

Building Organizational and Community Resiliency in the New West: A Capacity-Building Peer-to-Peer Exchange

Hosted by the Montana Watershed Coordination Council & Future West

**November 11, 2021
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM MST**

Overview

Future West and Montana Watershed Coordination Council are united in our efforts to support community-based conservation organizations and ensure thriving watersheds. We have long enjoyed working together to advance our shared visions. Shortly before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we began discussing the possibility of teaming up to provide a capacity-building training for our overlapping networks, and the need for this technical support became even clearer to us in the months that followed.

Over the past two years, the changes and pressures our communities have been facing have become even more pronounced and placed immense pressure on our resources and resilience. Drought, wildfires, the Covid-19 pandemic, growing recreational demands, and changing community demographics are just a few of the ever-evolving changes we continue to face. As we approach the end of 2021, our expectations about where we thought we would be are coming up against realities about where we actually are, requiring us all to adapt and respond. Watershed groups, conservation districts, local officials, community leaders, and other natural resource professionals in particular must find ways to do so while staying true to our organizational missions and visions.

Resiliency amidst change is at the forefront of everyone's mind, but we cannot achieve this without first understanding the factors (social, political, environmental, industry-related, and economic) that are impacting our communities, our organizations, and our missions.

We believe that the path to sustainability at both the community and organizational level requires a solid awareness of these factors so we can identify, create, and adapt effective options for working with them. This virtual peer-to-peer exchange will offer organizational staff, board members, and community leaders a first step towards collectively identifying the challenges we face, with a view towards naming and ultimately providing the support and resources we need to respond to these changes now and in the future.

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Agenda

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Objectives:

- Discuss the changes natural resource professionals are facing in our communities.
 - Identify and share lessons learned.
 - Share helpful resources.
 - Identify additional resources needed.
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8:30 AM Introductions, Welcome, and Overview of Agenda

- Ethan Kunard, Montana Watershed Coordination Council
- Hannah Jaicks, Future West
- Heather Stokes, Facilitator

8:45 AM Keynote: Changes, Challenges, and Resiliency in Our Communities

Staff from organizations at different stages of organizational development and from different geographies will present on the intersection of challenges they're facing and share how they are responding to the changing landscape. The panel will serve as an entryway into small group breakout discussions on regional and local issues people are facing. We want to give groups a chance to take inventory of what's been happening and establish common ground regardless of your capacity or where you're at in your organizational development.

- Dusty Olson, Administrator for the Garfield Conservation District
- Heather Brighton, Watershed Coordinator for the Lolo Watershed Group
- Holly Hill, Executive Director of the Gallatin Watershed Council
- Pedro Marques, Executive Director of the Big Hole Watershed Committee

10:15 AM Break

10:30 AM Roundtable Discussions: Changes, Challenges, and Resiliency in Our Organizations

Breakout groups will ground truth what people are observing in their own communities by discussing the changes they are experiencing, ways they are dealing with these changes, and what resources and support they need to continue to adapt.

Please come prepared to discuss the following questions:

- How is your community/watershed/landscape changing?
- How are you thriving during these changes?
- How are you adapting to these changes while staying focused on your mission? Is there mission drift?
- What resources have been helpful?
- What are the challenges to successfully accomplishing your goals?
- What resources are needed to address these challenges?

11:30 AM Tying it Together

After taking inventory of the changes impacting communities and organizations, then evaluating groups' ability to respond to these changes, and identifying resources/technical support they need to move forward, we want to give groups a chance to reflect on that information.

11:50 AM Next Steps and Summary

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