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## Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative: Collaborative Functionality Evaluation

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## **WWFC Mission Statement:**

“To improve the social, economic, and ecological resiliency of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and local communities, through collaboration by a diverse group of stakeholders.”

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## Executive Summary

*In response to a need to actively restore the Wallowa Whitman National Forest (WWNF) and increase the livelihoods and economic viability of the Forest's surrounding communities, in June 2012 Baker, Union and Wallowa counties convened interested stakeholders and created the Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative (WWFC). Twenty two members have signed a set of principles governing the group. They represent diverse stakeholders working together to improve the resiliency of the forests, watersheds and communities in Northeast Oregon. The WWFC seeks balance between ecological sustainability, economic viability and social acceptability. Its deliberations and recommendations help inform the US Forest Service's (USFS) planning processes. The collaborative has worked on one project, Lower Joseph Creek Project, and has recently begun their second, East Face.*

*As a part of the WWFC multi-party monitoring strategy, the group decided to evaluate its collaborative functionality. This evaluation was conducted in the summer of 2015 through a series of semi-structured interviews and an online survey of collaborative members and partners. The purpose of collaborative functionality monitoring is to track the functioning of the group, evaluate levels of trust and social agreements and identify aspects of the group process helping or impeding progress towards its shared goals.*

### **KEY RESULTS FROM THIS EVALUATION INCLUDE:**

- ***WWFC is doing something novel and new:*** Overall, most members believe collaboration is a better way to be making decisions than historical avenues, and that the WWFC is doing something no other group in its community is working on.
- ***Collective Vision:*** Most WWFC members value similar broadly stated goals, yet many believe there are fundamental differences in philosophies within the group and that they lack a shared vision and definition of the goals. Many recommend stepping back and ensuring all have a common understanding of the collaborative's purpose and where the collaborative might be headed in the future.
- ***Collective ownership:*** Many feel the group lacked collective ownership on its first project, and voiced the importance of working on a project from beginning to end, seeing results and knowing how far the group has progressed. Some recommend moving forward on smaller and less controversial projects, while others suggest taking the time to slowly work through more difficult ones. Many believe a combination of these two approaches could be helpful.
- ***Zones of Agreement:*** Overall the group believes creating Zones of Agreement (ZOAs) is an admirable goal. While most do not feel the collaborative is ready to begin using ZOAs, most agree the WWFC will naturally reach these agreements by working on projects, monitoring together, and integrating learning. Once the group begins developing these agreements, many hope that the WWFC can spend less of its time and upfront investment in planning and negotiating consensus, and shift its role to implementation, monitoring and adaptive management of specific projects. However, there are concerns about the potential precedent setting nature of the group's decision making process.
- ***Identifying agreed upon science and data:*** Many members express difficulty in finding science and data all members can agree upon to use to make decisions. Due to the large landscape in which the collaborative works, agreeing upon ecological, economic and social data and science is something that will continue to be a

struggle for the collaborative, and the group could benefit from focusing on creative ways to facilitate joint learning and fact-finding.

- **Decision Making:** Clarification is recommended on the process and guidelines for dissenting from a position or consensus document, and how new information can be integrated into the decision making process.
- **Trust and Communication:** There is a high degree of respect between the members of the collaborative, but less trust. While most believe communication has significantly improved, there is a general sentiment that members may not be candidly communicating. Most members believe time, mutual successes, and candid conversation will build trust, but some recommend bringing in a “collaboration” or “communications” expert to foster common understanding of what successful collaboration and communication look like.
- **Operating Principles:** There seem to be different perceptions within the collaborative about its rules of engagement. Members expressed a desire to review its Operating Principles, and establish a better shared understanding about what it looks like when operationalizing these principles in day-to-day activities, and how to hold one another accountable.
- **Success and Celebration:** The group feels it should collectively celebrate minor and major accomplishments more often than it does, and could benefit from collectively defining what success means for the collaborative. Similarly, many hope these accomplishments can be shared with the public to create better understanding of the collaborative’s work, progress and relevance.
- **Outreach to General Public:** There seem to be differing philosophies within the group about the role the collaborative should have when educating the public about their work. The group should consider having a discussion about how they want to engage with and present themselves to the general public in NE Oregon.
- **Representation and Participation:** Most members collectively agree that the biggest assets for the collaborative are the individuals who are sitting at the table. However, many believe the collaborative could benefit from more active, regular participation from its present membership and, if possible, more diverse representation.
- **Relationship with the Forest Service:** The group feels it has a strong relationship with the Forest Service, and going forward encourage the Forest Service to be as candid and open as they can with the collaborative.
- **Organizational Structure:** The organizational structure of the collaborative is an aspect most members agree is robust and working effectively, but added transparency could be helpful.

**Seven main recommendations emerged from the collaborative functionality monitoring assessment:**

**Recommendation #1:** Work on a project from beginning to end and develop shared project ownership and vision.

**Recommendation #2:** Define success and celebrate accomplishments.

**Recommendation #3:** Revisit Operating Principles and seek outside assistance to help group define “collaboration” and “communication.”

**Recommendation #4:** To begin developing Zones of Agreement (ZOA’s) the WWFC needs to understand and trust the science and data it is using.

**Recommendation #5:** Continue open, candid communication with Forest Service.

**Recommendation #6:** Initiate a conversation about how to tell the WWFC’s story and how to prioritize outreach to general public.

**Recommendation #7:** Increase internal accountability and transparency.

## Brief Background of the WWFC

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The Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative (WWFC) was formed in June 2012 and includes 22 stakeholder groups that represent diverse interests including logging, fish and wildlife, fire management, ranching, tribal, conservation, counties, cities, state and federal agencies and community members. The geographic focus of the Forest Collaborative is the Wallowa Whitman National Forest (WWNF), which includes 2,392,508 acres, three states, ten counties, and contains four ranger districts, one national recreation area, four wilderness areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

In an effort to restore the landscape and increase economic and community viability within the region, Baker, Union and Wallowa counties jointly convened a public meeting to propose the creation of the collaborative. The counties invited over 150 different individuals, organizations and agencies from the three county area, and state-wide stakeholders, to discuss the collaborative's direction, priorities and structure. The meeting took place on June 7, 2012, with 48 participants from 23 stakeholder groups present. Participants endorsed the formation of the collaborative. Soon after its formation the WWFC organized an official Operations Committee consisting of nine voluntary members, appointed Wallowa Resources as its fiscal agent, and drafted group operating principles and a mission that seeks "to improve the social, economic, and ecological resiliency of the WWNF and local communities, through collaboration by a diverse group of stakeholders."

The WWFC's first project came on the heels of the Wallowa County's Natural Resources Advisory Council (NRAC) six-year collaborative process on the Lower Joseph Creek Project, a 100,000-acre region on the northern boundary of the WWNF characterized by deep canyons, warm/moist forests on steep canyon slopes, warm/dry forests on south-facing slopes, cool/dry forest and small amounts of wet mixed conifer and subalpine fir. The NRAC had performed an integrated Watershed Assessment of the region that showed the current status of forest range, wildlife, transportation, riparian, fuels, and recreation, cultural, and socioeconomic resources. They were close to finishing the assessment, and many within Collaborative and the NRAC recommended that WWFC take on the Lower Joseph Project and finish it as its first project. Members felt this could be an early and significant first success and learning experience for the newly formed group. The WWFC took on the project with the idea it would divide the area into three smaller projects and focus on one at a time.

However, very early in the process the Forest Service went through significant budget and staff cuts and informed the WWFC that the project's implementation timeline would be much longer than initially thought. This longer timeline did not meet the WWFC's triple bottom-line goal and mission of trying to improve the ecological, economic and social resiliency of the region at a pace at which most members were comfortable with. At this same time the Forest Service's Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Interdisciplinary Team, a team dedicated to planning accelerated restoration in the Blue Mountains at a larger landscape scale, offered to take on the Lower Joseph Project as its first East Side Restoration Strategy project. The Strategy is a set of commitments to initiate landscape-scale planning projects that focus on increasing the pace and scale of restoration of dry forest landscapes in Eastern Oregon and Washington. When the Blue Mountain ID Team took on the project, it provided for an accelerated one-year planning and analysis timeline, and the capacity to work on the entire 100,000 acre project area all at once. As of September 2015, the collaborative is waiting on the Lower Joseph Project's Record of Decision from the Forest Service, and has begun discussions regarding their next, a 47,621-acre landscape in Union County called the East Face Project.

# Findings and Observations

The following are the overall findings and recommendations that emerged from 15 interviews and 22 surveys of partners and members of the Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative in July and August 2015. The findings and recommendations are divided into seven main categories that include 22 observations about (1) “collaboration” and the WWFC, (2) Zones of Agreement (ZOAs) and how to find mutually agreed upon science and data (3) the WWFC’s decision making process, (4) trust and communication within the collaborative, (5) the WWFC’s definition of success, (6) WWFC participation, representation and its relationship with the general public and the Forest Service, and (7) collaborative structure and organization.

## General observations about collaboration & the WWFC:

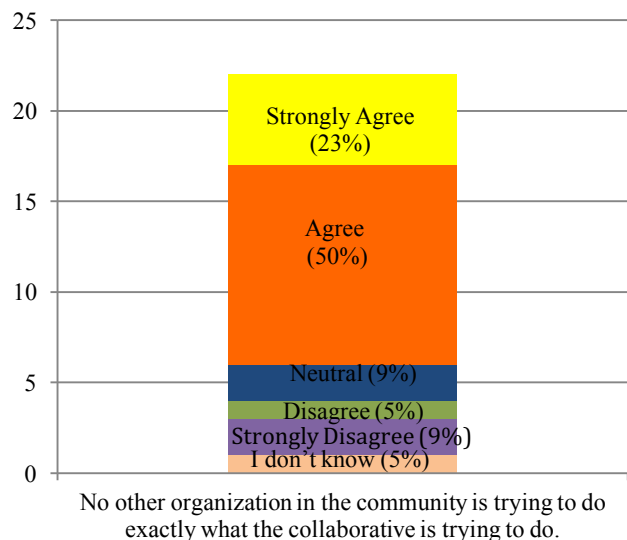
**#1: COLLABORATION CREATES MORE EFFECTIVE, PLACE-BASED SOLUTIONS:** Most participants believe collaboration is a method that can lead to more sustainable decisions that reflect more diverse interests than alternative methods, and that the WWFC is doing something no other organization is doing.

- Participants believe the WWFC represents a new approach to problems that the community cannot solve using old methods, and according to the survey 73% believe the collaborative is doing something no other organization in the community is trying to do (see Figure 1).
- Many believe collaboration creates decisions that are more connected to community values than historical practices. One of the interviewees states, “The collaborative creates better projects and outcomes... we are able to sit down at the same table with partners I normally never agree with and see where our interests overlap.”

**#2: FUTURE OF COLLABORATION:** Some members need reassurance about collaboration’s long-term viability and whether or not it will continue to be a model for public lands management in the future.

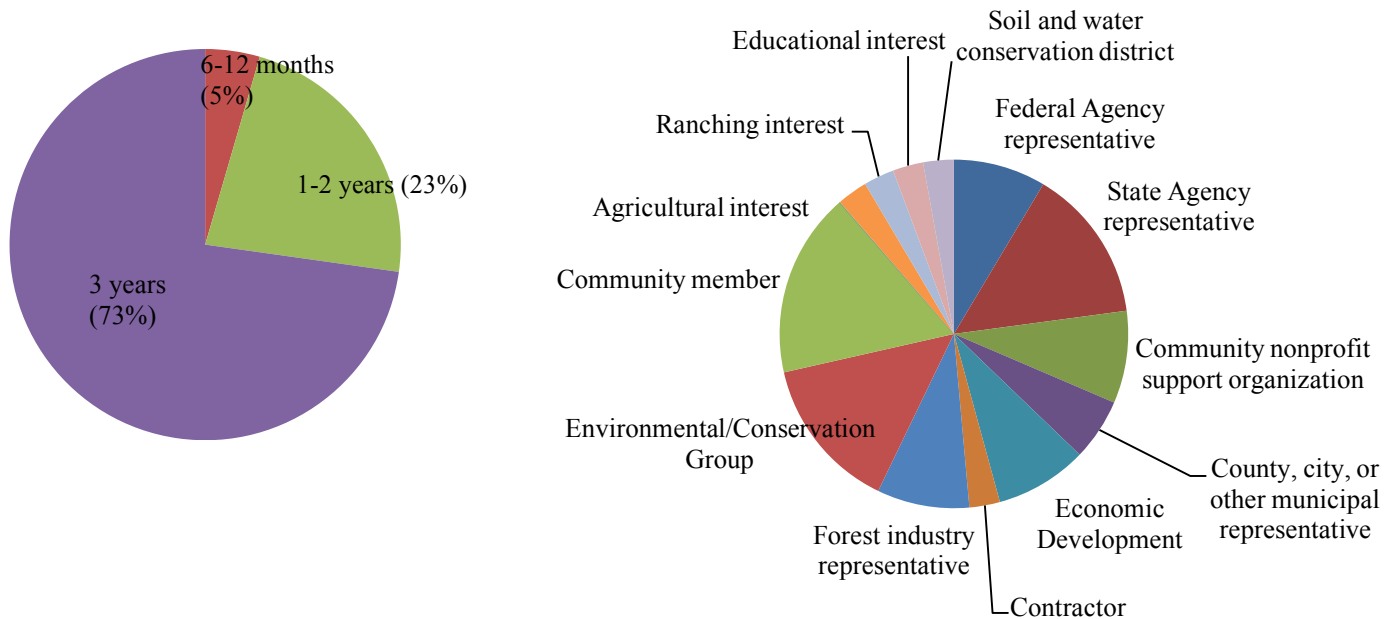
- Many state that in order to continue investing their time they need assurance the Forest Service and other land manager will continue to use “collaboration” in the future.
- Some voice uncertainty about whether collaboratives will begin setting precedent, and what that means for individuals or groups who may not be at the table collaborating.
- A few participants believe collaboratives should have a powerful voice, but also think their voices should be limited at the risk of becoming legally stronger than any other stakeholder.

*“It (collaboration) takes a really long time; but I wish we had started doing this back in the 1990s. We could have started and learned together; we’d probably be at very different place right now. We wouldn’t have many of these deep entrenched problems we have today... But I’m really glad we’re trying it now.” - Interviewee*



**Figure 1 WWFC doing something no other organization is doing.** 73% of survey participants generally believe the WWFC is doing something no other organization or group in their community is trying to do.

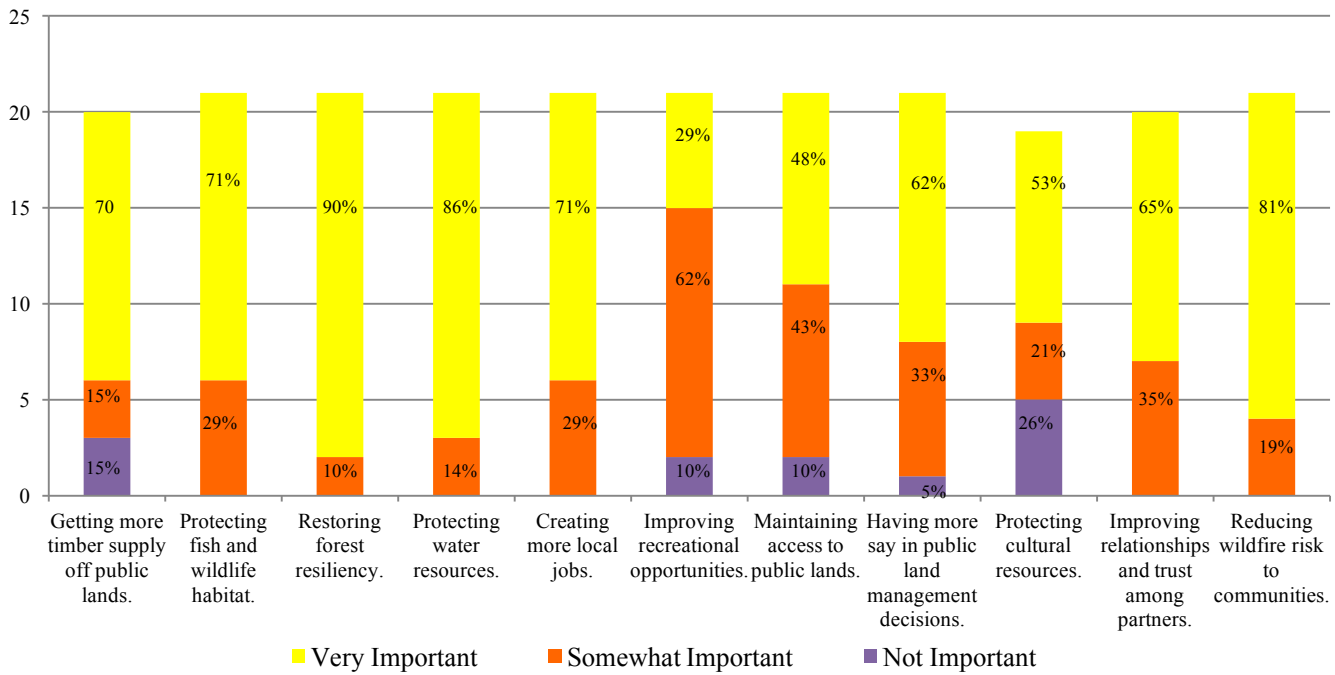
**#3: WWFC MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED, DIVERSE AND CONTINUE COMING BACK:** 73% of survey respondents have participated since the collaborative’s formation in 2012. This is a strong indicator that individuals are committed to the collaborative and continue to participate regularly. The survey respondents also indicate they represent a wide array of interests (see Figures 2 & 3).



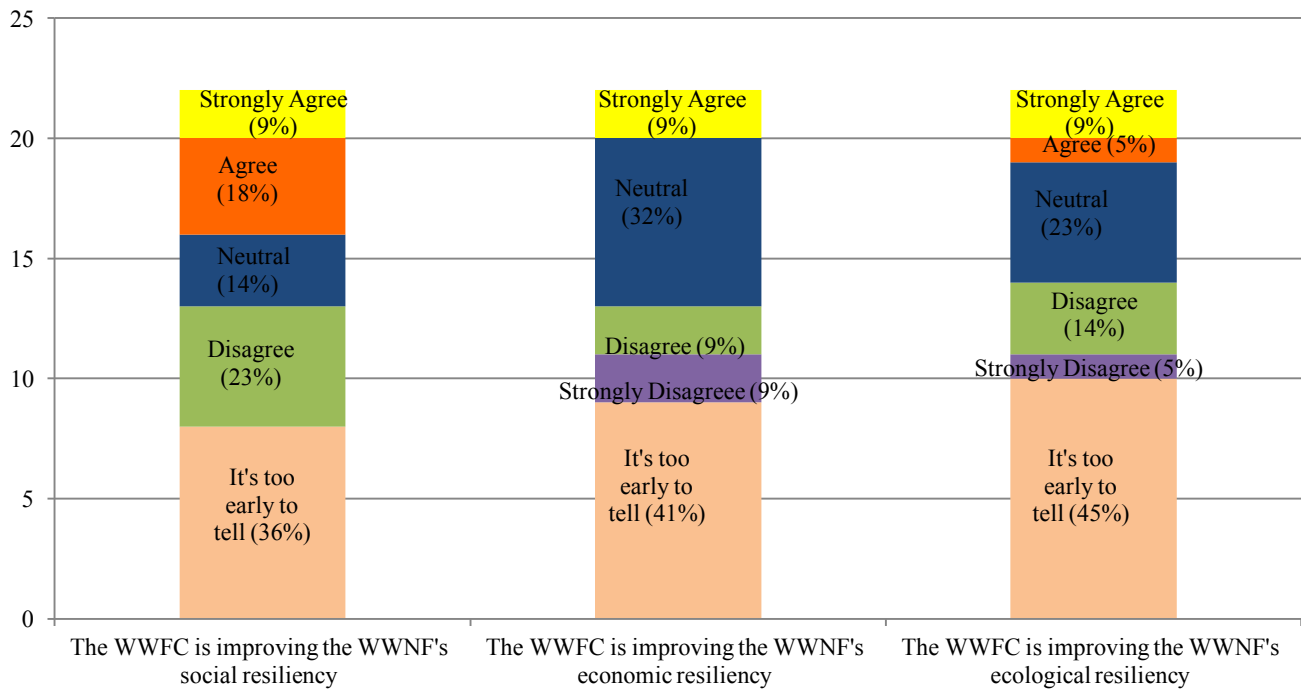
**Figures 2 & 3: WWFC affiliation and time spent on collaborative.** 73% of survey respondents have participated in the WWFC since its formation, and when asked on the survey, “What type of organization or group do you represent? Check all that apply” they indicated that they come from a wide array of backgrounds.

**#4: PERCEIVED LACK OF SHARED VISION WITHIN WWFC:** While many agree that collaboration can be an effective tool, many voice a concern that the WWFC does not seem to have a unified vision, and that there may be fundamental philosophical differences within the group. However, when surveyed every participant without contest agrees that (1) *protecting fish and wildlife habitat*, (2) *restoring forest resiliency*, (3) *protecting water resources*, (4) *improving relationships and trust among partners*, (5) *reducing wildfire risk to communities*, and (6) *creating more local jobs* are important issues the collaborative should be addressing (see Figure 4). Despite the perception that members have philosophical differences, there may be more similarities within the WWFC, or areas of agreement than many think.

- Overall interviewees agree the collaborative should help increase the pace and scale of restoration on public lands and that it should be done in an ecologically, socially and economically sound manner. However, in the interviews many express the degree to which each of the WWFC’s goals should be implemented differs between members (see Figure 4).
- Many state that the WWFC is a young collaborative and working at a larger scale than is typical of most projects in the Wallowa Whitman National Forest (Lower Joseph Creek at 100,000 acres and East Face at 47,621 acres). It has also not yet completed a full project, and as a result many believe it is too early to determine whether or not the collaborative is successfully fulfilling its mission or if it has a shared vision (see Figure 5).



**Figure 4: How important are these issues to you or the group you represent on the WWFC?** When surveyed, every partner and member of the collaborative without contest agrees that (1) protecting fish and wildlife habitat, (2) creating more local jobs, (3) restoring forest resiliency (4) improving relationships and trust among partners (5) reducing wildfire risk to communities, and (6) protecting water resources, are important issues the collaborative should be addressing.



**Figure 5: The WWFC's mission is "To improve the social, economic, and ecological resiliency of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and local communities, through collaboration by a diverse group of stakeholders." How effectively is the WWFC meeting these goals?** When asked if the WWFC is fulfilling its mission, 50% were unsure or felt it was too early to tell if the Collaborative is improving social resiliency; 73% were unsure or felt it was too early to tell if they were improving economic resiliency; and 68% were unsure or felt it was too early for ecological resiliency.



**#5: APPROACHES TO FUTURE PROJECTS:** There seem to be two visions within the group about how the WWFC should move forward on future projects. Some believe the group needs to work through another large project that includes challenging and controversial issues. Others recommend a smaller project that is less controversial. Many believe a combination of these two approaches could be helpful.

- One interviewee states, “We need to have more voice in the beginning of the project and we need to have a shared history we can all point to. We then can work through those hard issues in the beginning, gather the data, and learn from them. It is going to be hard, but it has to be done.”
- Many feel Lower Joseph Creek was too large and complex and the WWFC should have begun something smaller and less controversial. Others feel the group has great talent and expertise and if it does not challenge itself, it will not realize true progress.
- According to many of the interviewees some issues were brought to the group late in the consensus building process. Due to the accelerated timeline the group did not have the time to give the issues true consideration.

### Zones of Agreement & how to find mutually agreed upon science and data:

**#6: ZONES OF AGREEMENT:** Overall the group believes developing Zones of Agreement (ZOA's) is an admirable goal. Most think the collaborative has the ability to begin developing general ZOA's on issues like aspen restoration and dry forests. There is less agreement on how to reach consensus on more controversial topics like moist forests, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA's) and travel management. However, most agree tools like flexible sideboards that can be adjusted to account for project specific variations and adaptive management could help the WWFC move forward on more controversial topics.

- Most interviewees believe that through a natural progression of doing projects and seeing their results, the collaborative will develop enough trust and understanding to create general zones of agreement. One interviewee states, “We need to get out in the woods and reflect on what these post treatments are going to look like. We need to work through smaller projects, monitor those, see the results, and learn together. This will help us improve our group's mental picture of what ZOA's will look like on the ground and across the landscape.”
- Many hope WWFC will eventually spend less time and upfront investment in planning and negotiating consensus, and begin shifting its role to more implementation and adaptive management of specific projects.
- Some believe the group needs to have candid conversations about zones of *disagreement*.
- Many recommend working on one ZOA at a time, starting with issues that can have clear economic and ecological gains, and then moving on to more controversial ones. Others are hesitant about working on projects too small to justify their involvement and recommend first working on more difficult issues. As one interviewee states, “We are a smart and capable group of individuals. If all we do is uncontroversial issues, why are we here as the collaborative? We should tackle controversial issues that the Forest Service cannot take care of on its own. That is the purpose of the collaborative.”
- Some feel making transferable agreements across the landscape would be a big success for the group, but it should not be the collaborative's only goal.
- There are concerns about how the Blue Mountain Interdisciplinary Team and other collaboratives will view WWFC's ZOA's and if these agreements will be precedent setting.
- Most interviewees agree that the most sensitive or controversial topic areas for the group include (1) commercial/noncommercial logging, (2) inventoried roadless areas, (3) potential wilderness areas (4) riparian areas (RHCA's) (5) travel management and (6) Other Unroaded Lands (OUL's).

**#7: FINDING SCIENCE/DATA GROUP CAN AGREE TO USE:** During the interviews, many expressed concern that the group has a difficult time agreeing upon the science and information that the WWFC will use to make their decisions, in addition to finding reputable and non-biased sources.

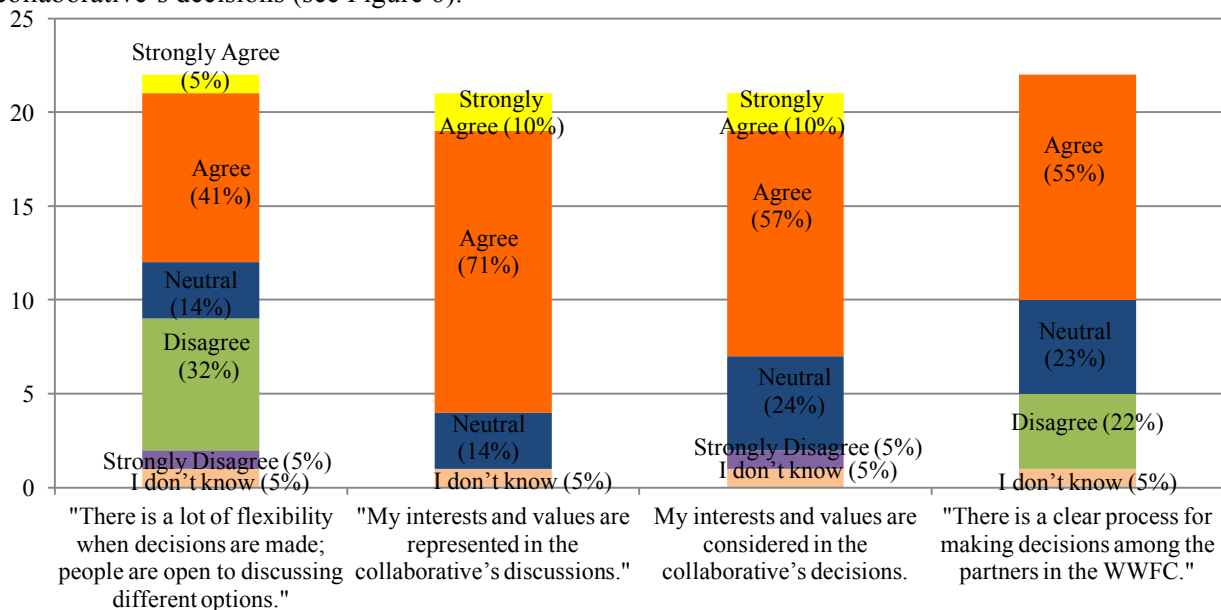
- Many would like to develop an agreed upon set of economic, ecological and social data the WWFC uses to filter its decisions.
- Many find it difficult to determine “good” from “bad” science, who to trust or what criteria the group should use to decide on science.
- Many interviewees remind the group that science not only includes ecological and biological science, but socio-economic as well. As one interviewee states, “We need to have a conversation about social and economic values within Wallowa, Baker and Union Counties. We need to get down into metrics like: Are we helping to maintain community infrastructure? Are we creating year round or seasonal jobs? Is there going to be an increase in absentee ownership? School enrollment? These things are not always understood or appreciated by everyone.”

“Trying to figure out how to have a science discussion that is not just a debate about my science versus your science is going to be important for our group moving forward.”  
- Interviewee

**Decision making process:**

**#8: SOME MEMBERS OF THE WWFC DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF ITS DECISION MAKING PROCESS:** Collaborative members expressed confusion about the WWFC’s decision making process, specifically around consensus, dissenting opinions and new information.

- In the survey, when asked if their interests and values are incorporated into discussions, 81% believe they are. However, when asked about the WWFC’s decision making process, 45% do not feel there is a clear process for making decisions (see Figure 6) especially around how to dissent and how new information is used.
- Most believe it is important for the collaborative to take time to develop a clear decision making process everyone is able to understand and feel their input is both heard and taken into account. However, 37% of the collaborative do not believe the group is open to discussing different options or there is flexibility in the collaborative’s decisions (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6 Decision making in the WWFC:** In the survey, when asked if their interests and values are incorporated into discussions, most (81%) believe they are. However, when asked about the WWFC’s decision making process 45% of members are unsure or feel there is not a clear process for making decisions within the group. Additionally, 37% of the WWFC don’t believe members of the collaborative are open to discussing new or different options.

**#9: VALUE OF PROJECT SUB-COMMITTEES IN DECISION MAKING:** Many believe the Lower Joseph Creek Project would have not moved forward without the assistance of its dedicated project sub-committee. However, a few believe future project sub-committees should represent a more diverse subset of the collaborative and should include more than three individuals.

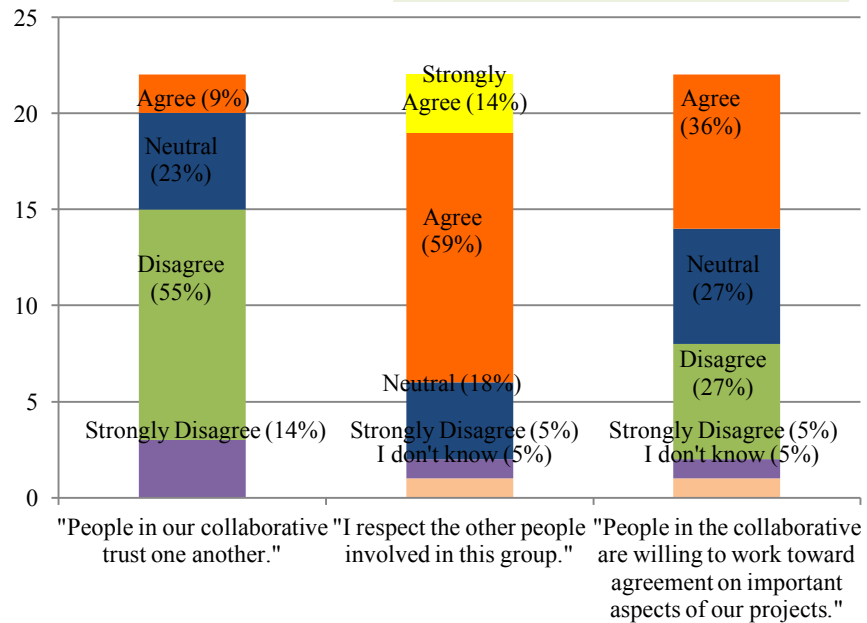
- All participants voice a strong understanding that the Lower Joseph sub-committee took on hard and complex issues, dedicated significant resources and moved the collaborative much closer to consensus than they could have reached otherwise. Many mention it was helpful to have two seemingly opposing parties and one mediator/facilitator on the sub-committee to tackle and work through tough topics. Some state that contacting other members individually to ensure views were interpreted correctly during the consensus building process was helpful.
- The individuals on the committee believe the process of working through these difficult issues allowed them to develop stronger relationships with one another, but some find the progress individuals on the sub-committee made did not always translate to the collaborative as a whole.

**Trust and communication within the collaborative:**

**#10: TRUST AND RESPECT ARE DIFFERENT:** There is a high degree of respect between the members of the collaborative, but a medium to low level of trust. Some also feel there may be differences in members interpret the Operating Principles.

*“If I leave \$20 on the table and leave I trust that the other WWFC members wouldn’t take it. I have that level of trust, but I don’t trust if I am not there that the other group members will ensure my interests are represented at the table. Those are different levels of trust, and we need to work on that latter one.” -Interviewee*

- There is a high degree of respect between members (73% state they respect others on the WWFC), but only 9% of those surveyed feel members in the collaborative trust one another, with 69% stating they either disagree or strongly disagree (see Figure 7).
- Many think having agreement on a few noncontroversial issues does not build long-term trust. Rather, disagreement, working through difficult issues and experiencing mutual success builds trust.
- Many feel there still seems to be a sense of an in-group and out-group dynamic on the group that may be rooted in historical disagreements.
- All members mention the stress the death of one of its long-standing members had on the group in the middle of the project. Many feel the group



**Figure 7 Trust and respect within the WWFC.** Individuals within the WWFC respect other members of the collaborative, however, at this point in time, the level of trust within the group and the belief that individuals within the collaborative are willing to work toward agreement are low.

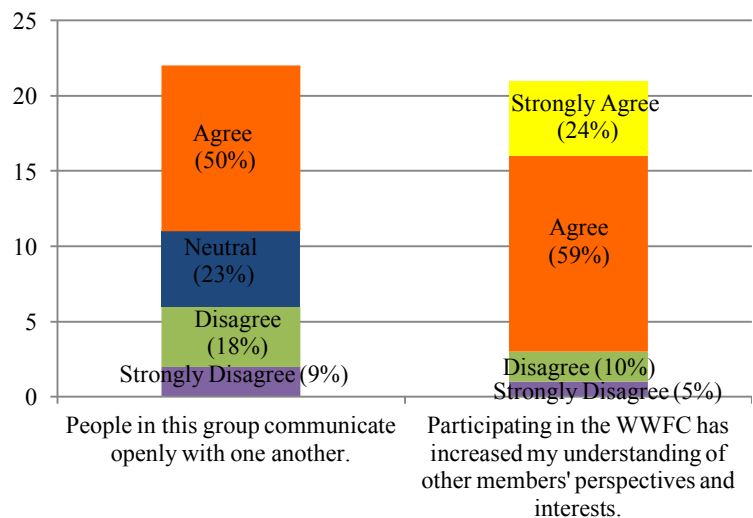
did not have adequate time to build the collective trust, relationships and level of communication that might be indicative of a group together for three years.

- During the interviews, a few members suggest there seem to be different perceptions within the collaborative of what the Operating Principles state and what it looks like when putting those principles into practice. Most recognize that the group wrote the principles together, but with changes in membership, new projects and changing group dynamics, many think it would be helpful to walk through each Principles to ensure all members have a similar understanding of their meaning. For example, some voice that WWFC participants may be characterizing the WWFC’s work or other members in public in ways that are not necessarily respectful or reflective of its Operating Principles.

**#11: IMPROVED COMMUNICATION, BUT NEEDS TO BE MORE CANDID:** Overall, members believe working on projects and attending meetings together has improved communication between its members as compared to prior to the collaborative’s formation. However, there is a general sentiment that members may not be candidly communicating with the group, and many feel the WWFC has not reached a place where individuals are disclosing their true values and opinions.

*“We all need to be more clear and confident in our language, and not as worried about whether or not our specific words will be used against us in the future.” -Interviewee*

- Most participants believe communication has improved since the collaborative first began in 2012. 86% of the survey participants state that they have personal, informal communication with other members of the WWFC about the collaborative’s work and 85% agree that participating in the WWFC has increased their understanding of other member’s perspectives (see Figure 8).
- However, during the interviews some voiced a concern that members are not talking candidly to the group. Only 50% of those who filled out the survey believe the members communicate openly with one another. As one interviewee states, “Many, including myself sometimes, seem to be using ambiguous language to avoid committing to a particular stance or issue... At the same time, we all need to agree not to use words against others.” As a result, some feel the group has not taken the time required to work through and learn from difficult issues and conversations.
- Some also suggest conversation is often dominated by the most extreme voices.



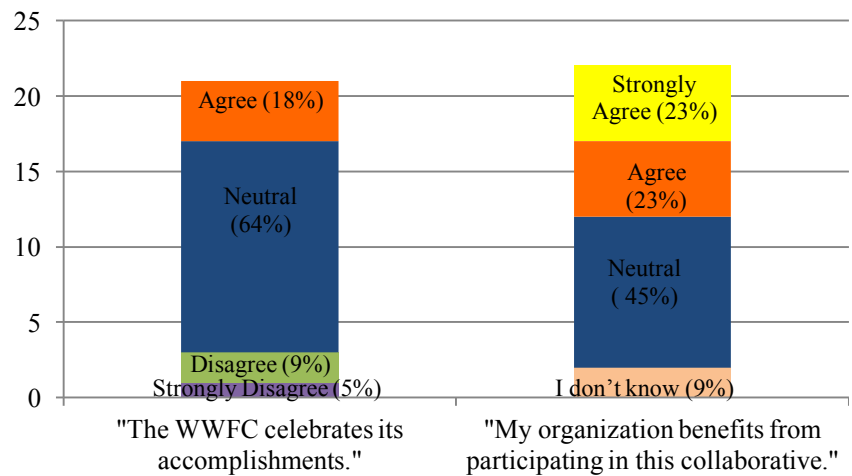
**Figure 8 Communication in the WWFC:** Most participants believe communication has improved since 2012, yet only 50% of those surveyed believe the group is openly communicating with one another.

## WWFC’s definition of success:

**#12: WWFC SEEMS TO LACK MUTUAL DEFINITION OF SUCCESS:** During the interviews many seem to be defining ‘success’ or ‘accomplishment’ for the collaborative differently.

- Some seem to be measuring success based on whether or not the collaborative reaches a consensus. As the WWFC did not reach a formal consensus on Lower Joseph Creek, many feel they cannot articulate any

successes the group has had. They instead are waiting on the Record of Decision to determine the group's success. Others believe there might be too strong an emphasis on reaching consensus, and that the WWFC should instead be holding up their smaller accomplishments. One interviewee states, "I don't think we have taken time to reflect and celebrate the successes of the WWFC, we need to do that each and every time, regardless of how small they are." As a potential symptom of these different definitions of success only 46% of the participants state that their organization benefits from being on the collaborative (see Figure 9).



**Figure 9 Celebration of success and benefit from participation in the WWFC:** When asked if their organization or group benefits from participating in the WWFC 54% stated they were unsure or neutral. Just 18% believes the WWFC celebrates its successes.

**#13: WWFC SELF-IDENTIFIED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Despite not reaching formal consensus, most WWFC participants agree they have accomplishments that should be celebrated and recognized more often than they presently do.

- During interviews the collaborative identified many accomplishments it has achieved in its three years: (1) working at a larger scale than is typical of most projects in the Wallowa Whitman National Forest, (2) developing a collective mission statement and a set of mutual Operating Principles, (3) creating a standing Monitoring Subcommittee which is designing a framework for multi-party monitoring, (4) creating a diverse Project Subcommittee that worked through difficult issues on the Lower Joseph Creek Project, (5) making significant progress on difficult subjects like old growth, dry forest, 21-inch trees, riparian areas, and other complex issues that come with working on such a large scale, (6) creating an active, standing Operations Committee, (7) creating a website to host its meeting notes and news, (8) holding monthly meetings with high attendance rates, (9) hiring a dedicated neutral facilitator, among others. Many believe the group needs to remind themselves of these less obvious accomplishments and successes.

**WWFC participation, representation and its relationship with the general public and the Forest Service:**

**#14: GOOD CROSS SECTION OF COMMUNITY, BUT MAY LACK PEOPLE POWER TO ACCOMPLISH GOALS:** Most members feel the right people who represent a cross section of the community are at the table. However, in the survey 73% do not feel or do not know whether the collaborative has enough 'people power' to do what it wants to accomplish.

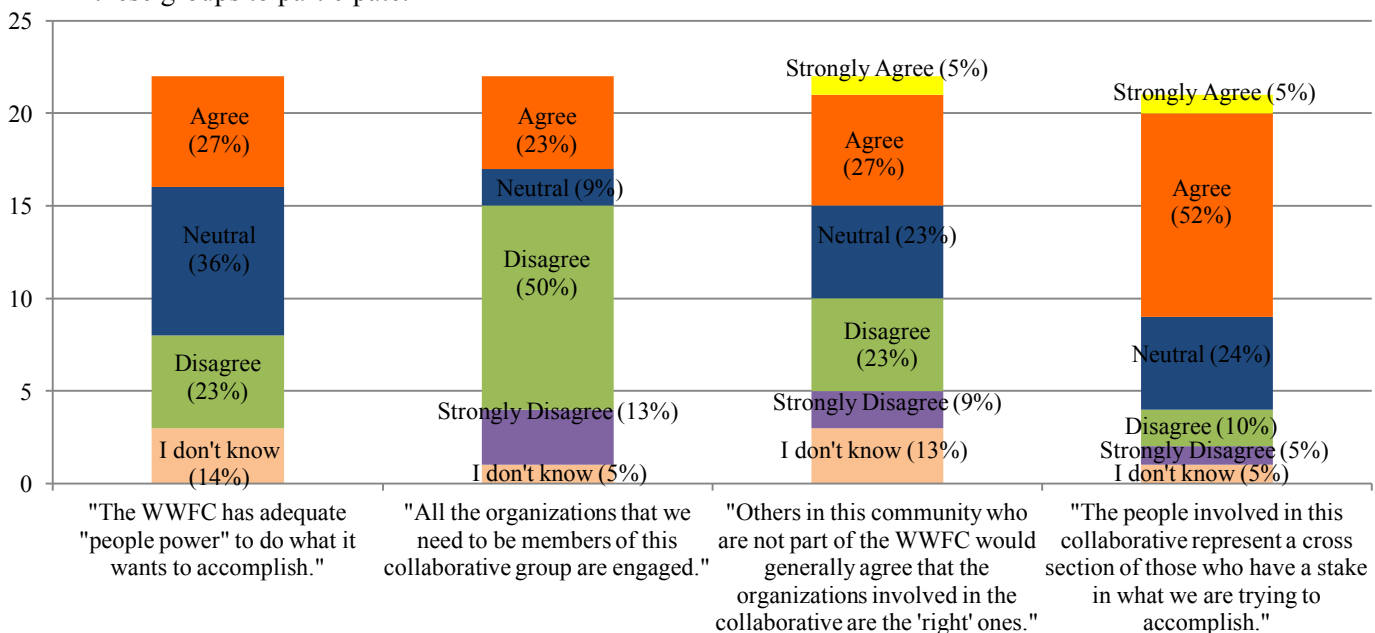
**#15: ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:** One issue all interviewees articulate is the need for individuals to regularly attend and actively participate in meetings. This is also cited this as one of the largest barriers to the group's progress.

- Some feel they do not have sufficient time and capacity to continue in the collaborative if the group does not have something it can show as a success. With five collaboratives in Northeast Oregon, many mention participation fatigue.
- Some express concern that members may not be reporting to the constituencies each represents about the collaborative. If members commit to recommendations or actions on the WWFC, each needs to be certain they speak for their organization. Some also voice that if members make commitments or promises that they make sure to follow through.

*“The Collaborative is a microcosm of the community at large, and as a representative it is our responsibility to let our constituencies know what is going on. They can’t all be at the table and have their voices heard.” -Interviewee*

**#16: BROADER REPRESENTATION NEEDED: Most participants believe the WWFC contains diverse individuals with a broad array of expertise and interests. But when asked if all the organizations that need to be members of the collaborative are engaged, 63% disagreed. They suggest groups representing fringe interests and centrist perspectives could add to the quality of discussion (see Figure 10 below).**

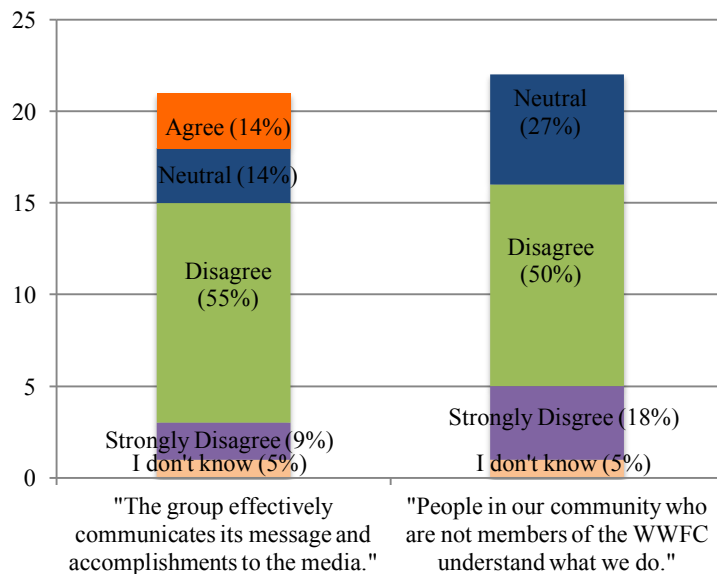
- Many express a need for a stronger representation of individuals representing the “messy middle” such as sportsmen, fishermen, hunters and recreation interests; this may assist individuals at either extreme articulate their interests and find new ways of approaching problems.
- Others feel better decisions and less misunderstanding will come from a more diverse collaborative, and recommend actively encouraging more fringe groups to participate in the WWFC.
- Most participants voice the important role the conservation community plays on the WWFC. Some mention a need for more diverse representation from the local, state and national conservation community. Many believe the few conservation representatives at the table are often disproportionately called upon to participate in sub-committees to ensure the conservation community’s voice is represented. A few specific suggestions include The Nature Conservancy, local land trusts, and soil water conservation districts.
- All understand the legal need of the tribe to consult with the Forest Service on a government-to-government basis given their status as a sovereign nation. But many think the WWFC dialogue would be richer if the tribe to participate in a more active way. Some recommend regularly extending outreach to all tribes in the region, inviting them to the WWFC’s meetings and providing them with updates on the collaborative’s deliberations.
- Some participants would like to see more representation at the meetings from the fish & wildlife perspective.
- Some want to see more local businesses, schools, local community leaders and local government representatives on the collaborative, and believe the WWFC needs to rebrand its message to better encourage these groups to participate.



**Figure 10 Representation on the collaborative:** While most members feel the members on the collaborative represent a diverse cross-section of the three-county area, many feel the collaborative could benefit from more diverse representation.

**#17: RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL PUBLIC:** Most participants do not think the general public cares or is aware of how the collaborative’s work affects them (Figure 11). Many feel the WWFC needs to have an internal conversation about how to tell the collaborative’s story in a unified and compelling way.

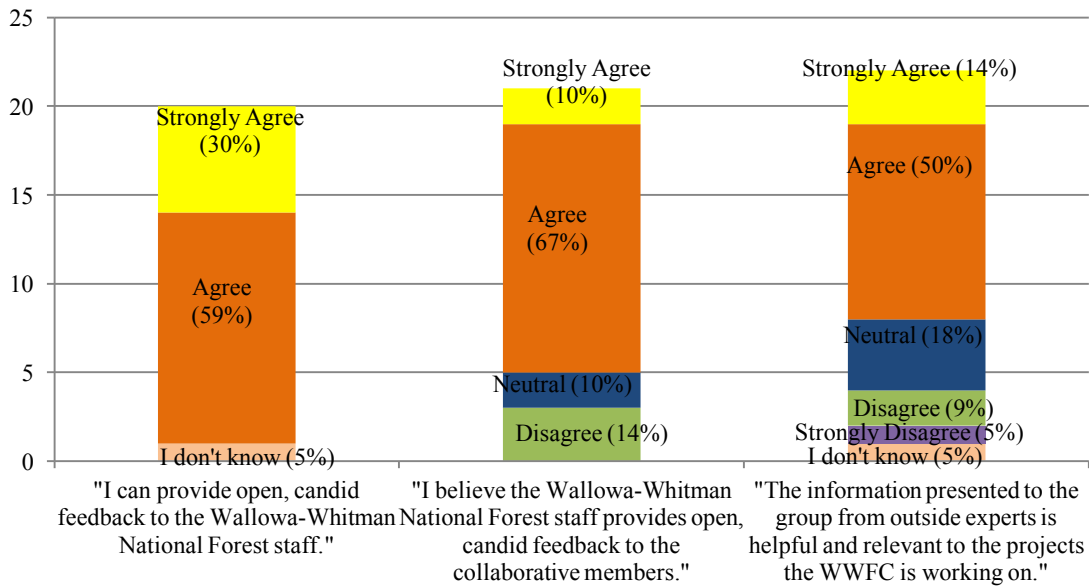
- Many participants think the WWFC first needs to develop a clear, unified vision and an example of an outcome before it can begin dedicated public outreach. Two interviewees state, “The general public doesn’t understand what the collaborative is doing and for the most part they don’t care,” and “We haven’t told the story of the collaborative effectively.”
- However, there seem to be differing views about whether or not the collaborative should invest its time in outreach to the general public. A few participants feel it is not the collaborative’s role to provide outreach, but rather to find areas of agreement and advise the Forest Service. Others believe outreach should be one of the WWFC’s main priorities.
- Some voice that many in the community are mistrustful of the collaborative effort and, at times, it is difficult for community leaders to participate in collaborative processes without being stigmatized by their communities.
- A few members express that the group first needs to revisit its Operating Principles, especially around communication external to the WWFC.



**Figure 11 Relationship with the general public:** The collaborative generally agrees that the general public does not have a clear understanding of the collaborative’s work or purpose, and most do not believe or are unsure if the collaborative is doing an effective job of communicating its message to the community at large.

**#18: RELATIONSHIP WITH FOREST SERVICE:** Overall most participants feel communication with the Forest Service has been positive and appreciate the time, expertise and feedback it has given the collaborative (Figure 12). However, a few members state they are not sure what information the Forest Service takes away from the meetings and are interested to see the results of the Lower Joseph Creek ROD when it is released.

- Many express appreciation of the Forest Service for attending meetings, being present and making themselves available to listen to the collaborative. 89% of those who filled out the survey believe they can provide open and candid feedback to the Forest Service. As one interviewee states, “The Forest Service has a team of experts, is very informed and has great technical knowledge they should be sharing with us. We should be leaning on their expertise.”
- However, a few members would appreciate more time for dialogue with the WWNF, and less time dedicated to presentation of information and data. One interviewee states, “It is very important to get information from the Forest Service, but there needs to be more of a candid dialogue, less time presenting, and more time spent discussing the issues...I sometimes am not sure what they are taking away from the meetings.”
- A few members express confusion about the goals and future plans of the Forest Resiliency Project and the Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Interdisciplinary Team.



**Figure 12 Relationship with WWNF staff:** Overall the relationship with the Wallowa Whitman Forest Staff is very positive; the collaborative feels it can provide open candid feedback to them, and the Forest Service will do the same.

## Collaborative structure and organization:

**#19: STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE:** Generally, most participants are very satisfied with the overall structure and management of the collaborative and Operations Committee (see Figure 13), although a few voice limited understanding of the Operations Committee's precise role within the collaborative.

- All express trust and a strong appreciation for the time and resources the Operations Committee members have dedicated to the group. Some voice a general lack of understanding of the Committee's day-to-day activities and feel communication with the larger collaborative could be improved. One interviewee who has been with the WWFC since its beginning states, "I would like some clarification on what exactly the operations committee does and what it does not do. Maybe I don't need to know, but I'm still not quite sure."
- The field trips are helpful and the collaborative should continue to schedule them (see Figure 13).
- The ability of the collaborative to create ad-hoc committees and working groups has been helpful when addressing timely issues or projects.
- The Operating Principles the group collectively created have been instrumental in guiding the group through difficult issues.
- It is helpful to have WWFC meetings on consecutive days as other regional collaborative meetings.

**#20: WALLOWA RESOURCES:** Overall most participants appreciate the role Wallowa Resources has played. They are respected and trusted within the WWFC and the collaborative would not exist in the form it does without them. A minority of participants recommend increased transparency between Wallowa Resources as the fiscal agent and the collaborative.

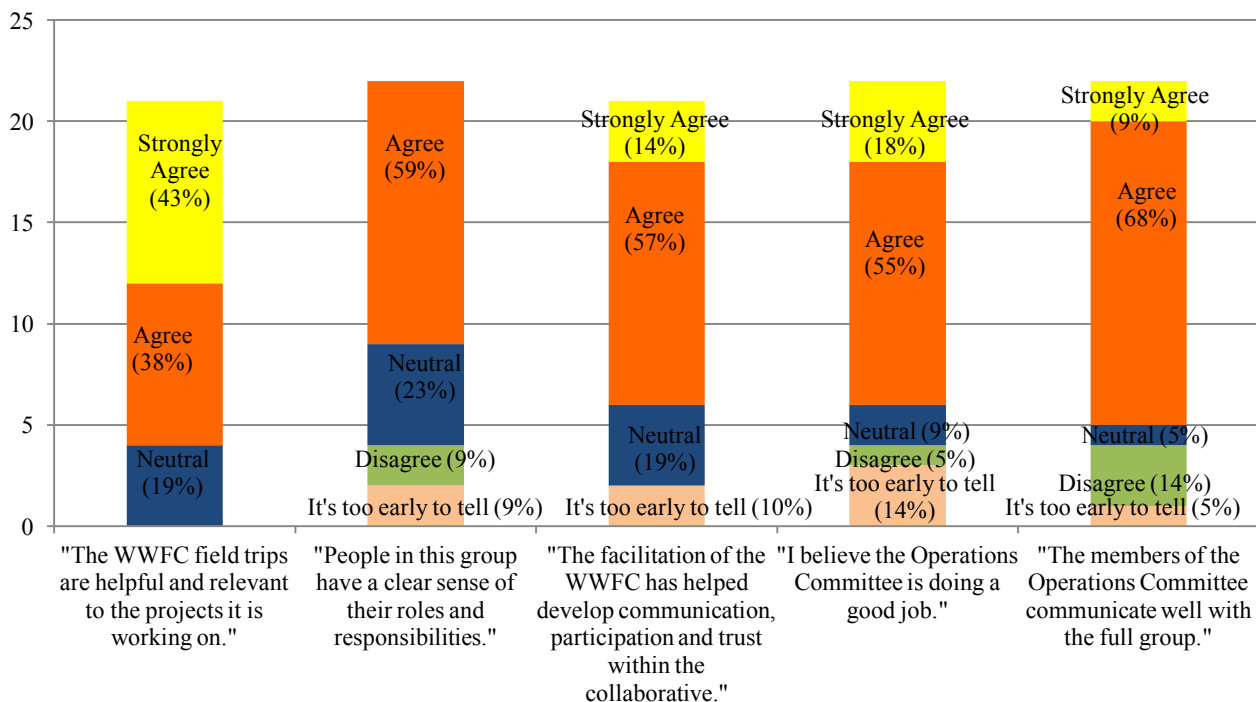
- One interviewee states, "The Collaborative would not exist without Wallowa Resources and the extensive amount of time they have spent to advance the collaborative." Another states, "Wallowa Resources already comes from a place of balance: they are emulating what we as a community and a collaborative are trying to achieve. The very nature of their organization can be a marker for what we should be aiming for."
- Some mention Wallowa Resources has maintained direct communications with several groups that are not fully invested in the process to ensure their voices and perspectives are incorporated into the collaborative's discussions and decisions.



- All agree it is helpful to have Wallowa Resources as the fiscal agent, but a few individuals are unclear how grants function and think more transparency around finances is always a good practice.
- A few feel Wallowa Resources and Sustainable Northwest’s missions and roles are misunderstood within the collaborative and the general community.
- Some question if Wallowa Resources will continue to participate as actively in the collaborative when a project is not based in Wallowa County.

**#21: FACILITATION: Despite the observation that she is new to the collaborative, all participants provide very positive feedback for the new facilitator and believe she brings a strong background in facilitation and natural resource management issues.**

- Most participants (71%) believe the facilitation has helped develop strong communication, participation and trust within the collaborative (see Figure 13) and many indicate that the role of a consistent facilitator is integral to a well-functioning collaborative.
- All members feel it is better to have Wallowa Resources as an interested party at the table, rather than in a facilitator role.
- Many state the Operating Principles have been broken historically and members were sometimes left to advocate for themselves.
- Some state the agendas are very full and the group is sometimes cut off before they can sufficiently discuss issues.
- A few observe the facilitator seems to have many other commitments and wonder how much time she is able to dedicate to the collaborative.



**Figure 13 Collaborative structure and Organization:** Most participants indicate the group’s Operations Committee, facilitation and the use of field trips have been effective, relevant and are helping the collaborative to reach its goals. A few feel the Operations Committee could better increase its communication with the greater collaborative.

# Recommendations

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During the interviews, surveys, and group meetings the WWFC members and partners collectively identified recommendations that address many of the above observations about the collaborative's functionality. From these many suggestions, seven main recommendations emerged:

## **Recommendation #1: Work on a project from beginning to end and develop collective project ownership and vision.**

- **Discussion about compelling future project:** The WWFC should have a philosophical discussion to collectively decide what it would like to achieve from its next project. Ultimately, it should choose a project that the group thinks is both motivating and compelling.
- **Work on project from beginning to end:** All participants generally agree for future projects they would like to have more of a voice early in the planning process. Some recommend that working on a project from its beginning to its end will help the group develop collective project ownership and group vision.
- **Remain within legal framework:** Some members state that significant scope and scale is a good goal for the WWFC, but it needs to ensure it meets legal ecological and biological objectives.
- **Field experience builds collective vision:** All participants think on-the ground, tangible experiences that transition the group out of the conference room and into the field will help build collective understanding of the landscape and eliminate misconceptions that might exist.
- **Tap into other collaboratives' expertise:** Other collaboratives have created strategic plans and this may help the collaborative develop attainable goals and a long-term vision for itself.

## **Recommendation #2: Define success and celebrate accomplishments.**

- **Discussion about defining success:** The WWFC does not seem to have a collective definition of what success means for the collaborative and many suggest that the group could benefit from having a conversation about how the group is going to define success going forward.
- **Celebration of small and large accomplishments:** Many recommend regularly celebrating the WWFC's progress and accomplishments regardless of size. Specifically, many recommend formally celebrating the individuals who stepped up to work on the Lower Joseph Creek sub-committee.

## **Recommendation #3: Revisit Operating Principles and seek outside assistance to help group define "collaboration" and "communication."**

During the interviews, many suggest differing perceptions about its Operating Principles and what it looks like when putting those principles into practice. Most recommend collectively revisiting and walking through the Principles, ensuring all members have a similar understanding of their meaning. To help facilitate this conversation many recommend hiring a communications specialist and/or a collaboration expert to lead the group through the fundamentals of collaboration and effective communication. It could help the WWFC to create a shared understanding and vision of what respectful, clear and upfront communication and collaboration can and should be (suggestions: Elle Page, Oregon Consensus Center). Interviewees and survey participants also suggested specific recommendations around decision making, trust building and communication listed below:

**Decision making:**

- **Revisit decision making process:** The collaborative should revisit the decision making section of its Operating Principles to ensure the group clearly understands how decision making works, what it means to dissent, how new information is vetted, and that all are comfortable with this process.
- **More diverse project committee:** For the WWFC's next project some interviewees recommend involving more individuals with a wide range of interests on the project subcommittee.
- **Conversations with whole group:** Some suggest that more of the project discussions should take place at the collaborative-level instead of within a sub-committee.
- **Communicate progress at committee level to group:** Find more creative ways to translate progress made within the subcommittee to the collaborative as a whole.

**Trust Building:**

- **Four things build trust:** Most interviewees agree that four things: (1) time (2) mutual successes (3) more candid conversations and (4) a willingness to bring issues to the table as soon as they arise, even if they may be controversial or difficult will all build trust within the collaborative.
- **Use activities in meetings:** Some members recommend investing time during meetings in activities that help build trust and mutual understanding (e.g. icebreakers to start each meeting and role play activities).
- **Socializing:** Many recommend the need for allocating more time and resources for social gatherings.
- **Follow-through:** Many stress that when promises and decisions are made within the group it is important for members to keep their word and follow-through on their commitments.
- **New member orientation:** A few members recommend creating a new member orientation that informs new participants or visitors to the collaborative about the group's progress and history. The orientation could outline the group's (1) operating principles, (2) history, (3) walk through decisions that have been made, (4) the group's meeting minutes, and (5) one-on-one meetings with present members.

**Communication:**

- **More candor and bring up issues early:** Most participants agree the group needs a greater level of candor and a willingness to bring issues to the table as soon as they arise, even if they may be controversial.
- **Active listening:** Many emphasize the importance of practicing active listening, not being dismissive of viewpoints different from one's own, and trying to actively understand the other side's views.
- **Keeping constituencies informed:** Some recommend that members on the collaborative need to ensure they are reporting back to their constituencies about the collaborative and its progress. Similarly, if members commit to recommendations or actions within the group, each needs to be certain that they speak for their organizations or constituency. This will help ensure all interested parties are kept abreast of the collaborative's ongoing progress, understand reasoning behind decisions and that their values are part of the collaborative's discussions even if not physically at the table.
- **Roundtable discussions:** Some suggest integrating more roundtable conversations into the meeting agendas to ensure all voices are present and heard.
- **Talk about mutual issues first:** To help build trust it is helpful to start a discussion around issues that mean something to each of the members and leave the more contentious issues until later.
- **Examples of effective communication:** Collectively during the interviews, members and partners identified a number of specific types of communication they have seen members use to help the group move forward in times of disagreement and contention. These include:

- focus on mutual gains, past progress and common ground;
- willingness to take risks;
- focus on relationships and genuine respect for other people;
- separation of people from the problem;
- willingness to compromise;
- active participation;
- face-to-face communication on a regular basis;
- focus on interests rather than positions;
- solutions-based and positive communication;
- reframing of issues;
- candid and honest communication;
- use of accessible language that lacks jargon;
- effective use of non-verbal cues;
- patience;
- unwillingness to give up;
- separates inventing of ideas or options from deciding on them;
- asks questions;
- provides prioritization when expressing one's values or interests;
- tit for tat negotiation (negotiation issue by issue, rather than all at once);
- uses facilitation to encourage other voices at the table;
- verbally recognizes when others have made concessions;
- uses own voice to bring up voices not at the table or not as strong;
- believes someone at their word until they prove themselves otherwise;
- introduces innovative ideas and solutions at key moments.

### **Recommendation #4: To begin developing Zones of Agreement (ZOAs) the WWFC needs to understand and trust the science and data it is using.**

- **Visually see a ZOA:** Many recommend the group needs to visually see how ZOAs will look across the landscape. They suggest a combination of field trips and adaptive management to implement, monitor and adapt their prescriptions over time. Through this process, most believe the collaborative will begin creating ZOAs.
- **Zones of Disagreement:** Most agree the WWFC needs to have robust and detailed discussions early and include issues members cannot agree to (i.e.: zones of disagreement).
- **Use other groups' expertise:** Some recommend the group spend time meeting with and discussing how other collaborative groups reached a zone of agreement (e.g. Aspen Restoration from OSU Extension).
- **Create ZOA sub-committee:** Similar to the Lower Joseph Creek Subcommittee, some recommend creating a ZOA subcommittee with a diverse and representative membership to help the group begin identifying areas it may have consensus.
- **Flexible agreements:** When developing ZOA's many members recommend creating agreements with loose and flexible sideboards that can take into account local and project specific variations.

One of the main challenges interviewees identify to creating zones of agreement is that the collaborative has a difficult time finding science and data to use as a basis for their decisions. To help the WWFC move away from a "my science" vs. "your science" discussion interviewees recommend many suggestions:

- **Use internal expertise:** The WWFC is a group of intelligent and skilled individuals and many encourage the collaborative to utilize this expertise help the group decide what kind of information it needs to move forward.
- **Specific recommendations to find science for WWFC:** Members recommend many ideas to help the group determine science and data they can agree on: (1) bringing on an independent science advisor/s dedicated to the collaborative (similar to the Blue Mountain Forest Partners) that comes from an ecological, public policy/legal, or economic background, (2) utilizing panels of experts when discussing an issue, (3) conducting debates, (4) inviting mutually agreed upon independent scientists or researchers to present, and (5) finding innovative ways to integrate data from multiple sources (i.e. online database or web tool; youth monitoring; look at other examples).
- **Interest based conversations around values:** A few members recommend having conversations that focus on questions like "What does a healthy forest look like?" "What does resiliency mean?" "What does

restoration mean?” In addition, many suggest moving away from positions and talking about interests related to sensitive topics. Specific examples of this include:

- Regarding travel management: some recommend focusing on agreement around temporary roads, rather than all roads.
  - Regarding old growth: focusing on limiting the scope of 21-inch trees, or on old growth in dry forests, rather than blanket statements about all old growth.
  - Regarding moist, cool forests: There is a wide range of variation within the moist forest designation, and instead of focusing restoration on all moist, cool forests there may be more agreement around the dry spectrum of moist forests.
  - Regarding OULs: helping all members of the collaborative better understand the social and community impact of this designation may be an appropriate next step.
  - Regarding wildfire: the Blue Mountain Forest Partners have developed general agreements ahead of time for what to do post-fire for salvaged logging. This could be something the WWFC tries.
- **Compare with USFS’s Silvicultural Guide:** One participant recommends collectively the collaborative could compare their ideas about forest management with the recently released Forest Service’s Silvicultural Guide that draws from Eastside Restoration principles. It may be a helpful starting place to help the WWFC determine how closely it can collectively agree with its recommendations.
- **Socio-economic data conversation:** Many recommend a conversation or presentation on the socio-economic values and metrics of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and its surrounding communities. The presentation should include issues like community viability, year round vs. seasonal jobs, absentee ownership, school enrollment, or how the economy is contributing to local infrastructure. The presentation should utilize the expertise of local community members and the timber industry.
- **Values vs. Science/Data:** Some suggest the group could benefit from a discussion about the differences between *values* and *science/data* and how each will be used when making a decision as a group.
- **Soften hard lines:** Generally, individuals recommend that members need to be willing to soften “hard lines” on individual issues.

### Recommendation #5: Continue open, candid communication with Forest Service.

- **Initiate conversation with USFS about key issues:** Collectively WWFC members and Forest Service staff recommend the WWFC and the Forest Service have a candid conversation about the role of the Forest Service within the Collaborative going forward. Specifically, they should cover: (1) what information and data the WWFC would like the Forest Service to provide on future projects (2) the WWFC’s expectations for the Forest Supervisor within the collaborative, (3) the limitations the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) has on the Forest Service’s ability to actively participate in the collaborative’s meetings (4) ways to encourage the participation of Forest Service line officers and field staff to participate in WWFC meetings and (5) continued conversations about NEPA and collaboration.
- **Iterative draft process suggested:** A few suggest the Forest Service provide intermediate drafts and seek feedback from the WWFC iteratively throughout the draft writing process and that they keep the WWFC actively engaged throughout the objections process.
- **Regular check-ins with Blue Mountain ID Team:** To create a better understanding of the direction of collaboration in federal land management, some advise continuing to have regular and often check-ins with the Blue Mountains Restoration Strategy Interdisciplinary Team about the East Restoration Strategy and Forest Restoration Project and to provide clarification on regional, state and federal priorities.
- **Informing Congress and others about progress:** To ensure long-term funding and support for the collaborative, some suggest regularly informing congressional, state and federal partners about the WWFC’s progress.

## **Recommendation #6: Conversation about how to tell the WWFC's story and how to prioritize outreach to general public.**

### **Outreach to general public:**

- **Conversation about outreach:** There seem to be differing views about what the WWFC's relationship with the general public should look like. The collaborative would benefit from a conversation about the level of resources it would like to dedicate to public outreach, what it would like the public to know, and how to frame its messaging going forward. Some recommend maintaining strong relationships with other collaboratives across the state and country to learn about best practices (eg. Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project in Bend, Oregon).
- **Suggestions to increase outreach:** Some specific suggestions to increase community presence include (1) attending and presenting at targeted community meetings, (2) creating a new WWFC website, (3) developing a social media presence and (4) actively engaging local community leaders.
- **Involve more research on community values:** Some suggest the collaborative seek regular input on the community's perceptions and opinions related to public lands management through reports like Joel Harter's Communities and Forests in Oregon (CAFOR) survey, "Forest Views: Shifting Attitudes Toward the Environment in Northeast Oregon."
- **Communications protocol:** Some recommend developing a collective communications protocol that addresses communication outside the collaborative. It could include how to communicate information about the collaborative's work, while upholding each organization's mission, and being respectful of all members of the collaborative.

### **Representation on the collaborative:**

- **Discussion about missing partners:** Many recommend the WWFC needs to have a discussion about what types of groups are missing and how to involve them, with a particular focus on groups that can help the collaborative move forward.
- **Suggestions to increase diversity:** Other suggestions to increase representation include (1) determining how to increase tribal, county, and fish & wildlife participation, (2) ensuring the conservation groups at the table know how important their role is, (3) greater community engagement by making sure local businesses, schools and community leaders understand the importance of the collaborative, (4) a more diverse conservation community presence, and (5) extending invitations to fringe groups.
- **All lands-management:** Many collaborative groups are focusing their efforts on all lands management (projects that focus on private and public lands), not just recommendations for public lands restoration. To attract a wider variety of perspectives in the collaborative, an all-lands management focus could be something to consider.
- **Payment for service on collaborative:** A few members mention pursuing grant funding or participating in congressional advocacy to encourage the funding of stakeholders to participate on collaboratives.

## **Recommendation #7: Increase internal accountability and transparency.**

### **Operations Committee and general operations:**

- **Roles of Committee:** Some suggest that fleshing out the specific roles the Operations Committee plays and which it does not could be helpful.
- **Quarterly Updates:** To increase transparency, others would like the Operations Committee to provide quarterly updates to the collaborative at the beginning of each meeting (verbally and/or written).

- **Translating discussions at Committee level to the whole group:** Some recommend the Operations Committee members try and bring the discussions they have within the Committee to the larger discussions more frequently. This will help keep the larger group abreast of progress made on the committee level.
- **More sub-committees:** Many encourage the group to continue to utilize smaller, yet representative sub-committees when addressing large and complex issues. Other collaboratives have committees such as the riparian conservation committee, a field trip development committee and a communications committee.
- **Align with other collaborative meetings:** Continue to maintain strong communication between other collaboratives to ensure the Umatilla Collaborative and the WWFC occur on consecutive days.

#### Wallowa Resources as the fiscal agent:

- **Maintain same level of participation outside Wallowa County:** Due to their key role in the collaborative, most participants feel Wallowa Resources should continue their same level of participation if a project occurs in Baker or Union counties as they do in Wallowa County. Some also recommend Wallowa Resources takes care to let the collaborative grow and learn on its own as well.
- **Suggestions for transparency:** To create more transparency some recommend: (1) creating a legal boundary between the facilitator and Wallowa Resources (2) having the Operations Committee perform a personnel evaluation of the facilitator (3) creating a committee to oversee finances and provide a quarterly report back to the operations committee and (4) clearly having each collaborative member articulate his or her group's purpose for being at the collaborative and what they would like to gain individually.

#### Facilitation:

- **Understand unique county values:** Some recommend the facilitator spend time understanding unique perspectives of each county (Baker, Union and Wallowa) by attending meetings and individually meeting with commissioners and partners.
- **Use expertise:** If the facilitator notices any areas she can lend her expertise from prior work, a couple of participants encourage her to do so.
- **More time for group discussion:** A few suggest limiting the time in the agendas allocated to presentations and provide more time to discuss topics more in-depth as a group.
- **More active role in field trips:** A few suggest the facilitator very effectively facilitates meetings, but could take a more active role during group field trips.
- **Visit Operating Principles:** Many suggest collectively revisiting the WWFC's Operating Principles. Additionally, some recommend the group adds "walking through the Operating Principles" as a regular agenda item and to make the Principles visible to the group throughout each meeting.
- **Specific suggestions around Operating Principles:** Most suggest the facilitator should take care to ensure the Operating Principles are upheld, and provide specific suggestions to focus on: (1) Keep the group from using positional statements, and focus on interests (2) Keep group moving forward (3) Keep communication positive and respectful (4) Pay attention to group dynamics (5) Ensure all voices are heard; propose using "round robin" or other creative methods to help bring out new voices (6) Remind the group of housekeeping rules (7) Call out if members are out of line (8) Collectively agree to create social agreements within the confines of established laws and policies.

# Conclusions and Next Steps

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The survey provided important information on how the collaborative sees itself, while the interviews revealed some of the nuanced reasoning behind these observations. Overall, at just three years old the WWFC has made great progress. It is working at a pace and scale larger than any other collaborative in the state of Oregon and as a result of this large and diverse landscape, is encountering issues more complicated than is normal of many collaboratives. This diversity and complexity is present both in the landscape and in the individuals around the collaborative's table. The survey also showed that members of the WWFC are returning to the table and are willing to dedicate their time to work on hard issues month after month. This is a testament to the importance of this effort in the community and to each of the constituencies the WWFC members represent.

In addition to the seven main recommendations provided in this evaluation, the Collaborative might consider performing a collective visioning exercise, a process championed in the foundational book *Making Collaboration Work* (2012). This exercise could take many forms for the WWFC, such as a visioning process regarding where Wallowa, Baker and Union counties could be in 10, 20 or 50 years. Each member outlines his or her best and worst case scenarios, and the group then collectively ensures one another that each member's worst case scenario will not take place. Each member also understands that his or her best case scenarios are also most likely not to occur. This provides a mutually agreed upon set of parameters and image for the group going forward.

This visioning process, combined with the WWFC's Operating Principles, its overall structure and the agreement to work on these issues collectively, can help further develop communication channels, mutual understanding, and eventually trust between members, something that many WWFC members currently believe is lacking. As members work on projects together and develop relationships, research shows they will begin feeling more comfortable softening stances on some of their formerly hard-lined individual issues. This softening and commitment to collective benefit instead of only individual is essential for collaboration to work effectively, and for innovative solutions to emerge. It will allow the group to continue finding agreements and scenarios that meet its members' diverse interests, and find scenarios where each member gains more from participating in the Collaborative than pursuing his or her interests away from the table.

The purpose of the collaborative functionality monitoring is to track the functioning of the group, evaluate levels of trust and social agreements, and identify aspects of the group process that are helping or impeding progress towards its shared goals. Ideally this evaluation will also provide guidance and spark a series of conversations about how the Collaborative would like to grow into the future while achieving the mission of improving the social, economic, and ecological resiliency of the WWNF and its surrounding communities.

## Methodology

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This assessment is based on 15 interviews and 22 surveys from the WWFC members and partners. The interviewees each participated in a 60-minute over-the-phone or in-person interview. The interview included questions about each member's history with the Collaborative, communication and trust within the group, challenges and successes during the Collaborative's first project (the Lower Joseph Creek Project), and questions regarding the Collaborative's structure and organizational capacity. Twenty-two WWFC members and partners filled out the survey, for a response rate of 81 percent. Of these respondents 86 percent self-identified as voting members who have signed the Collaborative's Operating Principles, 38 percent are members of the Operations Committee and 33 percent are members of the Monitoring sub-committee. Seventy-three percent of respondents have participated since the Collaborative's formation in 2012. The WWFC's history was compiled through a combination of the individual interviews and a report on the WWFC's Lower Joseph Creek Project.