Welcome

FROM: Joe Meade, Dir., National Partnership Office
Tony Tooke, Dir., Ecosystem Management Coordination

TO: Forest Service Staff, Collaborators, and Strategic Partners

SUBJECT: Work Products to Empower Collaborative Stewardship

This is an era in which the only way the Forest Service will be effective in carrying out its mission is to join together with partners and stakeholders across all jurisdictions to reach shared public land stewardship goals. We all have a stake in restoring the structure and function of healthy, resilient forest ecosystems, and of sustaining plentiful supplies of clean water, habitat for wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Likewise, we all have a stake in keeping working forests and ranches viable and producing all the other goods and services Americans want and need from their forests.

An all-lands approach is based on the understanding that we are all in this together, rural and urban, public and private. No one can do it alone, especially in an era of climate change. The challenges are too vast and the resources too limited. If people work in traditional ways—cut off from each other, pursuing their own private interests or stove-piped as public agencies—America will never fully tap the potential of our collective knowledge, energy, and ideas to meet the forestry challenges of the future. But, if people come together for the common good, working collaboratively across landownerships and landscapes, we will be able to address shared issues and concerns and effectively pursue common goals.

With an increased focus and need for collaborative skill sets and capacity, the Forest Service initiated a focused conversation in early 2011 about how to foster collaborative capacity in a coordinated way across the Agency. This initial workshop established a strategic path towards fostering the Agency's collaborative capacity. Out of this workshop, we launched the "Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project" to carry out this charge. With the focused energy of four diverse work groups (referred to as "Dimension Groups" because each focuses on a distinct, yet interrelated dimension of collaborative capacity), internal and external stakeholders collectively developed several products that are cornerstones to increased capacity in this arena.

We are very pleased to share with you the work products emerging from the Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project's Dimension Groups:

- **Where Do You Start?** Our initial assessment of the state of collaborative capacity in the Forest Service indicated that there are many opportunities to collaborate that are missed because personnel and partners are not sure where to start. Thus, to help new collaborators get off on the right foot, we have produced a brief primer, entitled, "Collaboration: Getting Started."
- **What About FACA?** We also learned that many people hold themselves back from fully embracing collaboration because they are not sure when the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) applies, and find FACA intimidating. Therefore, we created a short set of guidelines

designed to demystify FACA so that it doesn't present an obstacle and staff know how to work collaboratively within its parameters. We call these guidelines our FACA "Easy Button."

- **You're Leaving??!** As you may be aware, the Forest Service has a long-established tradition of rotating line officers and personnel around geographically and through different kinds of positions so that they can gain a broad and multi-dimensional perspective on the work of this agency. However, partners point very clearly to the down-side of this time-honored tradition, in that the personnel changes disrupt the relationships that are at the heart of effective collaboration. To overcome potential challenges associated with transfers, we have developed principles to guide employee transitions in a manner that helps employees and communities sustain relationships and collaborative momentum, as well as examples of how others have effectively navigated through leadership transitions under varying circumstances.
- **How Do We Work Collaboratively Across Distances?** Maintaining an open, transparent, and participatory process often means working collaboratively with those who can't be in the same place at the same time. Many people wonder if it is possible to work collaboratively in a meaningful way if face-to-face meetings are not possible. The truth is sometimes it is possible and other times it may not (depending on the issues and circumstances). With the intent of maximizing the benefit of collaboration, we have produced a set of "e-collaboration tips" about how to make good use of electronic communication during a collaborative effort.
- **How Do We Learn How To Collaborate More Effectively Next Time?** Collaboration can be a complex undertaking. Whether a collaborative effort goes incredibly well, or falls short of what you had hoped, the key is to learn from the effort. If we reflect on and share our insights about what went well and what could have gone better, we will learn together how to use collaboration effectively. To that end, we created an "After-Action-Review" tool and guide.
- **How Can I Get My Hands On These Great Resources?** And finally,we are delighted to roll out the recently-revamped Partnership Resource Center (PRC) website, which comes on line shortly. You can find all of our work products and more at this site.we are incredibly proud of what we have already accomplished – using collaboration – in the Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project. These work products will support the implementation of a number of initiatives of strategic importance to the Forest Service, including the proposed new Planning Rule with its "all lands approach, the climate change scorecard and the watershed integrity index.

We are now turning our attention to fostering a "community of practice" around collaboration. In that context, we anticipate developing a "Long-Term Strategy" for fostering collaborative capacity across the Agency and in partnership with affected communities, and concurrently working on pragmatic, action-oriented projects to contribute to that end. If we have been able to produce all of the above important, tangible resources in just a few short months, think what we can achieve through a thoughtful and comprehensive "long-term" strategy! We invite and encourage you to join that effort. Each of you can make a unique and valuable contribution to this work! To find out how to get involved, please contact Peter Williams (peterwilliams@fs.fed.us; 970-295-5708) or Andrea Bedell-Loucks (abloucks@fs.fed.us; 202-205-8336), who are collaboratively managing the Fostering Collaborative Stewardship Project.

Where Do You Start?

Our initial assessment of the state of collaborative capacity in the Forest Service indicated that there are many opportunities to collaborate that are missed because personnel and partners are not sure where to start. Thus, to help new collaborators get off on the right foot, we have produced a brief primer, entitled, "Collaboration: Getting Started."

Collaboration Primer

What Is Collaboration? Collaboration is a process that involves people working together -- often with widely varied interests -- to share knowledge, ideas and resources towards addressing clearly-defined common goals and objectives. Collaborative processes seek mutually-acceptable ways of meeting all participants' key underlying interests with respect to substantive outcomes, fair and transparent deliberations, and respectful working relationships. That said, the goals of a particular collaborative process may vary along a spectrum from a relationship-building focus to a task-oriented focus, or any combination in between. Collaborative process are designed to foster an environment where people can talk about their needs and interests, listen actively and thoughtfully to each other, and work constructively in an open and trusting environment to chart a shared path forward. Collaboration can be very informal, or quite structured. Because it leverages the energy and resources of many, collaboration represents a powerful way of conducting business for the Forest Service.

Why Would One Use A Collaboration Approach? Collaboration is usually initiated as a result of a perceived need for help in addressing a specific situation – a situation that no one party can successfully address alone.

Where Is Collaboration Appropriate? Collaboration can be undertaken at an array of scales, from specific projects to broader land-use planning. Every USFS Region has used it at some point in time. The "Empowering Collaborative Stewardship" Project is in the process of developing a map showing the location of collaborative processes in which the Agency is involved; we expect it to be posted on the USFS Partnership Office website when available.

When Is A Collaborative Approach Appropriate? A structured collaborative process takes a significant investment of time and resources on the part of all involved. Ideally, however, that upfront investment will reap far greater rewards in the long run (e.g., implementable solutions to public lands management challenges; fewer appeals and litigation; and positive working relationships that are available for future projects as well). It is wise to begin by conducting a "situation assessment" to determine if your particular situation would be suitable for a collaborative approach. Sometimes this can be done in-house, and other times it is worth arranging for a collaboration expert to do this assessment for you. Please see the Partnership Resource Center website for information about how to access the assistance of both in-house and external collaboration experts. In general, circumstances that are conducive to a collaborative approach include:

Where Do You Start?

1. High priority issues must be addressed, and there is an opportunity to take action on them;
2. There is wide recognition that effectively addressing these issues will require contributions from many levels of government, as well as the private sector;
3. Resolution of these issues is impeded by responsibilities and authorities that are fragmented and dispersed among many entities.
4. There is an agency with the authority to make a decision, but not sufficient power to implement it alone.
5. The sponsoring agency is able and willing to devote the staff time and funding to support the collaborative process (e.g., accessing the help of a facilitator and technical experts if necessary); and
6. Timing is ripe, with political leadership aligned in support of a collaborative process.

When Is A Collaborative Approach Less Likely To Be Appropriate? Just as there are circumstances conducive to a collaborative approach to addressing public lands management issues, there are also circumstances when a collaborative approach is less likely to be successful. These include:

1. Affected parties do not see the issue as high enough priority to commit their time and energy to a collaborative process on this topic.
2. There is an urgency to addressing the issue that precludes taking the time to develop a solution collaboratively.
3. The sponsoring agency is not committed to implementing a solution reached through the collaborative process. (Where formal public comment opportunities are required for such an outcome, the commitment sought is typically to use the collaboratively-generated solution as the draft that is distributed for public comment.)
4. There are insufficient resources (staff time, funds, etc.) to adequately support the collaborative process.
5. At least one of the key parties is unwilling to participate out of a conviction that the issues involve a matter of rights or non-negotiable principles.
6. The situation has become so polarized that the parties are unwilling to talk face-to-face.
7. At least one of the key parties could get their interests addressed more effectively in a different way, and is expected to use the collaborative process to delay progress in this venue.

How Does Collaboration Work? There are many ways to conduct a collaborative process, and many choices that participants will need to make, individually and collectively. Of course, the design of a particular collaborative process must be responsive to tangible needs, such as budgets and safe meeting spaces, but it also needs to fit the culture, the communities of both place (e.g., those stakeholders associated with a particular forest), the communities of interest (e.g., the types of uses valued by affected stakeholders), and the diversity of values of the participants. The collaborative process should integrate these community-driven considerations with science and policy to come up with implementable and durable solutions. Principles that may serve as helpful guidelines include:

1. Work at an appropriate scale; frame the scope of the effort explicitly and thoughtfully.
2. Understand the legal sideboards and agree on working guidelines early on.
3. Encourage diverse participation and communication.
4. Pay constant attention to learning and helping people make sense of what they're learning.

5. Use conceptual frameworks and collaborative processes that integrate social, political, economic and ecological aspects and focus on the "big picture."
6. Use an adaptive design anchored with principles and priorities jointly developed with participants, and continuously adjust to reflect lessons learned.
7. Empower the group.
8. Invest in building trust and lasting relationships.
9. Look for ways to tap internal knowledge and experience without over-burdening employees; share the resources and rewards.
10. Allow "power sharing" to emerge.
11. Establish clear, transparent, and public principles and priorities as the process unfolds.
12. Implementation is as important as planning; make feasibility and accountability part of the dialogue.
13. Substance matters; good science is as important as good participation. Develop quality data and meaningful products to address managerially and decision-relevant questions.
14. Whether or not your circumstance is ready for a collaborative approach, or individuals are willing to invest in a collaborative process commitment, local decision officials are urged to incorporate into your standard operating procedures the following norms, which each contribute to establishing the trust needed to gain social license to accomplish our Agency mission in the 21st Century:
    - Active listening;
    - Operating through transparency; and
    - Actively engaging diverse perspectives.

How Do We Work Collaboratively Across Distances? It is possible to collaborate "long distance," depending on the circumstances. It may work best if parties can meet initially in person to get to know each other, before relying on remote communication. Please see the Partnership Resource Center website for e-collaboration tips.

Who Can Start a Collaborative Process? Any person, agency or organization who wishes to see a collaborative approach taken to address a particular situation can suggest the process. However, it is usually the agency with primary decision-making authority over the focal issues that sponsors and provides leadership for the process. Sometimes the Forest Service is the official convener of the process, and sometimes another entity convenes the process and the Forest Service is a participant. As a general rule of thumb, initiators should approach and discuss the idea with the USFS Line Officer at the organizational level that matches the scale of the issues – e.g., a District Ranger in the case of a local project, the Forest Supervisor in the case of a forest plan, and the Regional Forester in the case of a regional assessment.

Who Should Participate In A Collaborative Process? Those who have significant stakes in the focal issues being discussed in a collaborative process should participate. "Stakeholders" are those who: (a) are potentially significantly affected by how these issues are addressed; (b) have related decision-making responsibilities; and/or (c) could either ensure or block implementation of solutions to these issues. It is wise to provide a range of ways that stakeholders can get involved, depending on their level of interest. Robust collaborative processes include people with a diversity of perspectives and ideas, and provide ways of folding newcomers in and sustaining momentum if some need to leave. (See the Relationship Dimension Group Guiding Principles on the transition of incoming and outgoing leaders, including the "handover memo," on the Partnership Resource Center website.)

How Does FACA Fit In? It is very important that the participants in a collaborative process understand just how their ideas and solutions will be put to use by the decision-maker. The manner in which this "decision space" is defined will have direct bearing on whether the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) will apply to the collaborative process; if so, there are specific procedures you will need to follow to comply with FACA. Please see the "FACA Easy Button" on the USFS Partnership Office website for information that will help you understand when FACA applies, and if so, how to comply with it. Among other things, collaborative processes subject to FACA must be open to the public and properly advertised.

For Further Information: Peter Williams, peterwilliams@fs.fed.us, 970-295-5708
and Andrea Bedell-Loucks, abloucks@fs.fed.us, 202-205-8336

To Learn More: http://www.fs.usda.gov/prc

What About FACA?

The 1972 Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) is an important law passed to ensure citizen involvement in federal decisions is equitable, that no one individual or group has undue influence. The simplest way to comply with FACA is to host only meetings with non-federal employees that are "open to all" and transparent. In addition, make clear to all participants that the agency, by law, must value insights from each individual and organization separately and equitably AND must not rely solely on any single individual or group perspective when making agency decisions. Doing this isn't always easy, so here are useful principles and best practices related to FACA compliance.

FACA "Easy Button"

When Does FACA Apply?

- A federal agency must comply with FACA when it (1) establishes, utilizes, controls, or manages (2) a group with non-federal members that (3) provides the agency with consensus advice or recommendations.
- Only groups that meet all three of these legal elements are subject to FACA.
- A definitive determination about whether FACA applies to a particular group is a fact-specific inquiry that generally requires consultation with the Office of General Counsel.

Best Practices for Avoiding FACA Violations

- Help participants understand how to work with the Forest Service in a FACA-compliant manner;
- Ensure that Forest Service staff and external stakeholders understand what constitutes consensus advice or recommendations under FACA;
- Individual group members can provide their own personal opinions, advice, or recommendations without implicating FACA.
- This is true even if several individual members of a group provide similar or identical opinions, advice, or recommendations.
- Do not solicit consensus advice or recommendations from a group that was established, utilized, managed, or controlled by the Forest Service;
- Inform (orally and in writing) members of a group that was established, utilized, managed, or controlled by the Forest Service that the agency cannot obtain the group's consensus advice or recommendations without triggering FACA;

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[*] Under FACA, the term "utilize" does not have its ordinary meaning. Instead, FACA's regulations provide that an agency "utilizes" a group only when it exercises actual management or control over a group's operations. 41 C.F.R § 102-3.25.

[+] The Uniform Mandates Reform Act of 1995 provides a limited exemption from FACA for certain groups of federal employees and elected officers of state, local, and tribal governments (or their properly designated employees) acting in their official capacity. See 2 U.S.C. § 1534(b).

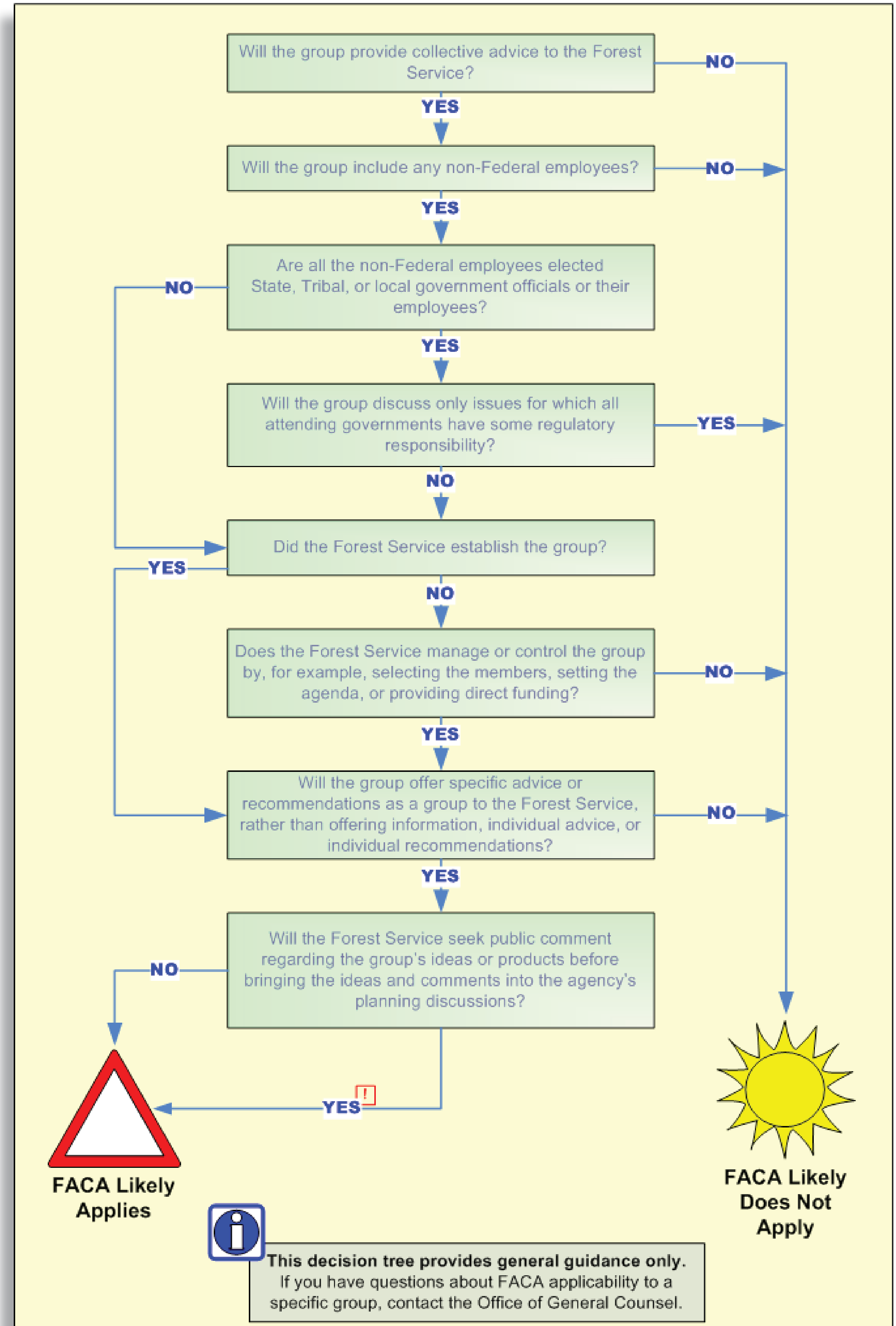
What About FACA?

- Seek advice or recommendations from interested stakeholders only after making clear that the agency is not asking the group to reach consensus or to provide only consensus advice;
- Ensure that collaborative meetings are open to the public and properly advertised in advance;
- Keep detailed minutes of all collaborative meetings; and
- Make all records, reports, transcripts, minutes, and other information related to a collaborative group publicly available.

Resources and References

- FACA - Final Rule 2001 (GSA)
- Partnership Guide - USDA Forest Service
- GSA - When FACA Applies and Not
- RedLodge Clearinghouse FACA section
- GSA -- FACA Management Overview
- BLM FACA Guidance
- National Park Service Guide to FACA
- Collaboation and FACA at EPA

What About FACA?



You're Leaving??!

Core to our cultural traditions is rotating our personnel around geographically and through different kinds of positions to gain a broad and multi-dimensional perspective of both the agency and the work it accomplishes. This cultural tradition however, does not come without tradeoffs: personnel changes often disrupt the relationships that are at the heart of effective collaboration. To help with this often difficult transition, a template for a "handover memo" currently exists to identify key formal and informal relationships for incoming leaders. However, we learned that this tool has not been widely used because: (a) people didn't fully realize the potential value this tool offered for minimizing negative impacts on ongoing collaborative processes; and (b) outgoing leaders didn't take the time to engage others in developing the "handover memo." Consequently, we have developed principles to guide employee transitions in a manner that helps employees and communities sustain relationships and collaborative momentum, and want to share those with you, along with examples of how others have effectively adapted the handover memo to fit their unique circumstances.

Fostering the Civic and Citizen Engagement Capacity of the U.S. Forest Service

Relationship Dimension Group

Relationships form the foundation for creating sustainable forests, grasslands, and communities.

Improving the Transition of Outgoing and Incoming Leaders

This near-term strategy focuses on insights and guidance for improving the transition of outgoing and incoming leaders. For insight, a core team of interested employees spoke with a number of line officers, community members, employees and stakeholders to better understand how transitions affect both our workforce and the communities served. A key insight was that what is good for the community is good for employees and vice versa. Another key insight was that change, the essence of a transition, can leave people unsure of their future and create undue stress. While this may sound obvious, we learned that during a time of transition some actions and behaviors work better than others. From this and other insights gathered, a list of guiding principles was developed by the core team to empower outgoing and incoming leaders, employees, and community members to proactively manage their transition for successful outcomes.

This work is not unique: it stands on the shoulders of other efforts to improve leadership transitions. One important effort undertaken in 2006 by the Collaboration Action Team, a multi-agency/stakeholder group, was the creation of a "Handover Memo." The intention of the handover memo was to develop a consistent process across the agency for improving the transition of outgoing and incoming leaders. At the same time, the handover memo provided a lot of flexibility in how information was documented and passed between leaders. The handover memo still makes good business sense and we continue to encourage its use (see Attachment). Yet we also heard that a less structured approach can be equally effective.

What's important is taking time to think through the actions and behaviors best suited for the needs of the outgoing and incoming leaders, employees, and community members.

Finally, transitions involve more than just outgoing and incoming leaders: employees, partners, stakeholders, families and communities are also affected. It makes a lot of sense then, that everyone involved in the transition be included in the transition process, whether it's the development of a handover memo or a potluck gathering designed to "meet and greet." To assist in the process, the guiding principles have been organized into the following groups: incoming leaders; outgoing leaders, and; employees and community members.

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles during a Transition

Incoming Leaders

- Meet as many people as you can: it lets them know they're important.
- Learn the issues and the programs: it shows you care.
- Let your employees and stakeholders see you for who you are, figuratively and literally: you'll build trust faster.
- Maintain your enthusiasm and make a few friends in the process: people want to hang around others with a positive, upbeat attitude.
- Build a solid relationship with your staff because without it, collaboration with our stakeholders or customers isn't possible.
- Let your employees' help you get up to speed, especially those who've been in place a longtime: they'll feel appreciated.
- Build on your predecessor's successes: those involved will feel valued for their past contributions.
- Don't assume your employees are on the same page: they span generations, experience, and knowledge. The same goes for your partners and stakeholders.
- Every group has informal brokers, central connectors and peripheral players. Learn the difference and figure out who they are: this will improve the group's communication and your overall effectiveness .
- Pay attention to the budget process, it's linked to employee and community morale: for employees it's about respect and empowerment, for the community it's about trust.
- Take time to learn a little about the history and culture of the new place before arriving: people take pride in their history.
- Think of some good questions (Appreciative Inquiry): they help make a connection with both stakeholders and staff.
- Direct communication is better than indirect in a transition process: there's less room for rumor and misunderstanding.

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Outgoing Leaders

- Don't forget where you've been: it helped you get where you're going.
- Include the community in outreach efforts for your replacement (this includes "actings"): it improves the chances they'll continue to communicate with the Forest Service.
- Have your leadership team develop a "30/60/90 day" list of priority actions in advance of your departure: the change will be less stressful for those you leave behind.
- Direct communication is better than indirect in a transition process: there's less room for rumor and misunderstanding.

Forest Service Staff and Communities of Place, Interest, and Culture

- Make time to introduce yourself to the new leader: they'll remember you faster.
- Volunteer: you'll broaden your perspective and gain valuable insight into how your expertise contributes to your unit's and/or your community's success.
- Leverage people in your existing network to establish new contacts: you'll be more efficient and expand your knowledge base.
- When interacting, ask questions to find commonalities: common ground is more likely to exist in why someone wants something, less so in what they want.
- Treat network building as integral part of your day: you'll have a better sense of what's going on.
- Attend "meet and greet" activities: putting a face with a name is always helpful.
- Engage in activities that promote trust and collaboration: you'll be viewed as more collaborative and trustworthy yourself.
- Direct communication is better than indirect in a transition process: there's less room for rumor and misunderstanding.

Tool: "Handover Memo"

Purpose- Today, communities of place, local governments and other groups are increasingly convening and facilitating collaborative efforts that directly involve our agency. In turn, our agency is recognizing the need for improved transitions between outgoing leaders and incoming leaders who will assume the responsibility for working directly with the public and partners. Good transition management between the agency leader these groups have been working with, and the leader they will now rely on, is especially important. Our ability to solve natural resource related problems over the long run depends on the quality of long-term relationships between agencies, other organizations and the public. Often, what makes collaboration work is a combination of formal and informal working agreements and commitments between various participants.

The purpose of this "Handover Memo" is to help communicate these agreements and commitments, not only between the departing leader and the new leader, but also to inform and involve agency staff and superiors who will continue to support such cooperative efforts in the interim and into the future. The very act of writing or finalizing this memo will emphasize the importance of, and pass along a better understanding of the relationships and cooperative efforts you have helped develop, so they can continue to grow and evolve.

Template

To: Address memo to the new agency unit leader and any interim leaders.

From: Completed by you as the outgoing leader prior to your departure. At a minimum, memo should be developed with the participation of your primary staff. At your discretion, you may find it useful to also have others review it prior to finalization.

cc: At a minimum, the letter should be copied to your primary staff and supervisor. At your discretion, you may want to copy others as well to better meet the purposes of this memo.

The memorandum should cover the following four areas:

1. Describe the current partnership and collaborative efforts underway on your unit

Briefly describe any specific projects or programs that each partnership or collaborative effort is currently engaged in. This memorandum should largely focus on describing key aspects of ongoing partnerships and collaborative relationships that may not have any formal, written agreements that are readily available for your successor to review. Partnerships and collaborative efforts that do have formal agreements (e.g. Resource Advisory Groups, Memorandum's of Understanding, Cooperative Agreements etc.) can simply be referenced with a description of the activities, projects or goals that are currently underway.

Some basic information about the length of time a partner or collaborative effort has been underway may also be useful. Some relationships will be in their infancy while others may have evolved over a period of time.

Where possible, consider having your key partners assist with crafting this section and include their signatures on the memo.

2. Commitments or schedules associated with current partnership and collaborative efforts

For each of the above relationships, describe any formal or informal commitments you have made to key partners or groups leading or engaged in collaborative efforts with you or your unit. Be sure to include any shared understandings about specific schedules for accomplishing joint projects or implementing shared programs. Commitments may include but are not limited to time agreements, financial arrangements, accomplishments or personnel commitments. These commitments may or may not need to be renegotiated with your departure. However, the current state of any agreement is key information to pass on to your successor, supervisor and staff.

Again, where possible, consider having your key partners jointly craft this section and include their signatures.

3. Current working agreements or procedures

Describe any local communication norms or procedural agreements that help keep relationships active and well functioning. This may include information about regular meetings, formal and informal expectations or working agreements that partners and the agency have developed during your tenure. This may include but are not limited to information about communication frequency, timing, particular subjects or issues of interest and key contacts etc.

Because this memo will function in concert with other transition activities and an on-site visit with your successor, this memorandum can be reasonably brief and focused on factual information about current partnerships and collaborative efforts that are active and underway during the transition period.

4. Strategy for meeting and getting to know your community

Describe a potential strategy for incoming staff to foster and maintain relationships within the surrounding community. Include information on potential venues, regularly scheduled events (if there are any), community social gatherings, and contacts for each.

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Where possible, engage your key partners in development of this section.

This memo is intended to focus on establishing and maintaining community relationships associated with ongoing partnerships and collaborative work. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities and/or projects. Partnership and collaborative efforts that have formal agreements in place should be referenced with a brief description of the activity to date.

Meg's story: Forest Supervisor, Willamette National Forest

Meg Mitchell
Willamette National Forest Supervisor

Meg has used the 'transition memo' with her many transitions since its inception on several units. She finds that it helps her stop to consider her role in helping manage the key aspects of transitions for others. The "form" of the transition has been different in every case she has used it but there have been common threads or experiences she's had overall.

Often the outgoing leader finds it difficult to focus on the transition for the incoming leader due to their focus on the new job and their upcoming move. Thus, she has found that the "acting" or interim leader is very important to helping manage the overall transition. Also, the development of the "key contact list" for a new leader is invaluable. When a transition has been addressed, the incoming leader is extremely grateful that someone has thought about who and how the new leader should make such contacts. She tends to favor more of a principle-based approach instead of a "have to" approach to transition, as there are common principles to every transition even though each one is always different. Her sense is that the agency tends to think of a "transition" as a meeting or something that takes weeks, not months. In her experience, 12-18 months can be considered a "transition" period, but the first 120 days is especially critical. Trying to address multiple or overlapping transitions is becoming more of the norm. She believes the "acting," as well as the supervisor and employees, are critical to this success – as the people who stay have the most at stake. There are always employees who are influential people in knowing how the communities of place or interest need to be engaged by an incoming leader. The interesting thing is that often these employees may not fully realize their value in this liaison and transition role. It's important for leaders and organizations to recognize that the most appropriate employee to aid with transition isn't just the employee who has the title, but the one who has the relationships. Listing them as a liaison or key contact 'up front' in the transition and helping them understand their role is good practice. Often there are agency retirees in the community who can also positively affect transitions.

Focusing on the internal transition (which is by nature most immediate) can overshadow the external transition, sometimes to the detriment of community relations. Spending time on both in the first month is important even if the internal transition is first, so the new leader can develop relationships with employees. One of the most successful things she has done is to provide some level of overlap between incoming and outgoing leaders. She has also found that the "transition memo" is often more of a notebook that has a "key contact" list and briefing papers or key documents that a leader may need in their first few months on the job to manage priority issues or relationships. The Willamette NF has a "survival guide" for Forest Leadership Team members and a new employee checklist for helping supervisors guide incoming employees. The guides help describe the various formal and informal processes that are used on the forest.

You're Leaving??!

File Code: **Date: November 1, 2011**
Route to:

From: Pete Karp, outgoing Forest Supervisor, Uinta NF

To: Dan Dallas, Acting Forest Supervisor and the yet-to-be selected Forest Supervisor, Uinta NF

"Handover Memo"

The purpose of this memo is to help improve transition between outgoing leaders and incoming leaders specifically in the area of partnerships and collaborative efforts. We followed a template given to me by Mary Wagner, Deputy Regional Forester, R-4, at our December Regional Leadership Team (RLT) meeting. We agreed that this "first handover memo" would serve as a test basis for future memos. Also due to the time of year, we recognized that coordination with key forest Staff and Rangers would be minimal (i.e. Annual Leave, holidays, etc.). I was only able to coordinate with Loyal Clark, Public Affairs Officer, for input.

Describe the current partnership and collaborative efforts underway on your unit

In no particular order, here are a list of key partners and partnership efforts.

Timpanogos Cave National Monument – recreation fee program partnership, future co-location of agencies in one facility, management of American Fork Canyon in partnership with Utah Department of Transportation and the Utah County Sheriff's Department. Forest Supervisor and Pleasant Grove District Ranger are the lead contacts. Partnership has been in existence for 8 years.

Utah Department of Transportation/Local County Transportation Agencies – agreements to maintain parts of the Forest transportation system. Forest Engineer and District Rangers are the lead contacts. Critical to maintaining Forest Service (FS) roads to provide quality customer service within shrinking budgets. Ongoing partnership for many, many years.

Congressional Staff – at least monthly briefings with staff from Senator Bennett, Senator Hatch, Congressman Cannon and Congressman Matheson offices. These offices are located in Provo and Salt Lake City. Congressman Bishop's staff is included when his district is affected. Forest Public Affairs Officer (PAO) is the lead contact. Important for Forest Supervisor and sometimes other Staff and/or Rangers to attend depending on significance of topics.

County Commissioners/County Council/Mayors – regular briefings as needed. There are four county governments that are directly affected by the Forest's programs and decisions. Three are in the form of county commissions and one is a county council. There are 23 mayors that are part of the Forest communication network. The most common communication method is the monthly Council of Governments meeting. Forest Supervisor, District Rangers, and PAO coordinate responsibility for contacts.

State Agencies - Tim Garcia, Utah Statewide Coordinator is the primary contact for the Forest Service. Forest Supervisor and Leadership Team are involved as needed. Local State agency contacts are coordinated by the Leadership Team.

Tribal Contacts – briefings as requested and needed. There are two Tribes that are affected by Forest programs and decisions; Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation located in Ibapah, and the Ute Tribe located in Fort Duchesne. PAO is responsible for Forest-wide program. Forest Cultural Heritage specialist and District Rangers are the lead contacts for specific project information.

Utah County Convention and Visitor's Bureau – office and visitor center are located in Provo. Forest Service information is provided at the visitor center. Partnership Specialist is the lead contact. Coordinates events and information requests with PAO and other Forest staff.

Provo/Orem Chamber of Commerce – Partnership Specialist is the lead contact. Coordinates events and information requests with PAO and other Forest staff.

Media – 3 daily and 11 weekly newspapers, 6 television stations, and 10 radio stations are part of the Forest communication network. PAO is the lead contact.

Friends of Strawberry Valley (FOSV) – a very key group of people that help in various ways to make Strawberry Valley (Heber RD) a better place. Group was started about five years ago. Jim Carter is the Executive Director (a real jewel!) and backbone of the group. The District Ranger at Heber is the key forest contact, although long-term strategies should be set with Forest Supervisor involvement. "Strawberry Watershed Report" is the key guiding document.

Trout Unlimited – key group to work with primarily in American Fork Canyon (decommissioning of American Fork Hydroelectric Plant, and abandoned mine land reclamation and restoration, Diamond Fork Creek restoration, Strawberry Valley Project Lands). Great organization, very productive partnership over the last 5-8 years in particular. Ted Fitzgerald, retired FS person, is key contact for abandoned mine work in North Fork of American Fork Canyon.

Rock Canyon Land Exchange Proposal – fairly recent "opportunity" to acquire 80 acres near mouth of Rock Canyon, Pleasant Grove Ranger District. I was approached by Provo City Mayor, Lewis Billings, and asked to work with City and landowner Richard Davis, and other interested parties (including President of the State Legislature, State Senator John Valentine, Orem) to explore possibilities to acquire this land and have it become part of the National Forest System (land exchange, purchase, etc.). John Logan is the key forest contact.

Volunteer Program – an absolutely unique and invaluable partnership on the Uinta NF. The program always leads the nation in number of participants (generally 8,000 – 10,000 per year, as many as 17,000 one year). As importantly, this program allows the Forest Service to maintain close contact with communities and is extremely effective in communicating Forest Service programs and learning what our National Forest owners want. The positive Forest Service working environment for the Uinta NF is a direct result of our staying connected through our volunteers. Never let this program disintegrate! PAO is the Human Resource Program (SYVP) coordinator. Each Ranger District has a full-time HR coordinator position.

Commitments or schedules associated with current partnership and collaborative efforts

Timpanogos Cave National Monument (NM)– main efforts involve recreation fee program and construction of Timpanogos Interagency Center (will be new location for the Pleasant Grove Ranger District office). Pam Gardner is the key contact on the forest and is working with Kit Mullen, Superintendent, Timpanogos Cave NM. The ball is in the National Park Service (NPS) court on design and incorporation into the NPS budget for construction. The Forest Service provided the land (37 acres) through a land exchange for a construction site. Senator Bennett is interested in getting funding through NPS budget. Spring should be the next checkpoint. NPS process is slow right now. The FS will need to stay on top of this one and move for funding in FY-07 or FY-08 at the latest. The estimated cost is $5.8 million, which has been conceptually "agreed" to by NPS Acting Director in Denver.

Friends of Strawberry Valley (FOSV) – commitments are pretty well described in the Strawberry Watershed Report (copy is in bookcase in my office). Some projects are scheduled in FY-06. The Uinta will need to coordinate and plan for projects in FY-07 and beyond. There are great opportunities here for additional partnerships with Blue Ribbon Fishery Council, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Habitat Council, other user groups and possibly Wasatch County. Jim Carter is a key person to work with on this. Julie King, Heber District Ranger is the key forest contact.

Rock Canyon Land Exchange – informal commitment to work with Provo City Mayor, Lewis Billings, to try to find a win-win solution to get 80 acre piece of private land in Rock Canyon on National Forest System lands. No specific timeframe has been discussed. The next coordination meeting is January 25, 7:30 a.m. in Salt Lake City. John Logan is the key forest contact.

Current working agreements or procedures

I encouraged Staff and District Rangers to be the key contacts for local elected officials (i.e. Mayors, County Commissioners, etc.) and local partnership groups. This helped maintain direct communication at the lowest organizational level of the Forest Service. I am kept up-to-date by Staff and Rangers on current and emerging issues, jointly develop strategies with them, and become personally involved when issues were forest-wide or larger in nature. I think this strategy helped develop leadership skills in Staff and Rangers too. Staff and Rangers can provide additional information and any formal agreements. Include this in your transition.

Strategy for meeting and getting to know your community

Work with the PAO on possible media opportunities as a way for the local public to get to know you as a person. Monthly evening meetings with Council of Governments is a way to meet local Mayors (Utah County). The PAO can schedule you on the agenda. Visits with four County Commissioners/Council is encouraged. A transition meeting with Forest Leadership Team is important early on. This will also result in a larger list of key contacts for you to make. Meet with forest employees as soon as possible. These are some of the finest employees you will ever know! Meet with the Regional Forester's Team as soon as you can and get the highest Regional/National priority items for you to address during your assignment. Finally, make sure you enjoy something from each and every day in this job. The Uinta NF is one of the best in the entire system. Help ensure it stays at the top of the pack!

/s/ Peter W. Karp
PETER W. KARP
Forest Supervisor

cc:
Jack Troyer
Cathy Beaty
Mary Wagner
Uinta Forest Leadership Team

Maintaining an open, transparent, and participatory process often means working collaboratively with those who can't be in the same place at the same time. Many people wonder if it is possible to work collaboratively in a meaningful way if face-to-face meetings are not possible. The truth is sometimes it is possible, and other times it may not (depending on the issues and circumstances). With the intent of maximizing the benefit of collaboration, we have produced a set of "e-collaboration tips" about how to make good use of electronic communication during a collaborative effort.

E-Collaboration Tips

Tips for Using Electronic Tools to Support Collaboration

Working collaboratively with people inside or outside the Forest Service often involves a combination of in-person meetings, phone calls, and, increasingly, what's called "new media." New media refers to web pages, blogs, webinars, discussion forums, Tweets, or social networking. How you use these and other electronic tools to support your collaborative efforts often can determine whether the entire effort succeeds.

Know the Basics

New media and social media, as well as other types of electronic tools, can be confusing, even intimidating. Rules change as fast as expectations. For a good overview of tips, tricks, and issues, keep your eye on a few good resources. A good one for Federal employees is this:
http://www.howto.gov/web-content
(and notice how clean and crisp the website looks...)

Remember about Copyright

Not every document available electronically is appropriate to share publicly. Some documents are copyrighted. Here are some tips about copyright written with electronic collaboration in mind: LINK

Think about Collaboration and Technology Together

Today, it's hard to imagine working collaboratively with a diverse group without using technology. In fact, Federal employees are required by Presidential Memorandum to use technology to ensure transparency, collaboration, and participation. Still, it's easy to forget how collaboration and technology work together. Here's a good website for Federal employees that highlights excellent examples of integrating collaboration and technology:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/

Keep Your Effort Integrated

Electronic tools should be an integrated part of designing any collaborative process, as opposed to an after-thought or an add-on. You can think about your electronic material as the electronic "face" of your collaborative effort. Keep it polished and professional. Think about it as the electronic "memory" or "repository" for material you want to share and that participants will need to engage in a meaningful way. Or think about electronic tools as ways to extend your reach to allow participation by individuals who can't be in the same place or time. An easy way to maintain integration is to reuse content. If you develop a handout, share it on a website. If you share something on the website, Tweet about it to attract attention.

Aim for Simplicity

Maintaining a website or hosting a webinar, even holding a large telephone conference call, takes work. And it takes time for a participant to engage with a website, webinar, or conference call. Keeping your electronic tools simple will reduce your work and honor the value of everyone's time. When you're thinking about designing your process or an event, or selecting an electronic tool, look for examples you want to use as a model. But, remember: what looks simple to you may be hard to navigate for someone else. On web pages, use hyperlinks and "Quick Links" to help participants find what they need quickly. On RSS feeds or Tweets, include links to your main electronic tools, whether a webpage, blog, or something else.

Be Substantive

Like all aspects of a collaborative effort, electronic content needs to be as substantive and meaningful as possible. That means ensuring all the content you provide is relevant to the issue or to the interests of participants. Often, participants will tell you what they would find useful to have as well as useful to share.

Stay Fresh

Stale content can leave a bad impression, so keep your electronic materials current. If you have a meeting, share the materials electronically. Look for ways to keep participants engaged with the overall process by keeping them engaged with the electronic tools too.

Keep Content Understandable

Plain language allows more people to engage with a collaborative effort because ideas are more clearly communicated and more readily understood. Here's a link to a very thorough set of resources:
2010 Plain Writing Act -- http://www.plainlanguage.gov/plLaw/index.cfm

Resources for 508 Compliance

- FS Accessibility Working Group -- http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/accessibility/
- US Federal Government 508 compliance -- http://www.section508.gov/
- USDA 508 resource page -- http://www.ocio.usda.gov/508/index.html
- USDA Target Center (assistive assistance) -- http://www.dm.usda.gov/oo/target/
- FS 508 resource page -- https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/fs-cio-bio/508/default.aspx

Make Content Accessible

Ensuring the electronic media, websites, and electronic documents are accessible to everyone is essential and required by law. Sometimes, accessibility to electronic media and electronic tools is called "508 compliance" in reference to section 508 in the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

Pick the Right Tool

Some electronic tools a better for certain needs than others. Some require more work, some have more risk. Here are some rough guidelines:

What are you trying to do?	Electronic Tools to Consider
Kicking off a Project	In-person events are best
Sharing material in Electronic Form	Website
Ongoing engagement with participants who are in different locations	Blog
Single-event engagement with participants in different locations	Conference call or webinar
Keep participants up-to-date and engaged with regular, brief announcements	Twitter or an RSS feed (Real Simple Syndication), which is integrated with most modern web browsers
Leverage existing social networks	"Share" buttons on your webpages www.addthis.com or www.sharethis.com

Lastly, Just because you CAN use an electronic tool, doesn't always mean you should

Sometimes using an electronic tool to support collaboration has some risk. Make sure you appropriately engage the project leader, responsible official, and other key contacts. There can be issues or concerns about communication content or communication methods you need to address. Be sure you know whether any of those exist. For example, some social media websites, like Facebook, raise concerns about the content and the technology. Instead of using that technology directly, you can use "Share Buttons," like those from www.addthis.com or www.sharethis.com, so participants who use that technology can bring their friends to your electronic tools.

Collaboration can be a complex undertaking – complex enough that it is rare to get it "just right." Whether a collaborative effort goes incredibly well, or falls short of what you had hoped, the key is to learn from the effort. If we reflect on and share our insights about what went well and what could have gone better, we will learn together how to use collaboration effectively. With that in mind, we created an "After-Action-Review" tool and guide.

After Action Review Guide

USDA Forest Service After Action Reviews

An After Action Review (AAR) is a tool for quickly assessing what happened during an activity and whether any lessons from it would help in the future. An AAR is simple, quick, and immediately responsive to the situation and the people involved.

Purpose:

An AAR looks for timely lessons by comparing intentions with outcomes. With practice, AAR techniques often lead to improved performance and greater situation awareness.

Process:

A basic AAR addresses 4-5 questions immediately after an activity to capture lessons learned, identify the roots of perceived successes or problems, and assign follow-up responsibilities (see example in right hand column of table).

A more complete process begins before the action with establishing clear understandings of the reasons for the action, assignments during the action, measures of successes or problems, and potential challenges. The more complete process is especially useful if AARs tend to show a lack of agreement about what was intended by the action.

The process can be as formal or informal as needed, but it should be confidential.

Before Action Review	--Action--	After Action Review
Why are you taking this action?		What did you intend?
Who has what assignments?		What actually happened?
How might you know if the action works?		What can you learn about why it happened?
What challenges do you anticipate?		What would you do next time?
What did you learn from similar situations?		What will you do now?
What do you think is most important for success?		

Possible Subjects to Address:

Reference: After Action Review (AAR) from Wildland Fire Leadership Development Center

- Technical performance
- Equipment function
- Techniques
- Planning
- Resources
- Information and data
- Communication
- Coordination
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Effectiveness
- Unanticipated problems
- Anticipated problems
- Risk
- Situation Awareness

Watch-Outs:

- Don't engage in competitive analysis: Focus on what's really important, not who's right.
- Don't get into the weeds: Trivia isn't important.
- Don't let dominant personalities or job titles get in the way: Get everyone involved.
- Don't avoid looking at the elephant in the room: Denial of obvious needs for improvement can lead to very serious crises in the future.
- Don't distribute the raw AAR notes: Use the notes to identify lessons you want to see documented or acted on, but keep the raw notes confidential.
- Don't use results as the basis for punishment: Enhance future performance.

Techniques and Tips for Facilitators and Participants:

Preface: Something like, "Remember, our AAR is not about blame, it's about learning. Thomas Edison learned 100 ways not to make a light bulb before he learned how to make one work."

Clarify points through restatement: Repeat long or complicated statements to confirm the point.

Get the elephants out in the open:
Try 'negative polling' by asking if anyone thinks _____ happened differently or disagrees with a statement that _____ happened.

Offer you own observations and ask for suggestions about why that might have happened Confirm the implication by saying, "What I hear is that you would do ____ the same way again. Is that right?" And, if necessary, connect the action to some consequence that has already been mentioned and was seen as a problem.

Push outside the comfort zone by saying something like, "Everyone seems to be saying that ____ went well, but isn't ____ an example of something you didn't intend?"

Use the “5 Whys” to surface underlying contributors to why _____ happened (After a statement, ask “why did _____ happen?” or “why was _____ the case?”)

Ask Open-Ended Questions: Ask something like, “What were we trying to accomplish?” instead of stating, “According to our notes, we were trying to accomplish ____.”

Confidentiality:

An AAR depends upon honesty and trust. Confidentiality is essential. There’s no better way to ensure that an elephant in the room is ignored than by having a process a participant can’t trust. To ensure confidentiality, use the last question to think about how you might extract the lessons without distributing the raw AAR notes. Before ending your AAR, review all the results and then ask, “What should we do now to share these lessons or improve our next _____?”

Resources:

- Facilitating an After Action Review (AAR)
- Building with the AAR cycle
- Wildland Fire Lessons Learned Center - AAR
- Leadership Development - Toolbox
- Learning In the Thick of It, HBR
- After action reviews - KM toolkit

After-Action Worksheet

AAR Guide (Approx. time %)	AAR Notes
1. What did you intend? (20%) • What were your objectives? Why did you take this action? What were you trying to achieve? • What were the key assignments?	
2. What happened? (<10%) • Get multiple perspectives: There is no single best story about what happened. • Focus on "facts" (e.g., costs, number of people involved, figures, etc) and "opinions" (e.g., what worked and why, what happened). • No blaming!: Focus on events and what events preceded or followed, not why someone did something or what you thought about it. • Allow very specific comments as well as abstract and conceptual ones	
3. What can we learn about it? (25%) • What are some plausible explanations for why, when, and where events happened? • A key question is, "what did we do well that we need to discuss or else it will be forgotten?" • Don't look for blame; look for lessons, including lessons about 'mistakes'. • Be honest about what questions you still have about what happened and why.	
4. What should we do next time? (40%) • What worked that may not work again? What worked that you want to repeat? What do you want to do differently? • Spend ~50% of the discussion here to keep from falling into bad habits and failing to start good new ones.	
5. What should we do now? (<10%) • How will you share these lessons? • Don't just wait until next time if you can make a difference now. • Be clear about assignments and responsibilities: who will do what by when?	

PRC Overview

When policies cut across knowledge boundaries…
… and challenges cut across organizational boundaries,
… we need tools that help us span those boundaries

Part of working collaboratively across distances is having a place to go where you can share ideas, find relevant material easily, and learn with others, even if only virtually. Through a partnership between the National Forest Foundation and the FS's National Partnership Office, such a place has existed for about five years. Called the "Partnership Resource Center," this website has been a valuable resource for many inside and outside the agency. But we realized it was getting dusty and needed to be remodeled. At the same time, several other FS staff areas and external partners were recognizing the same things, so we expanded that original partnership.

The result is a renovated Partnership Resource Center website, soon to be launched and fully unveiled.

Goal:

Deliver or re-purpose electronic tools that…

…connect people and information, whether inside or outside the FS,
… build organizational and community capacity,
… and lead to better results on the ground!

Partnership Resource Center: Five Subject Areas

Connecting People:

- Business-driven use of social networking technologies
- Communities of Practice, Place, or Interest

Sharing Knowledge

- Electronically searchable databases and content repositories

Identifying Emerging Issues:

- Collaborative inventory and monitoring,
- Need for Change assessments & Situational Awareness

Designing Appropriate Processes:

- Including legal and administrative resources,

Supporting Partnerships and Collaboration:

- "How To" Guides and other resources

Project Organization:

- eCollaboration – Virtual teams, core and extended team model
- Partnership Resource Center renovation – Same

FS "Knowledge Sharing and Conservation" connection: Each looks to leverage the other

- eCollaboration and PRC – Can be platform to link people to KSC material
- KSC – Can help link people to PRC if interested in knowing about those topics

Getting Connected: Renovated PRC is nearing launch

- PRC to have "communities of practice" and "communities of interest" tools
- eCollaboration will turn to other project elements in FY12+

What's on the Horizon?:

- A Lifecycle strategy – outreach, training, and application
- Summit-style working meeting: Reps. from programs or projects with goals, deliverables, or dependencies complementary to those of the eCollaboration project

Mapping Tool

The collaborative mapping tool is an evolving display of known collaborative work across the national forests and grasslands. The map is meant to trigger discussions about collaboration. To make the map more useful, we need your help to increase our knowledge of the collaboratives the agency is involved in. We'd also like your help to increase our knowledge about attributes that make collaboration successful.

The collaborative mapping tool provides information on the scale and purpose of collaboration efforts with which the U.S. Forest Service is involved. The map will eventually reflect the many strong collaborative efforts – efforts that are multi-disciplinary and span boundaries with regions, agencies, states, and various stakeholders.

A Collaborative Mapping Tool Can:

- Inform management of collaborative capacity
- Learn more about the variety of ways the FS is using collaboration
- Build support and strengthen collaborative efforts by sharing information about existing collaborative efforts
- Generate meaningful discussions around collaboration

How can a mapping tool further our collaborative efforts?

- What questions should we ask of the map to make this a useful tool?
- How might a map be useful for field practitioners and managers?
- How can we evolve this map to make it useful in fostering collaboration?
- What do you see as the inherent opportunities and challenges of this map?
- How can we evolve this map to foster collaboration?

Your Questions and Feedback are Welcome. If you have further interest in the collaborative map, data collection methods or have collaboration information to share please contact Patty Burel at (541) 471-6767 or pburel@fs.fed.us

CoP Background

FOSTERING AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AROUND COLLABORATING IN AN "ALL LANDS" CONTEXT

What Is A Collaborative Community of Practice? A "community of practice" is a group of practitioners who share a passion for something and would like to use their interactions as a forum in which to learn to do that "something" better[1]. In this case, that "something" is collaboration in the context of "all lands" stewardship.

Aren't There Already A Lot of Collaborative Communities of Practice? It is true that there already are many existing collaborative communities of practice. One example would be a learning community that has developed around a particular unit-level project. Another would be a topical subset of the agency-wide community of NEPA practitioners. We don't seek to replace these communities of practice, but to name another, large-scale community of practice that has come into being organically and that may be one way of linking, fueling, and leveraging other communities of practice you belong to and value.

Thus, as the Coordinating Committee for the Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project has been working with a steadily expanding number of you on developing and implementing the "Near-Term Strategy for Fostering the Civic and Citizen Engagement Capacity of the U.S. Forest Service," we have realized that Forest Service collaboration practitioners and many of our external partners, stakeholders, and colleagues have naturally begun to function as a de facto community of practice around collaboration in the "all lands" context. As we reach the important milestone of completing implementation of the "Near-Term Strategy," we believe it may be time to name that community of practice – e.g., the "All Lands Collaboration Community of Practice" -- and give it the benefit of intentional cultivation, so that we can all learn from each other in as rich and robust a manner as possible.

Why Foster A Community of Practice? This is a time in the life of the Forest Service when Agency leadership recognizes that effective use of collaboration is vital to the continued relevance of the Agency, to our ability to be accountable to the American people, and to our ability to carry out our mission effectively. It is critical to implementation of the new planning rule, the climate change scorecard, the watershed integrity index, the integration of our inventory, monitoring, and assessment functions into a cohesive whole that serves the agency, and for coordinating, aligning, and integrating these initiatives with one another. A community of practice offers a way to frame our shared interest in strengthening the agency's collaborative capacity, while allowing ample room for members to participate in a way that fits their respective needs and preferences. Intentionally fostering a community of practice focusing on collaboration offers a venue where we all can go to learn more about collaboration as an agency core value and to explore options for enhancing our collaboration competencies.

[1] Wenger, Etienne. (2006). Communities of practice: A brief introduction.

How Do I Find Time to Participate? While learning to collaborate well, when and where appropriate, is becoming a core Agency value and expectation, we also know that all of you are extremely busy. "How," you may be asking yourself, "can I meet this expectation, with all I have on my plate?" Two key drivers behind framing next steps in fostering our collaborative capacity around a community of practice may shine light on that: (1) Through a community of practice, we want to provide each of you with easy access to helpful collaboration resources when and where you need them; and (b) A community of practice is a big enough universe to enable each of you to participate as lightly or as intensively as you prefer. Your participation in the "All Lands Collaboration Community of Practice" can be limited to visiting a central website when you need information. Alternatively, you can participate more actively by joining a work group. Even within a work group, your level of effort can vary from simply contributing on an occasional conference call to taking on projects and off-line tasks.

If I Want To Be An Active Participant, What Are My Options For How to Engage? One of the important activities we know we need to undertake going forward is the development of a Longer-Term Strategy for Fostering the Civic and Citizen Engagement Capacity of the U.S. Forest Service, with the help of all those willing to contribute. The Long-Term Strategy will guide the Agency's cross-deputy area work and investment of resources to foster civic and citizen engagement capacity with the intent of contributing to: (a) a more actively engaged and natural resource-aware citizenry (b) more feasible and implementable natural resource management decisions; (c) more efficient use of USFS' financial and human resources; (d) well-aligned leadership direction and messaging. The Coordinating Committee will seek to ensure that the Longer-Term Strategy will be driven by assessment that is as comprehensive as possible within the time available; informed by social science; thoughtful, strategic, and systematic (in an adaptive, not rigid, sense); and reflects a balance of interests in protecting the discretion of those with responsibility for implementation, while also instilling accountability regarding how that discretion is exercised). It will be designed with subsequent evaluation for program improvement in mind.

At the same time, we know many of you who are enthusiastic and lifelong students of collaboration may not be so enthusiastic about strategic planning processes. There are many other ways you can contribute! Those of you who gravitate more toward action-oriented projects can work together in that mode. There is plenty to do, from developing tools and templates for use in the training and practice of collaboration to serving on a work group to finish the business of integrating collaboration into our hiring and promotion processes.

What Topics or Projects Can I Work On Through the "All Lands Collaboration Community of Practice"? We have heard interest from various parties in the following topics and projects receiving focused attention as we move forward in fostering the agency's collaborative capacity. If one or more of these topics is something you would be able and interested in working on, please contact one or both of the co-managers of the Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project (Peter Williams and Andrea Bedell-Loucks) and discuss it with them via phone or email. (See the bottom of this section for their contact information.)

1. Leadership and Institutional Alignment – Foster the alignment of institutional procedures, organizational structures, and organizational culture to effectively empower collaborative stewardship.
   - Completing the business of integrating a value on collaborative skills into USFS hiring, promotion, and reward systems, including new employee orientation and leadership development programs.
2. Policy & Practices for Enabling Collaboration – Identify and promote policies & practices that enable collaboration; recommend changes in same to remove impediments to collaborative stewardship.
   - Coordinating assessment activities as needed to inform this charge.
   - Developing map of FS-related collaboratives around the country.
   - Updating Forest Service Manual to reflect expectation for expanded use of collaboration.
   - Identifying and implementing activities to reduce perception of FACA as obstacle to collaboration (conveying clear, consistent agency interpretation of when FACA applies and how to comply).
3. Learning – Develop ways to support collaboration practitioners in continually expanding their collaboration competence and ability to apply these tools in ways that are creative, principled, and effective.
   - Identifying and developing mechanisms needed to make learning resources readily accessible to practitioners when they need them.
   - Identifying needs of “late adopters” of collaboration.
   - Identifying “tough” lessons learned (e.g., through collaborative efforts that didn’t go well).
   - Setting up system for connecting in-house mentors and mentees.
4. Development of Long-Term Strategy for Fostering the Civic and Citizen Engagement Capacity of the U.S. Forest Service & Companion Evaluation Framework – Jointly develop the above-referenced long-term strategy; establish framework for evaluating progress so that the strategy can be adjusted as needed in coming months and years to achieve maximum impact.

Where Can I Get Further Information?

- The USFS Partnership Resource Center website will be our central clearinghouse for accessing people and resources. It has just gone through a re-design, and will be unveiled within the next few weeks.
- Contact the co-managers of the Empowering Collaborative Stewardship Project:
  - Peter Williams (Ecosystem Management Coordination; peterwilliams@fs.fed.us)
  - Andrea Bedell-Loucks (National Partnership Office; abloucks@fs.fed.us)