



2010

Sustainable Operations Accomplishments Report
Western Collective





Meghan Oswalt, Greening Fire: Waste Stream Audit 2010

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Leading by Example – The Emergence of the Western Collective	1
People Power	2
Western Collective Accomplishments for 2010	3
GOAL # 1: Sustainable Operations Integrated Reporting.....	4
Team A: Integrated Reporting	4
Team B: Utility Bill Clean Up	5
Team C: Green Purchasing	6
GOAL # 2: Pilot Projects to Policy – Going beyond recycling and lights off!	7
Team A: GHG Yellowstone	7
Team B: Getting to Zero Guides	9
Team C: Greening Fire	11
Team D: Power of the Wind	12
Team E: Partnership Assistance Kit for Pilot Projects	12
GOAL # 3: Cross-Pollination, Fostering Organizational Connectivity	13
Teams A & B	13
GOAL # 4: Youth and Community Involvement	14
GOAL # 5: Making EMS Useful to Us	15
GOAL # 6: Greening the Next Generation and Building Existing Capacity	16
Integrating the Intangible Outcomes	17
Moving Forward & Lessons Learned	18
Recognition	20
Acknowledgements	21

We will create within our operations habits that inspire individual and organizational decisions leading directly to conserving natural, economic and human resources for tomorrow through all the decisions we make. We will seek continual improvement, strive to share our learning, serve as an example to others, and work to live up to the public trust. All employees will understand and actively participate in creating this vision both in their day-to-day habits as well as their professional circles of influence.



INTRODUCTION

The Western Collective is a collaborative effort between six U.S. Forest Service Regions (R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, and R10) and the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) to coordinate work, pool resources, and foster cooperative leadership for Sustainable Operations across the West. This report documents the accomplishments achieved during the Western Collective's inaugural year of existence, fiscal year (FY) 2010. The Western Collective's ability to cultivate cooperative relationships through cross-boundary information sharing, circumvent duplication, and support barrier busting for place-based champions and Green Teams has helped the entire agency move more rapidly forward.

Leading By Example – The Emergence of the Western Collective

Early in 2009, Sustainable Operations champions identified a gap in the agency's efforts: the lack of a link for emerging place-based efforts implementing Sustainable Operations into a broader, more connected approach. These champions questioned how momentum for Sustainable Operations in the U.S. Forest Service resulting from a three year (2005 – 2008) learning laboratory led by the Rocky Mountain Region would be continued. Although there was increased awareness throughout the agency of federal consumption reduction requirements and significant innovation ensuing from Green Team work, the lack of integration resulted in duplication of efforts. Recognizing a leadership opportunity, R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, and RMRS agreed to collectively foster a system of sustainability by tapping into the desire for changing the agency's consumption habits, and linking locally attuned and responsive activities to support shared outcomes. The previously-formed Intermountain West Sustainable Operations Board of Directors was expanded and formally re-chartered by the Regional Foresters and Station Director as the Western Collective. Six Deputy Regional Foresters, a Deputy Station Director, two Forest Supervisors, a District Ranger and an advisory member from the Environmental Protection Agency comprised the new Board of Directors. An executive director was named, and a board staff or co-staffs were identified for each unit in the Western Collective to support day-to-day logistics of moving out with a new approach. This self-organized group created conditions that allow participants to interact in concert and move towards an enriched, sustainable system. In September of 2010 the Western Collective welcomed the Alaska Region (R10) as a formal member.

The objectives of the Western Collective are to:

- Incorporate and maintain long term programs, practices, tools, and policies that integrate environmental footprint principles throughout the organization by removing barriers and promoting the use of appropriate technologies;
- Institute a culture that emphasizes education, rewards positive actions, and recognizes achievements that reduce our environmental footprint in long lasting ways;
- Integrate environmental footprint considerations into daily decisions, habits, planning and operations; and,
- Increase capacity and capabilities to implement Sustainable Operations throughout the organization.

People Power

The Board of Directors and more than 80 people working on 15 teams made the FY 2010 Western Collective plan of work a reality. The Western Collective continues to serve as a national model for a non-traditional organizational approach, spotlighting efficiencies gained by working together and creating a cross-boundary shared vision for the future. In FY 2010, \$635,000 of cash contributions were leveraged with other contributions to develop a \$1,227,000 effort.

The Western Collective's FY 2010 plan of work was not assigned to any one staff or group of employees. Rather, interested champions from across the Collective's units formed teams to work on specific deliverables. Western Collective teams modeled diversity through a variety of disciplines as well as organizational levels, reaching from seasonal employees to Regional Foresters. This approach supported networking across the West and integrating Sustainable Operations into daily activities by bridging traditional boundaries. Such diversity continues to help the Western Collective adapt to changing conditions and embody resilience through variation, redundancy and decentralization.

Western Collective teams linked together place-based initiatives within the agency to accomplish shared goals. This cross-discipline, cross-boundary, "systems" approach to a shared workplan is unique within the Forest Service, and one of the key successes of the Western Collective. Beyond reducing the agency's environmental footprint and saving money, the Collective also provided a virtual gathering place where people at all levels of the agency could share their commitment to being more sustainable, both individually and as a group.



Western Collective Board and Board Staff – first ever face to face meeting, September 2010 Peer Learning with Bandelier National Park.

WESTERN COLLECTIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2010

The following table highlights the Western Collective's accomplishments for FY 2010. For each of six goals defined by the Board to help reach the Western Collective's objectives, teams were assigned to produce specific deliverables. When a goal had more than one team, teams were assigned a letter (A, B, etc.) For each deliverable, the following table lists what the team accomplished, why it was important, and the next steps identified by the team.

Many of the deliverables resulted in tools that were shared not only across Western Collective units but also across the entire agency. Where applicable, tools have been posted to the National Sustainable Operations website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/sustainableoperations/>



Caption: GYA Working Session, April 2010

Goal # 1: SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS INTEGRATED REPORTING

Board Member Champion: Lenise Largo

Board Staff Champions: Sarah Baker and Anna Jones-Crabtree

Significant reporting is associated with meeting Executive Orders 13423, 13514, the Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA 2007) and other Sustainable Operations related requirements. This goal articulates Sustainable Operations reporting requirements across the western units using an integrated framework focused on continuous improvement and meaningful tracking of progress on environmental footprint reductions. The intent is to streamline existing required reporting across the Western Collective and incorporate new metrics with meaning for tracking Western Collective progress.

TEAM A: Integrated Reporting

Team Members	Accomplishments
Julie Tucker, Chair Heather Davis Matt Gibbs Dan Golub Deborah Hennessy Meghan Oswalt	Summarized the myriad of Sustainable Operations reporting requirements (under EO 13423, EO 13514, EPACT, and EISA) into a master spreadsheet. Identified gaps between 'where we are today' and 'where we need to be' in our activities and data systems.
	Initiated the Leadership In Sustainable Operations (LISO) concept. LISO will be an interactive online tool that allows units to self-report progress toward Sustainable Operations goals, share success stories, and benchmark their progress against others'.
	Drafted a set of Green Team Baseline Tools: a short narrative for each footprint area that outlines the process for establishing a baseline from which progress can be tracked that will be integrated into the net zero footprint guides.
	Developed this accomplishment report to document progress made during the inaugural year of the Western Collective.

NEXT STEPS

- Make the LISO tool a reality that connects place-based efforts in a way that supports national progress on sustainable operations requirements.
- Continue technical support for the National Climate Change Scorecard Element #10 Sustainable Operations Guidance.

TEAM B: Utility Bill Clean Up

Team Members	Accomplishments
Laurie Yeager, Chair Katrina Bowles Cherie Coolbear Heather Davis Matt Gibbs Deborah Hennessy Renee Jewell	Created a comprehensive forest-level standard operating procedure (SOP) for reducing common utility bill errors such as incorrect rates, and paying for utilities on buildings no longer owned or in use. The SOP serves as a detailed resource, highlighting materials needed, how to evaluate accounts, and how to fix identified errors. Green teams, engineers, and budget specialists across the agency are achieving significant savings with this nationally sanctioned resource. The official letter and SOP are located here: http://www.fs.fed.us/sustainableoperations/focus-area-energy.shtml#utility
	Shared the story about utility clean-up opportunities to numerous audiences at the Sustainable Operations Summit, Open Mic calls and other regional forums.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop a plan for facilitating utility bill clean-up across all Western Collective Units
- Continuous improvement of the SOP

**Sustainability in Action!**

The San Juan National Forest will save \$32,000 annually (that's 19%!) as a result of conducting a utility bill clean-up. The effort identified utilities no longer used, billed erroneously, or associated with facilities no longer owned by the forest. Changes were made on 56 of 124 accounts with 69 percent of the savings from disconnecting services no longer in use.

TEAM C: Green Purchasing Advisory

Sustainable acquisition practices are significant leverage points to supporting progress in all of our footprint areas. The choice to consume something usually starts with a purchase. The chance to provide support and a leadership opportunity for first class Green Purchasing Champion Linda Dulac (R6) was an alliance that couldn't be ignored.

Team Members	Accomplishments
Linda Du Lac, Chair Cele Aquirre-Bravo Dana Bangart Tammy Draper Renee Jewel Marcia Kemp Lara Polansky Mark Sajbel (USDA)	Established a Green Purchasing Help Desk for the Western Collective to serve as the go-to team for sustainable acquisition practices across the Western Collective, answering questions about how and what to buy green. Link to Help Desk: http://fsweb.r6.fs.fed.us/acquisition-mgmt/acquisition/green-purchasing/index.shtml
	Explored how to create a baseline for green purchasing practices including what is currently being done and where we have opportunities to do more. This work also included collecting success stories from Regions 1, 2, 5, and 6 to be placed in a success story database. Region 6 data was collected from the GSA/USDA Environmental Aisle purchases and reported in a graph form. Graphs have been created including the region, forests, Job Corps, and research stations for purchases made from 2004-2009. Office Max (USDA Green Purchasing BPA) was discovered as another source to obtain purchasing data.
	Provided training webinars for micropurchasers about how to purchase green, and identified other training venues such as Aglearn.
	Served as convening group about the topic of green purchasing, connecting field purchasers with WO and USDA staff.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue training of micropurchasers
- Support R6 pilot of tracking green purchases.
- Build an online Green Purchasing Toolkit with information about requirements, success stories, standards, and training.

Goal # 2: PILOT PROJECTS TO POLICY - Going beyond recycling and lights off

Board Member Champion: Jane Cottrell and Faye Krueger

Board Staff Champions: Anna Jones-Crabtree, Sarah Kuiken and Joni Packard

Pilot projects have had an important role in the development of Sustainable Operations efforts. They provide opportunities for trial and error, identification of barriers or challenges, and a foundation for thoughtful larger-scale implementation of Sustainable Operations practices. This goal supports continuation of existing key pilot projects, starting strategic new pilots, identifying tools and assistance opportunities and establishing a more formal framework for dispersing lessons learned.

TEAM A: Greenhouse Gas Reduction in the Greater Yellowstone Area

Team Members	Accomplishments
Mike Fiebig, Chair Matt Schultze GYCC-SOS NREL	Hosted a unique cross unit, cross discipline working session that supported shared learning about GHGs and identification of specific unit and ecosystem level GHG reduction projects. The Session involved approximately 50 engineers, fleet managers, and green team champions from each of the 10 units in the GYA.
	Developed a comprehensive GYA-wide action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions using a "bottom-up methodology" that employed grassroots collaboration. This process is documented in Beyond the Inventory: An Interagency Collaboration to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Greater Yellowstone Area http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/49291.pdf
	Commitment by (GYCC) Leadership to a collective reduction of GHG Emissions of 21% - 36% by 2020 based on a 2007 baseline and on the action plans and an overarching definition of success for this effort. Action plans can be found at http://www.fedgycc.org/SOSGHG.htm

NEXT STEPS

- Pilot a comprehensive, bottom-up GHG inventory, tracking, and reporting system using tools and protocols that are being developed under a multi-funded agreement between the units in the GYA, the Tongass NF, the WO and NREL.
- Transfer the model and share the lessons learned from the inventory and action planning processes. Support the development of a nationally consistent GHG reduction approach.
- Explore ways to expand the GYCC efforts further across the ecosystem by including gateway communities and other partners in GHG reduction efforts.



Participants from the GHG working session (April 2010)
Photo by: Trista Patterson



Sustainability in Action!

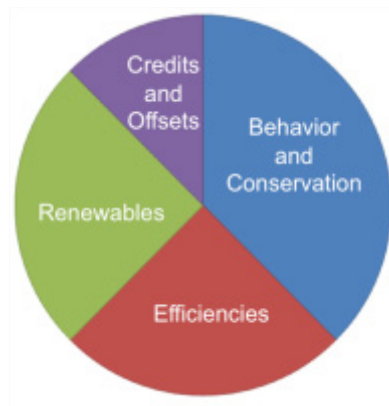
The 10 agency units in the GYA (6 Forests, 2 Parks, and 2 Wildlife Refuges) collaborated to create a coordinated Interagency Climate Action Plan to reduce the greenhouse gases (GHG) emitted from agency operations 21%-36% by 2020, using a 2007 GHG emissions baseline. This plan not only eliminates between 5,500 and 9,500 metric tons of CO₂e from the atmosphere each year, but also models how much can be accomplished through grassroots collaboration at the eco-regional scale. The GYA Climate Action Plan goals were approved by the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee (GYCC) on Dec 16, 2010, after a year-long collaborative process across the GYA units, the USFS Western Collective, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). This collaborative effort is designed to continually integrate and embody information to ensure enduring performance as well as the ability to evolve in order to survive changing conditions.

TEAM B: Getting to Zero Guides/BIG makeover

Team Members	Accomplishments
Matt Gibbs, Co-Chair Katie Newcomb, Co-Chair Carl Burdick John Chatel Heather Davis Gretchen Fitzgerald Ashton Hargrave Ari Jewell Matt Schultze Amie Stuart Laurie Yeager	Developed processes for approaching net zero for energy, water, fleet and transportation, and waste prevention and recycling. These processes are written into consistent guides that will lead Forest Service units through developing and implementing net zero plans.
	Launched the Fleet Life-cycle Expense and Efficiency Tool (FLEET) in collaboration with Forest Service fleet managers and National Sustainable Operations efforts. This tool provides vehicle users, fleet managers, and approving line officers the information they need to purchase the most fuel efficient and cost effective vehicles to get the job done. The savings are estimated to be \$37.8 million and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 110,000 metric tons of CO ₂ e over a 6 year period (average vehicle life expectancy).
	Worked on a pilot study of Net Zero Energy on the Shoshone National Forest. A detailed plan of energy consumption was generated for each facility on the Forest. Working with NREL, a plan was generated to optimize renewable energy technologies at each location in order to reach net zero energy consumption.

NEXT STEPS

- Test the net zero process guides at local Forest Service units.
- Incorporate the lessons learned from the pilot projects into the guides and develop a roll-out strategy for the guides



Example: Net Zero Energy
 An effective net zero energy plan helps us take bites out the energy demand pie until the entire pie is consumed.



Sustainability in Action! **Net Zero Fleet case study: Kiwi Fuel Gauges**

The Tool: The Kiwi Fuel gauge is a dash-mounted, real time, monitoring and feedback device that can train employees in eco-driving techniques.

The Study: 10 fuel gauges, 3 months, and the Colville N.F.

The Results: 10% fuel savings with a vehicle operator who is actively using the tool. They were not found to be effective in pool vehicles, likely due to regularly changing drivers.

The Savings: 6 vehicles were able to save 123 gallons of gas, prevent 1.2 tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere, and saving over \$400 in a period of just over a month.

— Carl Burdick, Colville NF

TEAM C: Greening Fire Operations

Team Members	Accomplishments
Heather Davis, Co-Chair Jennifer Letz, Co-Chair Jessica Bacca Sherry Bauer	Analyzed methods for reducing bottled water at fire camps. This included surveying approximately 120 Forest Service employees on the use of bottled water and bottled electrolyte beverages in fire camps. Completed the pilot of using 5-gallon water cooler containers in place of individual 16.9-ounce water bottles.
Willie Bengay Frank Castillo Deanna Crawford Rob Cruz Tom Fuchtman Christopher Howells Megan Oswalt Rachelle Meyer Rod Schmidt Deidre Witsen Marie Zanolwick (EPA) Hiedi Zardus	Developed a waste stream audit process and assessed the waste generated in six different fire camps in Montana, Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon. The process developed included a job hazard analysis (JHA) and a standardized method for waste analysis. The waste stream audit process was developed with the help of the Environmental Protection Agency.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop a letter of delegation template that includes Sustainable Operations as an attachment
- Develop contract specifications for recycling, food service using compostables, and others
- Continue waste stream audits by sharing lessons learned from audits completed in 2010
- Pilot a bottled beverage reduction action plan
- Increase communication with firefighters and leadership through participating in fire team meetings and trainings.

**Sustainability in Action!**

Lessons Learned from the Rooster Rock fire on the Deschutes National Forest

A Type 2 team in Sisters Oregon piloted the use of eleven 5-gallon jugs. These reusable water cooler jugs were provided by a local bottle water company and reduced the use of over 400 individual water bottles, saving approximately \$350 for this small fire camp. If one small fire camp can save like this, think what the savings could look like if all fire camps experienced the same savings.

TEAM D: Power of the Wind

Team Members	Accomplishments
Aurora Palmer, Co-Chair Jim Starck, Co-Chair	Created repository of wind energy resources and lessons learned from the wind turbine installation permitted at Aspen Ski Area. Provides users a real life example of the data gathered and process for the early phases of project feasibility and planning. http://www.windrepository.info/

NEXT STEPS

- Share this resource.

TEAM E: Partnership Assistance Kit for Pilot Projects

Team Members	Accomplishments
Sarah Kuiken, Chair Julie Molzahn Rob Santoro	Explored the wide world of partnership opportunities for Sustainable Operations and identified some strategic focus areas. Learned that the opportunities are great and perhaps our best strategy is to help us hook up internally first.
	Connected with the National Partnership Office to explore opportunities to share partnership resources with the Sustainable Operations community of practice.

NEXT STEPS

- Share the resources identified.
- Identify ways to keep the internal contact list up to date.
- Identify potential partnerships to specifically further the Western Collective pilot projects.

Goal # 3: CROSS-POLLINATION, FOSTERING ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Board Member Champion: Jerry Perez

Board Staff Champions: Lisa Machnik and Janet Valle

Many Sustainable Operations are taking place across the west. Effective communication, shared messaging, education and improved organizational connectivity will reduce duplication of efforts and increase efficiency and effectiveness in the development and implementation of Sustainable Operations activities. This goal will analyze and implement methods for active green team sharing, and create repositories or consolidated summaries of lessons learned from activities across the west

TEAM A & B:

Team Members	Accomplishments
Amy Ormseth, Co-Chair Christine Romero, Co-Chair Erin Boyle Heather Davis Maritza Huerta Lynn Kurtz Jennifer Purvine Doug Simon Mona Spargo	Developed a Western Collective Internal Wiki site to share Western Collective deliverables and successes http://fswiki.wo.fs.fed.us/fswiki/sandbox/index.php/The_Western_Collective
	Crafted a Western Collective Communication plan that included a list of key Sustainable Operations messages tied to individual communication objectives to be used across any Western Collective unit.
	Constructed an enterprise team scope of work for a success story database and template for continuity of success story storage.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop the Success Story Database.
- Implement and share the communication plan across the Western Collective.
- Support the development of a green team/champion network.
- Identify the best ways to support information sharing across this network.

Goal # 4: YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Board Member Champion: Brent Botts, Jane Darnell and Faye Krueger

Board Staff Champions: Joni Packard and KJ Silverman

Youth and community engagement activities offer opportunities to reduce our environmental footprints in a collective manner. Such activities can engage the next generation in a long-lasting manner. This is an opportunity to connect our resource management role with consumption.

TEAM

Team Members	Accomplishments
Kenton Call, Co-Chair Julie Molzahn, Co-Chair Mona Spargo Ari Jewell Richard Kehr Katherine Lawson Brad Siemens	Created a description of what Sustainable Operations in youth and community engagement means: taking our current work with youth and communities and weaving sustainability messages and components into all our efforts. Sustainable messages should include sustainable natural resource objectives as well as green team and Sustainable Operations programs. We will use our work with youth and communities to create relevancy and the ability to sustain Forest Service programs and messages for future generations.
	Assessed youth and community engagement activities across the Western Collective to identify opportunities to incorporate Sustainable Operations. Identified significant opportunities to integrate Sustainable Operations as most units were not yet doing so.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop a plan to integrate Sustainable Operations into youth and community activities based on the findings from FY10.
- Continue sharing this work with the WO Conservation Education staff.
- Identify opportunities to link with existing efforts such as Job Corps.

Goal # 5: EMS – MAKING IT USEFUL TO USE

Board Member Champion: Maribeth Gustafson

Board Staff Champions: Sarah Baker

Integrate Sustainable Operations expertise and resources with the implementation of the Environmental Management System (EMS) through green team education and tools, and support the development of strategies for future EMS focus areas.

TEAM A & B

Team Members	Accomplishments
Karri Heap, Co-Chair Karry McMenus, Co-Chair Janet Bean-Dochstuhl Jessica Call Mike Fiebig Matt Gibbs Larry Hayden Katie Newcomb Kelly Stover	Drafted an EMS implementation plan for Sustainable Operations including green purchasing, toxic and hazardous material reduction, pollution prevention, recycling, and waste reduction. Developed training for green teams on the EMS process.

NEXT STEPS

- Finalize and post training for green teams, once decision is made on agency's EMS direction.
- Incorporate future work for this goal into a broader goal to work across agency's stovepipes.

Goal # 6: EMS – GREENING THE NEXT GENERATION & BUILDING EXISTING CAPACITY

Board Member Champion: Rocky Boyd

Board Staff Champions: Jennifer Hayes

Sustainable Operations must be seamlessly integrated into all aspects of employee hiring, performance and development to truly become part of our culture. This goal is to develop key mechanisms that support that seamless integration, promote strategic placement and recruitment of new hires, and provide funding for Sustainable Operations professional development.

TEAM

Team Members	Accomplishments
Jennifer Hayes, Co-Chair Sarah Kuiken, Co-Chair Kurt Aluzas Charon Geigle Kent Wellner	Developed a process for and managed a Sustainable Operations professional development program which supported 13 employees across all Western Collective units and varying disciplines attending conferences or taking training to further their knowledge about Sustainable Operations
	Developed the script for a forthcoming short video from the Chief about why Sustainable Operations is important and explaining that everyone has a role.
	Partnered with WO Business Operations to include Sustainable Operations into the new employee orientation module http://fsweb.asc.fs.fed.us/HRM/training/neo/neic/checklist.pdf

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to administer the Western Collective Professional Development fund.
- Develop Sustainable Operations 201 training.
- Identify ways to support appropriate inclusion of Sustainable Operations into performance elements.

INTEGRATING THE INTANGIBLE OUTCOMES

Measures of success are usually tangible, delivering something concrete, material and physical. Although much of the work of the Western Collective has resulted in tangible outcomes, in some respects the unanticipated intangible outcomes have had a greater and longer lasting impact. Sustainable Operations is more than installing a piece of technology to reduce our consumption. To achieve success, there must be an element of behavior change—a cultural shift. The intangible outcomes from the FY 2010 Western Collective work have helped start shifting agency culture toward more sustainable consumption patterns. As future years' work plans are built, it will be increasingly important to continue to integrate and articulate the intangible outcomes.

The four main areas of intangible benefits identified for FY 2010 include:

The People Network: The Western Collective provides a space for employees, as well as partners and other agencies, from a variety of diverse disciplines and places, but with similar interests in creating Sustainable Operations, to hold a conversation. Many employees had felt that they were the only ones on their units wondering why the agency wasn't doing more. Suddenly, through the Collective, they not only support each other in implementing sustainable operations, but also learn from each other's experiences. The networks promoted resilient ideas as participants exchanged and altered information to create new options. This occurred both at the team and the Board level. While Sustainable Operations served as a convening topic for the Board, it also led to greater coordination on other topics. It provided a reason to connect that the Board didn't otherwise have.

Teamwork & Technology: The vast majority of Western Collective work was accomplished by teams of people who didn't sit in the same office. This required many team members to learn new skills such as how to set up webinars, effectively hold interactive discussions over conference calls, 'doodle' everyone's calendars, and transparently share documents through a digital team room. Some Western Collective participants hadn't previously had to plan across multiple time zones, learn the language of other disciplines, or balance the timing of a project. In many respects, the Western Collective experience served as professional development, meeting multiple needs with one elegant solution.

Facilitating Interconnectedness: Sustainable Operations is not about creating a new stove-piped program, but rather integrating sustainable practices into day-to-day efforts. The Western Collective work plan was set up to foster this integration and invest in strategies that promote both development and growth. Through the cross-discipline and cross-unit approach, the Collective was able to grow capacity on a variety of units in a variety of places. It also increased interconnectedness with the National Sustainable Operations efforts. The Western Collective became a place to ground-truth possible policies and approaches from a place-based perspective, to incorporate mistakes in a way that can lead to new and better ideas, and to repeat successful approaches. Likewise, members of the Board of Directors were able to increase their own capacity and understanding of Sustainable Operations and its linkage to the Forest Service mission. Finally, because of the Western Collective's unique approach to linking bottom up with top down efforts, it was recognized as an important element in USDA's Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan.

MOVING FORWARD & CREATING THE FUTURE WE WANT

Moving forward with the Western Collective, effective leadership for such a unique organization cannot rely only on traditional management concepts. Sustainability requires leaders to vision boldly, see behind the consumption curtain, and know how to right-size interventions in systems. In 2010, the Western Collective Board used “Leadership for Sustainability: 10 Guiding Principles” [http://www.fs.fed.us/sustainableoperations/documents/leadership_principles.pdf] to start a dialogue about shifting leadership models.

As discussed in the “Leadership for Sustainability” article, incorporating Sustainable Operations into practices, programs, and policies requires more than simple checklists. Changes in technology, the environment, economics, and systems lead to different sustainable solutions in different places, and these solutions vary over time. With so much fluidity, continual improvement becomes a critical component to adopting sustainability and, thus, is important to the Western Collective. Many lessons were learned in the first year of operation. It is imperative to reflect on those lessons and the feedback of people involved in order to plan future years’ work in such a way as to take advantage of opportunities for improvement. This approach will allow the Western Collective to persist by continually adding energy and ideas to heal and improve the system.

In preparation for the first Western Collective Board face-to-face meeting held in September in Jemez Springs, NM, feedback was requested from all Western Collective participants. From this feedback, five areas of opportunity were identified, discussed by the Board, and used to develop a specific Board work plan for FY 2011. Additionally, this feedback has been integrated into the deliverables for the FY 2011 teams. These areas of opportunity, which will be ongoing discussion items for the Board throughout FY 2011, include the following:

Building capacity: How do we get new people involved in Sustainable Operations without burning out the existing champions by asking them to do more? How can we foster our local champions? How do we integrate sustainability into our normal program of work so that it is not viewed as an add-on?

Communication: How can the Collective help all employees hear, understand, and access the Sustainable Operations message? Many employees throughout the organization do not know about the Western Collective and what we’re working on.

Fostering the Network: The most positive aspect of Western Collective participation is the opportunity to network with people from other districts, forests, regions and research stations. How do we continue to foster the ability to connect people around Sustainable Operations topics regardless of where they sit?

Leading by Example: The Western Collective is consistently recognized as a federal sustainability leader; we need to continue to focus on our successes and build from them. Working towards sustainable solutions can be motivating, and a source of pride and job satisfaction. We must capitalize on this unique opportunity.

Voice of Leadership: Although the Western Collective has an engaged Board of Directors, not all Western Collective participants had access to the Board's ideas, suggestions and feedback. We need to provide greater opportunity for the Board and other participants to interact and share ideas. We also need to help the Board build capacity to discuss Sustainable Operations as readily as they can other aspects of their jobs.

As the Western Collective has matured, so have national-level Sustainable Operations efforts. Western Collective work has driven some of this growth, and is dovetailing more and more with national-level efforts. The Western Collective served as a consultant on drafting the Sustainable Operations direction for the forthcoming Agency-wide climate change scorecard, using readily available ideas and energy to respond to a national need.

These five areas of opportunity help illuminate the path forward as we move into our second year as the Western Collective and welcome the Alaska Region (R10) into the group. The future of Sustainable Operations is brightened not just by solar energy but by the most critical sustainability resource: people power.



Anna Jones-Crabtree, Jamey Lowdermilk, Mike Fiebig, Heather Davis, and Jennifer Letz presenting at 2010 Green Gov Symposium on Western Collective.



Recognition

The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable awarded the U.S. Forest Service, Western Collective the 2010 Most Valuable Pollution Prevention Award for Projects/Programs.

In October, 2010, Dr. Anna Jones-Crabtree, Executive Director of the Western Collective, was awarded the Presidential "Sustainability Hero Award" by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) at the first annual GreenGoy Symposium, in part for her work in establishing the USFS Western Collective for Sustainable Operations.



The Western Collective would like to thank the following people
for their contribution to this report:

Sarah H. Baker, Region 3

Heather Davis, Region 2

Judy Dersch, Region 2

Leslie Horsch, Region 2

Anna Jones-Crabtree, Region 2

Megan Oswald, Region 1

Julie Tucker, Region 4

Marie Zanowick, EPA

All the team chairs





The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office Of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.