



Creeks and Communities

A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management

The Creeks and Communities strategy represents an innovative and adaptive approach aimed at building the capacity of land managers and stakeholders to address complex and often contentious issues inherent in managing riparian-wetland resources. Since 1996, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service have been working together to accelerate cooperative riparian restoration and management through this strategy. Focused primarily in the Western United States, this strategy is implemented by a diverse group of individuals and institutions referred to as the Creeks and Communities Network. In addition to delivering services in response to requests for assistance, the network also enables coordination, learning and information-sharing among its members.

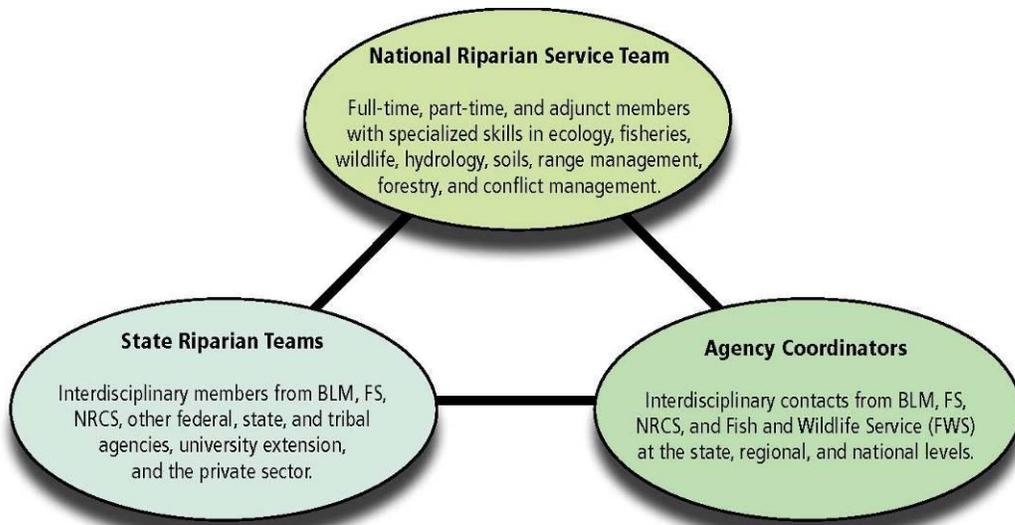


Figure 1. Creeks and Communities Network.

The strategy mission “Achieving Healthy Streams through Bringing People Together” is accomplished by the creation of forums that enable individuals to interact with each other more effectively. Emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for people to work cooperatively, across all land ownerships and administrative jurisdictions, to share knowledge and develop a common vision for riparian-wetland areas on a landscape scale. The Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment method is the foundational tool for building awareness and understanding of riparian function and how function forms the basis for the sustainable production of values over time.



The Creeks and Communities strategy:

- Provides a model for incorporating science into collaborative decision-making through an approach that blends the social and technical dimensions of resource issues.
- Applies principles and practices to ensure diverse and inclusive participation in support of cooperative conservation including methods to better manage the conflict inherent in working with diverse interests.
- Institutes processes that enhance understanding of a situation, participation of all interests, joint fact-finding and problem solving, thereby promoting ownership and commitment to decisions.
- Assists agencies and communities to accomplish the program of work in a manner that builds capacity for improving assessment and monitoring strategies, in support of adaptive management.
- Provides a diverse network of people who function in a bridge role, assisting with policy application and informing policy development.
- Facilitates program integration and interdisciplinary behavior by addressing watershed and riparian function as the basis to achieve on-the-ground benefits and values.

Activities of the Creeks and Communities Network are designed to meet a number of objectives important to implementation of the strategy:

- *Outreach, Communication and Marketing* - briefings, presentations, key contacts, newsletters, website.
- *Technology Development and Transfer* - formal and informal products that address specific topics or issues, canvassing the network to gather the most current material, convening experts to facilitate interchange of knowledge.
- *Training, Mentoring and Network Development* – training sessions and workshops (Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment, riparian monitoring, riparian ecology, riparian grazing management, conflict management and consensus building), biennial Network meetings, mentoring and coaching activities.
- *Providing Expertise and Problem Solving Assistance* – service trips (combination of training and place-based problem solving designed to address technical issues considering the social context within which they reside), Working Landscapes Alliance (government, non-profit and private partnership), working groups and special teams, review of programs, projects and products.
- *Program Management* – planning, executing, reporting and evaluating Network activities, leveraging resources.

The Creeks and Communities approach, while currently focused on riparian-wetland issues, is applicable to fostering collaborative adaptive management to address any number of resource issues that do not correspond to jurisdictional boundaries. The Network is facilitating the integration of the principles and practices within programs and initiatives and seeking to expand the development of innovative partnerships and alliances to increase effectiveness.

**For more information, please contact Susan Holtzman, NRST
Coordinator at (503) 808-2987, skholtzman@fs.fed.us
or visit the website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/programs/nrst>**