, and, working with the community, mapped another 90,000 acres for special protection. It also identified three small areas that snowmobiles currently use and agreed to support their use as long as the needs of wildlife are met (Bass, 2008). The legislation now sits in Washington, D.C. at the desks of the Montana delegation .

The Three Rivers Challenge collaboration stands out from the other collaborative projects presented in this research. It differs in that it is strictly a partnership of local citizens with more limited involvement of PLMs and the focus is mainly on federal public land management.
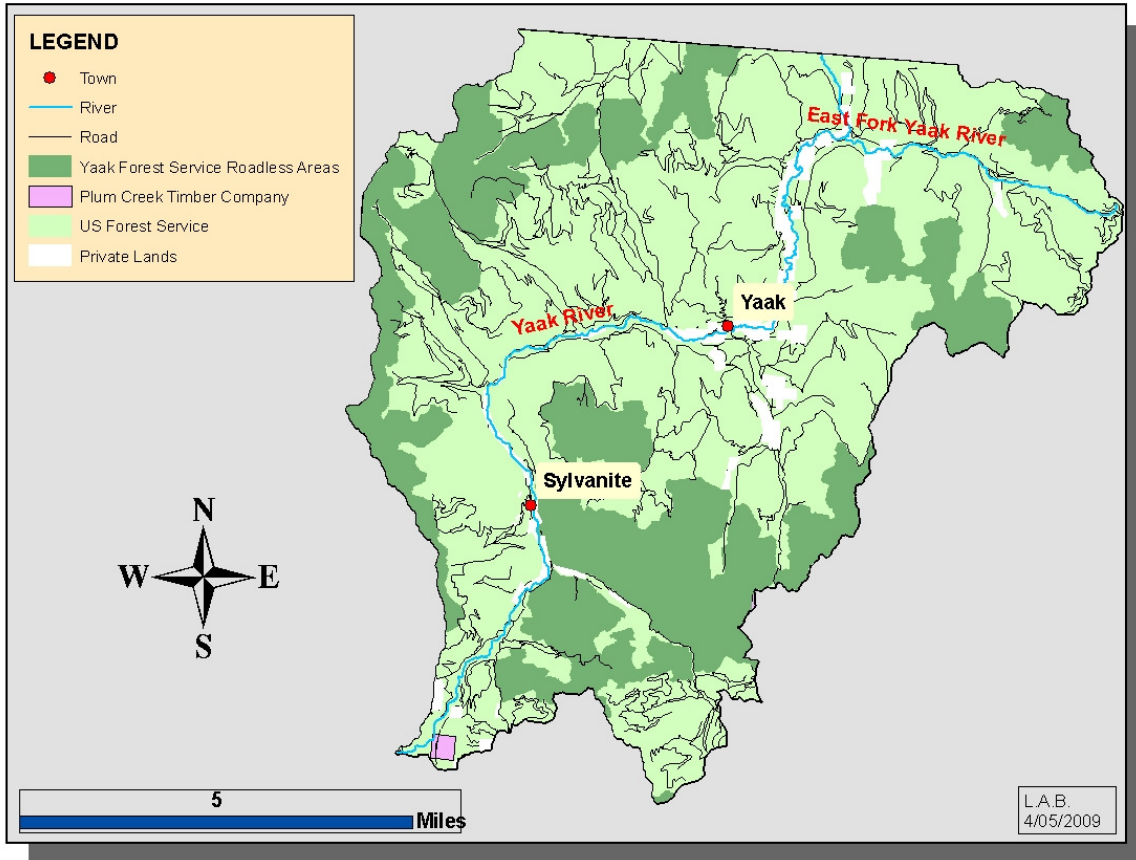
Figure 3. Map of The Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts.

Source: Assembled by Author using geospatial data from Montana's Natural Resources Information System.

DATA SOURCES & METHODS

To provide further understanding of stakeholder perceptions on the role of PLMs in CCP, a case study relying on qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews was conducted with the three CCP groups. Interviews were conducted with 5 to 6 stakeholders from each group between August 2007 and March 2008.

A qualitative approach was chosen for this research because this technique allows the researcher to explore the understanding and perceptions of the involved parties and stakeholders. Qualitative methods examine how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others (Berg 2004). This method is more suitable than others such as surveys and open-ended questionnaires in seeking to understand the perceptions of PLM in CCP. Using a more quantitative approach via surveys might have captured the intent of this research; however, if humans are studied in a symbolically reduced, statistically aggregated fashion, there is a danger that conclusions – although arithmetically precise – may fail to fit reality (Mills, 1959). Reality in the case of this research is a very personal opinion of one's feelings about PLMs, and it was felt in the design of the research that these opinions could only be teased out by the use of in-person interviews. As a result, conclusions have been more accurately made.

Case study selections were chosen based on primarily seeking different conservation initiatives that represented different property ownership regimes. For example, the MVRG represent conservation efforts on private lands, the YVCE represent conservation effort solely on federal Forest Service Land, and TBC represents conservation efforts on approximately fifty percent private and fifty percent public lands. It was thought that by having this diversity in land ownership, similarities of the role of

the PLM between the cases would be more interesting rather than if the cases were more identical. In addition to land ownership, cases were chosen based on them having produced collaborative outcome, composed of diverse interest of stakeholders, and had PLMs as participants/stakeholders in collaborative efforts to some extent.

Selected interviewees were chosen based on their positions and importance in the collaborative processes of each case. Selected interviewees are active stakeholders in the conservation initiative or have been identified as playing a part in some capacity in the collaborative initiatives. They hold a seat at the collaborative table and are able to voice opinions or vote on the direction of an initiative. Key stakeholders from each case who are best able to provide perspective on the role of the PLM have been identified, and these include either PLMs or non-PLMs. The interviews were cross-sectional in that there was a concerted effort made to interview both PLMs and non-PLMs in each group in order to obtain a broad perspective on the role of PLMs in collaborative efforts. Examples of non-PLMs include conservationists, working lands representatives, and committee members of the conservation initiative groups being researched. Public Land Mangers are primarily agency personnel at the state and federal government levels. Local government officials interviewed in this research such as County Commissioners were not considered PLM due to the fact that the lands they represent are privately owned.

In addition to the above criteria, background research on the different cases was conducted to help identify the selected interviewees. Internet pages listing stakeholders for each group were referenced for this information. Initial contact via phone and email was then made with the main organizers of the conservation groups. In communication

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with the initial contacts, snowball sampling was used to identify additional interviewees, in other words, by asking for the names of other people who possess the same attributes in reference to this research (Berg 2004). This method of selecting interviewees proved beneficial and supports the legitimacy of those that were selected. This method also helped to pinpoint the most appropriate interviewees when Internet pages listed more than 5 to 6 stakeholders or more.

To gather diverse perspectives, it was decided to use a 2:2:2 ratio of participants. In other words, the interviewees of each of the three conservation initiatives were to include two PLMs, two representatives of a non-governmental organization (NGO), and two individuals that were local stakeholders (LSH). There is overlap in selected participants from one role to the other. For example, some NGO representatives were also local stakeholders, and some PLMs were also local citizens of the conservation initiative. A break down of participants shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Type of stakeholder interviewees by case study.

Stakeholder Type	The Blackfoot Challenge	Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts	Madison Valley Ranchlands Group
PLM	2	2	2
NGO	2	2	1
LSH	2	1	2

The research selected participants from the following agencies, organizations, and local stakeholders:

- United States Forest Service
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- Sonoran Institute

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- Yaak Valley Forest Council
- Executive Directors
- Ranchers
- County Commissioners
- Snowmobile Community
- Small Business Owners

To get the best sense of the collaborative setting in each case, and to engage in face-to-face interviews, it was necessary to travel to each location and meet in person with interviewees, interact with members of the surrounding community, and to observe the surrounding landscape on which these conservation initiatives focused on. This interactive approach not only was enjoyable but also provided the research with a rich and dynamic visual perspective of the social and environmental issues each collaborative group is faced with. To have blindly conducted interviews over the phone or via email would not have done justice to the research. In addition, it would not have been understood in many instances what the interviewees were talking about when it came to explaining features of the landscape, ecology, or the social construct of the communities they are a part of. Therefore, driving to these places, staying at local hotels, exploring the local landscapes, and visiting with locals at their community establishments and gathering places was essential and rewarding.

The interview guide included questions that were arranged to gain a sense about the role of the PLM in CCP. Likely and appropriate probes were included in the guide to provide consistency. A copy of the interview guide is provided in Appendix A. Interviews were recorded using a digital dictaphone and were held at mutually comfortable and convenient locations, such as the interviewees home, office, a restaurant, or local parks. The University of Montana Internal Review Board provided prior approval of this research before any interviews or initial contacts were conducted. An

informed consent form was prepared and presented to interviewees before the start of the interview, at which time they signed giving their consent to be interviewed and recorded. Further consent was obtained once recording commenced by asking the interviewee for their consent to be interviewed and recorded. Actual interviews ranged anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how verbal the interviewee was, but they generally lasted about 1 hour. Responses from recorded interviews were downloaded to a personal computer where manual transcription took place with the use of Microsoft Word and Windows Media Player.

The interview guide was divided into four main parts. The first part focused on acquiring basic information about the interviewee by asking about their role in the collaborative group, as well as their education, training, and experiential background in CCP. This provided a sense of where these individuals came from, how knowledgeable they were about the collaborative process, and through latent observation how these individuals might interact with a PLM. This section also helped give the interview a personal feel by simply getting to know one another and establish a rapport.

The second part represents the nuts and bolts of the interview and is primarily focused on looking at how the PLM participated in the collaborative process. This section is made up of three areas, which are:

- *First area*: examines how the interviewee perceives the PLM's participation and differences between the role of the PLM and Non-PLM stakeholders.
- *Second area*: examines perceptions of what positive attributes the PLM added to the collaborative process and where the PLMs is the most useful.

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- ***Third area***: describes negative attributes of the PLMs or challenges the PLMs faced in collaborative efforts, and suggestions about what the PLMs could do.

The third section of the interview guide explores perspectives on "why" the PLM participates in CCP. An historical element was also added to the third section to examine whether or not the PLM has played a more active role in collaboration more recently than in the past. The fourth section of the guide was designed to get a general sense of the effectiveness of the collaborative process.

The analytical method employed in this study consisted of content analysis, which involved manually coding data (interview responses) into simple, related trends, then identifying similarities and differences among responses corresponding to each question. This coding (or grouping) allowed data to be analyzed thematically when comparing results within each group and between groups. A matrix was developed to accomplish the coding process. One matrix was composed for each question asked. All interviewee responses to a particular question were grouped together and compared to one another with the use of the matrix. Meaning was extrapolated from each interviewee's response to a particular question. The meanings became sub-themes. By comparing sub-themes of a question with other sub-themes, similarities were identified which lead to group sub-themes together into a theme. With the use of the matrix system, the coding process display that some themes appeared more frequently across all interview questions. These more frequent themes became the main focus of this study and are presented in the discussion chapter. Matrices can be viewed in Appendix C.

RESULTS

Introduction

The results of interviews are found in this chapter and organized by the four parts of the interview guide. From each question asked, themes are identified and meaning inferred by analyzing the interviewees' responses. Not every interviewee was asked every question because of time constraints and whether the interviewer found it appropriate. Results are as follows.

Part One: Interviewee Characteristics

Part one generated baseline information on the interviewees specifically:

- How they participate in the collaborative group.

- Their role within the group.

- Whether they are a Public Land Manager.

- What their experience and or training in the area of Collaborative Conservation Planning is.

Part one did not undergo as rigorous an analysis as did parts two and three; it is meant to simply provide a description of who was interviewed. Also, detailed descriptions and cross-case comparisons are not provided to maintain confidentiality.

Interviewee's roles in Collaborative Groups.

Question One: What is your role in this collaborative group? Do you manage public lands and if so, do you have a seat at the collaborative table?

All sixteen interviewees provide a variety of responses, depending on the type of stakeholder they are. However, in their description's commonalities emerge. The

responses explain how the stakeholder participates with collaborative groups and in most cases what they bring to the collaborative table.

How the interviewees participate in the collaborative group varies according to the agency, organization, or jurisdictional land/resources (private, state, federal, wildlife, water, etc.) they represent. Other factors in their participation include whether they served as board members, on a subcommittee, and/or in an administrative role. Some comment on the fact that they are community members and the effect this has on their roles while others talked about how legal considerations affect their participation, such as in the case of most PLMs.

All six PLMs identify themselves as the representatives of their jurisdictional lands/resources within their collaborative groups. The PLM positions are composed of Forest Service District Rangers, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist and program director, and a Montana Department of Fish Wildlife, and Parks biologist. Two LSH note that they represent a specific constituency of the community they belong to, such as a recreational community member, non-affiliated citizens, or a specific user of a resource.

PLMs participate at different levels of the collaborative initiatives. They act as vice chairmen, board members, or subcommittee members. Three of the six PLMs fall into one of these categories. According to PLMs, acting on subcommittees is not an uncommon PLM role. Not all collaborative groups have official boards with members or subcommittees, such as in the case of the YVCE. Of six PLMs interviewed, have a seat at the collaborative table. Two PLMs are key components to the collaborative group, as acting sources of information, data, and other types of technical support for resource management.

The NGO participants describe their roles in a variety of ways. They act as board members or active participants in collaborative efforts. Other times they participate more from the sidelines as consultants, technical advisors, and collaborative organizers. Some NGO participants play more active roles in collaborative groups than other PLMs. All NGO participants participate in a variety of ways, ranging from roles as technical consultants to board members with voting privileges. Two NGOs interviewed said they are board members with active voices at the collaborative table, although lacks voting privileges. Another NGO is more of a technical advisor, providing suggestions and support and voicing opinions when asked. One other NGO is a collaborative organizer, conducting administrative support, a unique role for a stakeholder.

LSH participant roles' also varied. Four are board members of their collaborative group. Two LSHs are not board members because no boards exist in their collaborative group. However, the same four also work on a subcommittee within their collaborative groups. All acknowledged they actively participate in one of the following ways: as an administrator, chairperson, project director, specific stakeholder representative, unaffiliated citizen representative, or executive director. Four out of the six LSH hold paid positions in their collaborative groups.

Eleven out of the sixteen interviewees identify themselves as community members of the areas their collaborative groups concentrated on. This includes three PLMs, two NGOs, and all six LSHs.

Legal considerations surface in four of the six PLM's descriptions of their role. Legal issues, authorization, and other agency guidelines dictate the degree to which the PLMs can or cannot participate. In one case, PLMs cannot comment on the direction the

collaborative group wants to take because of a conflict of interest. The group is taking an approach that involved legislation. Thus, the PLMs act more neutrally as a sounding board, providing answers to questions about natural resource management. In other cases, administrative approval is granted to other PLMs allowing them more active roles as board members and/or vice chairs. This range shows how collaborative endeavors can vary from one case to another.

The roles interviewees play in collaborative groups is also based on the skills they bring to the collaborative setting. Interviewees described several key roles, such as building relations between multiple constituencies or acting as facilitators to work through conflicts. All PLMs provide technical assistance and advice about managing natural resources. One NGO indicated that they also provide training on various natural resource planning topics. Table 3 captures main roles interviewees hold.

Table 3. Interviewee participation by stakeholder type.

PLM	NGO	LSH
Representative of their jurisdictional lands and resources	Board Member of a collaborative group	Representative of Recreation community or Non-affiliated citizens
Vice Chairperson	Active Participant	Administrator
Board Member	Consultant	Chairperson
Subcommittee Member	Technical Advisor	Project Director
Participant in Collaboration	Collaborative Organizer	Executive Director
Community member	Community member	Community member
		Board Member of a collaborative group
		Subcommittee member

Interviewee's experience and/or training in the area of CCP.

Question Two: What are your experience and/or training in the area of Collaborative

Conservation Planning?

Responses to this question provide an overview of the interviewees' educational background, as well as their experience and training in CCP, or lack thereof. All but one interviewee have an undergraduate-level college degrees, and seven have earned a Master's degree or higher. Only two of sixteen have a component of collaborative planning as part of their formal education. Most interviewees, though, say they learned about collaborative planning by "jumping into it" or, "on-the-job-training." Two PLMs report that their agencies had provided formal training in collaboration but the amount was minimal.

Part Two: Public Land Manager's Participated in the Collaborative Process.

Part two of the interview guide represents the "nuts and bolts" of the research. The objective is to measure how the PLM participates in the collaborative process. To dive deeper into the subject, additional questions or probes were used. Interviewee perceptions show three areas of commonality:

- *First Area*: Perceptions of the Public Land Manager's participation and differences between the role of the Public Land Manager and Non- Public Land Manager stakeholders.

- *Second Area*: Perceptions of what positive attributes the Public Land Manager adds to the collaborative process and where the Public Land Manager is the most useful.

- ***Third Area***: Negative attributes of the Public Land Manager or challenges the Public Land Manager faces in collaborative efforts, and suggestions for what the Public Land Manager could do differently.

Similar thematic trends, emerging in all three areas, represent the key findings of this research, and therefore warrant focused discussion. These themes include:

- *The Individual Public Land Manager.*

- *Types of resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative groups.*

- *Agency structure in collaboration - multi-faceted.*

Other themes emerge, but are not considered to be trends because they only occur once throughout interviews. However, they contain important information and thus identified in Part two. In original interview format, the question "Can you provide an example where the PLM has affected the collaborative planning process and outcomes?" was included in part two of the results section. However, in the actual interviews, this question was answered will in advance to an earlier question. Other times, there was simply not enough time to ask this question and thus it was dropped from the research. In general, each question is analyzed separately unless otherwise stated.

First Area

Question One: How has the Public Land Manager participated in the collaborative process? All sixteen interviewees provided responses to this question.

Three themes emerged in responses.

1. *The Individual PLM.*

2. *Types of resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative groups.*

3. *Agency structure in collaboration: Stakeholder interactions.*

The first center on how the interviewees describe PLMs as an individual in terms of their personal traits, overall personality, and the effects of these factors on collaboration. The second relates to what the PLM brings to collaborative efforts. The third focuses on how agency structures influence PLM interactions in collaborative settings.

Theme one: The Individual Public Land Manager.

The first theme looks at participation of the PLM at the level of an individual and how it can help or hinder partnerships between agencies and collaborative groups. Numerous interviewees describe personal skills and traits of a PLM. They tend to depict PLMs as individuals separate from the agency they worked for. PLMs for the most part are seen as human rather than as government entity. For example, two NGOs and one LSH precieve the PLM they work with as a community member, not as an outsider. The PLM's people skills, as well as the overall enthusiasm and willingness to "think outside their agency box" made participating with that specific PLM easy. As one NGO commented:

> So, he [referring to PLM3] is willing to put effort into achieving the goals of the collaborative group… It has to do with his personality and his willingness to participate and say "yes" and go with it rather than be a roadblock. He has really bought into the idea of the collaborative work and working collaboratively with the people at the table and following through with it and encouraging his staff to do the same (NGO3 2/14/2008).

Additional effects of the individual PLM on collaboration are evaluated when comparing different PLMs and agencies. For instance, wide disparities and inconsistencies exist between two PLMs from two different National Forest District

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Offices. Although both districts fall within the collaborative group's conservation

strategy, the nature of the each district's support is different. One PLM is reported to

provide support, enthusiasm, and an ability to think outside the agency box; the other is

not viewed as demonstrating these personal traits. According to some interviewed, the

PLM may possess these positive traits, but withholds them because of possible lack of

overhead support or a lack of desire to fully engage in the collaborative efforts. Others

also express that this PLM's lack of participation may be caused by a breakdown in

communication and lack of education in collaborative planning and communication

skills. If the PLM or non-PLM possessed better collaborative personal skills, conflict

could be reduced and solutions created. This issue of inconsistency is examined more

closely in the following responses to questions.

A final aspect of the theme "The Individual," and frequently addressed by

interviewees, is whether or not a PLM is considered to be part of the community.

Interviews explain that this concept does not apply to all PLMs, but only to some. These

PLMs, already accepted in the community, are asked to take part in the collaborative

group and are already accepted as community members. This inclusion is closely tied to

a PLM's people skills. If a PLM has good people skills, they are more easily accepted

into a community. Another factor is residency: by living in the area where collaboration

takes place, and a PLM can create a good rapport with their community. This aspect was

expressed in the above statement of NGO1, as well in the following response:

> So, the process itself for a PLM helps them see the big picture, and most of these
> PLMs are in a position where they need to be seen…district ranger…high level
> administrative position. And so they probably got to those positions because they
> listen to what the community has to say but the process helps those PLMs get
> plugged into what the community has to say and they can't stay on the fringe they
> have to come in and be a part of it [the community], and we need to continually

and actively engaged and participate them. So, we meet monthly…helps to visit and share what is going on in their sphere of influence and that in itself is more than just a visit, it is part of the collaborative process by getting to know one another and get behind the agency mask a little bit and get to know people personally and have a more open dialog (LSH6, 1/30/2008).

In other words, a PLM's positive influence is augmented by their degree of community participation and engagement.

Theme Two: Types of Resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative groups.

According to interviewees, PLMs participate in the collaborative process through what they bring and provide to the collaborative group. These include different resources and support mechanisms, such as material goods and funding for projects, as well as the PLM's knowledge and expertise concerning natural resources. Support also encompasses vocal support for projects and collaborative conservation strategies both within and outside their own agency. NGO1 explains how these provisions are used in a collaborative setting.

They [PLMs], for example, the District Ranger for the Forest Service, participate with the [collaborative] group in a technical advising way. I think everyone understands that what happens on the public lands affects the private lands and vise versa. So they have developed a very good working relationship, particularly with issues of weed control. This is an easy one because you know where the county road stops and the Forest Service road starts. And so I think they [PLMs] have been really supportive in helping the [collaborative] group be very effective, whether that is just sharing data, some scientific information, is there any new infestation, here are some grazing concerns… There is a lot of information coming into that community collaboratively that gives them a huge opportunity to make real, informed decisions. What I have seen the [PLMs] help that collaborative with is to interpret that information so that they can plan their program, projects, and objectives to help address that concern. That is where I think they have the strongest connection (NGO1, 1/14/2008).

Other types of resources include the PLMs as a source of funding and materials, such as maps and data. PLMs also lend their knowledge and expertise in natural resource

management, experience in structuring and organizing meetings, knowledge of agency

procedures and policy interpretation, expertise as technical advisors, and assistance in

data interpretation, to aid in making sound decisions on the best science available. In

some cases, the PLM helps to form subcommittees in order to find sustainable solutions

to difficult natural resource issues. PLM3 illustrates:

> Hopefully the experience that I can bring about our agency and about natural resources and about working together and how to achieve an outcome… The one thing that government folks can bring that I have seen is we can help provide some structure in form to discussion. I work with some community groups and because they do not have the training and background we have, like meetings management and running effective meetings, it is just some of those technical things that can help focus and help come to an end. But, that's the nature of our organization in the [agency] anyway. We can offer that and I think it does add some value to a product or meeting some objective (PLM3, 2/27/2008).

Additionally, the PLMs participate in the collaborative efforts by lending a

supportive political voice. In some cases PLMs go to Washington, D.C., to promote the

activities of the collaborative. Furthermore, they participate simply by being at the

collaborative table, being enthusiastic about the initiatives, and encouraging the

collaborative group, as NGO2 explains:

> It legitimizes the project by having [PLMs] involved…because it legitimizes it because you have public and private agencies and landowners working together and that is the mantra of [our collaborative initiative] NGO2 (2/12/2008).

Theme Three: Agency structure in collaboration: Stakeholder interactions.

In part, PLM participation is determined by his or her official role in the

collaborative setting. For instance, PLMs act as instigators, committee or board

members, and agency representatives. Their roles are further also defined by the fact that

they work for the government. Because they represent a government entity, the PLMs

have to abide by specific criteria, mandates, and/or rules that define the level at which

they can participate in collaborative processes. In some situations, PLMs are perceived

as having a conflict of interest or overstepping their delegated authority if they participate

past a certain point determined by their agency. An example of this limitation and how a

collaborative group incorporated this factor is described by LSH3. This statement also

expresses the need and desire for PLMs to be a part of a collaborative group.

> [PLM3] officially cannot be a board member and has been trying to do it, and it
> will take an act of Congress to actually do it. But we make them a part of the
> board. But officially in government's eyes, they are not. But we tell them all the
> way to DC that [PLM3] has got to be part of the process. So he is a board
> member (LSH3, 1/14/2008).

The status of PLMs at the collaborative table takes on many forms. First and

foremost is the fact that many interviewees see the PLM not as a superior or as "big

government." Rather PLMs are viewed as equals. One PLM describes this phenomenon:

> We are definitely a voice in the process, but I would very deliberately not try to
> become leaders in the process. The collaborative process needs to take its own
> direction and then we need to be a part of that; rather than manipulating the
> process, we need to be a part of working through issues (PLM1, 1/14/2008).

Further explanation on a PLM's interaction was provided by NGO1:

> The other thing that I will say is that those participants, whether it is the federal
> land managers or land use planners, they come as participants on two levels, as
> community members to their public forums, and they have been able to offer a
> framework for the other residents to kind of chew on the information that is being
> presented. They give a preliminary remark or they will say, "Well, in our new
> planning effort we realize that this area has experienced a lot of growth and
> development and is experiencing some, lets say, water shortages and so we would
> like to hear from you how we can better plan and address that. They have helped
> strategically in those forums. Sometimes they are panelists and sometimes they
> are presenters; other times they are asked to give remarks, and sometimes since
> they are just talented folks, they [PLMs] will stand up in the community and voice
> with their creative mind and help the citizens hone their comments and be specific
> (NGO1, 1/14/2008).

> The meaning of a stakeholder, however, differed when it came to the YVCE.

There, PLMs are restricted from sitting at the collaborative table because of the

legislative approach of the Three Rivers Challenge and an issue of conflict of interest. The PLMs in the Yaak participate more by providing interpretation of forest management and policy rather than an active voice. Many interviewees describe the PLMs as stakeholders in the Yaak and note positive relationships with them.

Another inconsistency was raised by one LSH when s/he identified differences in PLM interactions from one group to another due to conflicting issues. One contentious issue is elk management. PLMs, depending on their stance on the issue, may be viewed as stakeholders or as non-collaborators. This contention is described as follows:

> It's been a wide range over the years…we have had some [PLMs] that have been really encouraging like and others that have dragged their feet because they viewed us as a threat because we were becoming organized… [The agency] is the hardest public entity to work with…we went around and around trying to figure out why. I guess it's when we try to get groups together, and we have a wildlife committee and they try to come up with ideas, and those ideas vary from what [the agency] has said as their agenda or goal, they do not want to work with us any more. Again, we are talking about compromise and coming to the table, and we are willing to work together but all of a sudden they are backing off and saying we don't want to work with you any more and it is frustrating at that point (LSH. 1/15/2008).

PLMs also interact as board members, vice chairpersons, or members of a subcommittee of the collaborative groups. These activities are not universal in all groups. They are just some of the ways in which the PLM interacts. However, even though all groups do not have PLMs acting in such capacities, PLMs and non-PLMs see the partnership as a way of accomplishing similar conservation goals. Probably, all PLMs that collaborate see this benefit, which is why they participate. For instance, in the following example, a PLM use collaboration to solve difficult natural resources issues, complicated by different values. The process allows the PLM to find a zone of agreement and a positive outcome.

The County has legally asked [the agency] to look at the associated impact these proposed developments have on wildlife. So we get into [collaboration] that way… The whole point of the [collaborative] group when it comes to development is to try to maintain the traditional ranching in the valley… (Q: How does [your agency] match up with this interest?) I think it is huge. Most of the winter range, a lot of that big game depend on, is private land, and for us to keep them in business and to keep that land intact as open space is a huge interest of ours. There is a tremendous amount of land in that valley under conservation easements (PLM2, 1/15/2008).

Also, PLMs use the collaborative group's creativity to gain support and develop fresh ideas for an agency-driven project in hopes of resolving contentious issues.

In addition, PLMs interact at the collaborative table as representatives of their jurisdictional land base, incorporated in a conservation strategy. Having this representation is crucial to achieving conservation goals. Interviewees explain that without PLM involvement, successful conservation would not occur nearly as often because there would not be consistency and connectivity with the lands targeted for conservation.

Another role of PLMs is in serving as legal advisors. PLMs represent a mandated agency and work within government parameters. Legal dictates include the Endangered Species Act and The National Environmental Policy Act, among others. Legal advising is a critical provision for the collaborative groups, particularly when conservation efforts stretch to public lands and federal and state laws pertain. Thus, PLMs provide vital assistance by guiding the collaborative group through agency structure legal/policy hoops. This expertise is yet another "Support to the collaborative group" from PLMs.

Question Two: Are there differences between the roles of the non-Public Land Manager and Public Land Manager stakeholders?

Thirteen of the sixteen interviewees were asked this question. Responses yield

two main themes pertaining to how the PLM differed from non-PLM. These themes

concerned:

- *The differences in the types of resources Public Land Managers provides to collaborative groups.*
- *The differences that result from being a representative of agency structures: partnership dynamics – what PLMs can and cannot do.*

Theme One: Differences in the type of resources the Public Land Manager provides to

collaborative groups.

Differences found in the types of support the PLM provides to collaborative

groups are based on what the PLMs could bring that non-PLMs didn't or couldn't.

Numerous categories of "types of resources" are identified, and these relate very closely

to the overall "Resources Theme" of the previous questions. The most prevalent

response concerned the PLM's knowledge (i.e, technical, and scientific background in

natural resource management). Four PLMs, three NGOs, and one LSH identify and

discuss this important theme.

PLMs provide consulting of resources. They are particularly useful when private

landowners seek stewardship advice on their own land. For example, one LSH talks

about how valuable it is to have the PLM's knowledge available by phone call.

> We are starting to use the PLM for their expertise on private land. It makes our
> life easy. Instead of us looking at a piece of land and trying something, and it
> doesn't work; instead I pick up the phone, and I will call a PLM and ask what do
> you think and they might come out and, look at it, and that's huge…(LSH2,
> 1/30/2008).

The private stakeholder sees this type of information sharing as invaluable. The service

is free and it builds relationships with agencies.

The PLM's expertise is also essential when applying for natural resource enhancement project grants. Interviewees explain that PLMs help to obtain grants for numerous natural resource enhancement projects, such as weed management, wildlife fencing projects, and stream restoration projects. According to interviewees, PLMs play a significant influence in whether or not a grant is obtainable. They expressed that PLMs add weight to grant application because of their strong political connections and ability to match grants, dollar for dollar.

In addition, responses note that PLMs are invaluable in helping other stakeholders see the "big picture." PLMs tend to have a perspective rooted in terms of an ecosystem and the landscape. They are also attentive to political and legal ramifications, such as those created by the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and National Environmental Policy Act. As a result, PLMs provide direction and help steer the collaborative groups by providing consultation on such big-picture issues in ways that other stakeholders typically don't by providing additional insight into ecosystems, litagative pitfalls, and political hoops. As a PLM explains:

> The one thing that the PLM brings to the table is a technical background. You know, when we talk about water quality limit streams and total maximum daily loads, you can see the audience glaze over…they don't understand that. So by virtue of the issues we deal with and the training and diverse cadre of specialists we have, we are able to bring technical support to these groups… The PLM can bring a good understanding of the big picture because of all the projects we deal with and the issues associated with them; we have a pretty good feel where there is going to be controversy, where some projects and initiatives may be steered to avoid some of those traps and pitfalls that we have endure through our NEPA appeal litigation processes. (PLM1, 1/14/2008).

Theme Two: Agency structures in collaboration: Partnership dynamics – what PLM can

and cannot do.

A PLM's position in the collaborative setting can influence collaborative group

dynamics between PLM and non-PLM. As mentioned before, all PLMs are seen as

partners/stakeholders in each collaborative initiative, but not necessarily as leaders.

Instead, leadership in all three cases has been placed in the hands of a LSH. As partners

in the collaborations, PLMs are able to weigh in on decisions and provide resources to the

collaboration and/or being a part of the community. PLM support to the collaborations

and their role within group decision-making was explained by PLM4.

> Well, I think there is a difference and there should be a difference. The private
> landowners are the folks that actually own the land they are the community
> members by and large, but to be successful, those people need to have the lead
> and I think the PLM, well there is an old saying "we need to lead from behind"
> and I used to buy into that and you also see a lot of PLM who say "well we need
> to lead from up front, we need to hold the public meetings; we need to do all these
> things." And I actually believe that both of those things are wrong. I believe that
> we need to help from behind, and we have a lot of skill set on raising money or
> bringing in outside partners, of thinking about maybe we should do it this way.
> But, it has got to be the private landowners up front and center on those. They
> have got to be holding the meetings, they have to be the decision-makers and we
> need to be there to help them with that and I think that is a very distinct difference
> in what we do (PLM4, 1/30/2008).

The role of PLMs in the collaborations are differs based on their agency

affiliation and the responsibilities they have in the agency. This theme identifies what

PLMs have to consider when working within a collaborative setting in response their

delegated authority and distinct parameters and mandates that dictate their level of

participation. These considerations set PLMs apart from other stakeholders. Two PLMs

and one LSH identify this difference. The following LSH's statement shows

understanding from a non-PLM perspective, of some of the parameters and mandates that

dictate how much a PLM can participate:

> The PLMs have some more distinct parameters that they have to work within,
> sometimes a state statute, agency policy that may or may not limit how much
> collaboration. The private sector, they can do as much as they want. They don't
> necessarily have mandated or statutory limitations on what they can and can't
> do… (LSH3, 1/14/2008).

PLMs are not the only stakeholders with limitations. Non-PLMs are also

constrained. Unlike PLMs who are salaried, the non-PLM is for the most part

volunteering his or her time. Occasionally, exceptions exist, such as in the case of NGO

stakeholders. However, overall, volunteer stakeholders may be constrained because,

quite simply, they are volunteers.

One PLM identified a final difference between PLMs and non-PLM: the need to

consider a wide range of perspectives and values. In collaboration, PLMs are mandated

to consider all perspectives and to attempt to find an outcome that suits stakeholders,

unaffiliated with the collaborative group, as well as the resources. In contrast, non-PLMs

are not affected by this mandate. This difference is described by a PLM:

> I think we share a passion and a common interest in the land and the resource, but
> how that is managed and how that is divvied up and how it is used there are
> probably some wide-ranging opinions on that, and again it really depends on your
> perspective and where you are coming from as a private landowner in the valley
> and how you look at that... Do you have the means outside of that ranch to live
> and operate? Do you make your money somewhere else and the ranching is a
> hobby? If that is the case, you look at the wildlife as a tremendous asset. If you
> are a traditional rancher trying to live off the land, and the grass is your source to
> feed your cows, that tremendous resource can be viewed upon as a real liability
> because you have to share your resource, and that is grass. That is your livelihood
> and your cattle's livelihood and a lot of other critters' in the valley. So the
> tolerance for big game on your property is a lot less. From the perspective of a
> PLM we are constantly trying to accommodate that spectrum, but you can't, but
> trying to reach a balance where it is doable for everybody… We are trying to
> make wildlife on the landscape where people work, live, and play. There is a

wide range of spectrum to what that means to each landowner (PLM2,
1/15/2008).

A LSH adds to this observation about the how a PLM, as a member of an agency, must

participate differently and how it affects outcomes of collaboration.

> Yeah, I think there are differences. A sort of different bottom line, if you will, in
> that when you are the agency person it will not necessarily have any personal
> effect on a decision, where with the private landowner it definitely will have a
> personal effect and by and large the agency people do not live in the
> watershed…similar roles between private and PLM…the PLMs that live in the
> watershed are residents of the watershed and they represent a very large land base
> of the watershed, the private land owners are the flip of that…but they [PLM] are
> more interested in the rural way of life and how the natural resources support that
> and the agencies, by their mandate, approach it from a more natural resource side
> and how that supports rural way of life. So they both engage the process, but my
> sense is that they come at it from a different perspective because the role they
> play on the board is to represent that land base and not to represent the private
> interest (LSH6, 1/30/2008).

Second Area

The second area in section two analyzes interviewees' perceptions of what

positive attributes the PLM added to the collaborative process and where the PLM has

been the most useful in collaborative efforts. Both of these questions are asked and

responses provided. Results are as followes:

Question 1: What positive attributes has the Public Land Manager added to the

collaborative process?

Thirteen out of the sixteen interviewees are asked this question and provids

responses. Positive attributes described fall into one of three themes, which are:

- *"The Individual": Public Land Manager's Positive Collaborative*

  Attitude.

- *Types of resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative*

  groups.

- *Big Picture Perspective.*

Theme One: "The Individual": Public Land Manager's Positive Collaborative Attitude.

This theme embodies perceptions about individual PLMs' positive attitudes towards collaboration. Interviewees who responded refer to specific PLMs involved in their collaborative group and do not generalize this attribute to all PLMs in government agencies. The PLMs are described as enthusiastic about being involved with and supporting the collaborative process. Other positive attitudes include the PLM's ability to incorporate other stakeholders' ideas and to be a good listener. Seven of the interviewees speak to this: four LSHs, one PLM, and one NGO. A statement of LSH3 provides further understanding of this attribute:

> The best example is our District Ranger. He is very proactive, extremely collaborative. I mean he bends over backwards to provide resources, which the Forest Service has, whether it's education or real resources to further the work of the resource management of the conflict resolution. Helps write grants, is a great resource person to talk to, has a great mind, can sit down at the table and start looking at something, and he is a great linear thinker, and has spent a lot of time in the collaborative process helping everybody and himself see the big picture and see how this all fits together and what kind of resources are available or needed to address those (LSH3, 1/14/2008).

Another aspect of a positive collaborative attitude is identified by a PLM, who describes the importance of commitment. Some individual PLMs elect to stay in their positions for long periods of time. This chance provides some stability in agency representation. Too often, agencies have a high turnover rate, and PLMs need time to familiarize themselves with what is going on, the different stakeholders, and the interests they represent. Also, this degree of staying power is reflective of a positive attitude. Two interviewees also observe that a PLM in their collaborative group goes the extra mile. This PLM conducted internal agency politicking on behalf of the collaborative in order to

gain agency support for the group's missions. According to interviews successful PLM

work collaboratively toward overall objectives in conservation by getting the agency they

represent more involved.

 Theme Two: Types of resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative

groups.

The types of resources the PLM provides to collaborative groups include three

items that interviewees identified as positive attributes. The most frequently identified

items are the capability of the PLMs' agencies to provide funding and their ability to

leverage dollars for grant applications and project completion. Four of the six LSH

mention this ability in addition to one PLM and one NGO, all of whom express a sense of

gratitude for this attribute. Since a conflict of interest would arise if PLMs in the Yaak

contributed dollars to the legislative efforts of that collaborative process, this support

mechanism is not identified there. One PLM also describes another type of funding

support as the resource represented by their salary, as a fulltime, paid government

employee s/he paid to work on collaborative issues and projects. Salary is a valuable

resource, especially in light of the fact that most involved are volunteers.

Five of the thirteen interviewees (mostly PLMs) identify that PLMs also add to

the collaborative process by providing expertise and knowledge of grant writing, natural

resource management, and efficient meeting organizational skills. Two interviewees (one

NGO and one LSH, both from the same group), stated that by having the PLM at the

collaborative table and working in the collaborative projects, collaborative groups gain

more legitimacy and credibility. One LSH explains this value when asked this question:

> The viability of a project…we can discuss things all we want, but if it takes a law
> change or somebody to buy into it or fund it we need them [PLMs] on

board…and it gives us more credibility and it gives us more of a base because we are a wider base and because we have more stakeholders involved so its not going to tip over so easy (LSH1, 1/15/2008).

Being able to identify these resources can help PLMs and other stakeholders build on

partnerships that lead to successful outcomes.

Theme Three: Big picture perspective.

A third positive quality of the individual PLM's is "big picture perspective."

Public land management agencies have gained a greater understanding of the

collaborative process and the success that it can bring. They are more effective in

accomplishing projects and have become a part of communities by working more closely

with them. These successes increase trust and credibility for the agency when

conservation work gets done across many ownership boundaries. As one LSH observed:

> So we bring those guys [the PLMs] in and we engage them in the community and make them feel comfortable, and then we sit up here [as the leaders] and they become the tools in the toolbox. They take the backseat and they don't take the heat anymore. I mean people aren't going "Oh [PLM3], I don't like the Forest Service" and they are not beating on [PLM3's], they are going "I hate the Forest Service but I love [PLM3] and we are going to help you do that on your forest or we are going to play the game with you" (LSH2, 1/30/2008).

The other big picture perspective is a better overall understanding of ecosystem

management and a sense of equitability in regard to the management of public resources.

The PLM assists with in this by helping the public to see a bigger ecological and political

picture and the connections between private lands and their surrounding ecosystems.

One PLM illustrates this notion of the big picture:

> I think one of the big things we bring is that sense of equitability and that sense of reminding people that, at least from what we deal with, is that it is a public resource. I think there is a lot of value in that. People new to the state may not be as firmly familiar with how we got to where we are from a wildlife standpoint. It was a grassroots effort at the turn of the century; in the early 1900s we were in a tough way for wildlife populations. It was an effort that transcended economic

status, political party, age, and race. Average people got together, including landowners and businesses and the agency, and began to put together a system in place to restore the wildlife populations, and the only thing that was driving that at that time was the fact that it was a publicly held resource and people felt that right to their toes. And today there are a lot of efforts to try and privatize the wildlife resource because it is worth so much money now. For certain reasons, having us at the table is a way of buffering that Old West mentality of hoarding it for myself and making sure there are opportunities for everybody (PLM2, 1/15/2008).

The big ecological picture is further explained by NGO1:

So what the PLM does is they help people get up and see the bigger ecosystem and the connection that happens beyond peoples' existing neighborhoods and communities. So they may be concerned about the [valley], but what people don't always think about is how important is the [valley] to the Pronghorn population that is coming over on the west side of the park and migrating up through Idaho. I think that they help with that sort of level of perspective of inter-connected work of the larger landscape (NGO1, 1/14/2008).

Question Two: Where has the Public Land Manager been the most useful in collaborative

efforts?

Only one theme surface in response to this question: "Types of resources the PLM

provides to collaborative groups." This theme centers on what the PLM provided to

support the collaborative group. The results of this finding follow.

Theme: Types of resources the Public Land Manager provides to collaborative groups.

The most useful attributes of a PLM are their advisory/consultant capabilities,

technical support, their funding abilities and skills, and salary (the fact that they are paid

to collaborate). Many respondents express their reliance on, and appreciation for, such

support. The following comment from LSH4 captures these sentiments:

You need a person to speak on what goes on in an area or what type of vegetative management may go on in a certain area or you need maps. Those are all the things that if I call them [PLMs] about what about this and what about that – they may have said that but it is not an official statement…they will meet with us to hear what we have to say to see if it makes sense in the scheme in their future

planning to see if those things will meet their needs or, whether or not they can be part of their plan… (LSH4, 3/24/2008).

Most frequently, interviewees note that a PLM represents a watershed (the federal/state lands and resources). All categories of interviewees feel that this representation is important to the success of collaboration.

> When you look at the whole as the sum of its parts and if we are not participating you do not have the whole. And [X%] of the watershed that the [collaborative] is interested in is [agency] lands, that's a pretty big part. And so we need to be there. We are not going to be able to manage the landscape and watersheds when one organization or one group says I am not included…the objective is to look at the whole and so we need to be a part of that (PLM3, 2/27/2008).

> The land! The Forest Service, that is a big ol' chunk of land… Let's say they own all this land and they are a huge player and you can have all these smaller ranchers and small landowners doing one thing but if you do not have Forest Service doing it too, then what is the point. They have this presence, the land the money… The idea of connectivity is so important, wildlife habitat, water quality. They have to all be a part of that… To have them [PLM] part of this project is pretty impressive. There would not be a project if it were not for their part (LSH2, 2/12/2008).

Additionally, two LSHs noted another key PLM resource provision attribute is helping to create programs in the collaborative group that bring people together who never met before to build new relationships and develop solutions to issues. Their statements follow, starting with LSH1 who is referring to a weed program that was created mostly due to efforts of one local PLM:

> But the golden child has been with the weed program. It has brought every one of those entities to the table and every one of them has pretty much the same concerns. I mean it is a huge issue with [the] game range up there… This was in the past, everyone is a partner in this and that's why I say it's a golden child, everyone works in such a productive way…(LSH1, 1/15/2008).

> Building relationships has probably been the best outcome of this process and getting to know each other. They, the Forest Service, are the ones; the Forest Supervisor facilitated a meeting on small diameter… So, he helped put together a meeting…with the parties we mention earlier like the [environmental groups], and so we met with all those folks and that's where this stakeholders group started…

And so the Forest Service has facilitated those [meetings] by contacting people allowing folks to come to meetings with them and being an advisor. So yeah, I think the Forest Service has played an important role and has seen the value (LSH5, 3/25/2008).

A final aspect to this question is provided by a PLM, and it is noteworthy to address because it portrays a general perspective from what PLM perceives as most useful.

I guess I will go back to some of the statements that said before; just that you look at why this agency was even formed and it was formed because people said we need to have some entity looking over this public resource for the people, and I think that that is what we bring to the process (PLM2, 1/15/2008).

Third Area

The third area analyzes interviewee's perceptions of negative attributes of PLMs or the challenges PLMs face in the collaborative process. Interviewees also discuss whether there is anything the PLMs could do differently.

Question One: Are there any negative attributes or challenges the Public Land Manager faces in the collaborative process?

Three themes emerged in response to this question:

- *Inter-agency dynamics and their effect on the "Individual Public Land Manager".*
- *"Agency structure's" influence on Public Land Managers.*
- *Challenges the Public Land Managers faces within the collaborative process.*

Theme One: Inter-agency dynamics and effect on the Public Land Manager

The first theme concerns dynamics and challenges associated with PLMs' roles in representing the agencies they work for. Wearing the agency hat can hinder their

effectiveness in collaborative participation. Many aspects of this theme are identified, but not consistently.

One NGO interviewee explains the difficulties PLMs sometimes face when trying to keep their own identity separate from their agency identity.

> I think that sometimes because everyone wears different hats in small communities even if the PLM says, "I am speaking as a citizen of X or wherever", everyone who is looking at them says, "Yeah, but you're the Forest Service person who just decreased the number of cows allowed on this grazing allotment or whatever." I think that is probably a personal drawback and a struggle that they have (NGO1, 1/14/2008).

Another aspect of this theme is that PLMs may be less collaborative because of "old school" agency thinking and egoism reflecting the assumption that the agency personnel "know best." One NGO expresses that some PLMs are stuck in the old agency mindset that its personnel have the knowledge, training, and experience to make decisions with as little public involvement as possible. This attitude brings up the conflict of scientific versus local knowledge and the importance of integrating the two. Collaboration is one method. However, and if a PLM or even an agency as a whole are unable to retreat from this technocratic view and approach, then their effectiveness in a collaborative setting will most likely be minimal.

Another challenge the individual PLM can face stems from what Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) term "institutional culture." One NGO notes the frustration, of working for an agency, (in this case the U.S. Forest Service). The NGO realizes that there is a benefit to integrating collaboration into more of his or her daily work. However, the surrounding ranger districts and forest service does not support increased collaboration.

> …when they don't embrace the idea of collaboration across the board. I mean, that is the [collaborative initiative's] whole idea is that even when you leave the [collaborative] table and you take off the [group's] hat, you are still wearing it and

that you start thinking of all of your work in that light and so you don't just go back to your District office and say that's done with and now I am back to being a Forest Service employee, you start thinking, no we have to work collaboratively on everything we do, we have to be thinking that way…so thinking, ok, what would the [collaborative] do? Or what would my [collaborative] partners think about this? Or, how can I make this more collaborative? How can I bring more people to the table? How can I use this collaborative process more effectively in everything that I do? I think there is a division there in how the two districts or forests work… PLM3 is a lot better in thinking that way, thinking, should I bring the collaborative in on this or should I bring in my partner who sits at the collaborative table in on this process how can I use this to make sure that this works. Where on the other end of the watershed [on an adjacent National Forest], there is very little kind of thinking that way in terms of thinking, how do I make this a collaborative process, how do I make this be successful by using this process and these people and these partners that I have, why don't I bring them in. So, there is a gap there and I would say that one is much more successful than the other… So, I think that the PLM could be a lot better, just breaking out of their own kind of culture and, that bureaucratic mindset that this is the way that it is done and saying you know it would be a whole lot better and I would get a whole lot more done if I do it with people with my partners who are ready to help (NGO3, 2/14/2008).

Another challenge is related to the issue of "conflict of interest." This issue is exemplified by one PLM's wish to be allowed, as an agency representative, to become as formally involved with collaborative groups as other government agencies have been allowed to. Presently, this PLM cannot participate beyond his or her present capacity because more formal involvement may be perceived as a conflict of interest. At the same time, however, other PLMs in different agencies are allowed because they have received administrative approval. The PLM explains:

…it would be helpful at some point for the Department [of Agriculture] to recognize the value of FS agents and representatives to participate in more formal arrangements with these organizations and giving them the latitude and judgment to know when you are going too far… It makes us more of a partner; it shows our commitment completely (PLM3, 2/27/2008).

PLM4 also expresses that agencies' commitment to the ideals of collaboration is not always consistent due to output-oriented mindsets. This attitude is a challenge

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because, more often than not, the collaborative process can be very long, especially when groups have difficulty-reaching consensus. Because agencies are driven to show results quickly, they often have do not commit 100% to collaboration. On PLM describes how an output-oriented mindset constrains collaboration:

> It is a very time consuming process and so the negative of it is in your agency and in natural resource management - you just want to run to Z, you just want to get there, and the bottom line is that you just cannot get there that way. So the negative is the time and the dance that is associated with it, and there are bunch of people saying it's like a marathon rather than a sprint. I believe it takes two years to get your feet wet and five years to get through the door, and sometimes as agencies we don't want people to put that sort of commitment into what's going to come down the line (PLM4, 1/30/2008).

In addition, as another NGO stated, commitment of an agency can be hindered by the lack of ability or willingness to think outside of the lands under its jurisdiction. Exacerbating the issue of jurisdiction is limited funding and again, a reluctance to commit to the time-consuming process.

A final challenge associated with this theme concerns the issue of PLM tenure. Once a PLM has shown success in collaboration, understands the process, and is self-motivated and enthusiastically engaged, a PLM may leave, moving elsewhere for a better salary. The question arises: How to reward a PLM so that s/he stays and in their current position and continue to be involved in the collaboration? Related to this is the issue of PLM retirement – will the agency find a replacement that shares the same personal traits as their predecessor? LSH3 and LSH6 explain this point:

> PLM1 is not like any other District Ranger I have ever met, and our biggest fear is that when he retires we will get one of those dumb clucks that can't even spell collaboration and has no interest in it…the regional Forest Service office is in Missoula, and it's a large region, and people are transferred in and out without much regard for philosophy. I mean, I don't see the regional people say, well PLM1 has been there since [x amount of years] and he has been very collaborative and involved with the community, now who do we have that is

collaborative and would be part of the community. I do not think that is part of the process (LSH3, 1/14/2008).

Dale Bosworth [former chief of the Forest Service], he loved the FS and he recognized the forest service and he is a very community oriented guy anyway, but he recognized that they needed to figure out how to grow more [PLM collaborators], if you will, to be more successful and probably how to reward someone to stay in a place…how do you [as a PLM] get ahead in the agency but maintain being a part of a community? It seems that you would have to put the community ahead of the career and decide to stay in the community, and I am not going to move up the ladder…(LSH6, 3/25/2008).

As shown in responses to other questions, a successful collaborative PLM is one that is part of a community and possesses exemplary personal traits, including an ability to listen, be accepting, and be influenced by others outside of their agency. This relationship, forged by the individual PLM and the community, is not an overnight process. It takes trust building over time. Thus, an agency must find ways to maintain the stability of their agency representatives in a community. As some recommend, the solution is to find the right PLM who wants to stay in one spot and build these relationships, and once they retire, can help to find a replacement that can continue their collaborative work.

Theme Two: "Agency structure's" influence on Public Land Managers.

PLMs face challenges because of preconceived notions. Other stakeholders, question an agency's commitment in trust, relationship building, and communication. The most frequently expressed idea is the hardship PLMs face in building trust and understanding with the public. This hardship is a result of public perception. Government agencies are seen as regulatory entities that to take a "big stick," authoritative approach when developing natural resource management practices. According to three PLMs, one NGO, and one LSH, this challenge can result from not

effectively explaining the parameters agency decisions are confined to and the reasons

why parameters exist in the first place. Sometimes, the general public does not

understand these limitations that PLMs face, especially when agency decisions cannot

implement certain public comments and ideas that do not coincide with parameters. For

instance, NGO4 explains this challenge further:

> The challenges I see with them [PLMs] are bringing the public up to speed as to
> what the process is. The public is so uneducated about the forest service
> process…so I think that is a huge challenge trying to get the public to
> understand… So a lot of the time I see one of their challenges is…having the pot
> of money that they need to have to educate the local rural communities on how
> the process works… The biggest problem as to why the public complained about
> the FS was a result of not understanding the process (NGO4, 3/24/2008).

Another PLM adds to this notion, suggesting that PLMs have difficulty gaining

trust from those who have appealed public land agencies in the past. It is challenging to

et these disillusioned individuals to the collaborative table and find common ground. Yet

it is essential to bring these very people to a collaborative setting, develop a dialog, and

form relationships.

> Part of the challenge is getting the groups that do not want to come to the table.
> How do we get those groups involved in that is to me going to be harder than
> explaining to people why you cannot have that extra 100 miles of road. It's really
> the groups that do not want to get engaged in that and sit out until the last minute
> and do the appeals and the lawsuits. I think that we are getting to a point that the
> groups that we are actually getting to come to the table, I think we can find
> common ground and maybe not eliminate lawsuits but minimize them pretty well.
> But there are some groups that still won't come to the table… (PLM5, 3/25/2008).

Augmenting the challenges PLMs face in building trust, relationships, and

communication are challenges posed by agency policies and mandates that restrict how

collaborative they can be and to what level they can participate. The most commonly

expressed limitation is being part of a bureaucracy that faces red tape, is slow to act, and

requires multiple levels of approval. These bureaucratic factors construct challenging

walls that PLMs must overcome at times mainly due to the mandates PLMs must follow

that dictate how and to what level a PLM can participate in a collaborative setting. One

NGO notes that such limitations, "turns the local landowners off" (NGO2, 2/12/2008).

One PLM and three LSHs also find the mandates a challenge. They suggest however, not

that mandates are obsolete. Rather than discarding the mandates altogether, they need to

be adjusted or balanced.

Multiple interviewees also explained that agency mandates and policy create a

challenge for balancing local perspectives with state and national interests. Further,

communicating this challenge can be difficult when faced with communities or locals

who feel that local values should supersede those that come from outside.

> Being specific, getting back to the local solution. There is a distance we can go to
> try and accommodate that, but we cannot customize these for the Madison Valley,
> for the Bitterroot Valley, for the Paradise Valley before you begin to run into real
> conflicts state-wide with people in Missoula saying "well how can you do it down
> there and not here?"…you know that fairness thing…(PLM2, 1/15/2008).

> I think from an outside perspective, other interests that aren't local sometimes feel
> that when local land managers participated in the local collaborative, that carries
> more weight than others. Some people love forest planning to be based on what
> the locals decide and not have any influence from Iowa, California, or anything,
> but they are public national lands. So I think that it is sometimes challenging to
> be an effective participant locally and have national or statewide decisions that
> you are trying to make (NGO1, 1/14/2008).

> …the only way it is going to move from an outside-driven process to an inside-
> driven, a more community-driven process, to get things done, to support the
> national constituency, they [the agency] have to listen more to what local people
> have to say. And the reason they make a mistake is because they are listening
> more to their national or state constituency and they are not listening to what their
> local constituency has to say. Their job in that respect is more difficult because
> they have to figure out how to marry those two things together (LSH6,
> 1/30/2008).

Balancing interests across the local to national continuum can be especially

challenging when a PLM cannot make decisions based solely on general public values.

This idea expands on the previous challenge of communicating parameters and how decisions are mandated to incorporate policy and not just local values. As a result, collaboration has become a useful tool or medium to help balance the local versus national perspective.

Theme Three: Challenges with the Collaborative Process.

The last theme concerns challenges PLMs face within the collaborative process. Two main thoughts surface in relation to this theme. One, as two PLMs explain, is the challenge of how agencies get diverse groups and individuals to come to the collaborative table and engage in dialog. The second thought concerns how to keep groups and individuals at the table once they are there -- how to keep them engaged in the collaborative process. It can be easy for agency personnel to stay involved once they are committed because they are paid staff. However, most participants are volunteering their time. Keeping participants engaged can depend on how efficient meetings are and whether a facilitator is present. PLM5 comments on these matters:

> Part of the challenge is getting the groups that do not want to come to the table [to come]. How do we get those groups involved in that is to me going to be harder than explaining to people why you cannot have that extra 100 miles of road (PLM5, 3/25/2008).

Question Two: Is there anything you could suggest that the Public Land Managers could do differently?

This question, posed to seven of the sixteen interviewees, yielded three themes:

- *Education on Collaboration: internal and external.*

- *What Public Land Managers should consider in collaboration for an efficient process.*

- *Big Picture Perspective: Consider new approaches to land management.*

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Theme One: Education on Collaboration: internal and external

One PLM suggest that educational efforts could help PLMs become more effective in the collaborative process, particularly efforts that establish better lines of communication. According to the PLM, people need to learn the value of relationship building.

> Internally, the Forest Service could help people understand the value of building relationships and using that relationship to try to effect some change through a collaborative process like the [collaborative]) group (PLM1, 1/14/2008).

Another PLM notes that much can be learned from the successes and failures of collaborative endeavors that PLMs have been a part of. The PLM suggest a more thorough study of internal agency lessons learned from collaboration. The findings should be made more readily available to agencies and PLMs:

> We have had some successes in public land management and we need to learn from those successes, but we have also had some failures and so I think an honest assessment of what has worked and what hasn't work…[on collaboration should be conducted] (PLM4, 1/30/2008).

Theme Two: What Public Land Managers should consider in collaboration for an efficient process.

According to three PLMs and one LSH, PLMs who wish to become involved in a collaborative process need to ensure that they maintain trust and agency credibility. This can be accomplished by maintaining impartiality with a collaborative group, as well as among general public an interested in a project or issue. PLMs must balance collaborative group goals with the rest of the general public that are not a part of collaboration.

> So, what the Forest Service can try and do is to blend that [collaborative group] with Joe Public and try to make sure that those groups have an opinion but it is not the only opinion. That is our biggest challenge over time…not to be

perceived as being run by a couple of [collaborative] groups… So, that is the role of the Forest Service in this is to find that blend some how...reminding those [collaborative] groups that they are not the only people we have to listen to… (PLM5, 3/25/2008).

It is also recommended that PLMs discuss with other stakeholders any mandated policies and parameters that may affect the collaborative process. These discussions need to occur early in project design, rather than come as a surprise to the collaborative effort, when a project is well underway.

> [If] there are projects that may have some controversial aspect or issues…hopefully the [agency] biologist can point out to the [collaborative] group when [they] first hear of the project of the [controversial aspects or issues]…early on to provide some input at an early basis in the project (PLM6, 3/25/2008).

One LSH suggested that PLMs should listen more to local knowledge and consider ways of integrating it into an agency's professional methodology of natural resource land management. For instance, the following suggestion of what a PLM could do differently by LSH5 highlights this point and some benefit.

> I think listen to the local input. It is big in our mind that the locals are closest to the land, they know it the best, why is this one of the last best places, because people haven't damaged to that point…because they [the locals] know best, they harvest firewood in it, they take care of their huckleberry picking, they hunt, fish, recreate, hike, they have a much better knowledge of what's going on in the forest than someone that comes out here for a week and walks through the woods and go 'Woo, that's nice"…do they know root rot, mistle-toe, est.… And so, we think the local people have the interest…(LSH5, 3/25/2008).

Theme Three: Big Picture Perspective: Consider a new approach to land management.

Suggestions relating to a new approach for land management are provided by one PLM and one NGO. The new approaches suggest incorporating an ecosystem perspective so that management areas are not viewed simply as lands divided by jurisdictions with different and inconsistent land management strategies.

I think there could be some greater efficiency, again, if all the public and private management plans were integrated under one roof. And I think that would provide the collaborative group a clear picture because right now they talk to Department of Environmental Quality and they are driven by this agenda, and then they talked to the Forest Service and they are driven by this agenda… If we pursued these resource concerns under the agriculture, under growth and development, wildlife, water management, etc., we would be meeting these objectives and concerns, not only for our community, but also for the state of Montana's Department of Natural Resource Conservation, Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management. And we know that we are meeting everyone's objectives and goals. I think if it was unified a little bit more, and not necessary a policy but more of the goals of that watershed, that valley, that area, that could be really powerful… We could get to a better ecology… A small citizen group would be the best to organize this unification of goals and objectives…(NGO1, 1/14/2008).

If you are a Fish Wildlife Service manager of a refuge, what goes on outside of that refuge is just as important as what goes on within that refuge, whether it is on BLM land or Forest Service land or whatever, and sometimes it is so easy to go back to our office and say "I don't want to get bogged down with that stuff that is going on private land or corporate land or other agencies' lands, I just want to focus on my little postage stamp." It's easier, it's cleaner, and it has less risk associated with it. But if we are going to be successful with natural resource management, we have to do that. And yeah, it's a little frustrating, and yeah it's a little bit harder work, and yeah it takes longer, but in the end, the benefits to the resource and your lands that you are there to manage are a lot better off because of that and the resource is going to be better off (PLM4, 1/30/2008).

This theme exemplifies more of an ecosystem or holistic approach to managing natural resources. This method is not new; in fact, it is currently employed. However, the comments support greater incorporation of this approach and provide suggestions for improving it. Cross-jurisdictional coordination works very well with collaboration and better supports an ecosystem approach to land management.

Part Three: Historical Perspective.

The third section of the interview provides a historical perspective of the PLMs' role in collaborative planning. Important questions are 1) Why have PLMs been involved in these collaborative efforts? and 2) Has the PLM been more involved now than in the

past? Content analysis of these two questions display similar themes. Therefore the questions are combined. Thirteen of the sixteen interviewees these questions, and answers come in the form of three themes:

- *Community outlook.*

- *Helps to get things done.*

- *Conveniences.*

Theme One: Community Outlook.

The community outlook theme suggests that PLMs participate in collaborative planning now more than in the past because relationships have been built, the public participatory process is more effective, and to an agency's image within a community is improved. These improvements benefit communities and agencies alike, and have snowballed into greater efficiency and conveniences (the next two themes). As the benefits of collaboration continue, relationships become stronger, and PLMs participate even more.

Relationship building is in part a result of various new approaches and efforts in integrating communities and PLMs together. For instance, as one LSH states, collaborative planning allows the public to be more involved with agency planning processes:

> People were sick and tired of not being heard. When the majority of the people in an area were requesting something, there was always a reason why they couldn't because of regulations and rules that the federal government had…The collaborative process is drifting toward them coming to us and saying we have this issue with this road and USFWS is saying we have to close X amount of roads to enhance grizzly bear habitat and can you help us in that process? (LSH5, 3/25/2008).

This inclusion, as another LSH adds, also contributes to the development of sustainable solutions to natural resource issues and/or problems by allowing local communities to have a stake in of local issues and/or problems. This process is sustainable because as decision-making is increasingly localized, locals become empowered, and with local empowerment comes increased local support. PLMs do not participate in collaborative planning only for the valuable public participation. PLMs have also become more community-oriented, incorporating social values into their land management. They have discovered that more can be accomplished in a collaborative group setting. In particular, grant proposals become more legitimate when a diversity of stakeholder groups collaborate on applications. As one LSH explains:

> I think that it is a recognition that it is the only way you are going to have sustainable solutions. Because again, it gets to a funding perspective. If you think about what foundations are interested in, foundations recognize they are external, they are not internal, and they are an external source of revenue to a situation. What they want to do is they don't want to have to keep putting money into the problem. They recognize they want to put external resources into a solution to create sustainable internally driven solutions and recognize they want to catapult that initial capacity to sort of move the dial if you will. And so what agencies, I think, have begun to recognize is that they cannot sit on the outside of the problem and expect influence to change. They need to get in and become a part of the solution; they need to be a part of a community to move things forward… I think there is a bit of a movement in and around the country to try and effect more local decisions particularly when you think of land management agencies… So you [people in general] are trying to put the ownership back into the community. So, the agency needs to be a part of that ownership. They need to get into the community and be a part of a community-driven process. They cannot stand on the outside and say, "I am the agency, why don't you jump out of here, if you want to do something on the public land, then you are going to have to answer to me [the land agency]." They are really trying to change that sort of confronting attitude, a kind of, "I am in control" attitude, "I am the agency I know what to do, if you want my participation you are going to have to do it on my terms" (LSH6, 1/30/2008).

As a result, LSH1 suggest, PLMs have gained more public support for projects and have improved their reputations in local areas. And when there is support, there are

more on-the-ground-results that further improve relationships and an agency's reputation because the public likes to see their tax dollars get things done.

> It makes it so that they can get their job done easier, and it gives a lot of positive perception to the overall public because it shows that it's working… Instead of giving it "us versus them," they are a part of "we." We are concerned about the weeds, we are concerned about the wildlife, and we are concerned about land management… Getting their jobs done and their issues, instead of it being "us versus them," and it makes it, for them, a whole lot easier for them going to work each day knowing that we are all working together; otherwise they are beating their heads against a wall every time they see a rancher (LSH1, 1/15/2008).

As PLMs gain support, they are asked to be at the collaborative table, especially for conservation initiatives that aim to include public lands into their strategy. PLMs are seen as part of the community, and perceived PLMs are also included as representatives of the public lands, so essential to the success of many conservation effort. Because they see themselves as part of those communities and care about them far beyond what their professional responsibilities would require:

> Well, I think one reason why they are involved is at a personnel level because they live in the community and they care about it beyond their professional responsibility. I think they are involved as a local citizen in the community… I think they also recognize the potential and real power that the citizen organization has to effect changes on the landscape, by and large to make progress in conservation efforts… The other reason they are involved is because they see the citizen group as a mechanism to help them in their public lands…(NGO1, 1/14/2008).

PLMs' community interactions have resulted in richer exchange of dialogue and local community empowerment. The collaborative process has been a win-win situation for both communities and public land management agencies. Communities feel they are more a part of the decision-making processes on federal and state lands, and PLMs see that the collaborative process helps fill requirements for gaining public participation. Stakeholder cannot ignore each other, as all are important in the collaborative process,

and also as a part of the community. Their interactions with the land have an affect on the others. All parties see this, and therefore see the benefit in working together collaboratively to find sustainable solutions for the land.

Theme Two: Helps to Get Things Done

The next theme "Helps to get things done." As a result of collaborative planning, PLMs and non-PLMs are able to produce outcomes more effectively together rather than if they were separate, and therefore are able to look beyond each stakeholder's property boundaries. Instead, they coordinate efforts to improve natural resources and communities, and they work beyond differences and issues. As one PLM comments:

> We are getting involved in it because we see it as the right thing to do. I know how other districts are being managed and they would not venture beyond the national forest boundary. A lot of forest service managers would view their job ending at the forest boundary. They have a specific piece of real estate they are responsible for. We have recognized that issues we deal with extend far beyond the national forest boundary and that is why we have gotten involved. We cannot effect change doing it alone… So, from some of those failed attempts in the past we have learned that if we are going to get anything changed we have to do it with a larger foundation of support, a grassroots effort, and collaboration is the only way to do it (PLM1, 1/14/2008).

Additionally as three PLMs, one NGO, and four LSH all agree, they all need support from each other to get what they need. In a lot of situations, help is extended to avoid litigation. Past land management decisions and practices on federal lands have resulted in litigation and appeals. Collaboration has helped to relieve this gridlock through consensus building among diverse stakeholders. This support legitimizes projects, decreases the chance of litigation, and this contributes to the value that is seen increases the PLM's appreciation of collaboration. More success results in additional accomplishments on the land, such as restoration, further conservation, and relationship

building. So becoming part of a collaborative group helps the PLMs out in the long run,

as PLM5 explains:

> I think the Forest Service has not been working the way they should have been.
> You know, going to court for every stinking project is not an efficient way of
> getting things done. You have to find a different way of getting things done, and
> if that is letting people get involved with the cooking instead of just the eating,
> then I think it is a good way to get things done. I think it recognizes
> [collaboration] is efficient in the long run, and maybe the first two projects are
> difficult, but once you get that trust established, you get a little steam going, and
> then you can actually work a bit quicker and have more public buy-in. That is
> why the Forest Service does more with it. We are seeing success with it and we
> want to continue with that (PLM5, 3/25/2008).

Theme Three: Conveniences.

The third theme provides further reasons for why PLMs participate in

collaboration. Collaboration can create some conveniences, such as fulfilling

requirements for public participation, as mandated by NEPA and The Federal Advisory

Committee Act. Having access to and relationships with an organized, diverse group also

helps PLMs seek effective public comment for projects on agency lands. These groups

come with mailing lists and other contact information that the PLMs have been able to

access in some cases. Thus, not only is the mandate for public commentary fulfilled, but

also effective commentary is more efficiently obtained.

> They [the collaborative group] represent, and certainly not all, a core group of
> landowners in the valley, and I think to have that "ready-made-place" to go and
> discuss things in a framework where people are used to gathering and meeting is
> really a benefit [for agency] and so from that standpoint that is why. Again, I deal
> with a lot of landowners in the valley, and they all don't care to be a part of the
> [collaborative group]. So that's fine, but…they [the collaborative group] are set
> up; they have a funding base, they have, mailing list, they have all sorts of things
> that contact people (PLM2, 1/15/2008).

Part Four: General Sense of the Collaborative Process.

The fourth section of the interview guide was designed to get a general sense of interviewees' thoughts on how effective the collaborative process is. Four questions were asked:

- Has the Collaborative process been worthwhile and effective (how or how has it not)?

- Is there still willingness to participate on the part of any of the stakeholders?

- Has this process truly been collaborative (why or why not)?

- Did the process work to solve major issues?

Not every interviewee was asked each question due to time constraints and other factors. However, those that did respond provided meaningful comments.

Question One: Has the Collaborative process been worthwhile and effective (how or how has it not)?

Ten of the sixteen interviewees (two PLMs, three NGOs, and five LSHs) were asked this question. All respondents answered "yes" and provided some comments. They are as follows:

> I think that through this process we have all kind of learned from each other and you come out of it in a different place from where you started, and that is part of the deal. Yeah, we will definitely keep working with them (PLM2, 1/15/2008).

> Yeah, and even on that point of getting the individual. By getting those individuals on your collaborative groups they can almost be your ambassadors out there and they talk to their neighbors… Getting information out to the general public and making them feel like they are part of the management… It has been keeping me out of court [litigation]. And that is a good thing because court means that you failed at something along the way somewhere. If we can avoid failure that is a good thing… I think there is a lot of benefit when the collaborative group is its own group and invites the Forest Service to their meeting. To me that

is a neat thing instead of the Forest Service having a public meeting and everyone is standing up in the uniforms and whatever. This group is having a meeting and talking about an issue on National Forest land and they are asking us for advice… I think that is a neat way of getting it done (PLM5, 3/25/2008).

It is hard work. It is like life in the village. You are working with people and personalities. And that is why people don't do it too…but it is the only way to get it done. It is…the only way to be lasting and tangible is to have it community-based, because if you do not have your community members behind you can throw all the money you want at it but it is not going to last. But if you get the community members on board, you got it (NGO3, 2/14/2008).

Relationships over time between the Forest Service and the [collaborative] have gotten better and this is a result of having the same ranger for a long amount of time (NGO4, 3/24/2008).

Question Two: Is there still willingness to participate on the part of any of the

stakeholders?

Eleven of the sixteen interviewees were asked this question and provided

responses. All said that yes there is still willingness, but three of the eleven also said that

the degree of willingness depends on the specific project. For example, NGO3 brings up

the point that a neighboring community feels left out of the process and would like to

participate more. Though this comment reflects degrees of willingness in response to this

question, it also suggests that because the collaborative group is successful, others now

want to join. This interviewee added that there are efforts to help join that community

with the collaborative. Also, LSH4 comments on how hard and drawn-out the process

has been.

I think so…we are all fed up with meetings. We have had meeting after meeting after meeting (LSH4, 3/24/2008).

Question Three: Has this process truly been collaborative (why or why not)?

Six of the sixteen interviewees were asked this question. Fifteen provided

positive responses (i.e., "yes"), but one (NGO2) expressed mixed feelings. NGO2 felt

that collaborative efforts were "always the same people all the time," suggesting that not enough people were coming to the table, and that a greater diversity of interest needed to convene.

One other comment from PLM4 addressed the value of collaboration in referring to the fact that there is no need for the "hardcore environmentalist" at the collaborative table because issues are resolved to the point where there is acceptance from a diverse group and therefore groups that are usually oppositional to public land management practices have nothing to complain because issues have been dealt with.

> One thing that is interesting is that we have not had our hardcore traditional environmental groups involved with used because by tradition they are about fighting this or stopping this and we have been pretty successful in dealing with those issues because we worked them out ahead of time, so we have not had a lot of environmental group involvement. At the other extreme we have not had the farther to the right groups involved… There is not a need for both side groups (PLM4, 1/30.2008).

Question Four: Did the process work to solve major issues?

Five of the sixteen interviewees were asked this question and provided responses. Their comments are general, but provide good examples of how the collaborative process was used in a solution-oriented manner to overcome major issues. Responses describe how major issues are solved. Helpful parts of the process include acquiring the political support of PLMs, gaining resources, and building trust. PLM1 and NGO2 commented on how the collaborative process helped solve major issues by bringing people together that would not have done so otherwise.

> The [collaborative group's] weeds committee has broken down barriers in this valley for almost a wall-to-wall effort in weed control. (Q: What kind of barriers?) There are a lot of people who did not understand weeds, could not identify weeds. Through educational efforts and through the fundraising efforts we have been able to bring people from the entire valley into a central location

and help them understand the issues about noxious weed spread and what kinds of tools are available to treat them (PLM 1, 1/14/2008).

Yes, no way could someone do anything on their own with the technology and the speed of information and the cumbersome nature of actually trying get things done with the bureaucratic this and that… So yes, you got to bring everyone on board and it takes longer, oh my god, it takes longer, its painful and glacially slow and super-frustrating, and you feel that you are beating your head against a brick wall all the time. Yes, but it is the only way you can do it to make a solid foundation. So, it has to be collaborative to make it work and to make everyone feel that they have a stake. Not only a stake, but a voice too (NGO2, 1/30/2008).

One other comment is as follows:

Funds for restoration would not have been available if it was not for the collaboration of many private, state, and federal supports (PLM3, 2/27/2008).

Results Section Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, the responses to questions contained in the interview guide yield a large amount of rich content concerning the role of the PLM in collaborative conservation planning. This manifest and latent content was organized and presented thematically, and all themes that emerged in the analysis of the response are included. Data presented in the results provides deep insight into the PLM's role in collaborative conservation planning. Discussion on key points of the results is presented in the next chapter.

DISCUSSION: THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LAND MANAGER IN COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION PLANNING

Because of the richness of the content and diversity in the themes that emerged from it, a meta-analysis of the most reoccurring themes and the content they represent is provided in this chapter. These themes surfaced more frequently than others through content analysis warranting further discussion of their meaning in the context of theory. Following this meta-analysis, the role of the PLM in juxtaposition between each of the collaborative cases is examined using the most reoccurring themes found among all interview questions. These topics of discussion can aid in further studies, and/or can provide useful information to individuals, groups, and agencies that wish to engage in collaborative initiatives and/or seek effective ways in being a part of collaborative efforts.

Synopsis of the Most Recurring Themes

Three main themes reoccurred with some level of frequency in section two of the interview guide and warrant further discussion. These themes, although contextually different between the questions they surface in, are similar in their conceptual base. Not to discredit other themes with less reoccurrence, the three themes exemplify core issues around the PLM's role in CCP, and thus merit further discussion. These three themes include:

1. *The Individual Public Land Manager;*

2. *Types of Resources Public Land Managers Provide to Collaborative Groups;*

3. *Agency Structure in Collaboration – An Agency Perspective.*

Theme one: The Individual Public Land Manager.

The theme of the individual PLM surfaces more than any other theme throughout all interviews, and it proves to be the cornerstone of all three themes discussed. Also, this theme appears to directly influence to the success of a collaborative project. Particularly important are individual traits and characteristics of PLMs, and how the PLM's agency manages its personnel. Also the individual PLM profoundly affect collaborative outcomes, from securing resources for a collaborative project, to influencing an agency's role.

Similar research identifies the importance of this theme. For example, Koontz et al. (2004) asserts that PLMs act as followers, encouragers, and leaders of collaborative efforts. Meanwhile, Wondolleck and Ryan (1999) describe PLMs as Leaders, Partners, or Stakeholders. In general, these typologies define PLMs as agency representatives with the ability to influence agency involvement in CCP. This research, while adhering to these typologies, takes the subject at hand to a more personal level. Interviewee responses reflect a more personal level of the PLM's involvement in CCP projects, and point more to the individual PLM rather than the agency they work for. Interviewees rather than explaining the relationship an agency has with a collaborative group, reflect on the relationship of an individual PLM with a collaborative group. Thus, this research is unique in its intensive focus on the individual PLM. While Koontz et al. (2004) and Wondolleck and Ryan (1999) examine the individual PLM's effect on the collaborative process, this research examines this issue much more closely. Another major difference between this research and theirs relates to land ownership regimes that are considered.

Where theirs mostly focus on citizen-driven collaborative planning on public lands, this research looks at the model but across multiple ownership regimes.

For example, when interviewees reflect on the individual PLM they tend to explain why the PLM is so important to the collaborative initiative and what helps to make an individual PLM effective. Interviewees also describe the relationship between PLMs and the agencies they represent explaining how the two entities support or challenge each other in a collaborative effort.

In almost every response at least one interviewee references an individual PLM. In section two alone, three out of the five questions contained interviewee responses that refer to an individual PLM. Other sections in the interview guide indirectly make reference to an individual PLM through latent observations.

Results show that collaborative outcomes are affected by how deeply involved a PLM is and how an individual PLM interacts personally with other stakeholders. At times it can be hard, as some interviewees mentioned, to bring to the collaborative table a PLM who is willing to go the extra yard that these collaborative endeavors demand such as to incorporate an agency's jurisdictional lands and management plans into other collaboratively derived management plans, or involving the public in the creation of policy. Responses indicate that the degree of commitment is a matter of a PLM's personal choice, rather than the result of a managerial directive from a PLM's agency superiors and/or supervisors.

The personal characteristics of individual PLMs also help them build strong relationships with collaborative groups, which in turn enhance PLM's level of participation. Successful individual PLMs tend to be proactive and entrepreneurial.

They can establish relationships, secure resources and institutional support, market collaborative efforts and strive for effective implementation. In many of their case studies, Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) identify these effective entrepreneurial agency employees as emerging from inside agencies. In this study, such successful stakeholders are identified as PLMs.

Interviewees credit much collaborative success to individual PLMs with proactive and entrepreneurial traits. However, interviewees add that success is also attributable to people skills, such as being able to listen to other viewpoints, think outside their agency's cultural mindsets, and explain themselves effectively. Possessing a positive collaborative attitude and accepting the collaborative process is another necessary characteristic. Typically, the most effective PLMs possess these skills and attributes, making it easy for collaborative groups to accept agencies into their framework.

The following is a summary of the personal traits interviewees identify as being important to the successful individual PLM. In essence these can be considered to be contributing to the makeup of the "Super PLM." Realistically though, PLMs are simply human and to possess every one of the following traits would perhaps be unfathomable, but those interested in being the best PLM possible can gain some knowledge from the following. The four traits that are identified are the PLM's people skills, the PLM's collaborative attitude, they are entrepreneurial, and they are community-oriented.

Personal skills have mostly to do with interpersonal skills and the ability of a PLM to be an effective communicator with diverse audiences. These traits are not something that come naturally to every PLM. Instead, as described by some interviewees, these are something PLMs naturally have or don't have. Personal skills

include being a good listener, having the ability to maintain transparency by following through with commitment, being able to explain themselves well, and being able to build trust with a community.

Collaborative attitude has to do with a PLM's willingness to grasp whole-heartedly the collaborative process and realize the commitments that are needed to reach success. As it has been mentioned in this research, collaboration is not a quick fix to solve issues and conflict. Collaboration is a long commitment that can take many meetings. For a PLM to possess a collaborative attitude, they must realize this commitment and be able to stay enthusiastic and willing to go the extra yards collaborative endeavors require. In addition to commitment, having a collaborative attitude includes the ability to incorporate other stakeholders' ideas with the agency they work for in addition to marketing a collaborative project within their own agency in order to gain internal support.

Being entrepreneurial is the most challenging trait a PLM can have because entrepreneurialism can involve a lot of risk. This has to do with the challenges presented by agency structure. In this, PLMs who are entrepreneurial are those that have successfully and carefully stuck their necks out to see how far they can push the parameters of their delegated authority. Collaboration is a new arena for agencies, and if not for the risk-taking PLMs who pushed the boundaries in collaborative participation, how and to what level they can participate would not have been delineated.

Community-oriented has to do with a PLM's involvement with a community where a collaborative initiative is taking place. In doing so, interviewees identified that those PLMs who are the most community oriented live in or close to these communities.

As a result, PLMs are more accepted by the community and are able have better participation. Additionally, being community-oriented is enhanced when a PLM lives in the same community for a long period of time where they are able to work on projects in a collaborative setting. Having high turnover rates of agency personnel hinders this community-oriented focus because of the lag time it takes for a community to get to know a new agency person, and vise versa.

Possessing these personal characteristics and a positive attitude to collaborating can have profound effects on an agency's reputation within a community. A community's animosity toward an agency may disappear with the arrival of a particularity effective PLM. Therefore, it is advantageous for an agency to support those PLMs who strong people skills. These abilities can improve an agencies image in a community, join an agency into the fabric of society, and ultimately improve an agency's ability to do its work.

As trust and appreciation for an agency improves, multiple entities within a community begin to share decision-making in land management with an approach that crosses jurisdictional boundaries. The result is that an agency helps the community gain a sense of ownership in the management of their surrounding landscape.

At the same time, no matter how skillful an individual PLM is at communicating, or how motivated they are to collaborate, they still encounter barriers that challenge efforts at building relationships. It is important for PLMs to identify barriers in order to more easily navigate and overcome them and contributes to successful collaborative outcomes.

However, PLM and non-PLM stakeholders interviewed in this research all see the benefit in collaborating and look towards increasing their capacity and efficiency. To improve collaboration, it is crucial that an agency and collaborative groups recognize the importance of a single individual PLM, as well as the need to identify PLM employees capable of performing a marriage of conservation interests. It is not to say that agencies today do not already do this, but a stronger focus in providing necessary tools, political empowerment, and education for agency employees, as well as understanding the barriers individual PLMs are challenged with will benefit the agency, and collaboration, in the end.

As the cliché goes, the success and outcomes of collaborative efforts' are "only as good as the people at the table." Unfortunately, some PLMs do not have what it takes, or are unable to maintain their interest with collaborative efforts. As documented by Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000), "Natural resource managers do not typically have public relations skill to the extent that some workers in the private sector do [Forest Service district ranger]". A Forest Service public affairs officer seconds that comment: "One thing that limits our ability is having the trained persons in people-to-people relationships in the right places to do productive work with the public". Another Forest Service staff member noted, "We have a lot of technically competent people, but they would have done something else for a career if they were interested in people. They are not the best communicators in many instances." (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 64)

However, willingness to work with the public is improving. It is exciting to see federal and state agencies develop a stronger interest in participating with collaborative processes at the watershed or ecosystem level. This commitment on the part of federal

agencies is vital for many issues that motivate the creation of watershed initiatives are

federal requirements, and therefore federal government is clearly part of the problem and

solution (Getches 2001). Thus, it is important to identify the challenges individual PLMs

face in their agencies and working environments. Results of this research find the

following challenges exist for individual PLMs:

- Incorporating an agency's traditional way of land management with new collaborative processes, particularity the merging of local knowledge with scientific knowledge.
- Inconsistencies are present between one individual PLMs or forests especially in terms of the level of commitment an agency gives to collaboration.
- Coping with an individual PLM's lack of delegated authority and flexibility to be more formally involved in a collaborative group. This hindrance is due to agency policy and administration.
- Straddling the difference between the output-oriented focus of agencies and less output-driven timeframes of collaboration.
- Maintaining effective collaborative PLMs in their current positions rather than having them transferred or moved to another position; also replacing effective PLMs when they retire.

Previous research has addressed some of these challenges and provides further

understanding of their meaning. Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000) discuss conflicts

stemming from combining traditional ways of agency land management and agency

culture, with local knowledge. According to their research collaboration seems to run

counter to traditional management styles, undermine the ability of agencies to protect and

control their organizational turf, and is feared for a variety of reasons (2000, 60). Daniel

Yankelovich (1999, 170-174) explains this point further explaining that "the political will

is just about nil." He explains that "elites" (including public officials) pay lip service to

meaningful public participation, but in practice many don't want to do it, and they see no

compelling reasons why they should. Yankelovich suggests that the resistance of elites

stems from two sources: "One is a fear of losing status through sharing the power of

policy making with the mass public. The other is a blind spot – an unthinking assumption that the public's views are so ill-informed, narrowly self-interested, unrealistic, and moralistic that they cannot add anything of value to the decision-making process."

Though other factors may influence the level at which PLMs commit to collaboration, an agency's cultural egos can be a significant factor. It may prevent an individual PLM from allocating resources, time or other forms of support to collaboration regardless of the participation of other stakeholders. As displayed in the results section, this was a factor in some case studies examined here.

According to Wondolleck and Yaffee (2000), personnel issues also influence collaborative efforts. Many participants indicate that transfers or retirements of federal agency staff impede the development of productive relationships. They tracked thirty-five collaborative processes over three-to-five-year period, and found personnel changes affected 42 percent of the original cases (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 55). This issue is raised numerous times in this research. Interviewees express fear about what may happen once the PLM they have been working successfully with for years retires or is transferred. Other interviewees describe the challenges, and even drawbacks, that occur when a new PLM arrives. It takes valuable, even critical time fro the PLM to understand land and stakeholders, and for relationships to develop.

In order for these challenges to be overcome, agencies must change is occurring in today's United States natural resource management. Reform must occur in the cultural dynamic and the way they manage their employees. Agencies need to improve their performance in collaborative efforts and do so consistently across the entire United

States. Agencies must develop and support individual PLMs because an agency's successes in collaboration rest on the shoulders of these individuals. Collaboration occurs among individuals. Agencies must understand and endorse this concept. CCP is a personal, not an agency, process. CCP is not the work of a bureaucracy but of an individual PLM.

These calls for decentralization coincide with recent government activity. In 1993, President Clinton signed an executive order for federal agencies to explore and, where appropriate, use consensus-building processes to develop regulations. The mandate to build consensus is essentially a mandate to build personal contact and empower local PLMs. In 1997 in Montana, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) passed a resolution encouraging the use of consensus-building approaches to shape public policy and resolve public disputes (McKinney and Harmon 2004, 236). And in 1994, President George W. Bush signed an executive order in that ensured that federal agencies, including the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture, promote cooperative conservation in environment and natural resource law. They needed to include local participation in federal decision-making, in accordance with their respective agency missions, policies, and regulations (United States Presidential Documents: Executive Order 13352 August 26, 2004, Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation).

The recognition from the upper echelons of government that collaboration is worthwhile is evident. However, somewhere from higher levels of government down to individual PLMs, a breakdown occurs. Individual PLMs are not supported consistently across their agencies, impeding their ability to collaborate. Further research is needed to help identify such areas of breakdown. At the same time, agencies need to invests in the

individual PLM, give them flexibility and authority to be a part of a community, give them the tools to succeed, and reward them for successes. Such actions can help to achieve the intents underlying directives for collaboration.

In summary, this research has revealed two important aspects of the individual PLM theme. On one hand, certain PLMs are successful at collaborative endeavors because of their motivation, positive attitude, and investment of time and resources. On the other hand, individual PLMs, as well as collaborative groups, face challenges that are presented by the agencies PLMs represent. These challenges are not necessarily intentional, but instead result from traditional styles of management and agency culture. These traits impede the marriage of collaborative planning with traditional agency practices. Individual PLMs are successful in CCP largely as a result of their skill at navigating through such challenges. Their success will help other individual PLMs who wish to or are required to engage in CCP.

Theme Two: Types of Resources the Public Land Manager Provides to Collaborative Groups.

The interviewees could not, for the most part, stop talking about the resources an effective PLM provides to a collaborative group. Resources for collaboration help shape collaborative processes and outcomes and are critical in determining what collaborative partnerships can achieve (Koontz et al. 2004, 24).

Resources are also important for sustaining an initiative over time and can determine what outcomes can realistically be accomplished. Regardless of their roles, governmental actors and institutions influence the availability and character of human, technical, and financial resources in these endeavors (Koontz et al. 2004, 150). Three

main categories of resources PLMs provide are identified in interview responses. The following is a synopsis of these categories and the support items interviewees describe:

- **Professional knowledge:**
  - Expertise and scientific background in natural resource management.
  - Ability to interpret data for sound decision-making.
  - Expertise in structuring and organizing meetings.
  - Agency procedures.
  - Policy interpretation.
  - Ability to help form subcommittees within collaborative groups.
  - Expertise in grant applications.

- **A supportive voice:**
  - Speaking in favor of a collaborative group in order to gain support within and outside of agencies.
  - Simply being present at a collaborative table helps collaborative groups and projects gain creditability and legitimacy.
  - Putting forth the time to commit to collaborative endeavors.

- **Tangible Resources:**
  - Material goods for projects (i.e. fencing for grazing projects).
  - Funding for projects.
  - Technical advise.
  - Maps, other data sources, and scientific information.
  - Ability to leverage grant dollars.
  - A paid staff.

Interviewees indicate that the most prevalent resources PLMs provide to collaborative groups, across all case studies are professional knowledge, technical expertise, and scientific background in natural resource management. These provisions are lauded by all interviewees and are considered one of the greatest benefits to collaborative groups because they come with no cost, are reliable, aid collaborative groups in making sound land management decisions, and most important, it helps to build relationships between PLMs and non-PLMS.

It is also noteworthy that other commonly discussed resource types include the PLM's ability to add creditability and legitimacy to collaborative groups and projects,

simply by being at the collaborative table. Their capabilities in grant writing; as well abilities and interest in helping to create subcommittees for specific projects within collaborative groups are also seen as being very important. The presence of a PLM in collaborative processes provides a sturdier base for groups because the PLM's presence is usually noticed in the political world. Many institutional structures and attitudes impede efforts to collaborate (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 203). Agencies involved with successful collaborative processes often seek the help of others in fostering public and political support in order to overcome inertia, skepticism, or attempts to politically "fix" a situation in ways counter to the agreements reached through the collaborative process (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 203). This research supports the idea that certain PLMs with political savvy and tact can play a supportive political role and thus to be an important resource.

At the same time, the resources PLMs provide are deeply connected to the time they allocate in making such resources available to collaborative groups. PLM's allocated time is also seen as a provided resource in itself. In doing so, the commitment of time to a collaborative group demonstrates support to collaborative initiatives and without this, successful outcome would be less likely.

Knowing the different types of resources PLMs are able to provide, and the effect they can have on collaborative efforts, is useful information for other PLMs who are considering how to become involved in and provide support to a collaborative effort. Providing resources is one of the simplest ways to build effective relationships with communities and to bring success to collaborative endeavors. Granted, not all collaborative efforts, are suitable for relationship building, but for those that are the

provision of critical resources is a function that can be used to build a greater capacity

and relationships with collaborative groups.

Theme Three: Agency Structure In Collaboration – A Government Perspective.

The third recurrent theme is "agency structure in collaboration". It addresses how

and to what level PLMs participates with collaborative groups, based on the influence of

the agencies they represent. This challenges an individual PLM faces in collaboration

and the resources PLMs are able to provide for collaborative groups. In addition, this

theme provides insight into the PLMs work environment. The following paragraphs

illustrate how agency affiliation can shape a PLM's role, and how a PLM can navigate

through and agency's "limitations" to achieve success.

Parameters defining PLM engagement with collaborative groups and projects are,

for the most part, a result of certain federal policies and laws. Major legislation includes

The National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National

Forest Management Act. These, and other policies, are necessary to help ensure proper

public participation and management of natural resources. However, they create

challenges that individual PLMs must navigate through during a collaborative process.

With these laws come policy and administrative constraints, such as red tape and

burdensome procedures that are frequent obstacles to collaboration. Lack of

administrative flexibility in agency procedures for implementing agreements frustrates

many individuals in collaborative efforts (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000, 53).

Another important aspect of these policies is that they delegate PLMs the

authority to make decisions on public land management but only as long as they are

within the scope of their duties. Where public lands are included in a conservation

strategy, or where collaborative efforts focus on public lands, gaining adequate input and influence in decision-making is the challenge those government agencies have dealt with since public participation was mandated for agencies. Collaborative environmental management can alter the balance of power between communities and government officials (Koontz et al. 2004, 159). Collaboration allows PLMs to make decisions based on the recommendations and influence of communities. This then fulfills public participation mandates and sharing decision-making with communities while staying within the scope of PLM's delegated authority.

The single most important parameter challenging PLMs' abilities to be more formally involved in collaborative processes has to do with conflicts of interest. Of course, preserving strong standards that relate to conflicts of interest is important, though various interviewees raise the question as to how much flexibility in the standards can be allowed to let PLMs become more formally involved. For instance, in the case of the Yaak, a stakeholder group is taking a legislative approach to solving land and resource management issues. In this situation, more flexibility or formal involvement would most likely not be appropriate because it would be against the law for a United States agency to essentially lobby Congress. However, in other cases (i.e., the Blackfoot Challenge and the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group), PLMs could be granted a more active voice in collaborative decision-making without violating conflict of interest standards.

Another parameter that sets PLMs apart from non-PLMs is that PLMs are mandated to consider a wide range of values (e.g., local, regional, state, or national), while non-PLMs are under no such obligation. This difference played out in the Madison Valley over elk management issues. Interviewees described a breakdown in problem-

solving stemming from possible miscommunication. Sometimes, although PLMs and their agencies are interested in collaborating with their respective groups, the process hits a wall. This obstruction occurs when there are differences in perspective concerning how to manage a specific resource particularly when the issue is contentious. This contention occurred in the context of elk management in the Madison Valley. Thus, even though an agency maybe interested in collaborating, in finding solutions to tough issues, there is sometimes a limit to how far collaboration can go. The agency was criticized for collaborating only as long as everyone else agreed with the way it thought management ought to be. At the same time, the PLM and non-PLM interviewees agreed that the agency was in a tough position. On one hand, the agency wants to contribute to the achievement of the collaborative group's ideals of elk management, but on the other hand, it feels that it cannot commit to all of the ideals of non-PLM because there are other interests outside of the collaborative framework with different ideals than those of the collaborative group. Another lesson here is that the agency may not have the communication skills necessary to explain this difference and they need to acquire the skills to be open, transparent and explicit with the position have taken on this issue.

Even though an agency faces difficulties when having to address a wider range of opinions and values coming from outside a particular collaborative project, this parameter should rightfully stay in place. It is simply an example of what PLMs represent at the most basic level, and that is the greater public. Collaborative groups must realize this and incorporate the wider range of values PLMs represent into their decisions and adjust their thinking to incorporate these ideals. If other stakeholders in a collaborative do not feel this is appropriate, then perhaps they should not invite Public Land Management agencies

to their collaborative setting. However, if federal or state lands or resources exist in a conservation initiative, it would be in their best interest to invite the PLMs. If they don't, they should assess whether they are truly a collaborative group, or an advocacy group.

One final parameter presented that emerged in this research is that a commitment to a collaborative effort is not always consistent across an entire agency. For example, as was discussed earlier in reference to the TBC conservation initiative, lands pertaining to two different National Forests were considered for inclusion in the conservation strategy of the collaborative group. However, interest and participation levels between the two national forests were not the same. In one forest, the PLM is very motivated and involved in the collaborative group while in the other forest, the interest level and participation is not as strong. Why this difference exists is yet to be determined from this research. The consequence, however, is a lack of consistency in ecosystem management, the general public's frustration over this inconsistency, and a lack of connectivity in a unified ecosystem approach to land management across multiple ownership regimes.

As mentioned before, PLMs have been able to participate successfully in collaborative endeavors largely because of their creative ingenuity in the face of obstacles. As a result, government agencies benefit, especially in terms of improved public relations. The agency is perceived less as an authorities entity and more as a team player. This shift in perception comes from the efforts of savvy PLMs. These PLMs don not attempt to lead collaborative initiatives. Instead, they act as a voice in the decision-making process. In some cases, certain PLMs are able to vote on decisions a collaborative group makes, but not all PLMs share this ability. At the same time, both

PLMs and non-PLMs feel that PLMs are not the leaders and the PLM's agency benefits from this collaborative reputation.

PLMs have other incentives to participate in collaborative endeavors. Through the collaborative framework they develop solutions and gain internal support for projects. And by developing collaborative partnerships mostly made up of diverse stakeholders, the chances of government-sponsored projects being litigated are decreased. These are strong incentive for PLM participation.

Juxtaposing the Public Land Manager's Role in all Three Cases

In this research, the role of the PLM varies from case to case, creating variegations in themes. Quite simply, collaboration is not a "one-size-fits-all" planning tool; it is a tool that must be wielded differently, sometimes uniquely, from one case to another. Collaboration changes depending on the stakeholders involved, their knowledge of collaborative processes, what issues are being addressed, the physical environment it takes place in, and so on. Though collaborative efforts can follow a similar framework, each collaboration will have its own unique permutations, as will the role of the PLM. Thus, each case will be analyzed using the analytical framework of from Koontz et al. (2004). Simultaneously, departure from the framework will be described. Koontz et al. (2004) identified three factors that influence collaborative processes and outcomes: issue definition, resources available for collaboration, and group structure and decision-making processes. To understand how PLMs influence collaborative efforts, these three factors are looked at in the context of the three cases studies in this research. Koontz et al.'s (2004) research is chosen as a framework over other literature with similar finding because it is felt that the results of this research are best explained in the context of the

three factors Koontz et al. (2004) provide. Other literature, such as by Wondolleck and

Yaffee (2000), present similar findings but differ in that Wondolleck and Yaffee provide

a typology of how PLMs interact with collaborative groups while Koontz et al. (2004)

explain how collaborative groups' processes and outcomes can be affected by PLMs

depending on the three factors explained above. Since, in part, components of this

research are meant to explain how PLMs' roles affect collaboration, it is found that

Koontz et al.'s findings best fit this research.

Issue Definition

Issue definition refers to 1) how an issue is framed, 2) what set of solutions is

seen as feasible, and 3) the scale of the issue. Scholars have long noted that the way a

problem is presented and understood lays a foundation for who is likely to become

involved, what forces will come into play, and which solutions will be given serious

consideration (Schattschneider 1960, taken from Koontz et al. 2004, 23). Issue definition

plays a factor in the variation that occurs from collaborative project to project. It can

determine what types of stakeholders are involved, particularly the extent to which PLMs

engage in the process. Other factors may play a role, such as different parameters (i.e.,

their delegated authority and policies), self-interest and motivation, and incentives, but

issue definition is paramount. The following cases illustrate the variation that occurs in

PLM participation in terms of degree and focus. Again, the three cases are the TBC,

MVRG, and YVCE.

The TBC generally frames issues around an ecosystem management approach to

the watershed. It also aims to have representation from every type of landowner.

Because approximately fifty percent of the watershed falls under federal public land

jurisdiction, it is only natural for the community-based collaborative group to ensure that

the USDA Forest Service be present at the collaborative table as well as other agency

representatives from the US Fish Wildlife Service and MT Fish Wildlife and Parks. In

this collaborative setting the PLM is fairly proactive and involved as much as agency

parameters allow. PLMs hold numerous positions from acting in an ad hoc capacity,

serving as vice-chairs of a collaborative group, and as sub-committee members. In all

types of roles they have been able to provide various types of resources and support for

the group.

The YVCE is significantly different than TBC. There, the main issue defined by

collaborative efforts is to create policy on one hundred percent USDA Forest Service

lands through a legislative approach. As a result, collaborative efforts in the Yaak have

the least amount of PLM participation. Where legislation comes into play, a PLM's role

is limited. Multiple laws and regulations govern the level of participation. Thus, PLMs

act primarily as advisors for the collaborative group. They interpret policy; explain their

land management policies and other aspects of managing public lands. Their role is

limited to that of consultant. Legal parameters mandated by Congress to prevent

government entities from engaging in activities where a conflict of interest might exist.

In the MVRG, the issues are focus on maintaining viable ranching economy and

ecologically sustainable open space. In this case, public lands do not represent a large

part of the landscape that the collaborative efforts focus on. However, PLMs are more

involved in efforts to secure mutual and collateral benefits (i.e., the benefit both receive

from maintaining open space) for the group. PLMs in the Madison express strong

interest to participate in collaborative efforts. Their tendency, however is to participate

more when needed rather than directly and consistently. In TBC for instance, PLMs hold a regular seat at the collaborative table. In comparison, PLMs in the MVRG sit on subcommittees to aid in the direction of collaborative efforts. MVRG PLMs are not involved as representatives of the agencies they work for but simply have become involved on their own time and of their own volition.

It is also important to point out that (conservation) collateral benefits can accrue to both PLM and non-PLM stakeholders. Mutualism is illustrated by the relationship between ranchers' needs for grazing leases on public lands and the benefits that open space on private lands provide for PLMs and their agencies' interests. Interviewees explain that ranchers need to supplement rangeland resources with leases on public lands in order to maintain viable businesses. Without this opportunity, the attractive profit of selling land off for real estate development can outweigh the desire to maintain a traditional but non-viable business and way of life. Also, when subdivisions of land occur on or near the boundaries of public lands, the management goals, objectives, and standards for these lands become difficult for PLMs to reach and maintain. Thus, it is advantageous for PLMs to become involved in these collaborative efforts wherever it is suitable. This example of mutualism between non-PLMs and PLMs illustrates how the role of the PLM can be determined by collateral benefits to the agency.

Resources for Collaboration

Resources for collaboration are critical to determining what collaborative partnerships can achieve (Yaffee et al. 1996). In a summary of the literature, Koontz et al. (2004) identified three types of resources commonly discussed in collaboration. These are human, technical, and financial resources. According to Koontz et al. (2004) PLMs

influence the types and quantities of resources available to collaborative groups. Non-PLM stakeholders in the cases, grateful for the support, add that many successful outcomes were more easily achieved because of the resources PLMs brought to the table; especially their professional expertise, natural resource data, and grant partnerships. This role is critical to the successes and outcomes of collaborative endeavors.

In this research, however, PLMs brought a different set of resources to each collaboration. Thus, each case is somewhat unique. Some variation is due to the degree to which a PLM can get involved in the process. But even when participation is low, the simple provision of basic resources, such as maps and other information, can indeed help and is even considered critical to the success of the collaboration.

For example, in the YVCE, PLMs are not as deeply engaged in the collaborative processes due to legal constraints. In comparison PLMs from the TBC and MVRG are far more involve. Despite the discrepancy, YVCE PLMs make a difference, particularly as sources of information. As a result of PLM assistance, stakeholders gain a better sense of the landscape and make more informed collaborative decisions. Essentially, what resources PLMs are able and willing to provide to collaborative groups is determined by factors explained in "Issue Definition."

PLMs with the TBC provide more resources than do YVCE and even MVRG. Collateral benefits, like those mentioned above are provided. Collateral benefits are a product of the ecosystem approach that the TBC takes to addressing issues. PLMs have an interest in TBC collaboration because they are affected by the greater ecosystem, particularly because of a common challenge: the threat of private timberlands becoming subdivided for residential development. As in the case of the MVRG, when development

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occurs next to public land, the goals, objectives, and standards of public lands and resource management agencies become difficult to meet. Therefore, becoming involved in, and providing resources for, collaborative efforts is advantageous for PLMs. Thus, in the case of the PLMs in TBC where collaboration provides collateral benefits, PLMs provide the greatest amount of resources, as well as the greatest extent, offering assistance from all three categories. So far, the greatest achievement of TBC has been the Forest Service's acquisition of private timberlands that were in threat of being subdivided and developed. For this success to occur, several processes had to take place. First, the collaborative recognized that it needed the support of an agency. Second, the individual PLMs and their agency had to have an interest in supporting such efforts and determine what resources they were willing and able to provide. Third, what they could provide had to be consistent with the laws and policies that govern government agencies. At the same time, not one stakeholder alone could have successfully acquired the private timberlands. It was a coordinated effort of all parties involved. Within this chain of collaboration, however, comes a deciding factor: resources. As interviewees note, without the resources provided, this outcome would not have been met. Similar efforts still occur to this day through collaborative management of these lands and other resource issues within the Blackfoot ecosystem.

Table 4. Type of Resources PLMs provide to each case.

Case Study	Professional Knowledge	Supportive Voice	Tangible Resources
TBC	X	X	X
MVRG	X		X
YVCE	X		X

As mentioned before, the perception of PLMs in the MVRG vary from one stakeholder to another. Some non-PLMs speak highly of certain PLMs, but also express the challenges they faced with others. Despite these differences, all PLMs provide resources to the collaborative effort by either lending their professional knowledge or their tangible resources, such as maps and other data sources. Outcomes also vary between success and nonsuccess. For example, PLMs hired a facilitator in hope of resolving contentious issues over elk management in the valley. The outcome was inconclusive because consensus could not be met between all parties involved. It was never determined, in this research, why consensus could not be met, but this example goes to show that even if an agency and an individual PLM provide resources to resolve an issue, the outcome can be uncertain.

However, in the Madison Valley, there have been instances where resources provided by PLMs have made a difference. For instance, PLMs helped to leverage funds to create a collaborative weed management program across multiple jurisdictions. The result is an effective weed management program in the Madison Valley that has brought together people who may not have ever united on a common issue. It is even said that the efforts of for weed management are what instigated the initial collaborative efforts in the MVRG.

The PLMs in the YVCE provide the least amount of resources to collaborative efforts when compared to the other cases in this research. However, according to several interviewees, professional knowledge and tangible resources, such as maps and other forms of data, were essential in developing the group's map of common ground. In this, the PLMs acted solely as advisors and consultants, instead of playing more active roles,

helping to shape the direction collaborative groups take. It is also important to point out

that the PLMs assistance was fairly collaborative. Because the stakeholders are taking a

legislative approach, the PLMs in the Yaak Valley did not have to provide any resources

to the group. The PLMs could have withheld information, unless the group invoked the

Freedom of Information Act. Instead, the act was not invoked, and the PLMs willingly

supplied resources to the collaborative groups. Such activities, on the part of PLMs are

critical to successful outcomes.

Again, it is important to remember that resources PLMs provide to collaborative

groups are to some extent dependent on whether or not the PLMs want to provide such

support. Further if PLMs choose to do so, they, in most cases, must then receive the

blessing of their agency. Therefore, not only are successful outcomes of collaborative

efforts contingent on what resources can be provided to them, but they are also are

determined by the PLM's willingness to act, ability to gain support internally, and

capability of to implementing the resources they have to offer.

Group Structure and Decision-Making Process

Group structure refers to the types of organizational or administrative

arrangements that have been established within a collaborative group, including

hierarchy, authority, reporting relations, and division of labor. Collaborative groups

develop a variety of organizational structures, ranging from loose federations to groups

with tightly controlled memberships, and from _ad hoc_ committees with minimal

administrative capacity to formal organizations with full-time staff working within a

well-defined administrative framework (Koontz et al 2004, 24). They structure and

coordinate activities through a numerous, but generally accomplish this through

convening the groups that choose to structure workloads by creating subgroups assigned to particular tasks, whereas others conduct activities primarily through general meetings (Koontz and Korfmacher 2000).

Decision-making processes are used to select participants, coordinate activities, and aggregate individual preferences into group decisions. The selection of participants to sit in committees and subcommittees is an important task because such groups often have outreach responsibilities. Selected participants can range from all types of non-PLMs and PLMs alike. When inviting citizens (such as LSHs) to interact with public officials (such as PLMs), selection methods may affect the degree to which a group represent the broader community's (a collaborative initiative represents) interest, as well as the degree to which public officials will be responsive to the group's policy recommendations (Pierce and Doerksen 1976). Where PLMs have played a part in the aggregated arrangement of stakeholders, their role in the decision-making processes can affect the outcome of collaborative groups.

This research shows PLMs play a role in collaborative decision-making processes. Their role varies within and between groups. For instance, some collaborative structures may be limited in the types of decision-making processes that can be delegated to PLMs as a result of an agency's structure. Agency structure can differ from one agency to another. In effect, one PLM in a particular agency can be more or less a part of a collaborative decision-making process than another PLM in another agency. Koontz et al. (2004) explains that the Forest Service often is criticized for its traditional chain-of-command bureaucracy, which constrains its (as an agency) ability to engage in collaborative activities. In contrast, agencies with a looser organizational structure, such

as the BLM, are more flexible in the decisions they can delegate within a collaborative activity undertaken by the PLM (Koontz et al. 2004, 25). These differences in flexibility filter down to individual PLMs and can enhance or challenge the role they play in decision-making.

In this research, PLMs affect the decision-making process of the collaborative groups in three major ways: They are granted voting privileges, consult with non-PLM decision-makers in the collaborative group, and provide resources. Which roles PLMs play depends on where a PLM fits in the collaborative's overall group structure. For instance, a collaborative group may or may not need them. Also, PLMs come to the table with different resources and levels of decision-making authority.

Further, PLMs may or may not play a role in subcommittees, have voting privileges at the collaborative table, and or be board members. In this research, PLMs that did not hold one of these capacities and were not formally integrated into a group's structure participated mainly by providing resources.

In one situation a PLM was motivated to be part of a group's structure by participating on a subcommittee. However the PLM did not have administrative approval because of the perception of a potential conflict of interest. The outcome in this situation is that the PLM, on their own time, participates as a private citizen rather than as an agency representative. In this citizen role, the PLM can still provide resources via their professional knowledge. Participation, however, came without agency compensation. Factors that influence what capacity PLMs have in-group structure is displayed in Figure 5.

Table 5. Capacities PLMs held by case study.

Cases	Cases where PLM had voting privileges.	Cases where PLM sat on a subcommittee.	Cases where PLM held a board member position.	Cases where PLM were not formally involved in-group structure but participated in other ways such as provide resources.
TBC	X	X	X	
MVRG				X
YVCE				X

Of the three cases TBC has the most formal participation of PLMs. This level of participation is likely because all three factors that influence the capacity PLM have in group structure have been met: The collaborative group identifies that they need the involvement of PLMs; the PLMs are motivated and willing to be a part of the group structure; and some, but not all PLMs in the TBC, have been given administrative approval to be incorporated into the group's structure, to some extent.

While not addressed explicitly in this research, it appears that the greater involvement of PLMs in TBC has produced very positive outcomes for the group, and perhaps even more so than for the other two groups. It appears that TBC has achieved a greater amount of success in social and environmental outcomes. The group attributes their success to large organizational structure of the TBC, as well as to the on-the-ground successes in the community and the environment that have been detailed in the popular media. Although not to the same degree as the TBC, both the MVRG and the YVCE have produced important social and environmental successes. It appears, however, that

the MVRG collaborative effort has more success than that of the YVCE. This greater

success may be attributable to the involvement of PLMs there. Success can also result

from how long a collaborative group has been working together on issues. As a

conservation initiative continues to work, it can grow in size and ability to address

complex issues. New and smaller groups, in contrast, may be less likely to attract the

focus and attention of agencies and PLMs. Over time, as groups demonstrate that they

are stable, persistent, and effective, then those attentions may change. However, this

study also shows another factor in the strengths and success of collaboration when more

resources and other support are available to a collaborative when PLMs are more

formally involved in the group's structure. When this happens, PLMs and non-PLMs

benefit because community and social objectives are more easily met as well as the goals,

objectives, and standards of public land agencies. Therefore, it is advantageous for all

stakeholders to see the role of a PLM as important to collaborative efforts, and at the

same time for PLMs to see the benefits of participating in collaborative settings.

CONCLUSION

The research presented here examines the role of the PLM in Collaborative Conservation Planning through the lens of three different collaborative conservation initiatives in Western Montana. Analysis of content from interviews with PLMs and non-PLM stakeholders involved in these initiatives reveal three important themes: The importance of the individual PLM, The critical assistance of types of resources PLMs provide to collaborative groups, and the challenges that come with agency structure. These three themes significantly influence each other, as well as collaborative processes and outcomes. Of the three themes, the Individual PLM appears to influence the collaborative processes and outcomes most of all. At the same time, the Individual PLM also shows to be greatly influenced by the other two themes. Issues of PLM resources and agency constraints explain "how" and to "what level" individual PLMs can participate in collaborative endeavors. By exploring the reasons that underlie the "how" and "to what level" PLMs participate in CCP, this research produces new understanding of their roles. Thus, these findings can be used by PLMs and non-PLMs alike to make collaborative processes more effective and efficient wherever CCP occurs.

This research contributes to the geographic literature by adding to the understanding of human relations to natural environments from a planning perspective. Collaboration is a planning tool that is useful to find solutions to tough issues by gaining multiple viewpoints from diverse stakeholders in order to reach agreements and decisions. The study of collaboration fits well with the geographical discipline because it can help make informed decisions on land management objectives across large landscapes. Geography is a holistic discipline in that it helps researchers understand

relationships between multiple dimensions and spatial scales that exist on the planet. Rather than specializing on a specific element of the earth (i.e., cultural research, biology, economics) geography is a synthesis of many sciences and contributes to solving tough issues by examining the interactions between multiple human and natural elements. Collaboration can be used to find meaning in these complex multidimensional landscapes. Applying the geographic principles to land management requires a holistic understanding of the many elements across a landscape such as human communities, wildlife, different cultures, ecosystems, and other natural processes.

In this concluding chapter, a summary discussion of why PLMs participate in collaboration is presented. Recommendations for sustaining successful PLMs in collaborative groups will be given and key thematic summarized. Further, future research needs will be discussed and a final recommendations offered.

Why Collaborate?

Collaboration is hard work - it takes a lot of time and even with substantive efforts, can still have uncertain outcomes. PLMs today have a burdensome workload where time is of the essence. So why do PLMs collaborate? Not all participate, but those that do discover benefits.

This research shows that PLMs participate in CCP for three key reasons. One, collaboration builds relationships and partnerships with diverse groups, enabling the PLM to become an accepted part of a community. Second, because of this integration, PLMs achieve more on-the-ground results, improving the outcomes of ecosystem enhancement projects and the design of land management objectives. Essentially, they gain greater support from non-PLMs and, vise versa. This integration and collaboration

also diminishes such challenges as litigation, lack of funding, and political imbroglio. Third, the use of collaboration in government-sponsored projects is convenient. It helps government agencies comply with mandates for public participation, such as those by the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

In essence PLMs engage even more in collaborative planning for the benefit of "social capital", which adds to the health and empowerment of a community. Social capital comes through relationship and partnership building, and by having a community and diverse stakeholders become an explicit part of land management objectives and planning. When this occurs, cross-boundary coordination of land management objectives can be agreed on and outcomes can be more easily sustained. Without collaborative planning, diverse local issues and concerns over proposed projects are more difficult to address under existing public participation requirements. Granted, collaboration is not a one-size-fits all planning model, but where it has been used, outcomes tend to be more sustainable.

Outcomes from collaborative endeavors tend to be more sustainable because collaboration builds local support. LSH6 explains this sustainability, underscoring the importance of local support:

> I think that it is a recognition that it is the only way you are going to have sustainable solutions. Because, again, it gets to a funding perspective. If you think about what foundations are interested in, foundations recognize they are external, they are not internal, and they are an external source of revenue to a situation. What they want to do is they don't want to have to keep putting money into the problem. They recognize they want to put external resources into a solution to create sustainable internally driven solutions, and recognize they want to catapult that initial capacity to sort of move-the-dial if you will. And so what agencies I think have begun to recognize is that they cannot sit on the outside of the problem and expect influence to change. They need to get in and become a part of the solution; they need to be a part of a community to move things forward… I think there is a bit of a movement in and around the country to try

and effect more local decisions particularly when you think of land management agencies… So you [referring to people in general] are trying to put the ownership back into the community. So, the agency needs to be a part of that ownership. They need to get into the community and be a part of a community driven process. They cannot stand on the outside and say I am the agency, why don't you jump out of here, if want to do something on the public land then you are going to have to answer me [the land agency]. They are really trying to change that attitude of a sort of confronting attitude, a kind of I am in control attitude, I am the agency I know what to do, if you want my participation you are going to have to do it on my terms (LSH6, 1/30/2008).

In other words, local assistance is essential to gaining funding, garnering support, and finding a long-term solution.

PLMs in this research have, for the most part, acknowledged the importance of obtaining local support; however, the reality is that they represent the greater populace nation as a whole outside of collaborative settings. Therefore, their challenge in these matters is to balance the interests of the local against state or national constituencies. They must represent this trio of voices at the collaborative process, especially because some of those voices are not at the collaborative table. Because of this representative role that PLMs have to play, collaborative groups become better rounded and diverse. And as relationship between PLMs and non-PLMs grows, so too does the project's sustainability.

However, for these relationships to be effective and sustainable, one final factor must be considered: Collaboration is only as good as the people at the collaborative table. Consequently, to bolster the formation of successful relationships, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations: Sustaining Success

Key to the success of collaboration is the individual PLM. Again, this crucial player is shaped by issue definition, resources available for the collaboration, and group structure and decision-making processes (Koontz et al. 2004). Further factors, in this

research, are the qualities of: the individual PLM, the types of resources they bring to collaborative groups, and agency structure. These elements also influence how and to what level PLMs participate in collaborative settings. The recommendations offered here focus on these factors and provide suggestions that can improve PLM participation in CCP.

First, agencies should explicitly recognize the importance of providing support to those individual PLMs who possess the personal characteristics and traits needed for effective collaboration. In addition, agencies can increase their productive capacity in collaborative planning by learning from the effective PLM, using this valuable person to train and educate up-and-coming PLMs. As results show, most interviewees (especially PLMs) lacked formal education in collaboration and learned more from on-the-job-training. By cultivating collaborative characteristics in PLMs that lack such traits and or training new PLMs, agencies can improve their success for agencies and conservation alike. Quite often, individual PLMs become the face of their agency in the communities they work in. For them to be positively accepted by these communities, let alone included in a collaborative initiative, it takes a special PLM, one who is naturally able to fit in, communicate well, practice appropriate people skills, and possess a positive collaborative attitude. Individual PLMs that have these traits help an agency gain trust, respect, and appreciation within local communities. These enhanced relationships between PLMs and non-PLMs lead to shared approaches of decision-making in land management across public and private land boundaries. In effect, as an agency enhances the social capital of a community, citizens can gain a sense of ownership in their surrounding landscape's resource management.

Agencies can support individual PLMs in a number of ways. First, agencies must effectively address the issue of retirement or transfer of individual PLMs who are successful collaborators. Too often, an adept collaborator moves for better position or pay, or retires. Two suggestions came from interviews. On is rewarding successful PLMs so that they are not tempted to transfer for position advancement. Traditionally, agency personnel who want to advance their careers must move to a new duty station to find higher pay and advancement. This counters the need for stability of those successful individual PLMs and disrupts the continuity in collaborative projects, and between an agency and a community. Second, if a successful PLM does move or retire an agency assess the personal traits of the replacement and consider how a new PLM will fit in with the community and collaborative initiative. Interviewees bemoan the idea of having familiarized themselves with a new PLM. The transition requires a period of trust building. With the right PLMs the transition can occur. At the same time, agencies have an additional role: they must invest in the individual PLMs, letting them have flexibility via additional delegated authority. Such an allotment allows them to be part of a community more easily. Agencies must also give the tools to succeed, such as necessary resources. Finally, agencies must reward PLMs for successes.

Second, PLMs and agencies must recognize the challenges that hinder effective collaborative partnerships between PLMs and non-PLMs and find creative solutions. Two, major challenges are: 1) old ways of agency management and 2) historic cultural traits. These practices make it difficult to integrate collaborative planning with agency practices and policies. Eve though agencies are not opposed to collaboration, but agency

structure and culture inhibits agency involvement in collaborative endeavors. Successful individual PLMs are skillful enough to be able to navigate through such challenges.

Third, agencies and PLMs need recognize the relationships among individual PLMs, types of resources available to collaborative groups, and agency structure. These three factors significantly influence how PLMs participate and to what level individual PLMs can be involved in collaboration. Providing education to agency personnel and non-PLM stakeholders about these connections can create more efficient and effective collaborations between PLMs and non-PLMs.

Finally, it is recommended that agencies maintain a strong decentralized organizational structure. The more centralized an agency becomes, the less attached it is to a given community and collaborative setting. For example, the USDA Forest Service has seriously considered consolidating districts and even forests into larger units for seemingly practical economic and land management reasons. The effect of this action would result in one supervisory PLM overseeing a larger landmass than s/he does now, a having even less of a community presence. If this were to happen, the individual PLM would be detached from the community and collaborative efforts would be significantly reduced. Thus, there may be a few good reasons for consolidating national forest units and moving to a more centralized organizational structure; the costs outweigh the benefits. It is essential that agencies maintain their local presence, maintain their connected PLMs, and preserve a more decentralized organization.

Research Limitations

This research thoroughly examines the role of the PLM in CCP, however some limitations exist. It is questionable whether or not sixteen interviewee participants is an

adequate sample size for this research. Having additional interviewees could add to

legitimizing results and findings. Also, it is questionable whether or not three case

studies is a suitable amount of cases for comparing PLM roles in CCP in general. The

appropriate number of cases necessary is seemingly arbitrary; however, it can easily be

asserted that having additional cases would make for more compelling and interesting

comparisons. Finally, the researcher of this study is a PLM. Though very objectively

minded, the author/researcher being both a PLM and studying the role of PLMs in CCP

can arguably be seen as producing results with a smidge of bias.

Future Research Needs

Already, government agencies see collaboration as a worthwhile endeavor.

However, somewhere from between higher ranks of government to individual PLMs, a

breakdown of these directives occurs. Support for collaborative endeavors needs to be

strengthened across entire agencies. Especially essential is sustaining successful PLMs in

collaboration. Further research is needed to help identify such areas of breakdown.

The cases considered in this research represent a diverse array of property

ownership regimes. Diversity was sought because it was thought that greater differences

in the ownership composition would yield more interesting data.   While this research

studied collaborative planning across multiple ownership regimes, others has generally

focused on citizen-driven collaborative planning on strictly public lands. Future research

on the effects of land base differences in collaboration could illustrate additional trends of

the PLM's role in collaborative planning.

Another useful investigation could address the challenge of inconsistent

commitments of different national forests in the same conservation initiative. A closer

look at why these inconsistencies exist would be helpful in building land management connectivity across ecosystems. This research could employ a ground-level approach by examining the individual PLMs involved, studying their participation, challenges they face in CCP, and determining how these elements affect inconsistency or lack of commitment to CCP.

Final Word

Through qualitative methods, this research explores the role of the PLM in the context of three different collaborative conservation initiatives in Montana. Each case represents a different property ownership regime, thus adding complexity to the research. Vigorous content analysis of the interviews shows that there is a keen relationship among individual PLMs, the types of resource PLMs provide to collaborative groups, agency structure, and the outcome of CP. In addition, the PLMs' roles differ in each case in terms of how much they are able to participate and how they participate. Their level and kind of participation is influenced by issue definition, the resources PLMs were able to provide, and group structures and decision-making processes. By understanding these dynamic relationships, and other factors that influence the role of the PLM in collaboration, much can be understood to make collaborative partnerships between PLMs and non-PLM more effective and efficient.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Introduce myself and research.

- Informed consent.

- Indicate which are questions and probes below.

- Base Line Information:

  o What is your name?

  o What is your role in this collaborative group?

  o Do you manage public lands? If so, do you have a seat at the collaborative table and what is the role of this participation?

  o What are your experience and / or training in the area of CCP?

- How has the PLM participated in the collaborative process?

  o First Area

    ▪ Are there differences in the roles of private and PLM stakeholders?

    ▪ What positive attributes has the PLM added to the process?

  o Second Area

    ▪ Are there any negative attributes or challenges of the PLM in the planning process?

    ▪ Where has the PLM been the most useful in collaborative efforts?

  o Third Area

    ▪ Is there anything you could suggest that the PLM could do differently?

    ▪ Can you provide examples (projects or specific decisions) where the PLM has affected the collaborative planning process and outcomes?

- Why has the PLM been involved in these collaborative efforts?

- o Has PLM played a more active role now than in the past?

- Has the collaborative process been worthwhile and effective (how or how has it not)?

  - o Is there still a willingness to participate on the part of any of the stakeholders?

  - o Has this process truly been collaborative? Why or why not?

  - o Did the process work to solve major issues?

APPENDIX B: LIST OF ACRONYMS

BLM   Bureau of Land Management

LSH   Local Stakeholder

MT FWP   Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

MVRG   Madison Valley Ranchlands Group

NGO   Non Governmental Organization

PLM   Public Land Manager

TBC   The Blackfoot Challenge

USFS   United States Forest Service

USFWS   United States Fish Wildlife Service

YVCE   Yaak Valley Collaborative Efforts

APPENDIX C: CONTENT ANALYSIS MATRICES

What is your role in this collaborative group?

Themes:

How the stakeholder participates.

What the stakeholder brings to the table.

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Agency representative of the lands incorporated in the collaborative conservation strategy.	*	*	*	*	*	*										
Non-voting member of the collaborative group.								*								
Board member			*						*		*	*	*			*
PLM who has Administrative approval to serve on a board.			*													
Serves on a subcommittee.			*	*							*	*	*			*

A community member.	*			*				*			*	*	*		*	*	
Active participant in collaborative efforts.								*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	
Represent a NGO stakeholder group															*	*	
Collaborative organizer and or chair / vice /est.				*						*		*	*		*	*	
Building relations.	*														*		
Hired a facilitator for wildlife committee / Instigator		*															
Facilitator							*										
Provide training							*										
Assist in major on the ground projects									*			*	*	*	*	*	
Technical advisor/ technical support / organizational support	*				*	*	*										

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Do you manage public lands? If so, do you have a seat at the collaborative table and what is the role of this participation?

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSHB	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Yes	*	*	*	*												
No					*	*										
Active participant in committee	*															
Provide FS perspective	*		*													
Provides equity of a resource to everyone		*														

What are experiences and / or training in the area of CCP?

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Non-natural resource undergrad							*	*				*	*		*	
Non-natural resource masters							*						*			
Formal education in collaboration							*		*							
Beyond grad									*							
Undergrad in natural resources	*	*	*	*	*	*										*
No formal education on collaboration	*	*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Masters in Natural resources		*			*				*		*					*
On Job Training		*		*	*	*			*			*	*	*	*	*
Agency or employer provided some formal training		*		*											*	*
Working with the community				*										*	*	*

How has the PLM participated in the collaborative process?

Themes:

Types of Resources the PLM provides to collaborative groups

Agency structure in collaboration: Stakeholder interactions

The Individual

Sub-Themes	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Funding Source	*						*	*								
Instigator to solve resource issues (i.e., weeds, elk…, etc.). Could be the same as funding source.		*		*												

Expertise (natural resources, meeting structure, policy, the agency, parameters, technical advisor, data sharing, mapping).		*		*	*	*			*		*		*	*	
Promoter / lobbyist for collaborative							*								
Helps to legitimize the projects							*								
Supporter of the collaborative effort.								*	*	*				*	*	
Help establish committees	*														
Sits on committee board of a collaborative.	*						*	*							
Not as a leader, but as a partner.	*	*		*			*	*				*				*

As a mandated agency.		*				*										
Presenter – asking for support, review, ideas, partners, etc.							*			*						
A more rich and effective conversation to public comment							*									
Not as Big Government								*								
Represents Land Base in Conservation strategy.								*								
Leader / Instigator				*												
Sits at or is invited to the collaborative table (a stakeholder)									*			*	*			*
Relying on collaborative group to come up with solutions														*		

Opinion is welcomed on decisions but does not vote												*				
Community member						*	*								*
Engagement is inconsistent from one agency person to another (forest to forest, district to district)								*		*		*			
Non-cooperative but invited to the table (i.e. elk issues)										*		*			
In a very personal manner (people skills, sticks neck out, get to "yes", thinks outside the box).						*	*								

Are there differences in the roles of the private and PLM stakeholders?

Themes:

Differences in the type of resources the PLM provides to collaborative groups

Differences in the type of resources the PLM provides to collaborative groups

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Provide assistance, consultant via expertise to the table: i.e. tech background, big picture perspective, funding skills with grants connections, politics.	*			*	*	*	*		*	*						*
Provide resources i.e. $.								*								

The PLM role can be used to provide stewardship advice to privates on their land. (ECO-MGT)	*								*			*			
Provide direction to collaborative in ways that other stakeholders don't: i.e. avoiding litigation pitfalls	*					*									
Responsible (mandated) for a resource i.e. wildlife. Makes for non negotiable terms		*				*							*		

Role should not be to make the collaborative a function of the government.							*									
Considered an outsider.											*					
Limited to how much they can collaborate due to mandates.												*	*			
Represent a large piece of a watershed.																*

What positive attributes has the PLM added to the process?

Themes:

Types of Resources the PLM provides to the Collaborative Group

Individual PLM

Big Picture Perspective.

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Funds, grants, leveraging capabilities, paid staff.				*					*		*	*	*			*
Providing legitimacy and credibility to projects and the collaborative, value to the partnership							*				*					
Technical expertise	*		*	*			*						*			

Stability due to low turnover rate on local district.	*														
The interest to be involved and/or support			*									*	*		*
Individual PLM politicking with in agency to gain support of collaborative			*								*				
Just being at the collaborative table and incorporating peoples ideas into policy.					*				*	*		*			

Becoming more a part of the community. And being accepted in the community							*				*				
Willingness to not be big government.											*				
Having a good attitude for collaboration.															*
Brings to the table a sense of equitability. and fair access to resources for everyone.	*														

Lets people see the bigger picture / ecosystem and the connection between private lands and the surrounding. Communicating the **ecosystem perspective**.							*						*			

Where has the PLM been the most useful in collaborative efforts?

Theme:

Types of Resources PLMs provide to the Collaborative Group

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
An agency that looks over the resource for everyone.		*														
Just being there at the table representing that part of the watershed in the conservation strategy. **ECO**			*					*	*		*		*			

MGT.																	
Helping to create programs (weeds) to bring people together.											*						
Building relationships with the PLM															*		
As an advisory with expertise. Technical support				*		*						*	*				
Funding							*	*		*		*					

sources															
Person al								*							

Are there any negative attributes or Challenges PLM face in the collaborative planning process?

Themes:

Challenges with in Collaborative Process.

Challenges due to Agency Mandates and Processes

Inter Agency Dynamics

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Obtaining trust between the FS and the ones that sue.					*											
Entering a community and explaining why or why not something can happen, **educating the public on the agency process.**						*				*						

When collaboration does not work and there's a need to find other ways of working with landowners to find solutions.		*														
Dealing with many diverse groups.															*	*
Getting groups to come to the table and form dialog		*			*											
Keeping individuals engaged in the process					*											

Perception of the agency as a regulatory entity. Taking the Big Stick approach.	*	*			*					*				
Balancing the local perspective to the national on public land issues					*								*	
Affects of being a Bureaucracy: slow process…needing approval for things from higher up the ladder…decision-makers not at the table.		*				*		*	*	*				

| Not always as flexible to accommodate local values due to mandates and other values outside the local area. | | * | | | | | * | | | | | * | | | |
| To allow an agency rep to become more formally involved with collaborative groups and use their own sound judgment. | | | * | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Lack of an agency as a whole wanting to commitm ent to a long collabora tive process – output oriented.			*						*						*
People / agencies not being able to think outside their jurisdictio nal box.					*										
Personal drawbac k is the agency rep wearing multiple hats.					*										
They can show up more often be more								*			*				

involved.															
When PLMs do not embrace the collaborative idea across the board.									*						
Getting past the old school agency thinking and egos. Local v. scientific knowledge.								*							
Replacing good collaborating agency reps with new ones once the old ones retire													*		

Not enough funds available to the agencies										*					*	

Is there anything you could suggest that the PLM could do differently?

Themes:

Education in Collaboration: Internal and Outside the agency

What PLMs should consider in collaboration for an efficient process

Big Picture Perspective: Consider a new approach to land management

Sub-Theme	PLM1 M	PLM2 M	PLM3 B	PLM4 B	PLM5 Y	PLM6 Y	NGO1 M	NGO2 B	NGO3 B	NGO4 Y	LSH1 M	LSH2 B	LSH3 M	LSH4 Y	LSH5 Y	LSH6 B
Internally help people become educated on the collaborative process.	*											*				
Gain respect as an agency via the collaborative process.	*															
Learn from the agencies successes and failures.				*												

Maintain impartiality.					*									
Discuss mandated parameters earlier on in a project.						*								
Listen to more local knowledge.														*
Do not use an agencies bureaucratic clout.	*													
More effective if all parties integrated under one roof / same policy and process. **ECO MGT.**						*								

Think outside one's jurisdictional box.				*											

Why has the PLM been involved in these collaborative efforts?

Themes:

<u>Community outlook</u>

<u>Helps to get things done</u>

<u>Conveniences</u>

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Because PLMs need to recognize that issues they deal with extend far beyond the NF boundary and they have to be involved. **ECO MGT**	*															

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Because the agencies are seeing success.					*						*					
We cannot effect change doing it along. Change on the landscape	*						*									*
To get anything g done we need the support from other organizations, grassroots, and foundations. Helps to avoid court.	*				*	*	*				*	*	*		*	

Similar interest in missions make for good allies on accomplishing things	*														
For the convenience of having a public source (mailing list…).		*													
Helps to fulfill some mandated requirements (FACA).				*											
Way to gain public support for projects.		*												*	

(Personal reasons) Because the PLM is part of a community and cares beyond their professional responsibilities.	*					*						*			
Because the PLM was asked to be involved.							*	*							
Helps the PLM incorporate adjacent lands								*							

Provides a positive image for the agency in the eyes of the public because things are getting done.											*				
Helps with the public participation by allowing them to be more of the planning process (helps with NEPA)													*		

Only way we are going to have sustainable solutions by using public input in decision-making.												*		*
Way to put ownership back into the local community. Not being big Government.												*		*

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Has the collaborative process been worthwhile and effective?

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Yes		*			*		*			*			*	*	*	
No																
Mixed																
Leaned from each other at the table																
Using the folks at the table as ambassadors to get info out to the public and making them feel like they are part of the management.					*											

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We are not trained well enough but I think we are starting to see success with it that is why we keep on doing it…					*											
It is hard work and that is why some folks don't do it.									*							
Helped to find common ground on very high contentious issues										*						
Helped to form relationships										*						

Allowed the PLM to be more apart of the community										*					
Was able to release some timber														*	

Is there still a willingness to participate on the part of any of the stakeholders?

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLMB	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Yes	*	*	*	*			*		*			*		*	*	
No																
Mixed depending on specific projects							*				*		*			
Feels the need to expand to peripheral communities because they feel left out and want a say in the process									*							
We are all fed up with meetings.														*		

Has this process truly been collaborative?

Sub-Theme	PLM1	PLM2	PLM3	PLM4	PLM5	PLM6	NGO1	NGO2	NGO3	NGO4	LSH1	LSH2	LSH3	LSH4	LSH5	LSH6
Yes		*			*			*			*			*	*	
No																
Mixed								*								
No need for hard-core environmentalist and conservatives.		*														
Some criticism is that it's all the same people all the time								*								

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