


CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE 

## Course Objectives

- Provide overview of nonprofit organizational structure and culture
- Effectively align interests with a nonprofit
- Provide overview of National Forest Foundation programs


Understanding Nonprofits 205



## **Nonprofits are Mission-based**

IRS Code Section 501(c)(3) grants tax exemption to nonprofit organizations that:

- 1) serve charitable, religious, cultural, scientific or educational purposes (Mission)
- 2) spend any profit on mission
- 3) are overseen by a Board of Directors

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## Nonprofit Organization Structure

- **Board of Directors** – volunteers who provide oversight and recommendations
- **Executive Director** – link between board and staff; responsible to carry out the wishes of the board and guide the organization
- **Staff** – report to the executive director and may support the work of committees

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Nonprofits have common structures, though key roles often differ. The way that nonprofits are organized and the expectations of their board members, staff and volunteers can establish a distinct organizational culture. For example, some Board of Directors consist entirely of 'high stature' individuals—socialites or people locally or nationally recognized in their field—who are asked for name recognition and fundraising ability. On the other hand, many grassroots nonprofits expect their Board members to contribute significantly on committees and as volunteers. While this organizational culture can become entrenched, the Board Chair plays a great role in establishing expectations and ensuring that the board lives up to them.

The Executive Director sets the tone for the staff much the way that the Board Chair does for the Board of Directors. Staff size can range widely from one organization to another. Large national and international nonprofits can have thousands of employees, while local grassroots organizations may have only part-time or even all-volunteer staff. Whatever the size of the staff, its members really take cues from the Executive Director.

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## Nonprofit Organization Structure

- **Committees** – established by board to oversee specific organization functions, such as policy, fundraising, programming
- **Volunteers** – unpaid personnel who assist staff and serve on committees to fulfill organization's mission

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Like the Board of Directors, committees can be either of a working variety or more honorary and symbolic in nature.

Almost every nonprofit tries to recruit as many volunteers as possible. Volunteers enable groups to get more work done for less money.

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## Nonprofits Come in Many Shapes and Sizes

- Friends Groups
- Interpretive Associations
- Community Development Groups
- National and International Agencies
- Educational Institutions
- Health Care Institutions
- Religious Institutions
- Advocacy Organizations
  - **Local, regional, state-level, national**



Trail work by the Rocky Mountain Field Institute, San Isabel National Forest.

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Ask the audience to name nonprofits they know that fit into these categories.



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## Nonprofits Have Needs, Too....

- **Money-** Financial support comes from a wide-range of sources; budgets can be unstable.
- **Volunteers & discounted services-** Help is needed to get work done as cost effectively as possible
- **Achievement-** Without accomplishing results, support can dry up quickly
- **Publicity-** Communicating achievements are key to establishing a reputation, raising funds, and finding volunteers.

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When trying to pursue a partnership it's very easy to lose sight of the needs and desires of the other organization. However, taking the time to learn about a nonprofit you might partner with and understand what they'd like to get out of a partnership will drastically increase the chances of long-term success.


These are some common nonprofit needs, and it's interesting to note that many of them are probably common to your unit also.

While we may be frustrated with our Forest Service budgets from time to time, nonprofit budgets can be very unstable because they rely significantly on the generosity of individuals and foundations. Nationally, 80% of contributions to nonprofits come from individuals. If you think it's hard to get as much money as you'd like out of the Supervisor's Office or the Regional Office or the Washington Office, try raising your entire budget through \$25 donations.

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## Are interests aligned to achieve mutual objectives?

Start with an Open Discussion of key interests (not positions), and available resources for your project idea.



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Aligning interests to achieve mutual objectives is essential. So, first understanding a nonprofits' needs, is important so that you can see where your common needs line up, and you can work together in a win-win situation.

Start with an open discussion of key interests (not positions), available resources, and partnership possibilities will establish a basis for your relationship. Starting a relationship with a nonprofit organization is just like beginning any personal relationship—be respectful, responsive, open, honest, etc.

If you have identified a nonprofit that could be a potential partner, but don't have a mutual connection, don't hesitate to call their offices and ask to speak with the executive director. Because of the FS size, stature and perceived resources, most local nonprofits will be honored to be contacted by the Forest Service. Simply let them know that you'd like to learn more about their mission and organization, and let the conversation go from there.



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**Are interests aligned to achieve mutual objectives?**

**Remember:**

- Nonprofits manage limited resources in pursuit of their mission, which demands creative solutions
- Nonprofits will be looking to gain something from the partnership as well.

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Remember, most non-profits have been dealing with limited resources for as long as they can remember, so they are accustomed to finding creative solutions to problems. They are also accustomed to saying no to opportunities that they simply can't afford, so you will really need to work on finding common ground that makes sense for them and the Forest Service.

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## Successfully Aligning Interests – A grassroots example....

**Problem:**  
Deschutes National Forest needed more funding for on-the-ground projects, and didn't have administrative capacity for project management.

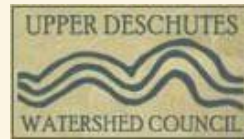
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## Successfully Aligning Interests – A grassroots example...

### **Solution:**

Upper Deschutes Watershed Council and the National Forest signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) to work together on specific projects.




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## Successfully Aligning Interests – A grassroots example....

**Outcomes:**

- Project-specific MOUs enable efficient use of organizational expertise
- Nonprofit handles budget and contract management, and
- Forest Service manages technical work and on-the-ground quality control.



Trout Unlimited Volunteers and Forest Service biologists secure trees.

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Here's another example from outside the natural resource realm where a small, boot-strapped nonprofit transforming a liability into an asset, and successfully aligned its interests with other parties to achieve its objectives. In this case, the nonprofit identified that its need—fixing stained glass windows—could be met by fulfilling the interests of many individuals—to learn how to fix stained glass windows. Initially, this concept worked because the neighborhood around the nonprofit had many old houses with stained glass windows, and the owners were interested in restoring their own assets. Classes were started and the press picked up on the story (—local newspaper stories and even television pieces.) People were intrigued with the idea and respected the creative solution, and word spread further and further. Eventually, students traveled from across the country. This has become a true win-win situation, with the nonprofit organization saving approximately one million dollars and hundreds of people learning a valuable new skill. For more information about this nonprofit go to: [www.unionproject.org](http://www.unionproject.org).

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**When interests align you may choose to work together in many ways...**

- MOUs
- Challenge Cost Share Agreements
- Participating Agreements
- Grants

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The “Partnership Authorities and Instruments 203” module addresses these and many other types of agreements.



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**Grant Applications:  
A common way to  
work together**

- Share writing and application submission tasks for mutual benefit.
- Share resources to implement the project and include in your application

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In some cases, you may be working with grassroots organizations that may not have the staffing to even pursue the grant funding that would benefit both them and the Forest Service. For mutual benefit, you may be able to offer assistance in writing those necessary grants.

Working with your nonprofit partner may result in seeking resources to complete the project. The agency is not in the business of competing with nonprofits but is in the business of facilitating their roles in meeting mutual benefits.

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## The National Forest Foundation



The National Forest Foundation (NFF), chartered by Congress, engages America in community-based and national programs that promote the health and public enjoyment of the 192-million-acre National Forest System, and administers private gifts of funds and land for the benefit of the National Forests.

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NFF is a non-profit organization dedicated to conducting activities that further the purposes and programs of the Forest Service

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## What the NFF Does...

- Conservation Programs
- Build Constituencies
- Marketing and Development

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## Conservation Programs

Through **Conservation Programs**, the NFF helps care for, enhance and restore National Forests and Grasslands.


- Financial awards
- Technical assistance
- National/regional convener



## Conservation Programs Include:

- Western Collaborative Assistance Network (WestCAN)
- Matching Awards Program (MAP)
- Community Assistance Program (CAP)
- Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (WSC)
- NCSSF: Connecting Science to Practitioners
- Lodge Contribution Program (LCP)



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## Western Collaborative Assistance Network (WestCAN)

- Connects Forest Service employees and nonprofits with short-term expertise to help collaborative activities get started or work through challenging issues.
  - Technical assistance (e.g., help in developing agreements or contracts, nonprofit organizational development, etc.)
  - Links to peer coaches or mentors.

Call the NFF at (406) 542-2805 X13 or 1-866-773-4NFF (4633) X13

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Provide handout to participants;

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## Financial Assistance Overview

- Things to remember when applying for grants
- Types of NFF Financial Assistance
- How awards are decided
  - NFF Grants Committee (board members)
  - Recommendations from staff and FS representatives
  - Support of the Forest Supervisor

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## When Applying for Grants....

- Know what the grant is targeting
- Understand the board's interests and values
- Learn from past records what was successful
- “Getting a no” does not mean a vote of no confidence
- If unsuccessful, call and ask “what could I have done to improve my grant application?”

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## Types of NFF Financial Assistance

- Matching Awards Program (MAP)
- Community Assistance Program (CAP)
- Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (WSC)
- Lodge Contribution Program (LCP)



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A common thread connecting the NFF's program areas is an interest in action-oriented projects that enhance the viability of natural resources while considering benefits to, and the involvement of surrounding communities.

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## How NFF Awards are Decided

- NFF Grants Committee (board members)
- Recommendations from staff and Forest Service representatives
- Support of the Forest Supervisor

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## Matching Awards Program (MAP)



- Eligibility: Nonprofits working on specific issues: **wildlife habitat improvement, recreation, community-based forest stewardship, watershed health and restoration.**
- Matching funds assist with **on-the-ground conservation projects** that directly benefit National Forests and surrounding lands.

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By matching federal funds provided through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Forest Service to non-federal dollars, the NFF's Matching Awards Program (MAP) is able to more than double the resources available to nonprofit partners to implement projects that directly benefit our National Forests and Grasslands.

The NFF will accept applications from non-governmental, nonprofit 501(c) (3) organizations working on or adjacent to National Forests and Grasslands throughout the United States. Through the MAP, organizations completing on-the-ground conservation work can apply for matching funds twice a year, though only one MAP award may be active at any time.

All grants awarded by the NFF require at least a 1:1 match of non-federal funds.

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## MAP Requirements

- Awards must go to nonprofit, partner organizations.
- Applications require Forest Supervisor letter of support.
- Awards require 1:1 cash match, which *cannot* come from federal funds.
- In-kind contributions *cannot* be used for matching funds.
- Deadlines and requirements are on the NFF Web site ([www.natlforests.org](http://www.natlforests.org))

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Applications are accepted from non-federal partners, community-based organizations, Native American tribes, and other nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. Applications **cannot** be accepted from federal agencies.

NFF funds awarded through this program can be disbursed only as a match to cash contributions from a non-federal source. These federal matching funds:

- Must be used for completing conservation projects on or around National Forest System lands.
- Cannot be used for general administrative purposes.
- Cannot be used for any federal expenses, including salary. Neither NFF funds nor the non-federal match may be directed back to the Forest Service or any other federal agency.



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## Community Assistance Program (CAP)

- Awards for **newly-forming, collaborative organizations**.
- Funds used for **basic start-up and operating costs**, materials and equipment, technical assistance, training, community outreach, obtaining 501(c)(3) status, program development, nonprofit management skill-building and communications.
- The **NFF also provides technical assistance** to help these groups.

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The NFF established the Community Assistance Program (CAP) to promote the creation of locally-based forest partnerships which seek to build ecological, social and economic sustainability. The program will support newly-forming nonprofit, collaborative organizations in need of start-up capacity-building that intend to proactively and inclusively engage the local community in forest management and conservation issues on and around National Forests and Grasslands.

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## CAP Requirements

- Newly-forming or reorganizing nonprofit organizations that are collaborative in nature and demonstrate inclusive, broad-based support.
- Cash match is not required. Applications are considered based on need.
- Grants range from \$ 5,000 - \$ 15,000
- All applications require Forest Supervisor letter of support.
- Deadlines and requirements are on the NFF Web site ([www.natlforests.org](http://www.natlforests.org))

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Priority will be given to underserved and culturally diverse communities that have had limited access to financial and organizational resources. Newly forming or reorganizing multiparty collaborative community groups that clearly demonstrate the need and relevancy of their program to the stewardship goals of the NFF and the Forest Service will be most successful.

CAP funds can be used for a wide range of tools, including: technical assistance, training, consultants, community outreach, obtaining 501(c)(3) status, group facilitation, basic start-up and operating costs, materials and equipment, program development, nonprofit management skill-building, and communications.

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## Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (WSC)


- Program is designed to assist the agency in meeting the Chief's Wilderness Challenge.
- Funds ecosystem restoration-related work in Congressionally-designated Wilderness Areas managed by the Forest Service.
- Projects must accomplish measurable on-the-ground results.



American Hiking Society, Alliance for Wilderness Education and Forest Service construct rock wall.

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In celebration of the 40th anniversary of The Wilderness Act, the USDA Forest Service issued a Wilderness Stewardship Challenge, calling for all Wilderness Areas in the National Forest System to be managed to standard within the next decade. Since 2004, the NFF has increased the resources available to meet this challenge by providing matching grants of up to \$50,000 to nonprofit partners to implement projects that directly affect Wilderness Areas within our National Forests and Grasslands and assist in meeting the Forest Service Wilderness challenge.

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## WSC Requirements

- All awards must go to nonprofit organizations.
- All applications need Forest Supervisor letter of support.
- All work must be performed in USDA-designated Wilderness Areas.
- The projects must assist in meeting the Chief's Wilderness Stewardship Challenge.
- All awards require 1:1 cash match, which *cannot* come from federal funds.
- In-kind contributions *cannot* be used for matching funds but can be used to show increased leverage.
- Grants of up to \$ 50,000
- Deadlines and requirements are on the NFF Web site ([www.natlforests.org](http://www.natlforests.org))

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## Lodge Contribution Program (LCP)

- LCP pairs NFF conservation award funds with donations from guests at ski areas, lodges, and resorts on National Forest lands.
- Funds are restricted for use on or around the National Forest(s) from which they originate.
- Applications require Forest Supervisor letter of support.
- A 25% non-federal, in-kind match is required.

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The NFF's Ski Area Contribution Program (SCP) pairs NFF conservation award funds with donations from guests at ski areas, lodges, and resorts on National Forest lands throughout the United States. This partnership aims to increase the amount of money available to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations to complete on-the-ground conservation work that benefits National Forests. Funds generated through this program are restricted for use on or around the National Forest(s) from which they originated.

The NFF will administer the SCP, and grant conservation awards for each involved National Forest. The total funds available for each award round are dependent on the amount generated by the ski area(s) or lodge(s) on each National Forest and will likely vary each round. Organizations receiving an award through the SCP will be required to document a non-federal in-kind match of no less than 25% of the total award.

Suggestions for organizations to which to distribute the RFP for each National Forest will be solicited from the US Forest Service, ski areas and lodges, and other organizations and entities.

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## National Council on Science for Sustainable Forestry: Connecting Science to Practitioners

The Partnership:

- Provides practical information and approaches that serve the needs of forest managers, practitioners and policymakers.
- Oversees a multi-year program of research, assessment and tool development, designed to implement and evaluate sustainable forestry practices in the U.S.
- Released its first finding report in January, 2005.



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That concludes the portion of the presentation highlighting the NFF grant programs. The next program is a partnership that NFF has been involved in since 2002, the National Council on Science for Sustainable Forestry.

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## NFF Constituency-building Programs

**Purpose:**

- **Build awareness** around issues facing National Forests



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Another emphasis area for NFF is with programs related to Building Constituencies for the National Forests and Grasslands.

*Friends of the Forest* is a unique communications channel and Web site ([www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org)) reaching thousands of Americans with an interest in the long-term health of our National Forests.

*Friends of the Forest* members receive a monthly e-newsletter, *tree-mail™*, and a biannual magazine, *Your National Forests*, to keep them informed on conservation issues and recreation opportunities, and inviting them to become engaged financially and as volunteers.

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## NFF Constituency-building Programs

- **Offer opportunities to participate** and volunteer to help address those issues through *Friends of the Forest*® program
  - Web site ([www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org))
  - *tree-mail*™, monthly e-newsletter
  - *Your National Forests* Magazine (replaces Mosaic)




Eagle County Youth Conservation Corps remove barb-wire fencing, White River National Forest.

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## **Marketing and Development (Fundraising)**

NFF seeks contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations to support work that benefits National Forests and Grasslands and provide financial assistance for conservation projects.

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## Fundraising in the *Neighbor to Neighbor* Program....

**Referring Prospective Donors:**

- **Forest neighbors**— private landowners with inholdings or property adjacent to National Forests.
- **Public information** which identifies landowner, property value, and mailing address of National Forest neighbors.

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Most significant philanthropic support will come from people whom you already know, or people with whom it makes sense for you to cultivate a relationship—the “neighbors” to the Forest.

Forest neighbors— private landowners with inholdings or property adjacent to National Forests.

Use GIS, other public information to identify landowner, property value, and mailing address of National Forest neighbors.


Forest Supervisors, district rangers and others who routinely meet and build relationships with forest neighbors-- are partners in identifying those who have a positive relationship with the FS

The 33,000 person FS workforce is first in line to identify high net worth individuals who have both the capacity to give and the inclination to support National Forest conservation.



## **Fundraising in the *Neighbor to Neighbor* Program....**

- **Forest Supervisors & District Rangers** can help identify those parties who have a positive relationship with the FS
- **33,000 Forest Service workforce** come in contact daily with many individuals who both have the capacity to give and the inclination to support National Forest conservation.

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## How FS Staff Might Help...

- Identify a Neighbor
- Forward the Neighbor's Name to the NFF
- NFF researches the individual to qualify them as a candidate for approach
- NFF contacts the individual to:
  - Introduce conservation philanthropy opportunity;
  - Inquire about the neighbors' interests in the forest and;
  - Shares work that NFF is doing in that area and opportunities that exist for their support of conservation.

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FS staff identify a Neighbor, such as a person who owns property adjacent to or an inholding in a National Forest, ideally someone who has expressed an interest in conservation.

FS forwards the name of the Neighbor to the NFF

NFF researches the individual to qualify them as a candidate for approach

NFF contacts the individual to introduce conservation philanthropy opportunity. FS leadership are welcome to attend introductory meetings that NFF will use to inquire about the neighbors' interests in the forest (fire, forest health, recreation, biodiversity, etc); shares work that NFF is doing in that area and what opportunities exist for private support of conservation.

NFF engages each Neighbor in forest conservation work to build a stronger partnership with the forest.

NFF identifies opportunities to make the neighbor a *Friend of the Forest* with a contribution to the NFF.

NFF works with Forest Service staff to accomplish mutually-agreed upon outcomes of step 4.



## How FS Staff Might Help...

- NFF engages each Neighbor in forest conservation work to build a stronger partnership with the forest.
- NFF identifies opportunities to make the neighbor a *Friend of the Forest* with a contribution to the NFF.
- NFF works with Forest Service staff to accomplish mutually-agreed upon outcomes.



## Recent NFF Work: Partner Story

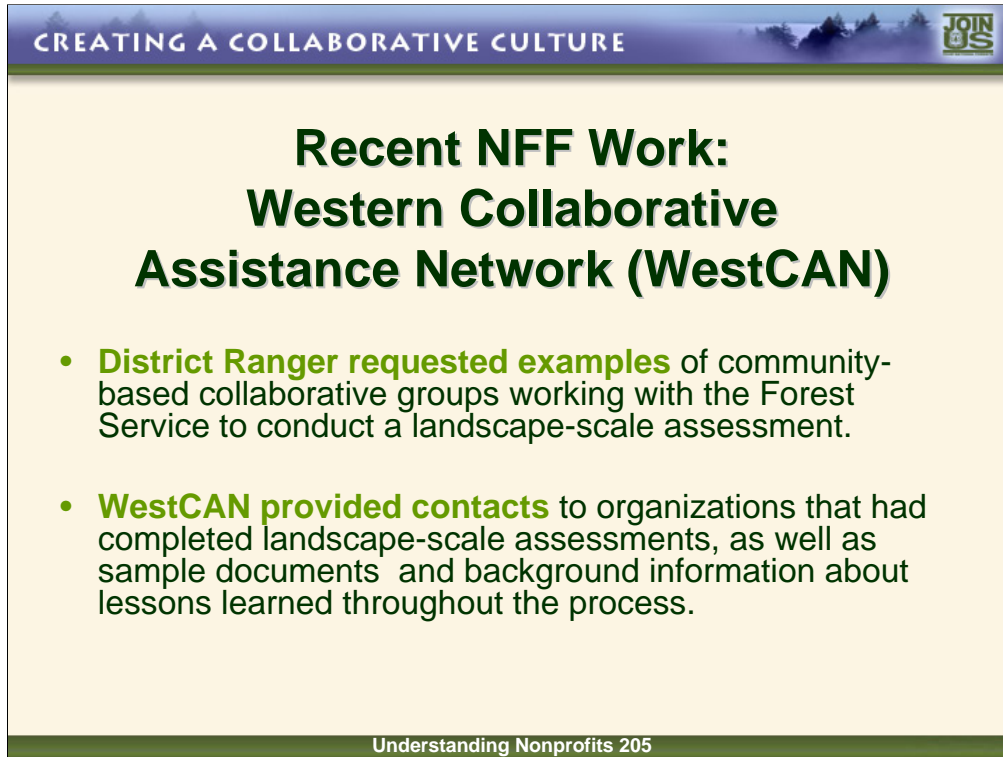
- In 2005, Colorado Fourteeners Initiative worked in partnership with the US Forest Service and the NFF to address the highest priority human impacts on Mount Massive, which included:
  - Focusing use along one sustainable hiking route
  - Mitigation of soil erosion by stabilizing slopes and re-vegetating alpine plant habitats
  - Maintenance and restoration of watershed health
  - Education of hikers regarding Leave No Trace ethics



## Colorado Fourteeners Initiative: Mt. Massive Project Outcomes

- Engaged 57 volunteers
- Totaling 568 volunteer hours
- 1.27 miles of new trail constructed
- 78,810 sq. ft. of alpine tundra restored





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**Recent NFF Work:  
Western Collaborative  
Assistance Network (WestCAN)**

- **District Ranger requested examples** of community-based collaborative groups working with the Forest Service to conduct a landscape-scale assessment.
- **WestCAN provided contacts** to organizations that had completed landscape-scale assessments, as well as sample documents and background information about lessons learned throughout the process.

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Recently, a District Ranger requested examples of community-based collaborative groups working with the Forest Service to conduct a landscape-scale assessment.

The WestCAN Coordinator provided contacts to two collaborative organizations that had completed landscape-scale assessments, as well as sample documents (roles and responsibilities, assessment protocols, overall process structure, etc.) and background information about lessons learned and what worked well in the other processes.

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## Get Involved with the NFF (Our Nonprofit Partner)

- Become a member of NFF
- Become a Friend of the Forest at [www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org), by signing up for *tree-mail*™.
- Recruit others to join.
- Encourage your local partners to learn more about the NFF.
- Refer potential donors to the NFF.



Two members of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees involved in lookout restoration on the Shasta Trinity National Forest.

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Become a member of NFF by making a financial contribution.

Become a Friend of the Forest at [www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org), by signing up for *tree-mail*™.

Recruit others to join.

Encourage your local partners to learn more about the NFF.

Refer potential donors to the NFF so they can leverage more money back into conservation projects on National Forests and Grasslands!

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## Contact the NFF...

National Forest Foundation  
Building 27 Suite #3  
Fort Missoula Road  
Missoula, MT 59804

406-542-2805  
406-542-2810 (fax)  
[www.natlforests.org](http://www.natlforests.org)  
[www.becomeafriend.org](http://www.becomeafriend.org)



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## Acknowledgements

- Pinchot Institute for Conservation
- National Forest Foundation
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- 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

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