Navigating Waters Beyond the Blackfoot: The Transferability of the Collaborative Conservation Model

Collaborative Conservation, Transferability, and Open Source

A Research Report Prepared By R. Patrick Bixler

Center for Collaborative Conservation Research Fellow
Department of Sociology
Colorado State University
B258 Clark Building
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1784

Acknowldgements

Executive Summary

The transferability of a collaborative conservation "model" raises all kinds of difficult questions inadequately addressed in the literature and in practice. By transferability, this report is referring to the replication, scaling-out, or adoption of institutional processes that have been successful in one place with certain people in another place with different people. Based on research with the Blackfoot Challenge during the summer of 2010, this report will set out to address this question. I start with addressing a key characteristic of successful, or "robust," collaborative organizations – social capital. My time with the Blackfoot Challenge illustrated empirically the ability of social capital to function with regards to natural resource conservation. Next, some baseline S.E.T. (social-ecological-temporal) conditions that will help facilitate the emergence of collaboration will be outlined followed by some "design principles" or key considerations for start-up collaboratives. Finally, transferability will be explicitly addressed by comparing the model of "adoption of innovation" with a new paradigm, referred here as "open source." Some conclusions drawn in this report are that the transferability process needs to be diffuse, decentralized, and adaptive while conducive for active communication among a network of places.

Introduction

Collaborative and community-based efforts at natural resource management and conservation practices have seen a wave of enthusiastic support over the last decade. These approaches offer promising ways to deal with complex and contentious natural resources issues that have been historically prevalent in the Western United States. Collaboration is theoretically promoted as a way to reduce conflict among stakeholders; build social capital; allow environmental, social, and economic issues to be addressed in tandem, and produce better decisions. In practice, the number of collaborative groups in the country continues to grow and likewise the number of empirical case studies is increasing rapidly. This is providing academics and practitioners with a new array of resources and tools to better understand the dynamics of collaborative conservation. One of these dynamics is "transferability." Recently, Obama Administration officials have promoted collaborative conservation within America's Great Outdoors conservation initiative. Needless to say there is general movement towards a more collaborative approach to natural resource management.

However, as with any new paradigm complicated questions arise. How, exactly, does a collaborative effort at natural resource management get initiated, grow, have success? Whose responsibility is this? Where do the resources come from? How can a successful model be replicated? These are difficult questions. As one Federal Agency employee and Blackfoot Challenge board member notes,

> "I think we are at the cutting edge of collaboration. I don't know that many places in US that do as much collaboration as we do in Blackfoot. So because it is new, the growing pains associated with that has been difficult."

One such growing pain and the main question driving this research is the challenge of transferability. Transferability refers to the notion of "replicating" or "scaling-out" of the collaborative conservation model. The idea of replicating a particular approach would appear pretty straight-forward, right? According to one executive committee member, "It sounds complicated, and it is, but it isn't, it is pretty simple, but to make it happen it is pretty complicated." Clear as mud? Scaling-out is used to define the spatial extrapolation of successful

approaches to other sites with similar circumstances; i.e. replication at the same scale but at different locations. However, there needs to be flexibility and adaptive capacity embedded within this process of replication. A recent workshop report from the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) describes this well:

> "It is not technologies that are scaled up, but processes and principles behind the technologies/innovations. This is consistent with the belief that scaling out is not just replication but adaptation and learning that is flexible and interactive…Scaling out is really about people – of communicating options to people, of a balance between introducing options to people, of a balance between introducing options and involving farmer's ability to adapt to changing contexts…Scaling out as a development process rejects the cookie cutter approach. [It] achieves large numbers and wide area coverage through multiplication with adaptation."

That points to some key issues we are trying to address in this report. Recent social and ecological outcomes in certain places have increased interest in "the processes and principles" of collaborative conservation. Yet, there is no "cookie cutter" approach. Every community is different. Every watershed is different. Different people. Different livelihoods. Different natural resource base. But success in certain areas has shown it can work and now the challenge is how to "transfer" success to other places. This report intends to push the boundaries of the way this question has traditionally been framed and open up some new avenues for theoretical exploration while providing some practical guidance. First, I'm going to discuss my experience with a successful model – the Blackfoot Challenge. The hope is by understanding some dimensions of a "robust" collaborative we can open the door to possibilities. Then, before "scaling-out," I'm going to consider "scaling-down" by exploring some conditions I think are key for successful collaboration. Then, some traditional models of innovation adoption are presented, with ideas how we can modify those for this context and this time to reflect the stated interest in transferability. Attendant in this issue is the role of the Blackfoot Challenge, and other robust collaborative conservation organizations, in this process. To conclude, a few 'design principles' will be suggested for emerging collaboratives.

<u>Starting Point</u>

In order to ask questions about transferability, it is necessary that we have a starting point. The starting point for this report is simply to ask the question: what are some characteristics of successful collaborative conservation organizations? In particular places some

individuals have created institutions, committed themselves to partnerships and cooperating, and have seen success with conservation outcomes. One of these places is the Blackfoot Valley in Montana.

The Blackfoot Challenge, a non-profit organization committed to coordinating conservation efforts from ridge-top to ridge-top in the Blackfoot watershed, has been very successful at building social capital. Several years ago, I often shrugged off notions of social capital as too intangible, too theoretical. And while mechanisms that build social capital may still remain largely out-of-sight, my time with the Blackfoot Challenge illustrated to me a case study in the functions of social capital. ***Social capital is interactive. Social capital is a group-level phenomenon. Social capital can be explained in terms of norms of reciprocity and mutual trust.*** By exploring dimensions of social capital, perhaps we can paint a clearer picture of what makes collaborative conservation successful. When asked about the essential elements of a collaborative approach, one program coordinator for the Blackfoot Challenge said:

> "Open communication. Everyone has a stake at the table, all the stakeholders. Trust. Honesty. A common goal and commitment by participants to work towards the common goal and setting aside differences to accomplish that."

Establishing the appropriate norms is important in order to facilitate the creation of social capital and get to some of these "essential elements" of successful collaboration. Norms can be reinforced through a variety of processes: forming groups, collaborating within and among groups, developing a united view of a shared future, and engaging in collective action.

With regards to forming groups, my time in the Blackfoot taught me that the ability to convene a diverse set of individuals is powerful. As one member of the board notes:

> "…my whole emphasis about what 'the Challenge' does and why they are successful is that they are able to pull in – at this time – they can pull in people from every single group. And by that, it is the only place that I've ever been, where they can get on the phone and get the forest service, BLM, private ranchers, private outfitters, mill people, loggers, ranchers, fish and game from MT, fish and game from federal, and plum creek timber and get all those representatives in one room to discuss."

The Blackfoot Challenge has the ability to convene a diverse set of interests and "set the table" for collaboration, which is very important in facilitating dialogue. Collaborating within and

between groups is another aspect of social capital, yet an important insight about collaboration follows:

> "the essence of collaboration is getting people together who are willing to leave their issue and agenda at the door and not really know where you're going to come out the other side. In a true collaboration you're going to put it all on the table and figure out where there is some opportunity to work together. And it may not be what you thought it was going to be when you walked in the door and if you don't have the ability to do that you're going to have a hard time with the collaborative process."

It is not just bringing everyone to the table, but to embrace uncertainty and being open to possibilities. Through this process it is often possible for a diverse set of interests to develop a united view of a shared future. The power individuals having a shared a past and expecting to have a share a future was apparent in the Blackfoot. As one subcommittee member talks about this,

> "Bringing community together to discuss shared values, dreams and goals and visions and the differences in doing that in forums where it is done regularly and non-threatening way and in a productive way."

Once this vision of a collective future is a part of the story, the door opens for collective action. This is an important piece of the success as it brings tangible benefits back to participants. In my time with the Blackfoot Challenge this was often referred to as "getting work done on-the-ground." "You've got to accomplish something that people can see and feel, and know that that difference on the ground is a benefit to the land and landowners," says a state natural resource management employee. Further, "I think it starts with starting with something that people can really get their hands on then building on success." The Blackfoot Challenge has had success in designing projects, getting funding, and implementing work on-the-ground for projects that span the range from water conservation to Grizzly Bear fencing. This is collective action.

A final key aspect of social capital, and one which I found to be fundamental in the Blackfoot, is reciprocity. That is, everybody in the room, and on the land, needs to think that they are getting something out of deal. One state agency employee draws on reciprocity when he says,

> "We've all experienced things that we feel are most important and sometimes you have to set them aside and say you know this is what I want but we can tweek it and do it another way. Is that a drawback, well you have to give up something. You can't always

be on the giving end sometimes you need to be on receiving end and then that will balance it out."

Successful conservation work is rarely going to come from just the "public" or "private" side of the fence. Rather, a fundamental principle for success in the Blackfoot Valley is a rich mixture of public and private cooperation and partnerships.

"Partnerships is a big one. A number of partners out here dealing with easements, fisheries, the parks biologists, the bear people…So that is one thing is developing these partnerships and open it up and not everybody running with their own little projects."

And further, these built in partnerships add capacity for quick collective action:

"And now we have all these cooperative agreements with agencies and now they just say here it is go out and implement it. So our staff is going out and getting people signed up and then the agency or other non-profit comes out and does the work."

One of the key drivers of these successful partnerships is trust. This is a fundamental aspect that makes social capital work. Individuals working within the Blackfoot Challenge framework and partners of the Blackfoot Challenge have, over many years, built trust in these relationships. One 22 year resident of the Blackfoot says,

"A lot of the success in the blackfoot is because people have come to the point I can trust my neighbor I can talk to them about my problems and the solution we come to is going to work for both of us… There has got to be trust and a willingness on both sides to work together to influence final outcome."

And he further illustrates the reciprocity aspect of this,

"Trust is critical. If you don't trust somebody you're never going to get anywhere. And that means you have to be trustworthy. It is not only you trusting somebody else but people trusting you. It has to work both ways."

Trust, reciprocity, collective action, future vision, collaboration – these are important drivers of the success I found in the Blackfoot Valley. However, the challenge of this research and report is to go further than revealing empirical elements of successful collaborative conservation organizations.

…..So, What is Next? The Right S.E.T.

Have the insights pulled from an analysis of social capital within the Blackfoot Challenge and the way it facilitates success in collaborative conservation brought us any closer to understanding transferability? Well, perhaps. At the very least it indicates some important features of "robust" models of collaborative conservation. However, there are still big questions about how success in one place with particular people can be replicated in another place with different people. The factors that make the Blackfoot Challenge successful appear, at first, to be intangible – particular to this place, at this time, with these people. Yet, that does not mean that the norms of operation that have worked in the Blackfoot Valley wouldn't also be applicable elsewhere. Success will depend on the particular configuration of variables related to the ecological characteristics of the landscape, the social rules in use, the attributes of the individuals involved as well as particular temporal factors. Instead of digging into the process of "scaling-out," let us first think about "scaling-down." By this I mean, what are some necessary conditions that can help guide the replication process – the question can be asked: is there the right SET?

(S) Social: Collaboration does not come easy, especially embedded in the conflict around natural resources experienced in the west. One problem may have to do with the social factors internal and external to a given group. The participants may simply have no capacity to communicate with one another, no way to develop trust, and no sense that they must share a common future.

Are the social conditions right for collaboration? There are several key social variables that contribute to the appropriate SET. I heard over and over again that it must start with the people.

> "It is the people that make it successful. So when you talk about transferring this I don't know if it works or not because I think it is the people who are willing to be a part of it that makes it successful."

Further, a federal land management employee notes,

> "People have to be willing to want to do this, they're growing tired of things that don't work so well and their trying to make some improvements and this is one way to do that but it has to happen in an environment where the seed is ripe."

The irony here is that good conservation work is not only about the natural resources, but perhaps more importantly about people. To help better understand 'the people,' three dimensions emerged as important: the process needs to be landowner driven, there needs to be a sense of community, and the right "type of" leaders need to be willing to lead.

I heard over and over again that in order for a collaborative process to be successful it needs to be driven by the landowners. It would be very difficult for a state and/or federal agency employee to initiate the forum for discussion and have the support of the community. It needs to come from the grassroots and not from the top-down. One Blackfoot Valley resident claims as an essential element to collaboration,

> "It starts with folks in the communities coming together with some common goals, some commonalities with what they see the landscape needing to be in 100 years. So that is key, it has got to come from the folks that live there."

A federal biologist echoes these sentiments,

> "The other part that is transferable is that the agency people should not be out front and center, it has got to be the landowners. If you can't get a landowner to step up and introduce you during a public meeting then you don't have buy in. You [agencies] have to somewhere behind the scenes."

However, as this Blackfoot Challenge board member notes, there is a caveat to the landowner-driven process,

> "But it was private landowners who said we've got to do something – they saw a need and starting working towards it. If agency hadn't supported it would've never happened. It takes support of people and agencies."

This raises a very important point. Drawing from the model of the Blackfoot Challenge, it is important that the process comes from the grassroots, from the people deriving their livelihoods from the land and interacting in the community. However, without agency support and participation real success will be difficult to achieve.

Collaboration is not only about working towards conservation outcomes, but intrinsic in the process is building community. As one local rancher notes, "I think being together – whether going to a branding or helping with ranch work it is a feeling of community." A sense of community is powerful and facilitates collaboration towards natural resource objectives. One Blackfoot Valley resident notes,

> "..it is the day to day interaction of people working together, visiting, building relationships working with people that over time starts wearing down mis-perceptions or whatever about something. That is what the [Blackfoot] challenge is doing on a day to day basis."

Community is a tricky concept to define, but most generally it involves interaction. This sense of community through interaction helps build those notions of a shared future, as one mill employee notes,

> "They all know each other, the ranchers help each other hay and do any number of different things. You develop these relationships with different folks and you can actually influence the future."

But even a process that is landowner driven in a place with a strong sense of community will not succeed without the right leadership. Personality is an important piece to this collaboration puzzle. "Checking your ego at the door," and being able to find common ground are important leadership characteristics with this process. One member of the Blackfoot Challenge describes this as such,

> "So first, find out in the community who are the key individuals who people listen to, respect, are credible, knowledgeable, have wide networks of folks in whatever their discipline or interest as well as in the community. So that is the place to start."

The best leaders may or may not be the city or county public officials. Leaders who often hold advantages in power relationships and stand to gain from the situation, while others lose, my block efforts for collaboration. One landowner in the Blackfoot says,

> "It is transferable, but you've got to find not necessarily the person who wants to do it but find the person that has the credibility and trust with his community to lead and try to talk them into leading it."

Finding the right leaders, along with the collaboration being landowner driven and being supported by a general sense of community are important social factors to consider with regards to collaboration. Next we will look at ecological factors.

(E) Ecological: Having the necessary social conditions are only one aspect of the "the right SET." The ecological characteristics of the place are important too. Having a relatively intact landscape and selecting the right species are important components of these ecological characteristics. As one federal land management employee notes,

> "We would not be successful if we didn't have a relatively intact landscape, relatively all the critters here that can get you so much money and prestige – you've got to have that science…We're lucky that we have the species we have, we're lucky to have the

> landowners we have. But I also think you can make luck happen, and part of that is selecting the right species. Its huge. Its huge."

Part of understanding these characteristics of the ecological is having scientific resources to draw from. When asked about the role of science, one state agency employee responded:

> "Its been huge and well received. I'll go so far to say it has been a driver in a lot, whether it is projects or issues that have come up. Science has been a driver…elk calving and forestry cuts, there are solutions. Science itself becomes the driver…"

Having the science to support the conservation work is important. Yet, the way the science is conveyed is equally important. A wildlife biologist living in the Blackfoot notes,

> "The Grizzly or Bull Trout or whatever, science tells you where that is, what the issues are and how you deal with it. Yet the science needs to be able to connect with the community… If you don't have the community behind you can have the best science in the world and it is not going to get you there."

These sentiments were repeated a number of times, "But when you talk to the community, talk information don't talk data…the information they have [scientists] is critical, but must be presented right to get buy-in," notes one part time Blackfoot contractor. So, again, the irony here is that even in considerations of the ecological, social factors become important. Having a relatively intact landscape, selecting the right species, and having the science to support the conservation work is an important component of the right S.E.T. Yet, there are temporal considerations that need to be considered too.

(T) <u>Temporal:</u> Even with the right social and ecological conditions, ultimately it also "has to be the right time." One forest service employee recognizes the characteristics of these temporal conditions,

> "Its not that it is a secret and it is not like it is hard you just have to have the right people in right place at right time to be willing to come together and I don't know that there are a lot of places where those things do coalesce at right time."

In addition to it being "the right time," another dimension of the temporal conditions is the capacity to invest time. One Blackfoot Challenge member from a non-profit notes,

> "A lot of getting together and getting to know people and being there long enough that people know you're going to show up and not do the wrong thing. It takes a lot of time…But it takes showing up all the time and being part of the process and long hours to understand where people come from."

Further noted by a federal agency employee,

> "The drawbacks are in the early years it is very time consuming. Most people aren't willing to put that sort of effort in even though in the end it will pay huge benefits but in the beginning it is tough."

One aspect of investing time is being patient. One long-term resident in the Valley notes, "You have to be patient. If you're an impatient person you're in trouble." Part of that patience is staying on the same page as your partners says a key player in the Blackfoot Challenge,

> "Its a lot of patience, a lot of…process is not getting ahead of your partners. Nothing can emphasize how important that is. Everybody is in a different place and public and private partners have their different mandates and own rules they operate with."

There clearly is no magic formula or blueprint for successful collaboration. It takes the right people, in the right place, and at the right time. In addition to considering the "S.E.T." a few "design principles" emerged from the analysis of this research. These can, perhaps, serve as points of guidance or principles for starting collaboratives.

Design Principles:

To bring us back to a fundamental question of collaborative conservation, what we are trying to understand is a theory of collective action whereby a group of individuals can organize themselves voluntarily to retain the benefits of their own conservation efforts. Some places have seen success with regards to this. Others are emerging. Keeping these notions in mind can help.

Starting Small is Okay

Starting small, with easy problems that can be solved is a good place to start. Success breeds success, and getting a group of people together to talk about an issue is just as good as any place to start. One Blackfoot rancher notes,

> …you have to start small and then grow. I think sometimes people try to make things too big and that doesn't always work… You know ideas start at a small table like this

between several people who have an idea then they expand upon it and bring the appropriate group of folks together and let it grow, but consciously, don't just throw it out there without a lot of thought.

The 80 / 20 Rule

One way to start small is to focus on the issues you can agree on. A Blackfoot Valley resident and former employee states it this way,

> "80/20 is about focusing on the 80% we agree on and not the 20% we don't. Acknowledge that it is there, but that we don't have to deal with it right now. Lets set it aside and as we develop our communication and trust and credibility maybe there will come a time when we can start working on that 20%."

Landowner and Agency Understanding

An important aspect of getting to the point where the 80% can be worked on is having the landowners and agency "see eye to eye." Developing these relationships, and seeing "the others" as on the same side is a tough, but necessary starting point. A Blackfoot resident who makes his livelihood ranching and logging notes,

> "But we as landowners, people, are fearful of government fearful of anybody connected to government but what you quickly discover when you have something like the Blackfoot Challenge, when you sit down across the table with agency people is that they are just like you and I. They deeply care for the land as much as I do."

Collaboration doesn't mean Consensus

And finally, a key point in starting small, the 80 /20 rule, as well as landowner – agency relationships is collaboration doesn't mean consensus. A federal land management employee explicates this,
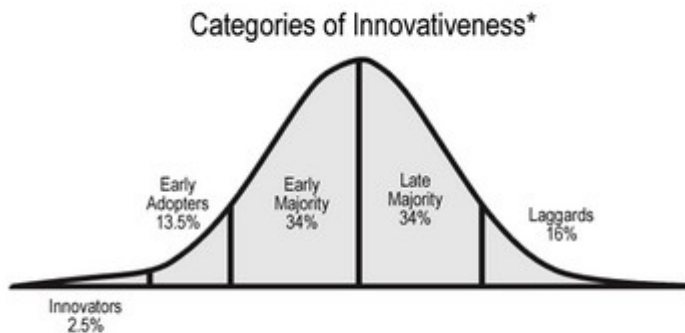
> "I now realize consensus is definitely not the right term because it is often difficult to reach consensus, but you can collaborate to come up with something you can live with."

But where does this leave us now? We've explored some aspects that make for successful collaboration, and explored a possible S.E.T. of conditions that are conducive for collaborative emergence as well as some design principles that are helpful to keep in mind. Does that get us any closer to answering the question of transferability?

Now…transferability?

Thus far, this report has shown some evidence of characteristics of a successful collaborative conservation approach as well as discussed some dimensions of necessary drivers. But that was the easy part. Having some insight into the complexity of collaboration, getting "the institution right" will be difficult, time-consuming, conflict-invoking process. It is a process that requires reliable information about social and ecological variables as well as an understanding about temporal dimensions involved.   Where do we stand with regards to transferability? Several handbooks and guides have been written to help assist people facilitating or participating in collaborative approaches. However, there remains a large gap in empirical and theoretical understanding of this process.

One sociological model that traditionally has been used to explain the transference of conservation techniques is the "adoption and diffusion of innovation" model. Diffusion is the process through which an innovation, defined as an idea perceived as new, spreads via certain communication channels over time through society. Adoption and diffusion of innovation is a theory of how, why and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. The model grew out of technological innovations in U.S. agriculture in the 1950s. The general model looks something like this:

Categories of Innovativeness*

Early
Adopters
13.5%

Early
Majority
34%

Late
Majority
34%

Laggards
16%

Innovators
2.5%

*From E.M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, 4th edition (New York: The Free Press, 1995)

For example, if we took all the watersheds in the four state area of the Pacific Northwest including Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon and looked at efforts at collaborative conservation we could apply this model. There would be the "innovators," those like the Blackfoot Challenge who have been working the details out for over 30 years. There would also be "early adopters," as well as the "early majority" who have been working towards collaborative efforts and may have had some successes. Also, perhaps we would find those

watersheds that have shown an interest in this approach but not sure where to start – the late majority. Finally, I'm sure there are communities / watersheds out there who like just fine the way things are and have not interest in collaborative conservation – laggards. This is all hypothetical of course, but even through this thought experiment two specific problems come to mind: 1) the innovation/model is immutable, and communities/watershed are just waiting for it to reach them to adopt it, and 2) somebody needs to be pushing the innovation, traditionally "the experts."

This research has, indeed, found these two points to be problems. Rather than mutable models which are expert-driven, the transferability process needs flexibility and adaptive capacity of adopters to change the model relative to their particular context and a less expert-drive, more diffuse process. Speaking to the idea of "re-inventing" the model, one landowner says:

> "Lets take these programs more broad in their statements and let's let the local people interpret what makes sense in their landscape. And it comes down to flexibility of people to make decisions."

When asked about transferability, one board member notes,

> "I think you do it very cautiously and thoughtfully. Don't go and take our story and say this is how you do it follow these steps and everything will be fine…We have a responsibility to tell our story about how we did it, but don't try to tell people they need to do the same thing just let them know they can accomplish something."

The Blackfoot model may not look exactly the same in Oregon, or even in one watershed over. A Blackfoot rancher makes this observation, "I'm not so sure that you can take the same model that we have here and transfer it to somewhere else, but I think you can encourage people to look at the process of collaborative work." Yet, this research supports the idea that "robust" collaboratives, such as the Blackfoot Challenge, do have a role to play. One executive board member says, "we feel a strong responsibility to make it work for others around the country." Further, another executive committee member notes,

> "The thing is we're not going to survive in the Blackfoot if we don't understand how we fit into this larger landscape. Its about landscape conservation. If the Blackfoot stays intact but everything around us doesn't, what did we do this for? We're an island and the rest of all this is nonfunctioning. We need it all to function and the Blackfoot will function because everything else functions and we need to be connected to much bigger place."

However, the caveat here is that embedded in this "desire" and "responsibility" towards transferability there is a concern of maintaining legitimacy at home. One state land manager says,

> "The other thing you've got to do is don't forget where you came from – we started with land owners and managers in the Blackfoot to get things done. And if you become too big to keep that as priority you are going to lose the very people that you've worked so hard to get and that is people in the Blackfoot. That has got to be the highest priority."

So where does that leave us? Clearly, there is interest in transferring this model to other places. Yet, there needs to flexibility and adaptive capacity in the design. There is a role for these robust organizations to play, yet it must be done cautiously to avoid being the "experts" while also staying connected to the grassroots. What I'm going to propose is an "open source paradigm."

Open Source:

There are emerging alternatives to the traditional "adoption" model that can help address the concerns noted above. As mentioned, I believe there is a role for robust collaboratives in facilitating the transference process, yet there is need to remain flexible in start-ups as well as staying connected to the home watershed. Open Source, traditionally emerging out of software development, promotes access to the end products "source materials." This philosophy has potential for innovation of much greater proportions. It can guide the collective development of any intellectual content, including the transference of collaborative conservation. In this context, the open source (OS) paradigm includes the concept of concurrent yet different agendas and differing approaches towards collaborative conservation. This embraces the concept of adaptive capacity and that collaborative arrangements may look very different from place to place. An open source paradigm would recognize the power of networks: connecting people and organizing work to access a greater diversity of perspectives and expertise while reducing costs of participation and coordination. New tools and technologies often referred as web 2.0, social software, social technology, etc. will help facilitate coordination and communication over greater geographic distance. This open source paradigm would also embrace notions of social learning. As one board member notes, "Let's have a conversation, lets learn about it and we'll come out more informed." Further, this open source paradigm reinforces sentiments I found during my time in the Blackfoot,

> "Whether it is public to public, public to private, or private to private that is the ridge top to ridge top idea, it's a watershed model looking across the boundaries. But what we're starting to understand is we should do that with other watersheds. The only way we're going to survive and do our work in the Blackfoot is if we understand how this watershed connects to other watersheds. The conflict is that you can't pull off landscape level work, there can't be one group working it is just too big."

The open source paradigm suggests embracing those connections, and facilitating collective learning and development of collaborative models. Yet, it does so from a perspective of emergence. Collaborative conservation is not simply an innovation to "be adopted," rather a process that will look different as result of different social, ecological, and temporal conditions variable from place to place. Creating transparency of process, opening up communication channels, supporting and encouraging new collaboratives, and staying connected to other watersheds are important factors are fundamental to an open source "transference process."

I will be the first to admit that this paradigm and approach to transferability needs to be developed further. Applying an open source paradigm in this context raises more questions than it answers and some of them might even lead to substantial rethinking of the very concept of "organization for innovation" and to a better understanding of innovation among distributed groups who use social-based innovations to produce ecological outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This report, and this research, starts to answer very difficult questions which are underexplored in the collaborative conservation and environmental governance literature. The problem of transferability may take many names including replication, scaling-out, and innovation adoption but the fundamental question of how success in one place with certain people can be transferred to another place with different people remains the same. The report has addressed some characteristics of social capital which appear to make collaborative conservation successful, and how it is manifest within the Blackfoot Challenge. Some S.E.T. conditions that may be necessary in order for successful collaboration to emerge, as well as some possible design principles to guide the transference process. Most importantly, this report has started the conversation about the "process" of transferability. Contrary to an expert-driven, adoption of

innovation framework this research supports a more diffuse, decentralized, adaptive process. Creating transparency of process, opening up communication channels, supporting and encouraging new collaboratives, and staying connected to other watersheds are important factors in the "transference process." Hopefully, this report will provide a good starting point for both theory and practice with regards to transferability.