

# Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative Operating Protocols

## 1. History and Mission

Since 2002, Stewardship Groups (SG's) have successfully proposed, prioritized, and implemented restoration projects using retained receipts generated through the implementation of stewardship timber sale contracts on the Siuslaw National Forest. Participants from these groups along with additional stakeholder groups have been engaging together in long-term forest planning and multi-party monitoring at a forest-wide scale.

A 2019 study by OSU found that there was interest in, and capacity for, a formalized forest-wide collaborative. This led to the creation of the Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative (OCCFC) which offers a platform for formal engagement in the NEPA process for FS projects on the Siuslaw National Forest and adjacent lands. The OCCFC operates in parallel to the Stewardship Groups whose work focuses on projects resulting from stewardship project retained receipts.

### Collaborative Mission

The Oregon Central Coast Forest Collaborative is a group of stakeholders with diverse interests who work together with the Forest Service and other agencies around shared values of ecological health, economic opportunities and community well-being. The OCCFC works to improve the development, implementation, and monitoring of forest and watershed management projects that align with the values of the group. This Collaborative provides a space for open discussion and communication amongst stakeholders and agencies, while providing a platform for education and shared learning.

### Collaborative Values:

- Our work is rooted in science and follows principles of adaptive management.
- We provide a space for open and honest communication between members of the public and between the public and agencies.
- We seek well-balanced win-win solutions based on common zones of agreement that represent the interests of the Collaborative members.
- The outcomes of our work result in a landscape that is more resilient to climate change, increased biodiversity, and socioeconomic stability.
- We practice inclusivity and respect while striving for robust engagement with diverse stakeholders who inform our project selection, planning, implementation, and multi-party monitoring. When possible, we acknowledge, value, and consider the public and broader collection of interests outside of the Collaborative, but we do not represent the general public.

## 3. Meeting Ground Rules

Ground rules will be included on all meeting agendas and be referred to during Collaborative meetings.

- **Treat everyone with respect:**
  - Have an open mind and work to understand other perspectives
  - Be courteous and allow others to speak before responding
  - Respect and support the role of the facilitator

- **Respect everyone's time:**
  - Stay on topic, follow the agenda, begin and end meetings on time
  - Take phone and side conversations outside and leave camera on during virtual meetings
  - Come to meetings prepared
- **Work to find common ground:**
  - Address ideas, not individuals
  - Accept areas of disagreement
  - Lead with interests rather than positions
  - Honor agreements and commitments, bring all cards to the tables
- **Encourage participation:**
  - Indicate when you want to speak
  - Monitor your participation to allow everyone the chance to speak
- **Prioritize transparency and honesty:**
  - Air disagreements and critical information during meetings
  - Avoid backroom deals
  - Keep colleagues/constituents informed about the work of the Collaborative

#### 4. Organizational structure

Full-Group: Voting members and non-voting participants and guests of the Collaborative

Voting members: Individuals who have signed the Declaration of Commitment

Subcommittees: Formed as needed to focus on specific projects or topics approved by the full group. Subcommittees will provide regular updates at full group meetings.

Operations Committee: The members of the committee are voting members of the Collaborative that represent the diversity of the full group. This Committee plays a more active role in managing the Collaborative. Responsibilities include:

- Providing direction and proposals for consideration by the full group
- Managing financial, personnel, and other administrative components;
- Selecting a Coordinator;
- Supporting and providing guidance to the Coordinator and;
- Carrying out the role of the Coordinator in their absence and;
- Consider a process for removal of voting members if necessary.

This Committee consists of 4 members, representing the diversity of interests found within the voting-members. Voting-members will select the members of the Operations Committee using the decision-making process detailed in this document. With some minor exceptions, the Operations Committee does not make decisions for the full group.

Roles:

*Collaborative Coordinator (non-voting):*

- Facilitates meetings:
  - Creates agendas, materials, and writes meeting notes
  - Schedule's meetings and coordinates logistics
  - Invites guest speakers as requested by group
- Tracks progress of collaborative projects and ensures deadlines are met

- Coordinates 1-3 field trips per year
- Drafts outreach material and updates website in a timely manner
- Directly supervised by the Operations Committee
- Acts as primary point of contact for Collaborative
- Maintains the listserv
- Serves as chief liaison with the USFS/federal and state partners
- Develops and manages grants and contracts grant proposals

*Agency Partners (non-voting):*

- Actively engages with the Collaborative by:
  - Attending meetings and field trips as invited
  - Offering resources and information on projects
  - Communicating decisions pertaining to activities on federal lands

*Guests (non-voting):*

- May listen, share experiences or expertise, participate respectfully and appropriately, identify themselves and their interests
- Invited based on full-group approval and request

*Participants (non-voting):*

- The term participant will be used to refer to individuals or organizations who actively and regularly participate in the Collaborative but are non-voting members and have not signed on to the Declaration of Commitment

*Voting Members*

- Sign declaration of commitment annually
- Actively participate in meetings
- Organizations/companies have one vote
- In-person attendance at a minimum of one of the following events per calendar year is strongly encouraged as a demonstration of good-faith participation in the Collaborative Group:
  - Full OCCFC Monthly Meeting
  - Subcommittee Meeting
  - OCCFC Field Tour
  - Science Panel/Presentation
  - Training (must be relevant to the OCCFC)
- May assign a proxy to vote in the members absence
- May decide to leave the group at any time
- New voting members:
  - Approved through current voting membership after attendance at 2 of 3 previous consecutive meetings, while adhering to the rules of the group
  - Sign on to the declaration of commitment.
- In the case that a voting member is clearly not complying with the Operations Manual and Declaration of Commitment the Operations Committee can consider a process for removing that voting member

*Relationship to Stewardship Groups*

Participants on the five Stewardship Groups are welcome to participate in the Collaborative and become voting members through the process described above. The Collaborative will not infringe on the primary work of Stewardship Groups: prioritizing off-forest restoration projects

to receive off-forest retained receipts but will work with the Groups when there are overlapping interests outside of their primary functions. The Collaborative Coordinator will communicate and share information with the Stewardship Groups facilitators.

## 5. Decision Making

### Full Group Decision Making:

Voting-members will work to reach consensus that meaningfully addresses the interests and concerns of all. In order to make a decision, a quorum of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of voting members must be present.

During decision-making, each participant is encouraged to express their perspectives including any disagreement so long as it is matched with a constructive alternative that seeks to meet the needs of all. Voting-members may also:

- *Set a motion:* A motion can be made by any voting member and must be seconded by another voting member. After which, the Coordinator will re-state the motion. Group discussion will follow. Meeting participants will be asked to indicate their support by show of hand or verbal confirmation.
- *Amend a motion:* A voting member will state the potential amendment, the Coordinator then re-iterates the amendment. Following discussion, the amendment is voted on. If there is agreement to the amendment, the original motion with the amendment is stated by the Coordinator for discussion and a vote.

When building consensus, voting members will indicate their support/lack of support by holding up fingers that correspond to their level of support. Consensus on a decision will be reached when all meeting participants can make statements 1-3. Consensus will not be reached if any participants indicate 4-5.

#### Consensus reached:

1. I agree with the decision and I will publicly support it.
2. I agree with the decision, but I will refrain from publicly supporting it.
3. I can accept the decision and I will not make public statements against the decision.

#### Consensus not Reached:

4. I cannot support the decision, but I will refrain from making public statements against the decision.
5. I cannot support the decision and I will make public statements against the decision.

### If consensus cannot be reached:

The level of agreement will be recorded in the meeting minutes. If voting members are unable to reach consensus, detailed areas of agreement and disagreement will be synthesized in writing via a Summary of Positions document. Voting members may decide to take  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority vote in a follow-up meeting or may also choose to move on from a topic without reaching consensus or a final decision.

Proxy or Distance Voting: Voting-members can send proxies to participate in decision-making if they cannot attend the meeting and have given advance notice to the group. Members can also convey their decisions/votes electronically when appropriate.

Consensus and Voting Topics: The following is a list of topics that will be approached through the consensus and voting process. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Amending the Operating Protocols
2. Amending or creating Zones of Agreement
3. Add new members
4. Commenting in the NEPA process as a Collaborative
5. Signing on to letters of support or objection
6. Statements to the media
7. Selecting members for the Operations Committee

#### Subcommittee and Operations Committee Decision Making:

Committee-related decisions will be made first by those involved in that committee. Decisions made during committee meetings will be recorded in the meeting minutes and distributed within a week of the meeting to all committee members and any other collaborative member that requests them. Each committee meeting will begin with a brief review of the decisions made during the previous meeting.

Committees should reach consensus on their area of work prior to discussion with the full Collaborative. When consensus has been reached, the committee will present their recommendations and rationale to the voting-members for discussion and final ratification.

## **6. Communication**

In general, Collaborative members and participants will work with the Coordinator to communicate with the Forest Service about projects they are engaging with. Collaborative members and participants may communicate individually to the Forest Service about non-collaborative projects. Regarding the work of the Collaborative, negotiations and discussions will happen with the full group and no backroom deals will be made.

#### Internal communication:

- Separate member and non-member listservs will be used for ongoing communication
- The collaborative email list should be used for information sharing
- The contacts on this list are not to be shared outside the collaborative without the contact's permission.
- In the case that the Collaborative is asked to consider signing on to a petition or letter of support with a deadline that does not allow the group to consider the topic in a Collaborative meeting, the Coordinator will send the document to the Collaborative members and members will have two-weeks, time permitting, to provide a written objection. Any objections to signing on to a letter of support would mean the collaborative does not sign that letter.

### External communication:

- A [website](#) will be maintained for storing and sharing information including:
  - Public events/meetings
  - Field tours
  - Meeting minutes
  - Governing documents
- In the event that media have an interest in attending meetings, the following expectations will apply:
  - Full disclosure to all present of any media presence at each meeting
  - Non-voting role
- All communications by members of the Collaborative with the news media on behalf of the Collaborative, will be done only by agreement of the group. Members can speak about Collaborative projects on behalf of themselves.

## **7. Meeting planning and coordination**

As a general rule, Full Collaborative meetings will occur once per-month at a specified time and date which is set at the first meeting of each year. As of January 2021, Full Collaborative meetings will take place on the second Friday of every month from 10am - 12pm PST. Monthly meetings may be canceled as needed at the discretion of the Collaborative Coordinator.

- Collaborative meetings may be held remotely, and when held in-person will provide a remote access option for participation
- The Collaborative will host at least one in-person field trip per-year
- Meetings will be announced via email and available on the Cascade Pacific website at this [link](#)
- Meeting agendas and the previous meetings minutes will be sent via email approximately one week prior to the meeting to allow for group input and suggestions
- All meeting coordination and listserv management will be the responsibility of the coordinator

## **8. Record keeping**

- Meeting notes will be taken by the Coordinator at each meeting and shared with members of the Collaborative within the following week of the meeting
  - The coordinator may audio record meetings for the purpose of note taking
  - In the absence of a coordinator a volunteer may take the meeting minutes
- Meeting minutes from the prior meeting will be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting and clarifications and issues will be discussed and approved
- Meeting minutes will not ascribe individual names to comments or questions unless necessary
- All meeting minutes and notes will be stored in the Google Drive, full group meeting minutes will be shared on the website