




CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE 

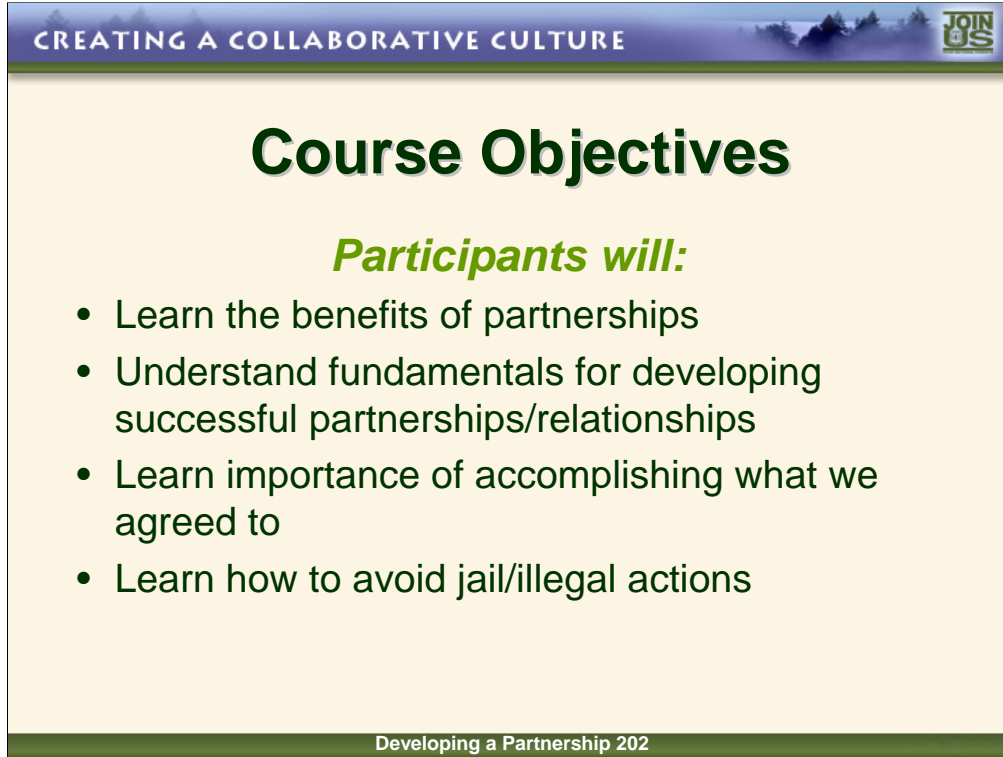
Collaboration and Partnerships

“We need to treat our publics as equals. Instead of educating the public we should work with them, involving them at every step of the way in our decision making. Our role at the Forest Service has changed: we still have an obligation to lead, but as organizers and facilitators rather than as experts who have all the answers, because we don’t.”

*Dale Bosworth, Centennial Congress Report Out, 1/6/05

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Our leadership is describing a change in our organizational culture. Our role is now one of organizers and facilitators, bringing people together and involving them in the decision making process.



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Course Objectives

Participants will:

- Learn the benefits of partnerships
- Understand fundamentals for developing successful partnerships/relationships
- Learn importance of accomplishing what we agreed to
- Learn how to avoid jail/illegal actions

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What we are going to talk about in this module, is a big shift in how we do business. The “Big Shift” is to let go of things you are doing and refocus your time on developing the relationships that need to take place. The goal is to eventually reach partners with the same information so the partners understand and hear the same thing that employees are hearing and learning.



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What Do We Mean by Partnerships?

- Partnership - a relationship where people work together to achieve goals that are meaningful to both of them.
- Federal policy defines partnerships as “arrangements that are voluntary, mutually beneficial, or entered into for the purpose of mutually agreed upon objectives.”

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The first definition here is partnerships in a broad sense. They may be formal or informal. We may partner with others toward a common goal without any formal agreement.

The bottom statement outlines the Federal policy definition which is the way it is defined when the partnership becomes more formalized and will require some type of agreement such as a volunteer agreement, a collection agreement, or a memorandum of understanding.

This module will be discussing issues around the formal partnerships i.e. grants, agreements, etc.



Reference Federal Grants and Cooperative Agreements Act of 1977 to differentiate between contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. The other agreements are those defined by other regulations/statutes.

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Other Agreements*

Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

General framework for cooperation – not used to transfer anything of value.

Mutual Interest/Mutual Benefit Agreements

- Participating
- Challenge Cost Share
- Joint Venture

Require some level of cost sharing of funds (cash) and/or resources (in-kind).

Interagency Agreements

Between federal agencies; most common authority is the Economy Act.

*Not all partnering instruments/authorities are represented on this slide.

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The key to this slide is to demonstrate, in general, the options available to partner with the FS. For more information on these and other authorities/instruments consider attending the 203 Training Module for Partnership Authorities/Instruments. These other agreements are not subject to the Federal Grants & Cooperative Agreements Act. They are supported by other regulations and statutes, some of which are unique to the Forest Service.

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Other Agreements*

<p>Cooperative Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Forest Roads Agreements</p> <p>Commonly referred to as OMB exempted cooperative agreements.</p>	<p>Volunteer Agreements</p> <p>Used by individuals or organizations when voluntarily contributing their time toward Forest Service activities.</p>	<p>Collection Agreements</p> <p>Typically referred to as a gift, donation, or contribution from a non-federal source – not used to accept cost-shared work.</p>
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Exercise:
Why Work in Partnership?

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Why Partner?

- Leverage funds and resources
- Meet targets
- Solve problems
- Build support

What else did you have?

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Important point is that many times the mindset in the Forest Service is that partnerships are to give money to the Forest Service. It is important to recognize that the partnerships and underlying relationships are much bigger than that.



The Bigger and Deeper Gains to be made by working in partnership will continue long after the project is over. Some of the long-term outcomes include:

- Increased level of trust between groups.
- Better understanding of various perspectives.
- By pooling resources together (people, ideas, money, supplies, materials, equipment, etc.) you have a better outcome.
- Expanded capacity- ability, knowledge, skills, workforce Move from individual partnerships to group effort.

WE need more capacity – how can the partner help or guide where we go?

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Goals for Working in Partnership

- A Mutual purpose and approach (helps focus time and energy)
- Support a healthy environment
- Sustain the resources
- Work closely with communities
- Solve problems
- Provide services
- Grow and change with time

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Ask participants what other goals they might add;

Comment: It helps to build a stronger partnership if the Nat'l forest can articulate a strategy that is mutually beneficial to potential partners.



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**Forest Service
National Strategic Goals**

- Restore, sustain, and enhance the Nation's forests and grasslands
- Provide and sustain benefits to the American people
- Conserve open space
- Sustain and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities
- Maintain basic management capabilities of the Forest Service
- Engage urban America with Forest Service programs
- Provide science-based applications and tools for sustainable natural resources

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National FS strategic goals. The regional goals should be similar.

Participants need to identify regional and Forest goals; these need to tier from National Strategic goals. Forest Service has been able to do work for many years without the close scrutiny that is occurring now. We are now required to be more accountable than in the past as evidenced by the national performance measures, etc. which will hold us accountable.

On top of that each community situation has its own needs and resources that are available. Employees need to think about their own situation both within the NF and the surrounding community and tie all of these factors together. We need to begin thinking more in a business sense when we approach partnerships and think more strategically about how to be efficient and effective in how we approach partnership arrangements.

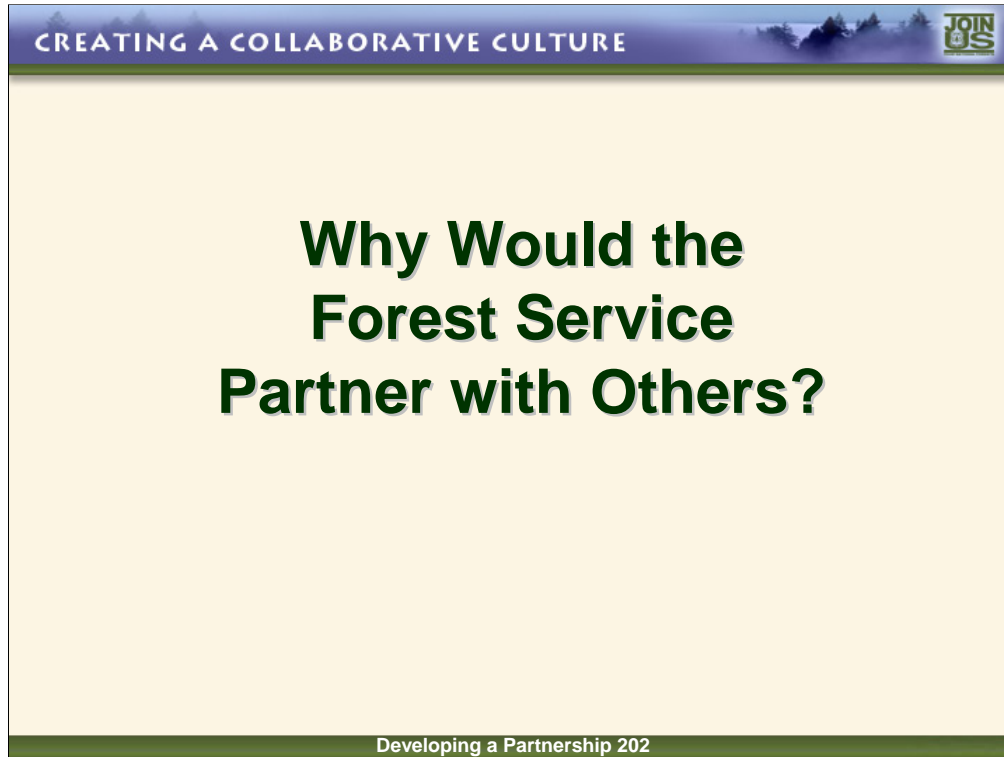


Put yourself in the position of the partner.....

What does the Forest Service offer?

Here's some ideas.... (to jump start the participants.....)

- FS includes Passionate individuals;
- Easy to work with and invite partners in;
- FS has the landscape and facilities;
- FS has wide variety of technical resources in terms of professional knowledge and expertise (international, research, S&PF, NFS);
- FS has resources;
- FS has a good reputation;
- FS has broad networks;
- FS supports safety, integrity, and diversity
- FS has projects with mutual benefits possible



We need to recognize that unlike the common perception.....nonprofits don't have lots of money. In a given year, they may be trying to fill an additional 30-40% of operating capital and are working hard to make it come together; Pragmatic optimism is what keeps them going vs. the FS who may not have our appropriations YET, but we still can operate and remain in business.

Reasons the FS would want to partner with others:

- Similar motivations
- Networks
- Constituent base – political and membership
- Recruiting power for resources
- Access to resources
- New ideas, opportunities and solutions
- Bring skills, interest, purpose
- Have the pulse of the community and know how to include them

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To Develop Successful Partnerships

- Build *functional trust* and relationships
- Clarify context, relationships, self and other
- Establish common ground – doable steps
- Maintain communications and face problems
- Share leadership
- Grow capacity and skills
- Early and often involvement and interaction
- Agree on roles & responsibilities

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All about relationships and the relationships need to be built around something. “Functional trust” is different from trusting someone with your LIFE; We become Partners many times due to personal relationships. But, individuals need to think about their personal intentions, and then put it into the perspective of the corporate approach and needs, then build from the common ground that exists. This requires that it be a more strategic approach, be relevant and be tied to strategic goals and objectives for the Agency and the Forest. If the trust does not exist yet, then move ahead by starting with small steps to build trust. Work together on a small project first where you both have an interest. We have personal partners – because it is a relationship thing, but you need to step back and look at the corporate approach... this is not something you can do tomorrow – or yesterday – most relationships take 6-8 months to 3 years.

Common ground – where can everyone agree to agree. What can be done together that will meet needs? Of self, relationship, other partners, community of interests. Collaboration is coalition of the unlike.

Be prepared for problems, because they will occur. Anticipate these problems and think about - How will the group effectively communicate and maintain communications over time?

Also consider idea of Shared leadership. We are at capacity. Could working with partners build more capacity?

Refer to resources/books by Dudley Weeks regarding “functional trust” . He

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Successful Partnerships Focus on the Future; Build on the Past

- + In alignment with self and agency
- + Communicating to understand
- + Focus on shared needs and options
- + Trust to do it

= Accomplish mutual benefits

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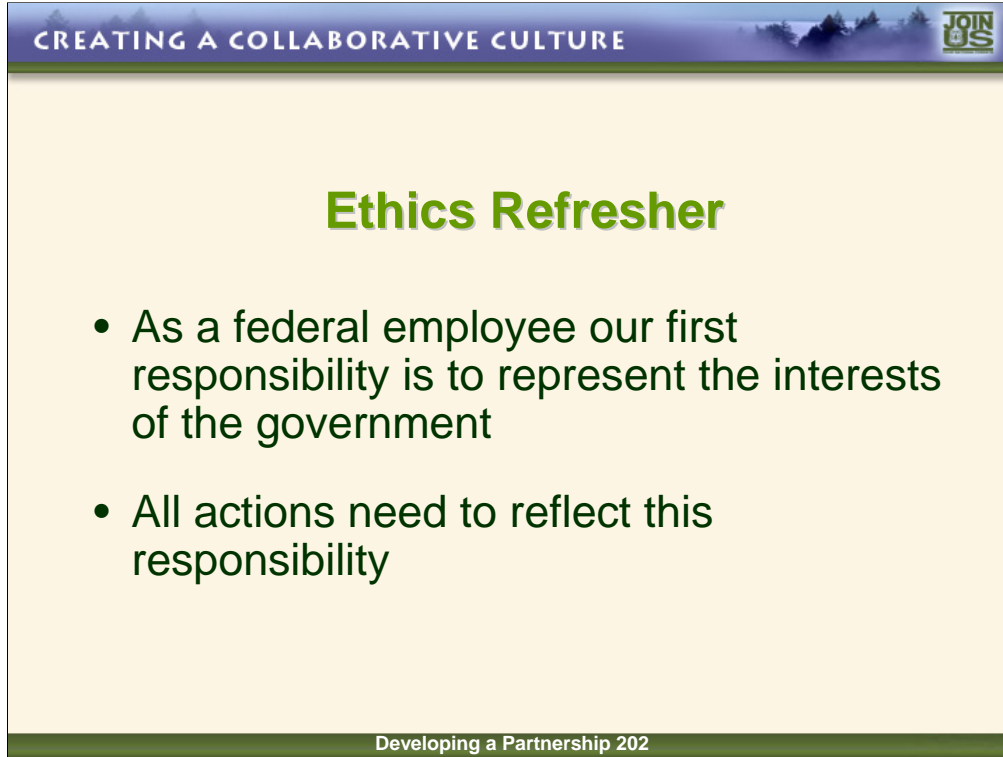
Ask yourself – Are you in alignment with self and the Agency?

Primary point: If you are feeling something in your gut that does not feel right, ethically, listen to it; it is hard to say what is right or wrong; But you need to reconcile within yourself and your intentions and whether it feels right;

Employees are viewed as the Agency and not so much as individuals.

Our job is to advise.....

Shared Needs: Think about uncoiling perceptions to get at what person needs (versus wants). Focus on things that can be done. Lay out a plan to do it and follow up. This may be as simple as a meeting – it is more important that it is something that can be accomplished vs. it being something big.



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Ethics Refresher

- As a federal employee our first responsibility is to represent the interests of the government
- All actions need to reflect this responsibility

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The next few slides deal with an Ethics refresher and some of the issues that arise relevant to partnerships.

Also, for more information, you can go to the Partnership Conduct and Ethics Module 204 in this suite of training modules.


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Partnerships vs. Fundraising

- Negotiating and documenting a mutual benefit relationship (partnership) is not considered fundraising.
- Forest Service employees can negotiate with partners for mutual benefit.
- Partners can fundraise to generate their contribution to the partnership.


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This is not an ethics issue

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Gift/Donation vs. Partner Contribution

Partner contributions in support of a mutual benefit agreement are not considered “gifts or donations” under the gift acceptance laws and regulations.




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There is lots of confusion around the issue of gifts. Partner contributions in support of a mutual benefit agreement are not considered “gifts or donations” under the gift acceptance laws and regulations.

This is the FS interpretation of our authority under mutual benefit and the Acceptance of Gifts Act.


But if someone is considering donating money, this is a different issue.

If you are uncomfortable, then maybe it is appropriate to remove yourself from the discussion (if the gift will create an appearance of a conflict of interest) and consult your Ethics advisor. You can also consider directing the donor to NFF. The National Forest Foundation can accept and solicit gifts on behalf of the Forest Service that may be controversial or prohibited if given directly to the agency.

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Exercise: Ethics

Use the Partnership Guide



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Presenter: Allow 60 minutes for this exercise. Use the Partnership Guide and have participants break into several groups of four or five. Assign an ethics topic from the Partnership Guide (Ethics chapter) to each group and get groups to have a discussion around these topics. It is most effective to have an interdisciplinary team for this, i.e. Budget/Financial, G&A Specialist, and Partnership Coordinator.

Participants will appoint a lead reporter and that person will report out what the group thought was a key concept. It is important to be aware of what the Regional standard is for gifts, non-monetary awards, recognition etc.

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The Beginning of a Partnership

- Conversations begin in many ways - either organically or facilitated
- Excitement is generated
- Possibilities are explored and grow
- Potential is assessed
- **Transforming talk into action**



Now is the time to get the right people to the table before you go any further!!


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Questions to ask, address, and answer:

Is this truly a partnership – or is this an action requiring a purchase order or contract?

What is the need that both parties are addressing? Is it clear to all parties?

Important point is to recognize that you are NOT ALONE!; Other people need to be pulled together to work as a team on a project. Trainer – pt is to not stifle the effort but to encourage employees to get the support and involvement of the appropriate people so that they are not setting up expectations with partners that cannot be met, ie. If the Line Officer for example is not supportive of the idea upfront.

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The Beginning of a Partnership

- Who needs to be involved?
- What is the mutual benefit?
- Where will it happen?
- When is the work to occur?
- Why should it be done?
- How will the partnership be accomplished under our authorities?

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Things to Think about:

What is the project?

Who are the potential partners?

What are they/we doing (compatible missions)?

Who within the Agency needs to be involved?

Important players:

Project Manager

G&A

Potential Partner

Budget and budget approval

ASC

Is the Line Officer in agreement?

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Remember...

- The Forest Service must have appropriate statutory authority

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Important point: Prior to entering into any agreement which could result in the use, obligation, or other commitment of any Forest Service resources, Need to have statutory authority as well as budget authority, including budget direction, and commitment of the funding through workplan. (appropriations authority)

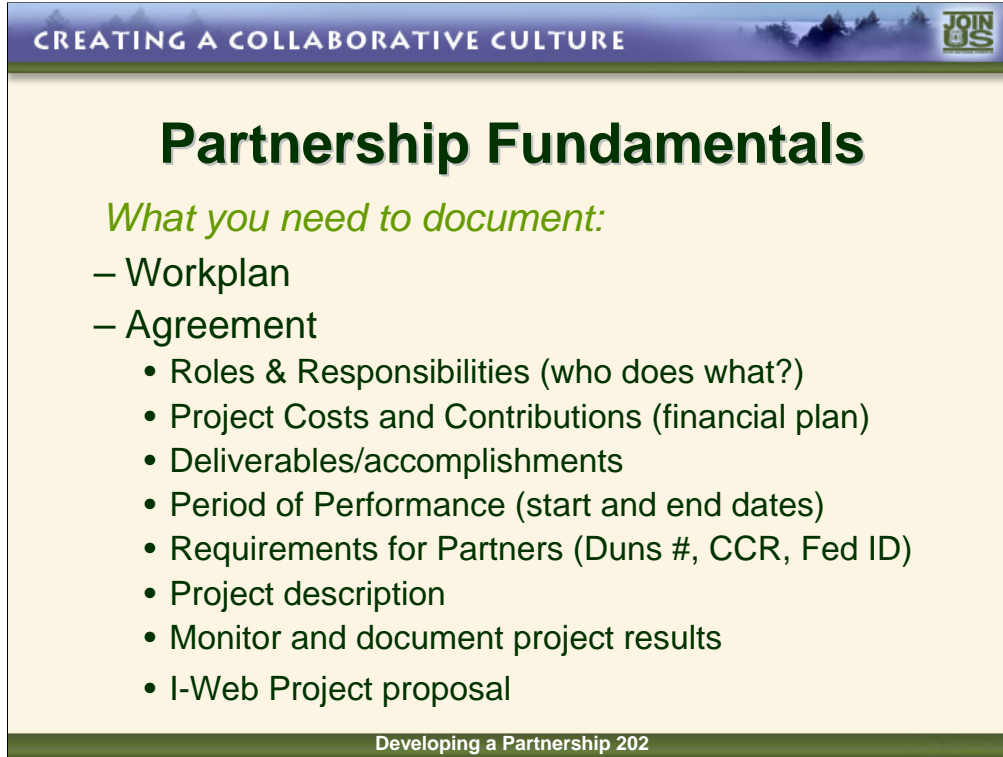
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Partnership Fundamentals

- Who is the responsible partnership lead?
- What resources are available? From whom?
- Does the project cross boundaries? If so, have all parties been involved?
- Are all timing issues addressed? E.g. NEPA, period of performance
- How will communications take place?

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As you get further down the road.....Some additional details to consider and think about.....



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Partnership Fundamentals

What you need to document:

- Workplan
- Agreement
 - Roles & Responsibilities (who does what?)
 - Project Costs and Contributions (financial plan)
 - Deliverables/accomplishments
 - Period of Performance (start and end dates)
 - Requirements for Partners (Duns #, CCR, Fed ID)
 - Project description
 - Monitor and document project results
 - I-Web Project proposal

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You need to document the partnership project/agreement in Workplan to obligate a job code. Some of you may be using workplan and some of you may have a unit lead that documents this.

As you are working to fulfill internal requirements, be sure this is in alignment with partners organizational needs; s; Align culture, policies and procedures to be more partner-friendly; Make things efficient, effective and be credible

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Partnership Fundamentals

Other legal requirements:

- How will this enhance Agency goals in diversity (Title VI)?
- How will safety training be accomplished?
 - Tail gates
 - OSHA
 - Liability
- Have you addressed ethical questions?

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Other things to think about:

Instead of a model where we are looking at a closed system, why not look at it from an Open system and more equitable approach; i.e. Instead of our traditional partner focus, who are some of the other new/different groups that we may not be thinking about initially or who traditionally the system/process has not provided them with access?

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In Summary....

Partners expect these from the Forest Service:

1. Accountability
2. Timeliness
3. Accomplishment of what was planned
4. Useable report

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If you were a partner, you would expect these things from the FS too.

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In Summary...

- Partnerships Are Serious Business!
- Partnerships are essential
 - Carry out our mission
 - Mutual benefits
 - Implement new initiatives
 - In the public interest

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- Explore new ventures
 - Extend your networks
 - Expand your capacity
 - Accomplish your plan
 - Monitor your outcomes
 - Celebrate your partnership
- ... and Maintain your relationships!

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Acknowledgements

- Pinchot Institute for Conservation
- National Forest Foundation
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- USDA Office of General Counsel
- FS Grant Strategists Enterprise Team
- US Forest Service, including:
 - **National Partnership Network, National Partnership Office, National Forest System, NFS – Business Operations, Research and Development, State and Private Forestry**

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Looking for More Training? Here's a complete list of modules.

- Partnerships and Collaboration 101
- Collaboration 200
- Meeting Objectives Through Partnerships 201
- Developing a Partnership 202
- Partnership Authorities and Instruments 203
- Partnership Conduct and Ethics 204
- Understanding Nonprofits and National Forest Foundation 205
- Partnership Administration 301
- Step by Step Partnership Administration 302
- Partnership & Collaboration Tools 303

Developing a Partnership 202