

MIDWESTERN PARTNERSHIP FORUM SUMMARY REPORT



Partnerscapes, together with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program, hosted the third of three planned forums to identify ways we can accelerate collaborative conservation and partnerships. The forum was held April 24-25, 2024, in Des Moines, Iowa with 84 participants, including private landowners and land managers, federal and state agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

WORKSHOP GOALS WERE TO:

- Provide peer-to-peer networking and learning,
- Share skills and keys to success in the delivery of conservation programs and partnerships,
- Assess needs and opportunities to improve partnership development across private and public lands,
- Identify barriers, gaps, and strategies to better equip practitioners to conduct private lands work, and
- Provide input on networking among practitioners and private landowners.



Heather Johnson

AGENDA

To achieve workshop goals, the agenda for the two-day forum was split into the following sessions:

- 1. KEYS TO SUCCESS:** outline the top skills it takes to be a successful private lands biologist,
- 2. BARRIERS/GAPS & STRATEGIES:** pinpoint barriers and gaps that prevent us from reaching goals for collaborative conservation and identify the strategies and opportunities to bridge those gaps,
- 3. NETWORKING:** identify and accelerate effective networking opportunities,
- 4. PARTNERSHIP IMPACTS:** share the foundational, operational and outcome impacts that help to establish and maintain successful partnerships, and
- 5. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER.**

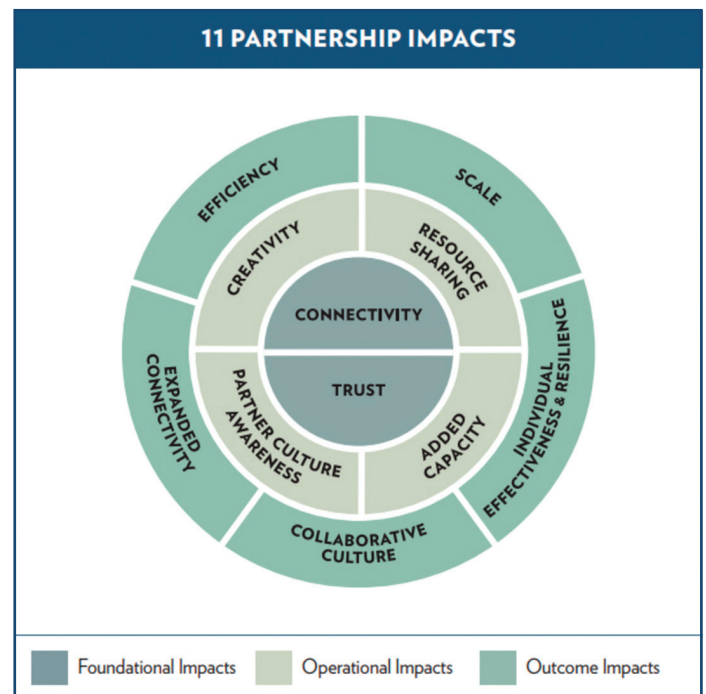
SUMMARY

Four of the five sessions started with a speaker panel, made up of a mix of private landowners and conservation practitioners. Following each panel discussion, facilitators led a question-and-answer session and an interactive process with small and large group activities to gather input from all the participants. Wall boards, flip charts, and sticky notes were used to gather independent thoughts and ideas, which were then distilled down to several broad, overarching themes placed on wallboards throughout the room. Open space was used to gather information for the networking session, which allowed participants a chance to move around the room, add ideas to flip charts, engage in conversations, and share ideas.



Grayson Smith, USFWS

Partnership Impact Model



Grayson Smith, USFWS



Heather Johnson



Grayson Smith, USFWS

For the Midwestern Forum, we kept the two-day format that we used for the Eastern Forum and added a social science session on partnership impacts. Feedback from that new session was very positive. The session moderator, Kiandra Rajala, introduced the forum participants to the **Partnership Impact Model** and then used a series of questions to panelists to demonstrate the effectiveness of the model, using an Iowa success story.

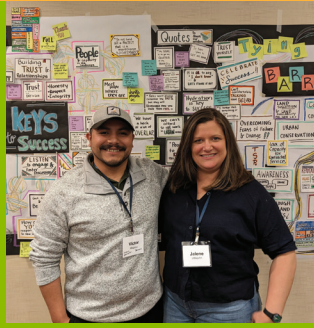
RESULTS

Top Skills

- Be a Knowledgeable Resource
- Listen
- Trust
- Two-way Communication
- Be a Part of the Community/Build Relationships
- Honesty/Integrity
- Flexibility
- Passion
- Connect People and Programs
- Find Common Ground

Barriers/Gaps

- Capacity
- Program Policies
- Turnover of Staff
- Outreach and Communication
- Training and Education
- Funding
- Diversity
- Urban Conservation Disconnect
- Shifting Priorities
- Land Succession Planning
- Lack of Collaboration
- Lack of Fire Culture
- Fear of Failure



Kourtney Stonehouse, USFWS



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Grayson Smith, USFWS



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STRATEGIES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase Capacity
- Increase Technical Service Providers/Contractors
- Streamline Policies and Processes
- Reduce Turnover of Staff and Hire for the Right Skills
- Support New Landowners
- Increase Outreach
- Increase Two-way Communication
- Increase Training/Education
- Mentor New Staff
- Increase and Diversify Funding Opportunities
- Increase Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Increase Land Succession Solutions
- Increase Collaboration
- Increase Knowledge and Education of Fire Culture
- Enhance Technology
- Facilitate Species Movement

NETWORKING

- Farm Tours
- Landowner to Landowner Networks
- Advocacy
- Farm Shows/Outdoor Expos
- Formal Education/Modules
- Informal Skills Training
- Cooperatives
- Existing Groups – Presentations
- Extension Classes
- Mentoring/Generational Exchange
- Creating Space to Expand
- Educational Institution Partnerships
- Build/Tap into Your Network
- County Connections
- Expand Opportunities for New Landowners



"I am a firm believer in the necessity of collaboration to get things accomplished."

- Dave Haubein
(Missouri Landowner)

Heather Johnson

We found many similarities between the three forums across the country. Although landscapes, practices, and land ownership patterns vary, many of the challenges we face are nationwide, and the things that make conservation partnerships successful are often very similar.

Thank you to all the participants who attended the Midwestern Partnership Forum. While this forum concludes the three-part series across the country, plans are to continue to add additional forums as funding becomes available and interest remains. Our vision is to continue to increase efficiency and effectiveness of our voluntary collaborative partnerships nationwide, through the acceleration of knowledge, experience, and lessons learned.



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STAY CONNECTED

Web sites

<https://partnerscapes.org/>

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

Facebook

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

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

Instagram

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

(no Instagram for PFW)

Partnerscapes Conservation Network

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/partnerscapes.conservaion.network>



Grayson Smith, USFWS