

WESTERN LANDS PARTNERSHIP FORUM SUMMARY REPORT



Photo by Conservation Media

Partnerscapes, together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program, hosted the first of a planned three workshop series on issues related to collaborative conservation and partnerships. The workshop was held January 11-12, 2023, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Over 80 people participated in the forum providing private landowner and land manager, federal and state agency, Tribal, and non-governmental organization perspectives.



Photo by Pat Weidknecht

“The health of the future of agriculture and conservation doesn’t end, or always start, at the field, the gate, the stream, or the prairie... Sometimes, its’ future lies somewhere where an honest, open, safe, conversation occurs.”

- Jake Yancey, from the Tracking Y Ranch

GOALS FOR THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED:

- Peer-to-peer networking and learning;
- Sharing skills and lessons learned in the delivery of conservation programs and partnerships;
- Assessing needs and opportunities to improve partnership development across private/public lands;
- Identifying gaps and strategies to better equip practitioners to conduct private lands work;
- Providing input on a framework for networking between practitioners and private landowners.

AGENDA

The agenda for the day and half forum was split into three sessions to support group learning and discussion:

- 1. KEYS TO SUCCESS:** Outlining the top skills it takes to be a successful private lands biologist.
- 2. GAPS & STRATEGIES:** Identifying gaps preventing us from reaching goals for collaborative conservation as well as strategies and opportunities to fill those gaps.
- 3. EFFECTIVE NETWORKING:** Discussing the best elements for a framework that will increase successful networking.



Photo by Pat Weidknecht

Each of the three half-day sessions started with a speaker panel, made up of a mix of private landowners and conservation practitioners. Following each panel, the facilitators led a question-and-answer session, as well as an interactive process to gather input from all the participants. Wall boards, flip charts and sticky notes were used to gather independent thoughts and ideas, and then distill those down into the broad overarching themes. By the end of the workshop, there were over 500 sticky notes on the wall. Activities between individuals, followed by table discussions and then entire group conversations led to connections between and amongst these ideas, and new topics realized. Participants also had an opportunity to do a short video, sharing their thoughts on how to accelerate collaborative conservation locally, regionally, and nationally.

RESULTS

Top Skills

- Trust
- Listen
- Find Common Ground
- Be a Part of the Community
- Two-way communication/conversations
- Respect
- Flexibility
- Be Humble
- Learn the Other Side
- Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Gaps

- Funding
- Capacity
- Turnover of Staff
- Lack of Consistency
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Training and Mentoring
- Connections/Communication
- Monitoring



Photo by Pat Weidknecht



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STRATEGIES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase funding and add flexibility
- Increase capacity
- Reduce turnover of staff and have overlap when turnover occurs
- Increase consistency within and amongst programs
- Increase training and mentoring
- Increase diversity equity and inclusion
- Increase outreach/communication
- Enhance targeted monitoring

NETWORKING

- Mentoring (Both formal and informal)
- Workshops
- Social Media
- Peer-to-Peer Learning
- Community Involvement
- Attend Meetings and Events



Photo by Pat Weidknecht

"It is not about the focal species. Rather, it is about the focal people"
- Jim Stone, Rolling Stone Ranch



"It is important to know the biology, the restoration ecology and the conservation programs. However, it is also important to learn about agriculture so you can relate to the landowners. Know the science, the restoration practices as well as the partnership aspects. That is the three-legged stool that makes a successful private lands biologist."

- Marisa Sather, Assistant State Coordinator, Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife program.

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Thank you to all the participants who attended the Nevada workshop. Our vision was to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our community-based collaborative partnerships by sharing and learning from one another. This transferability

of knowledge, experience and lessons learned will help influence the future and build upon success. This workshop is one of a three-part series, hosting another one in the Midwest and the East in 2023-2024. Results compiled from the workshop series will then be shared.

STAY CONNECTED!

Websites

<https://partnerscapes.org/>

<https://www.fws.gov/program/partners-fish-and-wildlife>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/partnerscapes>

<https://www.facebook.com/PFWProgram>

Instagram

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