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## EVALUATING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT

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EVALUATING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE CROWN OF THE  
CONTINENT

By

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Professional Paper

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

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# ABSTRACT

For over a decade the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent – a landscape-scale collaborative conservation network– has convened and connected people together to enhance conservation, culture, and community in the Crown of the Continent region. After years of conferences, workshops, and projects, participants have expressed a need to take stock of the difference that the network has made. This paper shares the results of an evaluation that used both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the social impacts the Roundtable has generated for active participants. Study results reveal that the Roundtable has generated measurable and meaningful impacts for active participants, including enhanced relationships, increased trust, expanded collaboration with Tribes and First Nations, and greater cultural understanding. This study also found that by generating these impacts, the Roundtable has facilitated collaboration across borders and enabled actively participating organizations to catalyzed change across the Crown. In addition to highlighting the impacts that funders, organizations, and individuals have generated through their participation in the Roundtable, this study also identifies gaps and opportunities for the network to optimize their efforts in the future.

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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY EVALUATE IMPACT?

Landscape-scale conservation is increasingly being seen as an approach that is needed to address the complex challenges – such as climate change and habitat fragmentation -- threatening the integrity of ecosystems and communities around the planet (Vasilijević et al., 2015). Over the last few decades, collaborative networks that work across boundaries and scales, include diverse stakeholders, and address multiple issues, have proliferated to forward more effective landscape-scale conservation (Scarlett & McKinney, 2016). Given the substantial investment of time and resources that participants, funders, and governments are dedicating to collaborative efforts, it is important to understand what difference these efforts are making to advance landscape-scale conservation.

While many collaborative conservation efforts have worked to evaluate their process (e.g., who is involved; how they work together) and the outputs they produce (e.g., agreements; projects implemented), few have demonstrated the **impact**<sup>1</sup> they have had on landscapes and communities (Koontz et al., 2020). Demonstrating impact is

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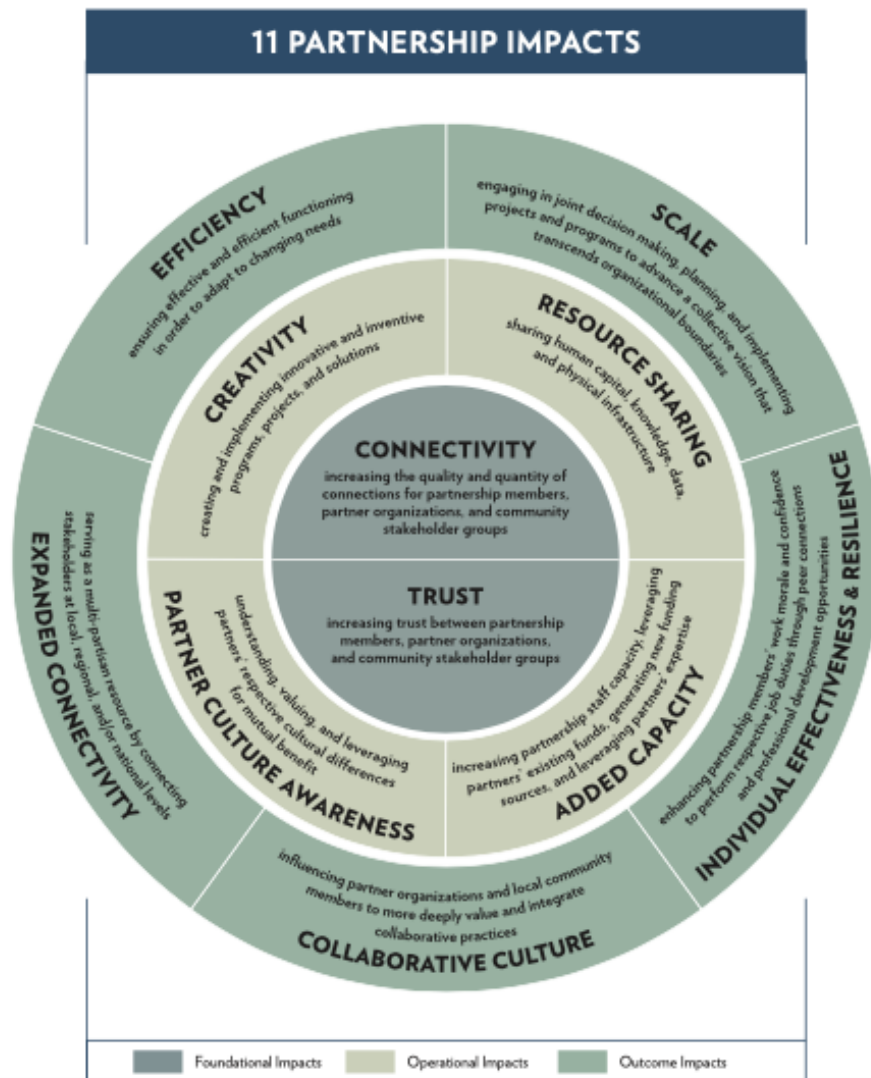
<sup>1</sup> Impact is defined as the outcomes, or “value added”, that result from a network’s efforts.

important; doing so can help participants and funders understand the difference they are ultimately making and identify opportunities to optimize success (Mickel & Goldberg, 2019). While measuring impact can be difficult given the long-time scales, complex dynamics, and differing definitions of success (Thomas & Koontz, 2011), a few evaluative tools have recently been developed to help collaborative efforts demonstrate the impact or success they are generating (Mickel & Goldberg, 2018; Varda & Sprong, 2020).

This study applied one such tool – the **Partnership Impact Model**<sup>2</sup> -- to evaluate the impact that the landscape-scale collaborative conservation network, The Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent, has had over the last decade. **The primary goal of this study was to understand, measure, and communicate the impact that the Roundtable has on active participants.** Through surveys and interviews with representatives of organizations that are active participants in the Roundtable, conversations with the Roundtable’s Leadership Team, and the review of historical documents, this study not only takes a retrospective look at the impacts the Roundtable has generated for active participants; it also draws from the Partnership Impact Model to establish a baseline for tracking the Roundtable’s impact into the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Learn more about the Partnership Impact Model by visiting <https://www.onetam.org/partnership-impact-model>



**THE PARTNERSHIP IMPACT MODEL.** Researchers Dr. Amy Mickel and Leah Goldberg developed the Partnership Impact Model shown here through a multi-year mixed methods evaluation of the One Tam partnership (California). Study results found that the One Tam partnership had generated 11 independent, scalable impacts grouped into three impact classifications: *foundational, operational, and outcome*. Image credit: Mickel & Goldberg, 2018.



### **THE PARTNERSHIP IMPACT MODEL: A Tool for Assessing Impact**

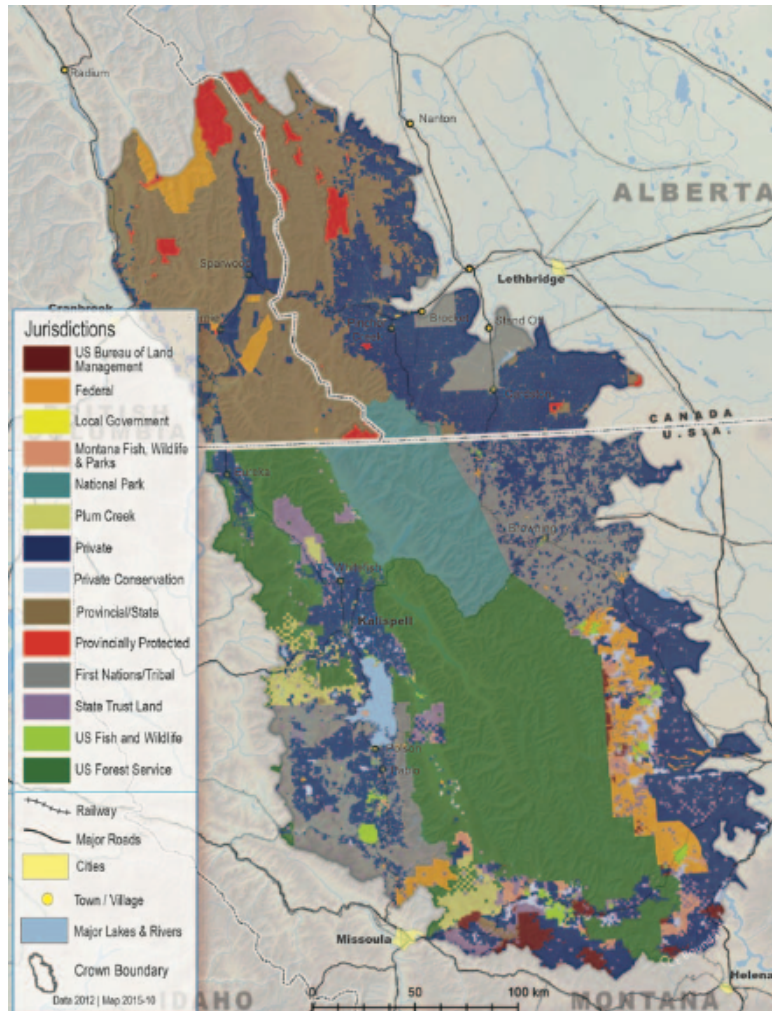
This study adapted the Partnership Impact Model as a tool to assess the impact of the Roundtable. While the co-creators of the Partnership Impact Model found 11 impacts specifically associated with the One Tam Partnership, they also created the Partnership Impact Roadmap to help other partnerships, networks, and collaboratives assess their own impacts. By first conceptualizing, defining, and prioritizing which potential impacts a collaborative may have generated, the roadmap suggests that an evaluator can then appropriately tailor evaluative methods to assess the impacts that are important to that partnership, organization, or network. Including a mixed methods approach, as was done here, can also create space for unidentified impacts to emerge through the course of an evaluation. While the model suggests that some impacts – such as trust – may be generated by most partnerships, it also creates a blueprint for each partnership or network to discover and assess the impacts that may be specific and/or unique to them.

### **THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT**

The Crown of the Continent is one of the most iconic, biodiverse, and intact landscapes in North America (Chambers et al., 2010). Spanning over 18-Million acres across Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana, the Crown is the crossroads between the Great Plains, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific Northwest ecosystems. High peaks of snow and ice form the headwaters of river systems that flow to the Pacific Ocean, Hudson Bay, and Gulf of Mexico. The Crown also holds the greatest diversity of plants

and aquatic life in the Rocky Mountains and is the only landscape on the continent that has retained all of its native large carnivores – including wolves, grizzly and black bears, cougars, and wolverines (Chambers et al., 2010; Crown Managers Partnership, 2016).

This remarkable landscape attracts millions of visitors each year who come seeking recreation, renewal, and inspiration, and is home to diverse communities and cultures who rely on the Crown's clean waters and abundant natural resources. Since time immemorial the region's indigenous peoples have been sustained by and stewarded the Crown's lands and waters. Today, the management of the Crown is led by over two dozen entities including Tribes and First Nations, federal, state, provincial, and local governments, private landowners, and non-profit organizations. While a map of the Crown may show a complex set of borders and jurisdictions, the region's waters, ecosystems, wildlife, and peoples are inextricably linked as one landscape. This patchwork of managers, landowners, and jurisdictions makes efforts to conserve and maintain the integrity of the Crown landscape difficult (Chambers et al., 2010).



**MAP OF THE CROWN'S JURISDICTIONAL COMPLEXITY.** Each color on this map of the Crown landscape represents a different type of land ownership. With over a dozen land management jurisdictions, conservation of the Crown at a landscape-scale requires working across myriad boundaries, managers, and perspectives. Image credit: CMP, 2016.

In response, managers and communities have increasingly recognized the need to work across boundaries to conserve this special place. In 1932 the Canadian and United States governments came together to establish the world's first International Peace Park – Glacier-Waterton – to forward transboundary conservation at the heart of the Crown, while in 1983 the Montana Legislature created the Flathead Basin

Commission to bring together agencies and stakeholders to monitor and protect water quality in the Crown's largest watershed (Chambers et al., 2010). In 2001 scientists and agencies from across the landscape formed the Crown Managers Partnership to further work across boundaries and address common ecological challenges (Crown Managers Partnership, 2016). While these efforts enabled better management across jurisdictions, many stakeholders and landowners key to addressing the landscape-scale challenges facing the Crown – such as climate change, habitat fragmentation, and increased demand for the region's natural resources – were still not connected to one another.

After years of deliberate discussion and planning, in 2010 the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy (University of Montana) and the Center for Large Landscape Conservation launched the **Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent**<sup>3</sup> as a “network of networks” to bring together all stakeholders from across the Crown to promote and sustain culture, community, and conservation on the landscape (Reuling et al, 2015)<sup>4</sup>. Today, the Roundtable continues to create a unique forum for tribes and first nations, working landowners, business leaders, local officials, agency staff, conservationists, universities and colleges, community members, and the region's

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<sup>3</sup> Learn more about the Roundtable at [www.crownroundtable.net](http://www.crownroundtable.net).

<sup>4</sup> While the CNREP and CLLC convened the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent, its formation would not have been possible but for the dozens of partners and stakeholders who added their time, resources, and knowledge to make the network a success.

young people to come together to address the challenges facing the Crown. As reflected in the results shown below, the Roundtable's vital work of convening and connecting people has been instrumental in catalyzing change for the communities and landscapes across the Crown over the last decade.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES**

### **Annual Conference**

Since 2010, the Roundtable has convened an annual conference to connect stakeholders, managers, and community members with one another. No other forum in the Crown brings together as diverse a spectrum of perspectives from across the entire landscape as the Roundtable's annual conference. The annual conference includes plenary sessions, workshops, informal opportunities to get to know each other, and space to honor the heritage and leadership of the region's Tribes and First Nations. By building relationships, sharing knowledge, having hard conversations, and creating a shared vision for the Crown, the annual conference serves as a catalyst for the collaboration needed to tackle the challenges facing the Crown at a landscape-scale.

### **Leadership Team**

Since 2011, a core team of leaders from across the Crown have convened monthly to plan Roundtable events, forward collaborative projects, and strengthen the

relationships needed to steward the Crown at a landscape-scale. The Roundtable's Leadership Team has included diverse representation from stakeholders, managers, and community members from across the landscape. Members live and work in Canada, the United States, and the region's Tribes and First Nations communities. Today, the Leadership Team continues this work while serving as a bridge between diverse constituents and many of the Crown's collaborative efforts<sup>5</sup>.

### **Adaptive Management Initiative**

From 2012-2015, with the Kresge Fountain's support, the Roundtable facilitated the Adaptive Management Initiative (AMI), one of the first large-scale climate adaptation efforts enacted across an entire landscape. With the goal of promoting a culture of stewardship by finding common values, supporting community leadership, promoting shared learning, and seeking place-based solutions, the Roundtable provided \$800,000 to fund 45 projects across the Crown through the AMI (Reuling et al., 2015). By funding large and established projects, representing the entire region, that focus on enhancing culture, community, and conservation at the same time, the AMI has had a tangible on-the-ground-impact on the adaptability of the Crown's landscapes and communities to climate change (Bixler et al., 2016).

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<sup>5</sup> A list of current Roundtable Leadership Team members can be found in the acknowledgements section below.

## **Workshops and Webinars**

In addition to the annual conference, the Roundtable continues to create opportunities to connect and forward collaboration around the challenges facing the Crown. In 2017, the Roundtable convened a Tribal Managers Meeting to advance Tribes and First Nations-led collaboration on aquatic invasive species management. Despite the immense obstacles of 2020, the Roundtable adapted to host their first virtual symposium and began a webinar series exchanging lessons from conservation efforts in Altai Russia – an ecologically similar landscape – with those from the Crown.

## COLLABORATIVE MILESTONES: A Timeline of Roundtable Activities

**2008** – The Lincoln Institute convenes a small workshop of stakeholders to explore the idea of a “Roundtable” to connect the various initiatives of the Crown.

**2010** – The Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy and the Center for Large Landscape Conservation come together to codirect the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent. The First Annual Conference, *Remarkable Beyond Borders: Shaping the Future of the Crown of the Continent* is held at Waterton Lakes National Park (Alberta, Canada) to explore the past, present, and future of the Crown.

**2011** – The Roundtable formalizes its Leadership Team, bringing together diverse leaders from across the Crown to forward events, projects, and relationships catalyzing change.

**2012** – With funding from the Kresge Foundation, the Roundtable launches the Adaptive Management Initiative funding efforts across the Crown that support communities and ecosystems adapt to climate change.

**2015** – After just three years, the Roundtable provides \$800,000 of funding to 45 projects in the Crown through the Adaptive Management Initiative, catalyzing partnerships and on the ground impact across the landscape.

**2017** – The Roundtable convenes a Tribal Managers Meeting in Choteau, Montana, bringing together leaders from the regions Tribe’s and First Nations to forward tribal-led solutions around Aquatic Invasive Species management in the Crown.

**2020** – Adapting to the challenges of COVID-19, the Roundtable hosts its 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference as a virtual symposium, gathering over 100 people from across the Crown for shared learning and discussion.

**TODAY** – The Roundtable continues to host leadership team meetings and is planning its next annual conference, a series of workshops, and several efforts to forward environmental justice across the Crown.



# ROUNDTABLE IMPACT EVALUATION FINDINGS

## THE IMPACTS ON ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

The following results draw from surveys administered to organizations that are **active participants**<sup>6</sup> in the Roundtable's activities, interviews with leaders from across the Crown, facilitated discussions with the Roundtable's Leadership Team, and historical documents produced by and about the Roundtable<sup>7</sup>. Through social network analysis, quantitative assessment, and qualitative assessment, I identified four central impacts that active participants have experienced as a direct result of the Roundtable's efforts and activities. This section details each of those impacts, highlighting the difference that the Roundtable has made for active participants over a decade of activity.

Most of the impacts identified in the following pages have been named by numerous practitioners, networks, and researchers as key indicators of success for collaborative efforts (Innes, 1999; McKinney & Harmon, 2004). This study also identified several impacts that set the Roundtable apart as a unique and distinctive collaborative effort in the region. The fact that the following outcomes are being achieved is a demonstration

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<sup>6</sup> Active participants are defined as organizations who have attended at least two of the last three annual conferences (2020,2019,2017), or are currently represented on the Roundtable's Leadership Team. Active participants were identified using the Roundtable's contact lists and conference summaries.

<sup>7</sup> A detailed summary of the methods used for this study can be found in the attached appendix.

of the vital role that Roundtable is playing for the communities and landscapes of the Crown.

#### A FOCUS ON ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

The Roundtable's efforts largely rest on involved organizations' investing time, resources, and participation in the network. Consequently, this evaluation targeted representatives of organizations that actively participate in the Roundtable to understand how they have been impacted as a result of being involved with the network. To focus the scope accordingly, active participants were defined as representatives of organizations that either attended two out of the last three Roundtable annual conferences or currently serve on the Roundtable's leadership team. It is important to note that this definition does not include many participants that are unaffiliated with an organization (such as many landowners and community members) involved in the network; future evaluative efforts should seek to reach the voices not included in the scope of this study.

The Roundtable has enhanced **relationships**<sup>8</sup> and increased **trust** between both actively participating individuals and organizations. While intuitive, these core aspects of relating to one another have been identified as cornerstones of a healthy collaborative process and network (Leach & Sabatier, 2005; Provan et al., 2005; Varda et al., 2008).

Several researchers, including the creators of the Partnership Impact Model that helped

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<sup>8</sup> While the term relationships resonated more closely with members of the Roundtable's Leadership Team than connectivity – as defined by the Partnership Impact Model -- they can be considered interchangeable when discussing impacts.

guide this study, identify relationships as trust as foundational to achieving further impact; without either, it is unlikely that a partnership or network will achieve lasting success (Innes, 1999; Mickel & Goldberg, 2018).

Expanded **Tribes and First Nations collaboration** has been another central outcome of the Roundtable's activities. Given the important role that Tribes and First Nations have as managers of the landscape and community members across the Crown (Chambers et al., 2010), the Roundtable has striven from the beginning to honor, include, and support tribal leadership and communities.

By convening and connecting diverse perspectives, the Roundtable has directly cultivated greater **cultural understanding** amongst participants. Many participants have identified the Roundtable as a "neutral space" for having hard conversations and learning with and from one another. Cultural understanding has been developed between Canadian and United States participants, Tribes and First Nations, Tribal and non-Tribal participants, and the diverse perspectives representing many sectors, jurisdictions, and communities in the region.

While the Roundtable's primary activities are to convene and connect people with one another, study findings clearly demonstrate that the Roundtable has catalyzed change

in myriad ways. The relationships and conversations the Roundtable generates are directly responsible for a multitude of projects and partnerships that have made a positive and tangible difference for the communities, cultures, and ecosystems of the Crown.

## ENHANCED RELATIONSHIPS

*The Roundtable has increased both the quantity and quality of relationships for participating organizations and individuals.*

Relationships are the foundation of a successful network (Provan et al., 2005). The amount and frequency of connections between participants is an indicator of the quantity of relationships in a network, while the types of activities participants conduct with one another is an indicator of the quality of relationships (Varda et al., 2008; Mickel & Goldberg, 2018). Study results demonstrate that the Roundtable has increased both the quantity and quality of relationships for active participants. 82% of those surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that the Roundtable had improved communication and strengthened relationships between participating organizations.

A core way that the Roundtable has strengthened relationships is through its annual conference, which has cumulatively brought together over 1,400 participants from all

corners of the Crown across ten convenings. The rotating location of the annual conference, which is held in a different quadrant of the region each year, enables individuals, organizations, and community members to forward transboundary relationships and collaborations across the landscape.

*“The Roundtable[s] annual conferences have been an engaging and effective convening for meeting people in the landscape and deepening conversations.”*

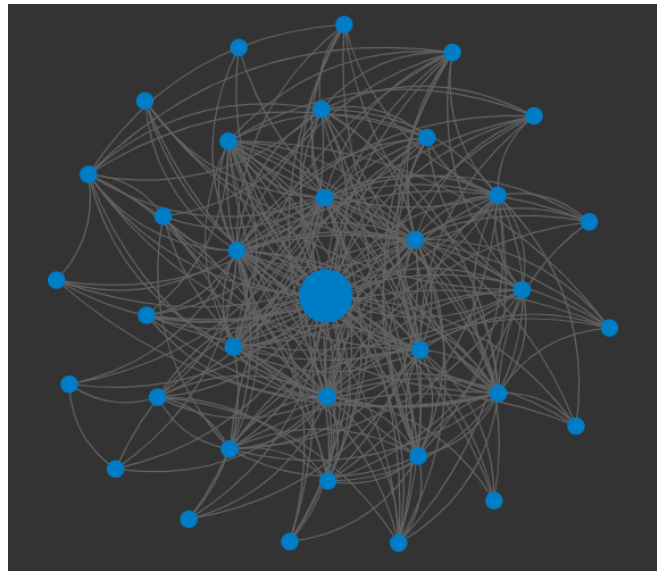
*-Roundtable Network Survey Respondent*

Monthly meetings of the Leadership team have also enabled the Roundtable to connect leaders, organizations, and collaborative efforts with one another. For several participants, the Roundtable’s Leadership team has helped them to better “know who the players are” across the landscape and identify both people and organizations they can work with to advance cross-boundary work.

*“Serving on the leadership team has connected me and my organization to others across the region -- building both individual (personal) and organizational relationships that have fostered understanding and exchange.”*

*-Roundtable Network Survey Respondent*

The Roundtable Network Survey – distributed to understand how the relationships between active organizations in the Roundtable’s network have changed over time – revealed a broad web of connections amongst active organizations in the Roundtable’s network<sup>9</sup>.



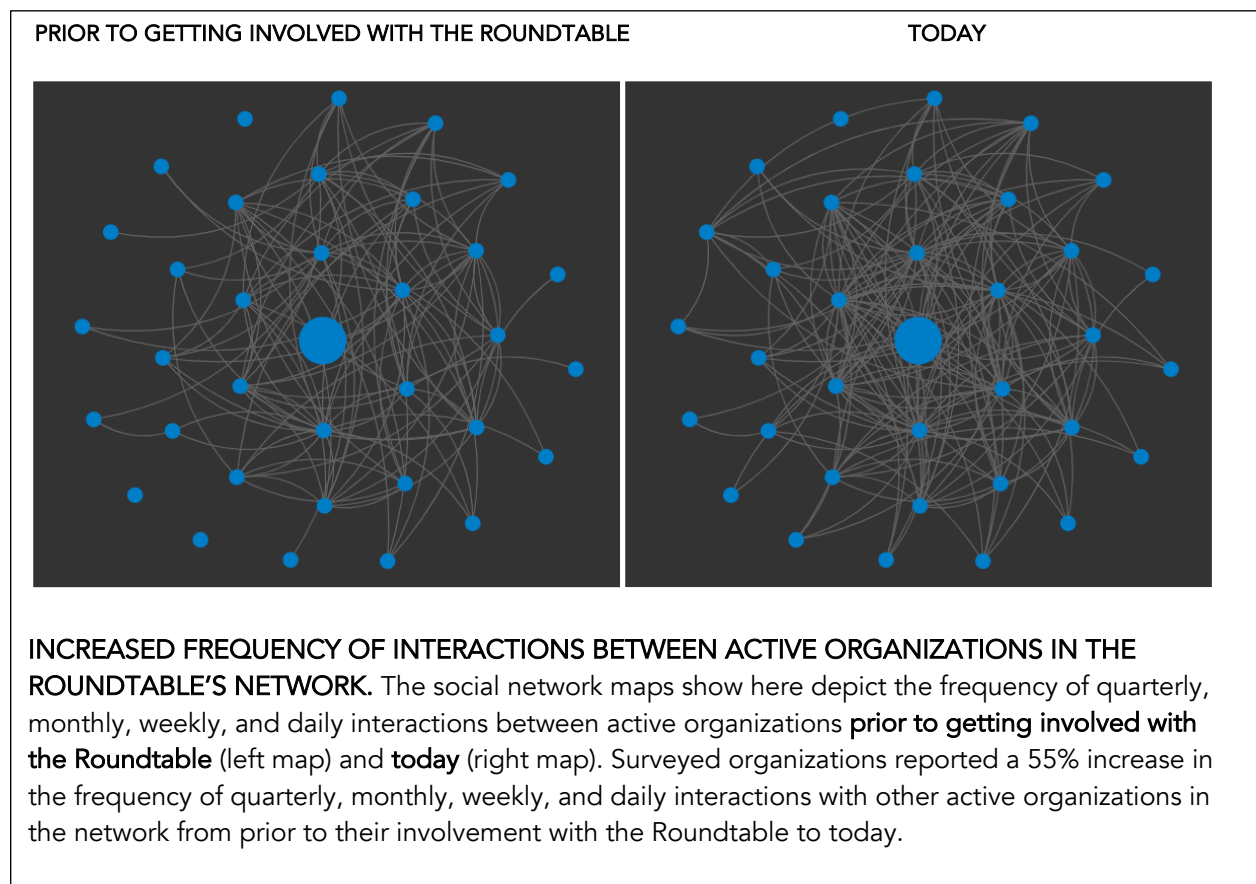
**SOCIAL NETWORK MAP OF THE ROUNDTABLE’S ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS.** The social network map shown here depicts the network of connections amongst surveyed active participants in the Roundtable. Blue dots represent active participants in the Roundtable’s network, while lines represent relationships between them. The large dot in the center represents the Roundtable.

A sample of the Roundtable network’s actively participating organizations revealed that the frequency of interactions has increased between organizations from prior to their involvement with the Roundtable to today. The two social network maps below paint a picture of the increase in quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily interactions between

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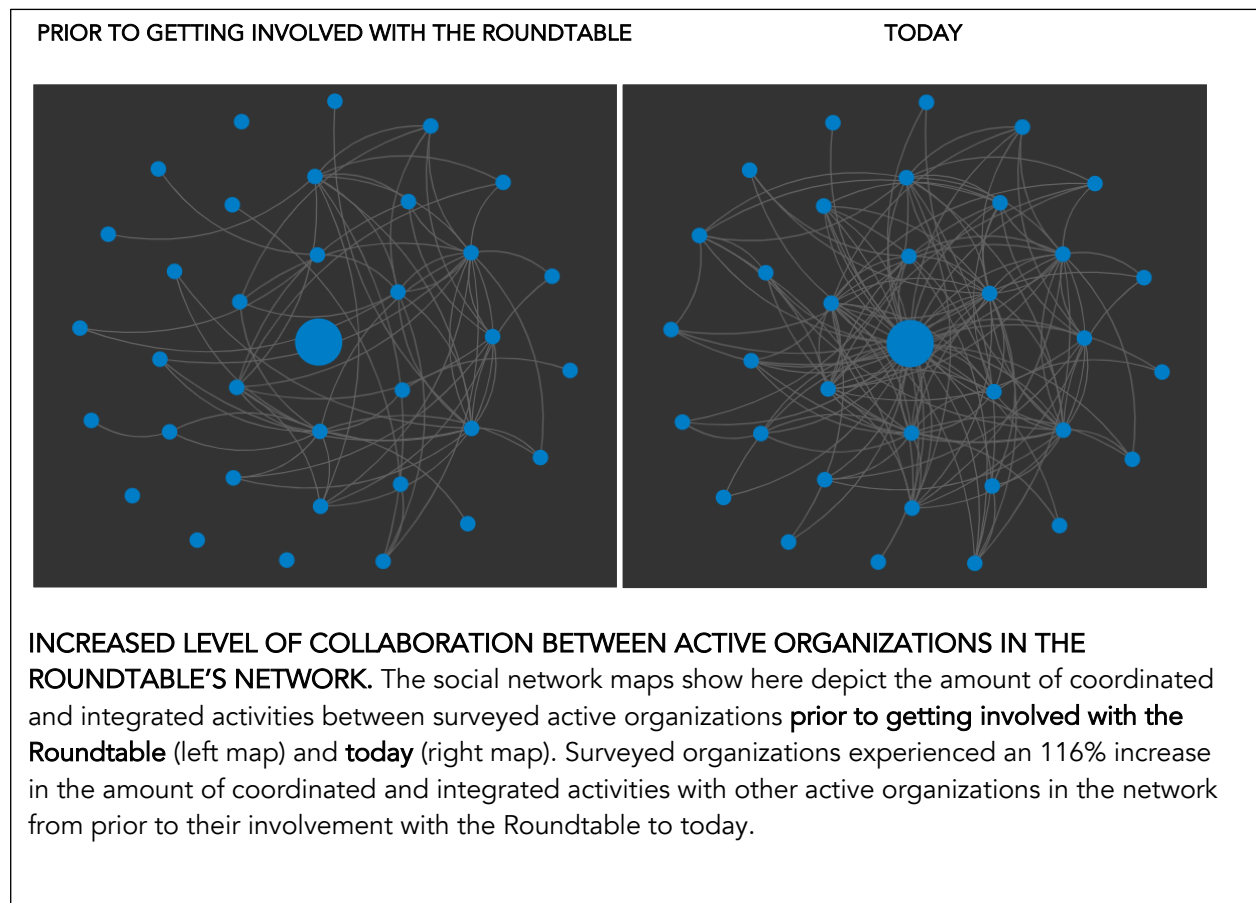
<sup>9</sup> The Roundtable had a total degree of 45, compared with a network average of 15.9. Total degree is the measure of a node’s total number of connections, weighted in comparison with the rest of a network.

organizations in the Roundtable's network. After joining the Roundtable, many organizations in the network have increased how often they interact with one another from just once a year to many times a year or even daily. Active participants reported a 55% increase in the number of quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily interactions with other organizations from prior to their involvement in the Roundtable to now.



The type of activity that participants conduct with one another is an important indicator of the quality of relationships between organizations in a network (Varda et al., 2008). When asked to assess the kind of activity conducted with other organizations, respondents to the Roundtable Network Survey reported an increase in the level of

collaboration<sup>10</sup> with other organizations after getting involved with the Roundtable. In total, surveyed active participants have seen an 116% increase in the occurrence of coordinated and integrated activities with other organizations since they started participating in the Roundtable.



<sup>10</sup> Level of collaboration is assessed by participants' responses to the question "What kind of activities does your organization conduct with this organization", with choices including: none (no activities), cooperative activities (exchanging information, attending meetings together, and offering resources to partners), coordinated activities (cooperative activities and intentional efforts to enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit), and integrated activities (cooperative activities, coordinated activities, and the act of using commonalities to create a unified center of knowledge and programming). The level of collaboration increases from none to integrated activities (Varda & Sprong, 2020)



Today, every surveyed organization in the Roundtable's network of engages in at least some coordinated and integrated activities with other organizations in the network – demonstrating a shift to higher levels of collaborative activities between sampled organizations after they became involved with the Roundtable.

#### **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE: Strengthening Partnerships in the Crown**

From 2012-2015 the Roundtable facilitated the Adaptive Management Initiative (AMI), which provided grant funding to over 45 projects forwarding climate change adaptation for communities across the Crown. Projects ranged from efforts to increase ecosystem resilience on the Rocky Mountain front through weed management, to local schools and community members in ecosystem monitoring and climate change. Instead of only distributing project funding to isolate organizations, the Roundtable worked to connect funded organizations and leaders with one another through workshops and monthly calls, building partnerships and fostering collaboration across participants. After just two years, the network of organizations involved in the AMI grew from 12 to 22, while ties between those organizations more than doubled<sup>1</sup>; strengthening partnerships and collaborations across the Crown (Bixler et al., 2016).

## INCREASED TRUST

*The Roundtable has increased the level of trust between organizations and individuals involved with its network.*

Trust is the cornerstone to healthy relationships, forging lasting agreements, and advancing successful collaboration (Innes, 1999). Research on collaborative efforts across the West have underscored the vital role that trust plays in advancing conservation goals (Bingham, 1985; Leach and Sabatier, 2005; Koebele, 2015). Trust arises from factors such as reliability, openness to discussion, and a shared sense of mission (Varda et al., 2008). Study findings revealed that trust has grown between Roundtable participants in multiple ways.

82% of active participants surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that the Roundtable has increased trust between participating organizations. When asked to rate other participating organizations on three dimensions of trust<sup>11</sup>, those surveyed reported an increase in trust from prior to their involvement with the Roundtable to now. A sample of active organizations in the Roundtable's network revealed a current

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<sup>11</sup> Trust is calculated from participants' responses to "How reliable is this organization?", "How aligned is this organization with the [Roundtable's] mission?", and "How open to discussion is this organization?" The total trust score is the average of the values reported for all three dimensions, using the following scale: 1= not at all, 2= a small amount, 3= a fair amount, 4= a great deal (Varda & Sprong, 2020).

total trust score of 85% between organizations surveyed (100% being the highest level of trust possible), an increase from the total trust score of 72.5% that respondents reported they had for one another prior to participating in the Roundtable.

*"I think having this common denominator of trust... ...oh, that was a Roundtable person, I can call them up... ...you were part of that and you believed in that and you subscribe to [our] mission and vision and I feel like I can call you and work with you."*

*-Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

Amongst surveyed active participants, the Roundtable proved to be one of the most trusted organizations in its network, receiving an average trust score of 3.87 out of 4.0, with other organizations' total trust scores ranging from a high of 4.0 to a low of 2.82. In conference evaluations and interviews, participants have repeatedly named the open, safe, and neutral environment that the Roundtable fosters as distinctive and vital to forwarding collaboration with others in the Crown.

For many active participants, the trust fostered at the Roundtable has helped them to form partnerships, recruit speakers for events, collaborate more effectively with others, and otherwise help them to be more effective in their work. One participant shared that the Roundtable has helped them to establish "a wider base of trusted partners"

that “hugely improves my ability to do my job”. Another said that the openness of the Roundtable has helped them to “see what is possible” through listening to other ideas that they may not have been open to before. By fostering open and honest dialogue, the Roundtable has created space for hard discussions, enabling previously conflicting sides to come together in conversation and, in several instances, form trusting partnerships.

*“People are willing to be open minded and listen carefully to other’s perspectives, and the Roundtable provides some space and encouragement to do that.”*

*-Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

## EXPANDED TRIBES AND FIRST NATIONS COLLABORATION

*The Roundtable has increased collaboration with and between Tribes and First Nations, centering tribal organizations and individuals as speakers, leaders, and participants.*

Tribes and First Nations play a central role in the Crown of the Continent and in the Roundtable. Tribes and First Nations have stewarded the Crown for millennia, and today manage millions of acres of the landscape (Chamber et al., 2010). In order for conservation efforts across the Crown of the Continent to be just and inclusive, it’s essential that such efforts are crafted with, by, and for the region’s indigenous

communities. The Roundtable believes that incorporating and integrating tribal knowledge and practices into natural resource management significantly increases the health of the Crown's landscapes and communities. Study findings show that the Roundtable has increased the level of collaboration between Tribes and First Nations, as well as between tribal and non-tribal participants.

Survey results demonstrate that active participants in the Roundtable's network have seen an increase in both the quality and quantity of relationships with Tribes and First Nations organizations over time. Respondents to the Roundtable Network Survey reported a 61% increase in the frequency of quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily interactions with Tribes and First Nations organizations from prior to their organization getting involved with the Roundtable, to today. Surveyed active participants have also seen a 200% increase in the amount of coordinated and integrated activities with Tribes & First Nations organizations since they started participating in the Roundtable.

*"There's been a great deal of leadership from our native communities...*

*...we honor the landscape, we honor their heritage, and they have taught us a lot about how critical that acknowledgement of heritage is to the future of the landscape."*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

Surveyed active participants identified the engagement of Tribes and First Nations as one of the two most important impacts that the Roundtable has produced. 94% of respondents to the Roundtable Network Survey either agreed or strongly agreed that the Roundtable has catalyzed the inclusion of Tribes and First Nations for participating organizations. For many non-tribal participants, the Roundtable creates a space to “honor [tribal] heritage”, “provide a platform for our tribal partners to speak”, build new partnerships, and “come up with some creative projects” alongside Tribes and First Nations. Every non-tribal participant interviewed explicitly set the Roundtable apart as a unique forum for connecting tribal and non-tribal communities together.

In addition to increasing collaboration between Tribes and First Nation’s participants and non-tribal participants, the Roundtable has also brought Tribes and First Nations from across the landscape together. Conference evaluations and interviews with several participants representing the Crown’s Tribes and First Nations called attention to the unique forum that the Roundtable creates for inter-tribal conversation and exchange. For several of the tribal participants interviewed, the Roundtable has enabled them to build new connections with leaders and members of other Tribe’s and First Nations in the Region.

*“The Crown Roundtable provides an opportunity to build those relationships -- so that we have a united front and it's not just communities and nations fighting by themselves. We have a united front with other indigenous people.”*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

The representation of Tribes and First Nations at Roundtable activities has also increased over time. At the 2014 annual conference, just 12% of speakers were tribally affiliated. At the Roundtable’s most recent in-person conference in 2019, the number of speakers representing Tribes and First Nations had increased to 36%. Although the Roundtable has also increased the number of tribal leaders represented on the Leadership Team and in conference planning, there’s always more that can be done to center Tribes and First Nations voices, organizations, and communities. The strong relationships that the network has fostered between and with the region’s Tribes and First Nations, places the Roundtable in an opportune position to honor and support the interests and leadership of tribal communities across the Crown.

## **GREATER CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

*The Roundtable has increased cultural understanding between participants, building a shared sense of community, inclusion, and cross-cultural exchange.*

The level of understanding between participants with different perspectives is an important indicator of success in collaborative efforts (Innes, 1999, McKinney & Harmon, 2004). Building an understanding of other cultures, worldviews, and interests enables participants to find common ground and pursue shared interests. Given the diverse cultures of the stakeholders shaping the Crown landscape, it is important that cultural understanding is developed in order for cross-boundary collaborative efforts to be successful. In addition to building cultural understanding between and with Tribes and First Nations, the Roundtable has also built understanding between conservation organizations, landowners, agencies, business interests, industry representatives, and community members from Canada and the United States.

All participants interviewed agreed that the Roundtable has introduced them to perspectives or cultures that they had not been connected with before. When surveyed, 94% of active participants agreed or strongly agreed that the Roundtable has increased participants' understanding of different cultures in the Crown, while 87% agreed or strongly agreed that the Roundtable had increased shared learning amongst participants. Many participants have found that the ability to share common challenges across perspectives -- while highlighting the distinct attributes and approaches of their community or organization -- has catalyzed a unique sense of possibility and innovation.



*“These workshops provide that opportunity to see what's possible, and to give people that space to think about what's possible.”*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

While it is one thing to be exposed to different cultures, it's another thing to embrace and seek out new perspectives. When asked “how committed are other organizations [in the Roundtable's network] to inviting and embracing different perspectives?<sup>12</sup>”, active participants gave other organizations an average score of 3.53 out of 4<sup>13</sup>, demonstrating the Roundtable network's high level of commitment to inviting and embracing difference. From working to build understanding between conservationists and ranchers on the Rocky Mountain Front to fostering dialogue between mining interests and communities downstream in the Flathead River Basin, the Roundtable has repeatedly sought out opportunities to build mutual understanding across perspectives in the Crown. For many participants, the Roundtable's ability to embrace and include different cultures has created a strong sense of shared community that continues to

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<sup>12</sup> Embracing different perspectives is defined as actively engaging with diverse perspectives in a welcoming and respectful manner.

<sup>13</sup> Respondents were asked to rate other active organizations' commitment to including and embracing diverse perspectives, on the following scale: 1= not at all, 2= a small amount, 3= a fair amount, 4= a great deal.

serve as connective tissue between participants and collaborative efforts across the Crown.

*"I feel like my executive committee would say the same -- we've always felt that it's a big family but also a big gathering of unique perspectives, cultures, heritage, thoughts, points of view -- and it's always been a very safe place to express those [perspectives]."*

*-Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

# IMPLICATIONS

## CATALYZING CHANGE: A DECADE OF DIFFERENCE

The results shared here demonstrate that the Roundtable has made a profound difference for individuals and organizations across the Crown over the last decade. By connecting and convening people together, the Roundtable has forged **enhanced relationships**, increased trust, expanded collaborations with Tribes and First Nations, and **greater cultural understanding** between many active participants across the landscape. Each of these impacts are valuable on their own, especially given that cross-boundary projects, partnerships, and collaborations almost always require working together with two or more individuals, organizations, or communities, to be successful. When compounded, however, the Roundtable's impacts add up to even more: the ability to **catalyze change** across the Crown.

*"It comes back to this concept of a network of networks. It's a place to convene. It's a place to exchange ideas and it's a place to catalyze new interests that could result in new relationships and give birth to projects and new collaborations."*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

Many participants credited the conversations had and connections made at Roundtable events as an important catalyst of additional outputs and impacts in their communities and landscapes. Interviewed participants named many instances of projects and partnerships that were enhanced or born out of conversations, funding, and connections established through the Roundtable. Examples were plentiful and included: a Roundtable conversation serving as the impetus for funding and creating a cross-boundary five-needle pine collaborative conservation effort; Roundtable-strengthened relationships enabling the recruitment of speakers at one organization's kick-off conference; and the establishment of new connections prompting conservation groups to lend support for the development of the Blackfeet Nation's Climate Adaptation Plan<sup>14</sup>. These outcomes are substantial and can be traced by participants directly to the Roundtable.

After taking stock of the Roundtable's impact, it's clear that there are many opportunities for the Roundtable to continue making a difference into the future. By convening and connecting people together, the network has built vital social capital and generated important connections that have and can continue to catalyze change across the Crown. The results shared here demonstrate that participants and funders

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<sup>14</sup> A selection of projects and partnerships supported and catalyzed by the Roundtable can be found at the Roundtable's website, <http://www.crownroundtable.net>.

alike have an opportunity to benefit from – and make an impact through – the Roundtable.

## FOR PARTICIPANTS

By participating in the Roundtable, individuals and organizations have the opportunity to experience the impacts highlighted above, and more. Attending the Roundtable's annual conference or virtual events enables participants to connect with others, build trust, be exposed to diverse perspectives, engage in shared learning, share their own challenges and innovations, and identify opportunities to work together across the landscape. For many participants, the Roundtable is a resource that enhances the work that they do.

*"We wouldn't be able to do what we do without those relationships in such a massive landscape."*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

The Roundtable also provides a unique point of connection between stakeholders in the region. While there are many collaborative efforts advancing cross-boundary work in particular sub-regions or sets of jurisdictions within the Crown, the Roundtable is the only collaborative forum in the region that invites *all* people from across the landscape

to come together. By doing so, the Roundtable creates a truly unique space to build and strengthen key partnerships with many kinds of stakeholders, forging relationships that are vital to the success of cross-boundary conservation efforts in the Crown.

Participating in the Roundtable not only exposes individuals and organizations to new relationships and collaboratives; it also enables participants to leverage the social capital of the network to advance their and others' efforts across the landscape. Almost anyone working across boundaries or perspectives -- and anyone that cares about promoting and enhancing culture, communities, and conservation in the Crown-- can get something meaningful out of the Roundtable.

## **FOR FUNDERS**

While it's difficult to see the impact of a single conference, workshop, or project, the results outlined here show that the Roundtable's activities are generating beneficial – and in some instances necessary -- impacts for individuals and organizations across the landscape. As several interviewed participants stated, many individuals and organizations could not do the work they do across the landscape without the quality relationships that the Roundtable helps them build. The Roundtable has and continues to build vital social infrastructure – through relationships, trust, and understanding – that is critical to forwarding cross-boundary conservation in the Crown.

Importantly, the Roundtable's efforts don't just serve a privileged few, but instead have and continue striving to serve historically marginalized and excluded communities. The Roundtable's ongoing commitment to centering Tribes and First Nations leadership and perspectives, alongside the network's inclusion of rural and economically disadvantaged communities, provides a vehicle to support social justice initiatives in the region.

Although the Roundtable has relatively low operational costs when compared with many organizations, providing enough funding to support the annual conference, leadership team meetings, and ongoing coordination is critical if the Roundtable is to continue convening, connecting, and catalyzing change in the Crown. There is no other entity that currently brings together as great diversity of perspectives from as much of the landscape to foster the above impacts, as the Roundtable. As the above results demonstrate, providing funding for the Roundtable is not only an investment in a single organization; it's an investment in the communities, cultures, and ecosystems of the Crown. Funders interested in supporting cross-boundary conservation efforts, social justice initiatives, and community engagement around the challenges facing the Crown of the Continent landscape, can make a difference through the Roundtable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

In addition to highlighting the central impacts that the Roundtable has on active participants, study results also pointed to several opportunities to optimize the Roundtable's efforts going forward. The following recommendations stem from both the comments shared by participants in this study and recommendations made by researchers and practitioners in collaborative conservation. While some of the recommendations listed below are specific actions that the Roundtable might take, there were also several recommended topics and ideas that emerged through the evaluation that the Roundtable's leadership team may benefit from discussing.

### Recommended Actions to Take:

1. **The Roundtable should continue.** Participants have a shared interest in the Roundtable continuing into the future. When asked what the Roundtable should do in the future, all those formally or informally interviewed said that it should continue, and at a minimum host the annual conference. To ensure the Roundtable's success going forward, many of the Roundtable's Leadership Team members pointed to the value of strong facilitation and coordination. Ensuring that there is funding to support continued coordination, and striving to reduce turnover on coordinators, was commonly suggested to help maintain



programmatic continuity and a central point of connection within the Roundtable's network.

2. **Continue to Center Tribes and First Nations.** Ensuring that Tribes and First Nations are centered in all of the Roundtable's events and activities emerged as a common interest of nearly every tribal and non-tribal participant interviewed. The Roundtable is well positioned to continue fostering relationships between and with tribal leaders and communities. Searching for opportunities to fund and support tribal led initiatives and involve tribal youth should, in the eyes of many Roundtable participants, be at the core of the Roundtable's efforts moving forward.
3. **Prioritize convening and connecting first.** Regardless of where the Roundtable chooses to go moving forward, almost all participants interviewed expressed that it is essential that the network continues to focus on its role as a convenor and connector of people across the landscape. For many, it's important that the Roundtable continues to serve as a "big tent", creating space for diverse ideas, conversations, and initiatives that appeal to the interests and issues relevant to a wide variety of stakeholders across the Crown. While projects and new

partnerships have the potential to expand the network's impact and generate additional value, such efforts should not be at the expense of conference and workshop planning and/or holding space for diverse perspectives.

#### **Recommended Topics for Future Discussion:**

1. **There are many effective pathways forward.** Surveyed and interviewed participants recommended a variety of pathways that the Roundtable could pursue going forward, all of which have a strong potential to generate further impact. Looking for opportunities to expand outreach to organizations and communities could enhance the quantity and diversity of the Roundtable's connections, strengthening both the network and the region's ability to address the challenges facing the Crown. For some of those interviewed, the Roundtable is well positioned to facilitate specific projects and partnerships related to social justice, climate adaptation, and connectivity. Others felt that the Roundtable ought to focus more on creating a forum for conversation and connection, and establish a clearinghouse for ideas, resources, and innovations related to the Crown. Taking time to brainstorm and discuss potential pathways the Roundtable could help to focus the network's strategic planning, communication, and activities, going forward.

**2. Exploring Partnership Opportunities.** While the Roundtable is a unique network that is adding value to the Crown, it is important to acknowledge that it is also one of many collaborative processes forwarding cross-boundary efforts across the landscape. Discussing opportunities to partner with both Crown-wide and sub-regional initiatives, organizations, and partnerships could enable the Roundtable to boost its capacity while supporting other efforts that are also enhancing and sustaining conservation, community, and culture in the region. Interviewees especially mentioned an interest in the Roundtable working more closely with the Crown Managers Partnership (CMP) and suggested that the Roundtable's Leadership Team explore opportunities to leverage the CMP's and Roundtable's complimentary strengths to enhance both initiatives for the benefit of the Crown as a whole.

**3. Telling the Roundtable's Story.** Many interviewed participants agreed that spreading the story of the Roundtable and its impact will likely increase the level of engagement and number of participants at future Roundtable events, while attracting funders to support the Roundtable into the future. The Roundtable's impact has proliferated across perspectives, communities, and borders -- its story should do the same. Taking time to explore, discuss, and refine the

Roundtable's story – and how it relates to other collaborative efforts to steward the Crown – could help the Roundtable to better engage funders, participants, and others across the landscape.

*"I try to take the Roundtable model to other places in the world because I think it's a model that works, and I think that's the way conservation has to function -- bottom up, collaborative, and large-scale"*

*--Interviewed Roundtable Participant*

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## CURRENT ROUNDTABLE LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

**Loren Bird Rattler**, Blackfeet Nation

**Angela Brennan**, Anglican Church of Canada

**Mike Bruised Head**, Kainai-Blood Tribe

**Len Broberg**, University of Montana

**Laura Caplins**, Nature Link Institute

**Chet Crowser**, Missoula County

**Rich Janssen**, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

**Emily Harkness**, Heart of the Rockies Initiative

**Cliff Kipp**, Montana Conservation Corps

**Shawn Johnson**, Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy

**Melly Reuling**, Center for Large Landscape Conservation

**Faye Bres**, Landowner

**Jeff Mow**, Glacier National Park

**Ann Schwend**, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

**Richard Klafki**, The Nature Conservancy Canada

**Gerald Wagner**, Blackfeet Nation Environmental Office

**Sara Mayben**, USDA Forest Service

**Kendra Hoff**, Roundtable Coordinator; Center for Large Landscape Conservation

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# APPENDIX A: Lessons for other Collaboratives

This study used the Partnership Impact Model -- a relatively new partnership evaluative framework-- as a guide to design an evaluation tailored to the needs of the Roundtable. Through consultations with Dr. Amy Mickel (co-creator of the Partnership Impact Model) and practical experiences adapting it to an additional collaborative context, several lessons emerged that are worth sharing with other collaboratives interested in conducting similar impact assessments:

- 1. Right-size the evaluation for your organization.** Every partnership and collaborative is different and operates in a distinct context. Instead of trying to evaluate all of the same things as other partnerships, it is important to make sure that what you are assessing meets the goals and objectives of the group you are working with. In the case of this study, although it was helpful to consider the impacts assessed in the One Tam Partnership Impact Evaluation, there were also several impacts unique to the Roundtable's context (such as collaboration with Tribes and First Nations) that emerged as especially important for our evaluation to focus on. Thankfully the Partnership Impact Evaluation Guide provides an excellent roadmap for discerning which impacts to focus an evaluation on based on the needs of your partnership or collaborative.

2. **Take time to evaluate.** This study is limited in that it provides a retrospective and current snapshot from one point in time. While I hope to continue tracking the Roundtable's impact over time, this study would be stronger if it had occurred over multiple years and collected multiple data points over time and will be strengthened if/when future surveys and interviews are conducted. Other partnerships and collaboratives will be well served by establishing evaluative metrics early on and working to collect data regularly over the span of many years. While this study provides a useful and substantial look at the Roundtable's impact, it takes time for many impacts such as trust to be generated; longer-term studies are able to better capture such impact and demonstrate change.
  
3. **Keep an open mind.** Often times evaluators set out to measure specific metrics and outcomes. While such approaches can be helpful when funders or participants are interested in understanding if specific outputs our outcomes are being realized, it also makes it easy to overlook additional and important impacts that might emerge through the course of an evaluation. Being open to other impacts emerging and ensuring there is space for survey respondents and interviewees to respond to open ended questions can help create opportunities

for other – often important -- outcomes to be identified and assessed.

Conducting multiple iterations of an evaluation can also help to incorporate new findings into the assessment, ultimately broadening the understanding of the difference that your partnership is making.

# APPENDIX B: Detailed Methods

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This research was designed in close consultation with the Roundtable's Leadership Team and was guided by the objective of being as useful as possible to the Roundtable. Through a series of preliminary conversations, it became clear that members of the Roundtable's Leadership Team were interested in an evaluation that, 1) helped them tell the story of the Roundtable's impact (both retrospectively and currently) and, 2) identified opportunities to optimize the Roundtable's efforts going forward. I employed the Partnership Impact Roadmap as a guide to frame this evaluation as it provides a clear process for consulting a collaborative (the Roundtable) to identify what they are interested in better understanding and the evaluative methods that fit their specific needs and objectives (Mickel & Goldberg, 2019).

While the Partnership Impact Model suggests that several impacts – such as trust – are critical to the success of all partnerships and thus are likely being generated by all partnerships, it also acknowledges that every collaborative effort is unique and may generate impacts that are specific and/or unique. Accordingly, the Partnership Impact Roadmap was developed to serve as a guide for a given partnership or network to assess the impacts that are most important to them. By first conceptualizing, defining,

and prioritizing the potential impacts that a collaborative may be generating, an evaluator can better tailor the evaluative methods to meet the needs and context of the partnership or network being evaluated.

Following the framework set in the Partnership Impact Roadmap, I held a series of facilitated discussions with the Roundtable's Leadership to conceptualize, define, and prioritize which impacts to evaluate. I then worked with Dr. Amy Mickel, co-creator of the Partnership Impact Model, to identify appropriate methods for this study. Given the limited research on evaluating landscape-scale collaborative efforts (Conley & Moote, 2003; Bixler et al., 2016; Koontz et al., 2020), I chose to draw from well-established network evaluation tools from other sectors (Taylor et al., 2014; Provan et al., 2005; Varda et al., 2008; Varda & Sprong, 2020). I also elected to use methods that facilitated a retrospective look at the Roundtable's impact (where it has been) while also creating a baseline (where it is at) to aid in potential future evaluative efforts.

## **ROUNDTABLE NETWORK SURVEY**

To assess the impact of the Roundtable on participating organizations, I distributed a social network survey to representatives of 35 active participants in the Roundtable's network. Active participants were identified as organizations currently represented on

the Roundtable's Leadership Team or having attended two out of the three last annual conferences<sup>15</sup>. A single respondent was chosen per organization, generally representing senior leadership for their organization.

The survey was distributed via email using the online survey software Qualtrics. Surveys were distributed to emails identified on the Roundtable's contact list for each respondent and a maximum of five reminder emails were sent over a three-week period, following the protocol outlined in the PARTNER evaluation guide (Varda & Sprong, 2020). Of the 35 surveys distributed, 18 responses were received (representing a 51% response rate). One response was not included in the final results as it was a duplicate for the same organization (the respondent was asked to fill out the survey on behalf of a specific organization, and instead responded for a different organization that had already had a representative submit a response).

The Roundtable Network Survey was designed to measure indicators of the quantity of relationships, quality of relationships, dimensions of trust, gather a small amount of qualitative data on relationships and trust, and identify the degree to which respondents attributed specific impacts to the Roundtable. Many questions also were

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<sup>15</sup> A list of active participants was identified by reviewing past conference summaries and participant lists.

designed to conduct a current and retrospective assessment of the above indicators in order to demonstrate change over time.

The survey was comprised of 21 questions. Questions 1-6 asked basic demographic questions about respondents. Question 7 asked respondents to identify the organizations (also surveyed) that they currently have a relationship with. Questions 8-9 asked respondents about the frequency of interaction and type of activity they engage in with other organizations. Questions 10-12 asked respondents about dimensions of trust regarding other organizations (reliability, openness to discussion, and alignment with the Roundtable's mission). Questions 13-14 asked respondents about other organizations commitment to cultivating community and inviting and embracing different perspectives. Questions 8-14 all asked respondents to share responses regarding their current relationships with other organizations, and their perception of those relationships prior to getting involved with the Roundtable.

Questions 15 asked respondents to indicate the degree to which (likert scale) they agree that the Roundtable has successfully achieved its mission. Question 16 asked respondents to indicate the degree to which (likert scale) they agreed that the Roundtable had resulted in various outcomes. Questions 17-21 asked a series of short questions regarding the Roundtables impact on them.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the Roundtable Network Survey were analyzed through social network analysis to map relationships amongst active participants. In social network analysis, organizations or individuals are represented as nodes while connections (the presence of a relationship; frequency of interaction) are represented by edges or lines. Social network analysis is a well-established, widely accepted, and versatile tool that can be used to map and describe the relationships within a network of people or organizations (Scott, 1988). Consequently, both the Partnership Impact Model and the literature on evaluating collaborative networks recommend social network analysis as a useful tool for measuring a network's relationships and trust over time (Provan et al., 2005; Varda, 2011; Taylor et al., 2014; Mickel & Goldberg, 2019).

Responses to the Roundtable Network Survey were downloaded from Qualtrics, sorted and reformatted in Microsoft Excel, and uploaded to the online social network software Polinode for analysis. All data were kept encrypted or stored on a private drive at each point in the analysis process to maintain respondent confidentiality. Several sets of social network analysis maps were generated to show relationships and change in relationships amongst actively participating organizations in the Roundtable's network. Maps included the centrality of the Roundtable in the network, the frequency of



interactions between organizations now, the frequency of interactions between organizations prior to joining the Roundtable, the types of activities between organizations now, and the type of activities between organizations prior to joining the Roundtable.

Roundtable Network Survey responses were also used to measure trust in the Roundtable's network of active organizations. Trust was calculated from participants' responses to "*How reliable is this organization?*" (question 10), "*How aligned is this organization with the [Roundtable's] mission?*" (question 11), and "*How open to discussion is this organization?*" (question 12). Total trust scores were averaged (means) from the values reported for all three dimensions, with values reported using the following scale: 1= not at all, 2= a small amount, 3= a fair amount, 4= a great deal (Varda & Sprong, 2020).

## MEETING NOTES

Metrics such as the cumulative number of conference attendees and percentage of speakers representing Tribes and First Nations at conferences were calculated from historic documents (conference summaries, participant lists, and meeting notes).

Information regarding the Adaptive Management Initiative was largely identified based on the study results reported by Patrick Bixler's research team and documents

published by the Roundtable. Narrative throughout was informed by myriad documents produced by and about the Roundtable -- including meeting summaries from the facilitated conversations with members of the Roundtable's Leadership Team used to frame this evaluation -- and informal conversations with participants of the Roundtable. Notes from the last nine monthly Roundtable Leadership Team calls that I have attended were also used to inform the narrative throughout this paper.

## **INTERVIEWS**

In addition to the Roundtable Network Survey, I conducted eight formal interviews with Roundtable participants, gathering qualitative data to complement survey findings and further understand the impact of the Roundtable on participants. Interviewees were selected using purposive sampling, with the aim of interviewing a cross section of Roundtable participants representing a range of perspectives, jurisdictions, and geographies. Criteria for selection included either being an active participant (having participated in two out of the last three annual conferences or currently serving on the leadership) or having been involved with the Roundtable for at least five years.

I interviewed two individuals from the region's Tribes and First Nations, two conservation organization staff, one individual from a land trust, one individual representing local business interests, one university employee, and one federal agency

official. Seven interviewees were from the United States, and one was Canadian.

Interviewees were evenly divided by gender identity, with 4 identifying as male and 4 identifying as female. Interviews were scheduled by phone or email, for an hour time slot. All interviews occurred via phone and Zoom and ranged in duration from 20 to 50 minutes. Interviews were recorded with consent of the interviewee, transcribed, and coded for common themes.

## LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, in the Roundtable Network Survey I chose to assess a “bounded network” that limits the analysis to a sample of the organizations involved in the Roundtable. It would have been extremely time intensive (both for me and for respondents) and impractical to assess the entire list of organizations that have been involved with the Roundtable over time, as that list includes hundreds of potential respondents. Narrowing the list of respondents to active organizations (as defined above) in the network allowed for me, within the bounds of a Master’s program, to conduct a feasible social network analysis of many of the organizations in the Roundtable’s network. Doing so, however, led me to only sample individuals affiliated with organizations actively involved with the Roundtable, leaving out individuals that may not have an organizational affiliation (which includes many landowners and community members). Future assessments should strive to capture a larger amount of

the Roundtable's network than is represented here; doing so will only add clarity to the picture of the Roundtable's impact.

Another major limitation was the number of both Tribes and First Nations survey respondents. While surveys were distributed to six tribal organizations, only two tribally affiliated respondents returned a survey. While I was able to either formally or informally interview four additional individuals representing Tribes and First Nations, there are many tribal perspectives I was unable to connect with and include in this study. Past evaluations of Tribes and First Nations perspectives across the Crown landscape have played an integral role in shaping the Roundtable's activities, especially the structure and content of the annual conference. This evaluation should be seen as complementary, and not definitive to those evaluative efforts. Future evaluative efforts should always strive to include Tribes and First Nations perspectives, as the region's indigenous people play a central role in the past, present, and future of the Crown.

Similarly, I was unable to connect with many Canadian survey respondents or interviewees. Only two survey respondents and four of those interviewed were based in Canada. Given that a vast amount of the Crown landscape spans into Alberta and British Columbia, and the important role that Canadian organizations, managers, and

landowners, and communities play in forwarding the efforts of the Roundtable, future evaluative efforts should strive to better include Canadian perspectives.

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations posed on this study by the pandemic. In other circumstances, I would have travelled across the Crown to meet people in person, conducting interviews and having informal conversations to build rapport, recruit respondents, and remove technology hurdles. Many participants are not well versed with the survey platform I used and may be uncomfortable participating in a Zoom or phone interview. Had I been able to meet with Roundtable participants in person, I would have likely been able to better reach many voices that are underrepresented in the results and increase the survey response rate by building investment in and knowledge of this study ahead of time.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is only a snapshot of the total impact that the Roundtable has had over time. While the Roundtable Network Survey asked respondents to retrospectively identify aspects of their relationships prior to joining the Roundtable, the data reflect their perceptions of the past and may not be as accurate as if they had been asked those same questions prior to joining the Roundtable. Results generated from asking respondents about their relationships now is likely more accurate and creates a baseline for future evaluations to build on. While interviews

provide qualitative data to enrich this study, expanding the sample size to a broader list of the Roundtable's active participants would paint a more complete picture of the Roundtable's impact.

Enriching this assessment with additional surveys geared towards further understanding the value of the Roundtable, as was done to develop the Partnership Impact Model, would also help to expand the understanding of the Roundtable's impact. If future funding and capacity allows, I strongly recommend that more evaluative efforts are conducted to assist in telling the story of the Roundtable's impact, assess change over a longer period of time, and assist the Roundtable as they work to optimize their efforts.

# APPENDIX C: Network Survey & Interview Guide

## ROUNDTABLE NETWORK SURVEY -- QUESTIONS

### Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in this survey, which is part of a broader research effort to evaluate the social outcomes of the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent. Your responses will help Roundtable participants and funders to better understand what outcomes the Roundtable has catalyzed and identify opportunities for the Roundtable to optimize its efforts to promote and enhance community, culture, and conservation in the Crown of the Continent. This survey will likely take between 15-25 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential unless you give your permission to be named in the results. You can choose not to respond to any of the questions. Participation or non-participation will not impact your relationship with the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent or the University of Montana. Submission of the survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate.

If you have any questions about this survey or research please contact the researcher, Travis Anklam, via email at [travis.anklam@umontana.edu](mailto:travis.anklam@umontana.edu) -- or his faculty advisor, Daniel Spencer, at [daniel.spencer@umontana.edu](mailto:daniel.spencer@umontana.edu). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the UM Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (406) 243-6672.

\*I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research.

### Survey Questions

*The purpose of this survey is to understand the outcomes that organizations like yours have experienced as a result of participating in the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent. Please answer honestly **as a representative of your organization** and note that responses will be presented in aggregate to Roundtable participants, the Roundtable's Leadership Team, and others. Information identifying you or your organization will not be included in the results without your permission.*

1. Please select your organization from the list below.  
(see list in question 7)
2. Where is your organization located?
  - ☐ First Nation or Tribal Community
  - ☐ Canada
  - ☐ United States
3. Who does your organization represent? (check all that apply)
  - ☐ First Nation or Tribal Government
  - ☐ First Nation or Tribal Non-Government

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business(s)             | <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landowner(s)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Agency     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City/County Government  | <input type="checkbox"/> University/College |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Non-Profit | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Non-Profit        |   |

4. What is your role within your organization?
5. How long have you been in this position? (number of years)
6. What year did your organization first get involved with the Roundtable?

\*involved with the Roundtable: attending meetings, the annual conference, or leadership-team meetings.

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 2020 | <input type="radio"/> 2014 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2019 | <input type="radio"/> 2013 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2018 | <input type="radio"/> 2012 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2017 | <input type="radio"/> 2011 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2016 | <input type="radio"/> 2010 |
| <input type="radio"/> 2015 |                            |

7. From the list, select organizations that you currently have a relationship with.
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Anglican Church of Canada	<input type="checkbox"/> Heart of the Rockies Initiative
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackfeet Agricultural Resource Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackfeet Environmental Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Ktunaxa Nation
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackfeet Nation Fish & Wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/> Missoula County
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Conservation Corps
<input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation
<input type="checkbox"/> Center for Large Landscape Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
<input type="checkbox"/> Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana State University
<input type="checkbox"/> Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	<input type="checkbox"/> Montana Wilderness Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Crown Managers Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> National Parks Conservation Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council	<input type="checkbox"/> Nature Link Institute
<input type="checkbox"/> Flathead Lake Biological Station	<input type="checkbox"/> Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent
<input type="checkbox"/> Flathead Lakers	<input type="checkbox"/> Vital Ground Foundation
<input type="checkbox"/> Flathead Land Trust	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Rockies Field Institute
<input type="checkbox"/> Glacier National Park	<input type="checkbox"/> The Nature Conservancy of Canada



- ☐ University of Montana  
☐ United States Forest Service

- ☐ USDA Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
☐ Whitefish Legacy Partners

*For the following questions, please provide responses regarding your relationship(s) with the listed organizations NOW and PRIOR to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable.*

8. How frequently does/did your organization work with the listed organization(s)?

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:  The University of Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Never</li> <li>○ Once a year or less</li> <li>○ About once a quarter</li> <li>○ About once a month</li> <li>○ Every Week</li> <li>○ Every Day</li> <li>○ Don't Know</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Never</li> <li>○ Once a year or less</li> <li>○ About once a quarter</li> <li>○ About once a month</li> <li>○ Every Week</li> <li>○ Every Day</li> <li>○ Don't Know</li> </ul>

9. What types of activities does/did your organization conduct with the following organization(s)?

*\*Cooperative Activities: involves exchanging information, attending meetings together, and offering resources to partners*

*\*Coordinated Activities: in addition to cooperative activities, this involves intentional efforts to enhance each other's capacity for mutual benefit*

*\*Integrated Activities: in addition to cooperative and coordinated activities, this is the act of using commonalities to create a unified center of knowledge and programming (note: level of collaboration increases from cooperative to integrated activities)*

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:  The University of Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> <li>○ Cooperative activities</li> <li>○ Coordinated activities</li> <li>○ Integrated activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ None</li> <li>○ Cooperative activities</li> <li>○ Coordinated activities</li> <li>○ Integrated activities</li> </ul>

10. *The Roundtable promotes and enhances culture, community, and conservation in the Crown of the Continent by creating opportunities for leaders and citizens to celebrate and honor place, remember history, and imagine a healthy future for all.*

How aligned is the following organization(s) with the above stated mission?

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:  The University of Montana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not at all</li> <li>○ A small amount</li> <li>○ A fair amount</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not at all</li> <li>○ A small amount</li> <li>○ A fair amount</li> </ul>

	○ A great deal	○ A great deal
--	----------------	----------------

#### 11. How reliable is this organization?

*\*Reliable: this organization is reliable in terms of following through on commitments.*

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:	○ Not at all	○ Not at all
The University of Montana	○ A small amount	○ A small amount
	○ A fair amount	○ A fair amount
	○ A great deal	○ A great deal

#### 12. How open to discussion is this organization?

*\*Open to discussion: this organization is willing to engage in frank, open, and civil discussion (especially when disagreement exists). The organization is willing to consider a variety of viewpoints and talk together (rather than at each other). Other organizations are able to communicate with this organization in an open, trusting manner.*

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:	○ Not at all	○ Not at all
The University of Montana	○ A small amount	○ A small amount
	○ A fair amount	○ A fair amount
	○ A great deal	○ A great deal

#### 13. How committed is this organization to cultivating a community?

*\*Cultivating a community: this organization creates a sense of belonging for all groups as part of a larger community.*

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:	○ Not at all	○ Not at all
The University of Montana	○ A small amount	○ A small amount
	○ A fair amount	○ A fair amount
	○ A great deal	○ A great deal

#### 14. How committed is this organization to inviting and embracing different perspectives?

*\*Embracing different perspectives: this organization actively engaged those with different perspectives in a welcoming and respectful manner.*

	Now	Prior to your organization's involvement with the Roundtable
Example:	○ Not at all	○ Not at all
The University of Montana	○ A small amount	○ A small amount
	○ A fair amount	○ A fair amount

	<input type="radio"/> A great deal	<input type="radio"/> A great deal
--	------------------------------------	------------------------------------

15. *The Roundtable promotes and enhances culture, community, and conservation in the Crown of the Continent by creating opportunities for leaders and citizens to celebrate and honor place, remember history, and imagine a healthy future for all.*

From what you have observed, how successful has the Roundtable been in accomplishing the above stated mission?

- ☐ Not Successful
- ☐ Somewhat Successful
- ☐ Successful
- ☐ Very Successful
- ☐ Completely Successful
- ☐ I am not aware as to whether or not the Roundtable has accomplished its goals

16. To what level do you agree that the Roundtable has produced the following outcomes for participating organizations?

	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree	don't know
Strengthened relationships with other organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved communication with other organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased trust with other organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased organizational capacity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased inclusion of Tribes and First Nations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased understanding of different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conserved Ecosystems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased amount of shared learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased engagement of local communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved resource sharing with other organizations (financial)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved resource sharing with other organizations (non-financial)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Please describe something that your organization has been able to accomplish as a result of being involved with the Roundtable. (If applicable)

18. Please give an example of how your organization has created a new relationship with an organization as a result of your organization's involvement with the Roundtable. (if applicable)
19. Please give an example of how your organization's relationship with another organization has changed as a result of your organization's involvement with the Roundtable. (if applicable)
20. Has your organization experienced any drawbacks as a result of participating in the Roundtable? (please describe)
21. Do you have any suggestions for what activities/efforts the Roundtable should pursue in the future? (please describe)
22. Do you give permission for your organization to be named as a respondent in the final results?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
23. Are you willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview regarding your responses?
- ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No

## **INTERVIEW GUIDE: THE SOCIAL OUTCOMES FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT**

**Before the interview**, ensure that zoom recording or phone recording app is functioning.

**Introduction & Informed Consent.** Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To give you a little bit of background, I'm a graduate student at the University of Montana in the Environmental Studies department. I have been working with the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent's leadership team to help them evaluate the impact the Roundtable has had on participants. These interviews are one part of the work I'm doing for that study.

In my questions, I'll ask about your experiences with the Roundtable, what you've gotten out of participating, that sort of thing.

Before we start, I wanted to let you know that your identity as a participant in this study will remain confidential unless you give your permission to be quoted. I'll reach out after the interview regarding any potential quotes. I also wanted to let you know that your participation is voluntary, and that you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. There's no consequence for not answering a question, and we can stop the interview at any point.

I don't expect any of my questions to cause discomfort, and you may benefit from this interview by better understanding how yourself and others have been impacted by the Roundtable's efforts.

If it's OK with you, I'd like to record this interview. Recording helps me ensure that your views are accurately recorded and allows me to focus on what you are saying instead of taking notes. Is that OK with you?

[yes/no; respond appropriately].

IF YES, START RECORDING. (If someone says “no”, I’ll have to take notes.)

Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

[yes/no; respond appropriately].

If you have any questions for me after the interview, don’t hesitate to reach out.

Now that I’ve covered the logistics, do I have your consent to start the interview?

[Yes/No]

**History and Participation.** Let’s start with your participation in the Roundtable.

1. How did you first get involved with the Roundtable?

Prove, if necessary: When did you first get involved?

2. Before getting involved with the Roundtable, did you have any experience working with other Roundtable participants?

Probe, if necessary: “Would you share a few examples of what this work consisted of?”

3. **Personal Impacts.** You have been involved with the Roundtable for a while! What would you say are some of the main things **you personally** have gotten out of participating in the Roundtable?

Ask “would you expand on that?” when appropriate

Ask “please clarify what you mean by \_\_\_?” when appropriate

Echo and Probe (a couple of times): “Are there any other things you have gotten out of participating in the Roundtable?”

4. How, if at all, has participating in the Roundtable effected your ability to do your job?

Probe, if necessary: Would you share a few examples?

5. **Relationships.** The Roundtable connects a lot of people with one another. If not mentioned above, ask: Has your participation in the Roundtable effected your relationships with others who also participate in the Roundtable?

Echo and Probe, if necessary: Would you share some examples?

**If not covered above, ask** “In what ways, if any, has the Roundtable helped you to build trust with other participants?”

Echo and Probe, if necessary: Would you share some examples?

6. **Diversity & Inclusion.** The Roundtable attracts a diversity of participants with a lot of different perspectives. What have you gotten out of engaging with different perspectives at Roundtable events?

Echo and Probe, if necessary: Would you share some examples?

Probe, if necessary: Are there any perspectives that you hadn’t engaged with until attending the Roundtable?

7. In what ways do you feel your perspective has been valued, or not valued, at Roundtable events?

Probe, if necessary: Would you give an example?

- 8. Drawbacks.** We've talked a lot about the benefits that you've gotten out of participating in the Roundtable. What drawbacks, if any, have you experienced from participating in the Roundtable?

Echo and probe, if necessary: Are there any other drawbacks that you have experienced?

Probe, if necessary: "Would you share some examples?"

- 9. The Value of the Roundtable.** I'm also interested in what you think about the Roundtable itself. From your perspective, what are the Roundtable's most important achievements?

If they ask, "what do you mean?", respond with – "another way I've been asking this question is to think: what wouldn't have happened had the Roundtable hadn't been created? What has happened only because of the Roundtable?"

Ask "Would you expand on that" when appropriate

Ask, if appropriate: "In what ways, if any, has the Roundtable improved conservation efforts in the Crown region?"

Ask, if appropriate: "In what ways, if any, has the Roundtable enhanced the communities and cultures of the Crown region?"

- 10.** What would you like to see the Roundtable do going forward?

Ask "would you expand on that" when appropriate

If not covered, ask "What, if anything, could the roundtable improve upon in the future?"



**Wrap up.** That's all I've got for you today! Thank you so much for your time, and for your ongoing participation in the Roundtable. Do you have any questions for me before we end?

**Post Interview**

- Save Recording
- Label Recording with interview code and date.

## APPENDIX D: Study Participants

Representatives of the following organizations responded to the Roundtable Network

Survey (N=17):

Anglican Church of Canada

Blackfeet Environmental Office

Blackfeet Nation Fish & Wildlife

The Center for Large Landscape Conservation

The Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, The University of Montana

The Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council

Flathead Lake Biological Station

Flathead Lakers

Glacier National Park

The Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Missoula County

Montana Conservation Corps

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

The Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent

The Nature Conservancy of Canada

The United States Forest Service

The Vital Ground Foundation