

Stewardship Contracting:

A Collaborative form of Land Management

**An overview of Stewardship Contracting
and
Results from the FY2008 programmatic
monitoring and evaluation effort**



What is Stewardship Contracting?

- It is a federal public lands management contracting mechanism meant to promote a closer working relationship with local communities in the planning, design, and execution of conservation and management actions.



What is Stewardship Contracting?

- It is a means through which multiple stakeholders can realize the sustainable economic opportunities that forest ecosystem restoration and conservation activities present forest-based communities.



What is Stewardship Contracting?

- A tool for the USFS and BLM to plan, design, and implement large scale regional stewardship agreements and contracts for ecosystem restoration with groups like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the National Wild Turkey Federation .



What is Stewardship Contracting?

It is a set of contracting authorities that allow the USFS and BLM to:

- Exchange goods (small diameter trees) for services (forest health thinning).
- Retain excess receipts at the forest level, allowing for additional tasks to be completed.
- Award contracts on a “best value” basis which considers socio-economic criteria other than simply price of services.
- Designate trees to be removed by description or prescription to increase overall project effectiveness and lower costs.
- Award multi year contracts for multiple and bundled tasks.



Benefits of Stewardship Authorities

For the agencies...

- Improves contracting flexibility and efficiency
lower costs
- Helps address forest health concerns
- Increases federal capacity for collaboration with
outside partners
- Improves public trust
- Reduces appeals and litigation



Benefits of Stewardship Authorities

For communities...

- Promotes local involvement in public land mgmt.
- Strengthens local economies
- Improves ecosystem and watershed health
- Reduces risk of catastrophic wildfire within proximity to communities



Status of Stewardship Contracting?

- As of 2008, there are **376 active SCs** on USFS and BLM lands combined.
- Between 1999-2008 there were over **316,000 acres** of land being **managed under stewardship contracts** (all task orders).
- Agency authority to use **Stewardship Contracts** **will run out in 2013** unless reauthorized by Congress.



Community Collaboration and Stewardship



“Effort should be made to involve a **diversity of local interests in collaboration** throughout the life of the project from project **design** through **implementation** and **monitoring.**”

-USFS Handbook



What is Collaboration?

- Diverse voices at the table
- Mutual learning opportunities
- Flexibility
- Concern over process
- Open and transparent
- Based on trust in the good faith of other participants



Collaboration and Stewardship

“The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management shall report annually to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate
“on... (3) the role of local communities in development of agreement or contract plans.” P.L. 105-277



Stewardship Contracting M&E Program

To monitor and evaluate the role communities play in the design, planning, and implementation of stewardship contracting projects.

- Pinchot Institute for Conservation (DC)
- Flathead Economic Policy Center (MT)
- Watershed Research and Training Center (CA)
- West 65, Inc. (NC)
- Michigan State University (MI)
- USFS and BLM
- Regional team members



Stewardship Contracting M&E Methods

1. 25% random stratified sample of projects in each region (NE, SE, SW, Northern Rockies, PNW)
1. Agency project managers asked for list of other non agency project participants
1. Interview two randomly selected non agency participants as well as an agency participant



Stewardship Contracting M&E Response



USFS Projects

- 2006: 51/204 projects and 121 people
- 2007: 58/232 projects and 125 people
- 2008: 71/285 projects and 144 people



BLM Projects

- 2006: 18/72 projects and 36 people
- 2007: 38/84 projects and 75 people
- 2008: 51/126 projects and 103 people



Key Questions of Study

1. To what degree are collaborative processes being used in SC projects?
2. What is the understanding of collaboration in stewardship contracting among those participating in SC projects?



Perspectives on the Benefits

- The ability to increase collaboration, use local contractors, improve public trust of management actions, and accomplish work on the ground were of high importance to 50% of the respondents.
- Nearly 75% of respondents identified the accomplishment of forest restoration, fuels reduction, and wildlife habitat improvements as having high importance.



What is Stewardship Contracting?



Community collaboration	44%
Goods for services	36%
A new contracting mechanism	35%
Getting work done on the ground	25%

What is Collaboration?

Working with others	45%
Achieving a common goal	19%
Public Involvement	12%
Diverse people and interests	9%
Gathering public input	8%
No need to collaborate	7%



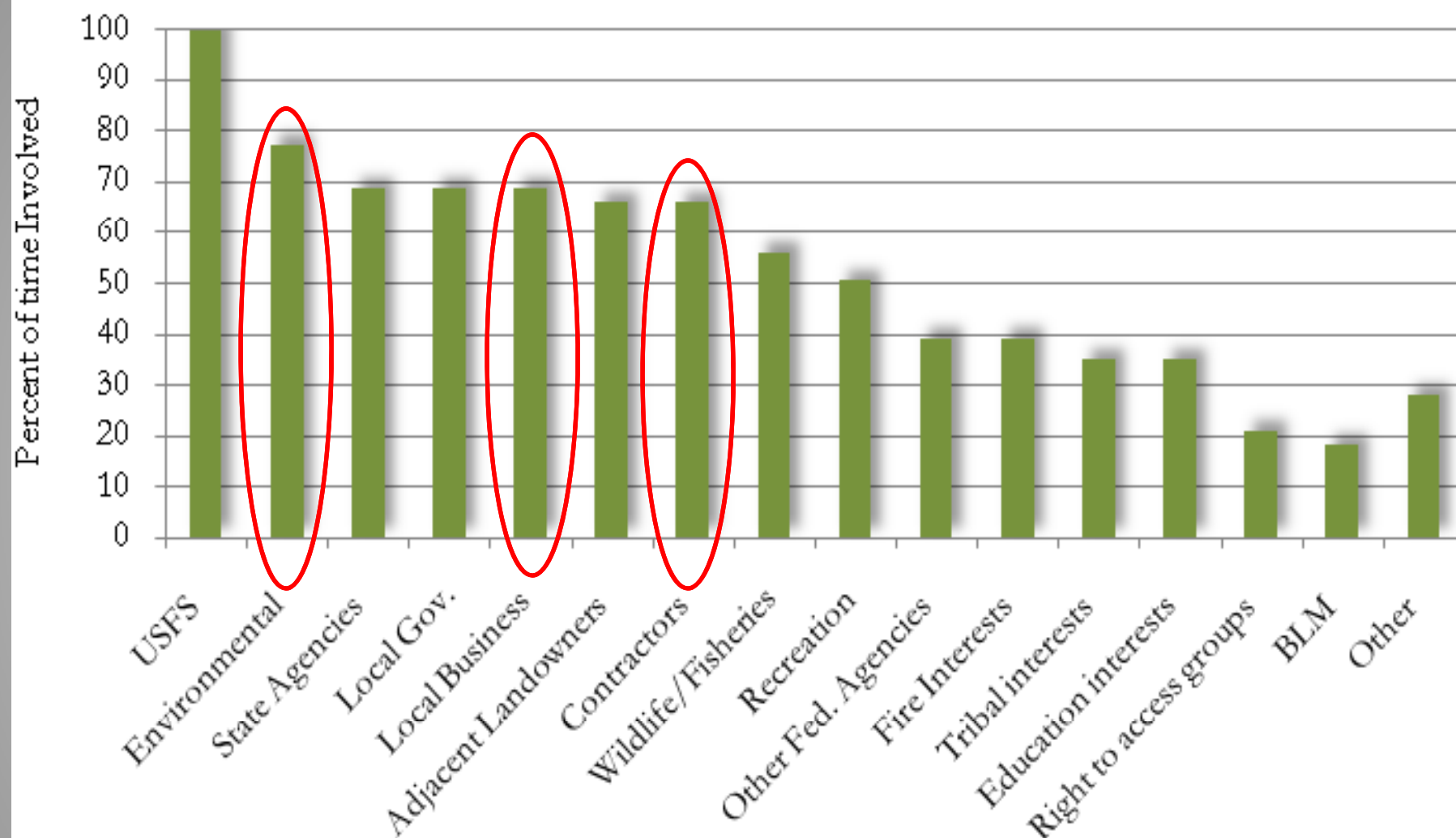
Degree of Collaboration?



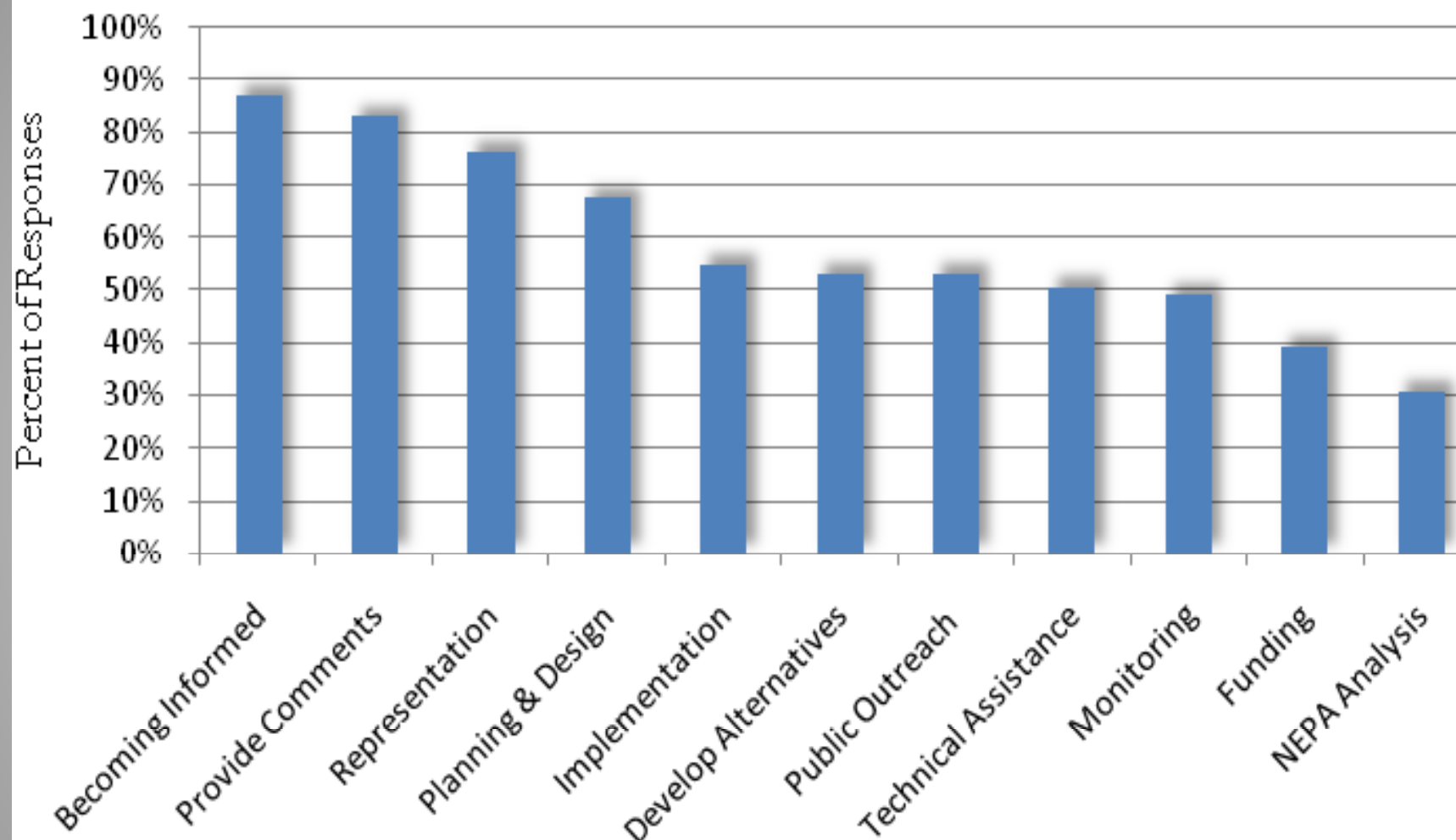
Very collaborative (1)	37%
Very collaborative (2)	25%
Somewhat collaborative (3)	22%
Not collaborative (4)	12%
Not collaborative (5)	5%
Do not know (6)	7%

Note respondents were asked to rank on an ordinal scale 1-6

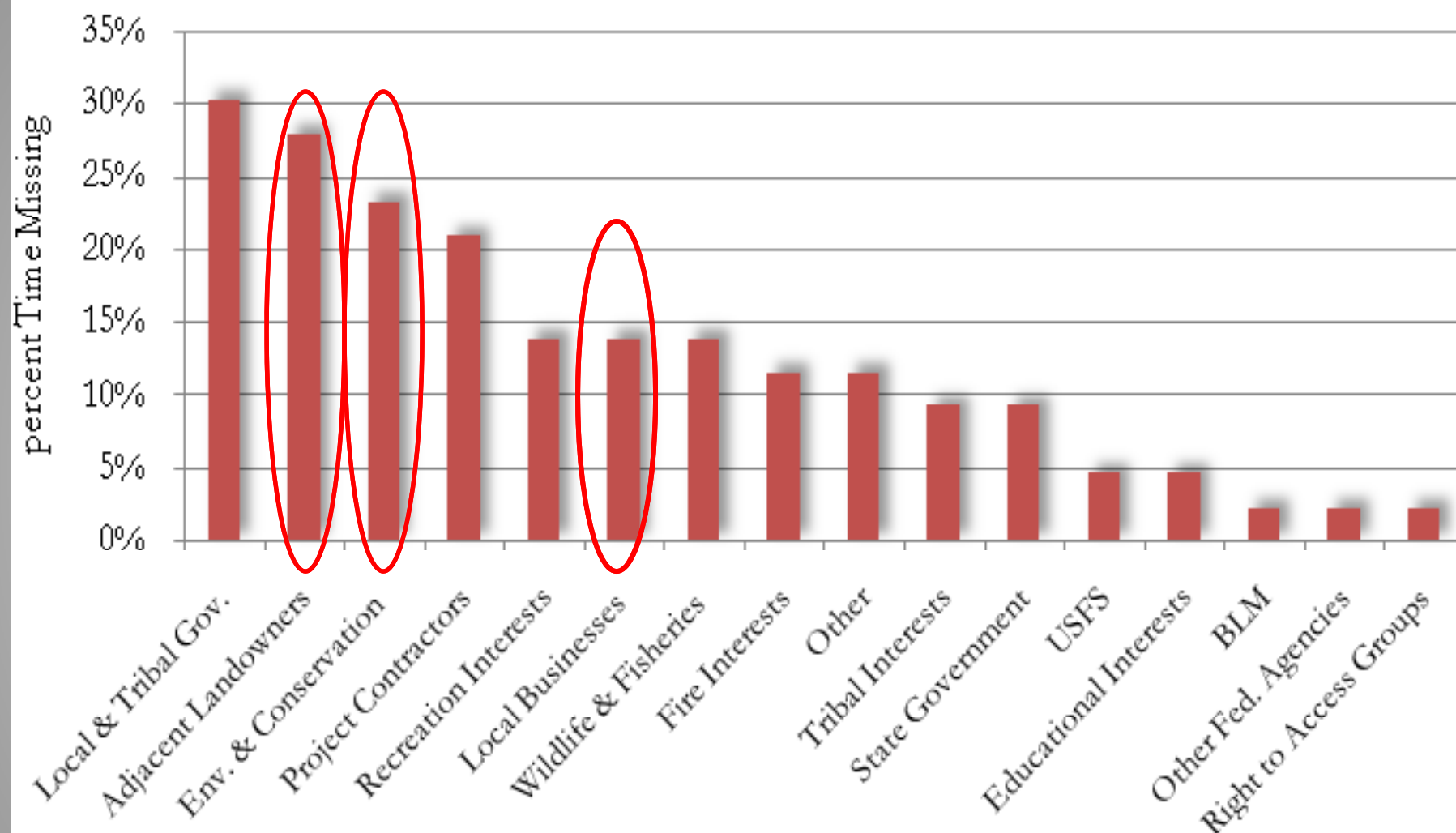
Frequency of Entity Involvement in Stewardship Contracts



Role of Local Communities in Stewardship Contracting



Individuals or Interests Missing from Stewardship Projects



Conclusions

Support for stewardship contracting in both the agencies and in communities



“ It is a tremendous tool that Congress has afforded the local communities and we want to avail ourselves of that opportunity”



Conclusions

Application of collaborative processes with communities uneven



“I have a hard time claiming it was a true collaborative effort. There was a significant amount of involvement but in my mind collaboration would be the Forest Service sitting at the table as one player along with everyone else trying to hammer out the issues. It was more an intensive public involvement effort.”



Conclusions

Participants perceive benefits from community engagement in stewardship contracting projects



“I like the opportunity to collaborate with diverse groups. There’s a lot of good ways to get jobs done. If we got more diverse ideas, it would be useful.”

“ I think one of the benefits was that it was a real working relationship.”



Conclusions

Administrative, cultural, and knowledge obstacles still exist within the agencies



“Stewardship contracting is not just a tool. It is not comparable to the timber sale. There is so much up front planning and process. It must be a longer term proposition with multiple benefits.”





Brian Kittler
bkittler@pinchot.org

www.pinchot.org



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