

# Understanding Elements Contributing to Collaboration in Community-Based Wildfire Planning



Photo Courtesy of Joe Walsh

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# Hypothesis

- The collaborative development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) requires specific capacities
- Communities and agencies do not possess the necessary capacities
- Intermediary entities fill these capacity gaps by providing resources accessed through the use of internal and external networks

## Definition of Intermediary:

- An intermediary entity is typically a non-governmental or quasi-governmental organization that serves as a bridge between private individuals and government institutions, or between neighborhoods/communities and public organizations (Berger and Neuhaus, 1996).
- More formally, intermediaries “provide support to communities to ***mobilize their internal resources*** and ***access outside inputs*** (information, technology, finances) that enhance their capacities to improve their situations” (Lee, 1998).

# Case Studies

- **East Portal CWPP**
  - Estes Park, CO; @ 60 miles NW of Denver
  - Larimer County
  - Two subdivisions (one with 118 homes, the other with 25), one Non-Government Organization (NGO), two local businesses; not included in a fire protection district; along “Spur 66”
  - Federal and private lands
- **Harris Park CWPP**
  - Bailey, CO; @ 66 miles SW of Denver, along Highway 285
  - Jefferson and Park Counties
  - Twenty-two subdivisions; twenty in one fire protection district, two in another; over 5,000 homes
  - Federal, state, and private lands
- **Lake County CWPP**
  - Leadville, CO; @ 103 miles west of Denver, south of I-70; 10,430 feet above sea level
  - One fire protection district
  - Federal and private lands

# Methods

- 30 interviews total (Lake County = 12; East Portal = 10; Harris Park = 8)
- Federal and state agency participants, local government representatives, local fire authority representatives, community members
- *“What resources and types of information did [each player] provide?”*
- *“What types of information and resources were important, and who provided them/where did they come from?”*
- Coded for themes using NVivo; preliminary research as well as literature review reinforced the themes

# East Portal CWPP

- Bobcat Ridge (2000) and Big Elk (2002) wildfires
- Previous mitigation activity
- “FireWise Community” title in 2003

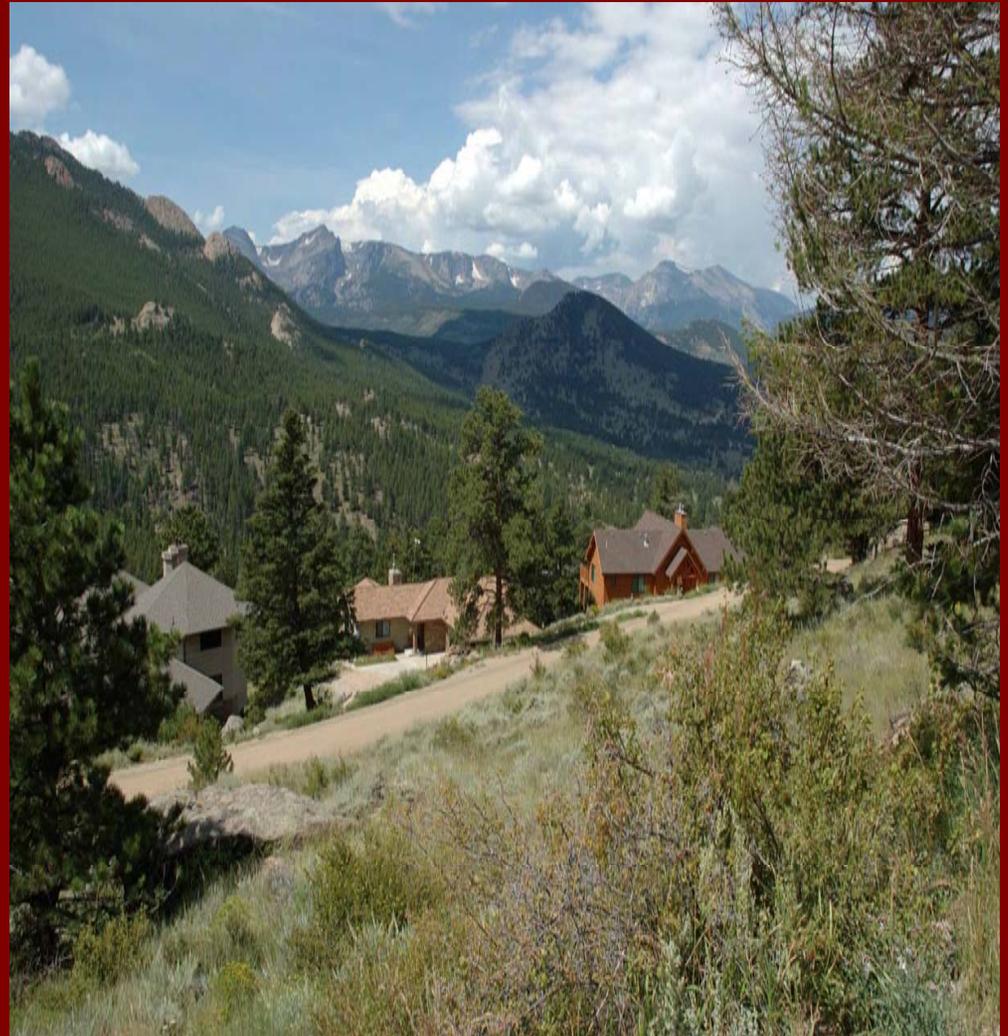


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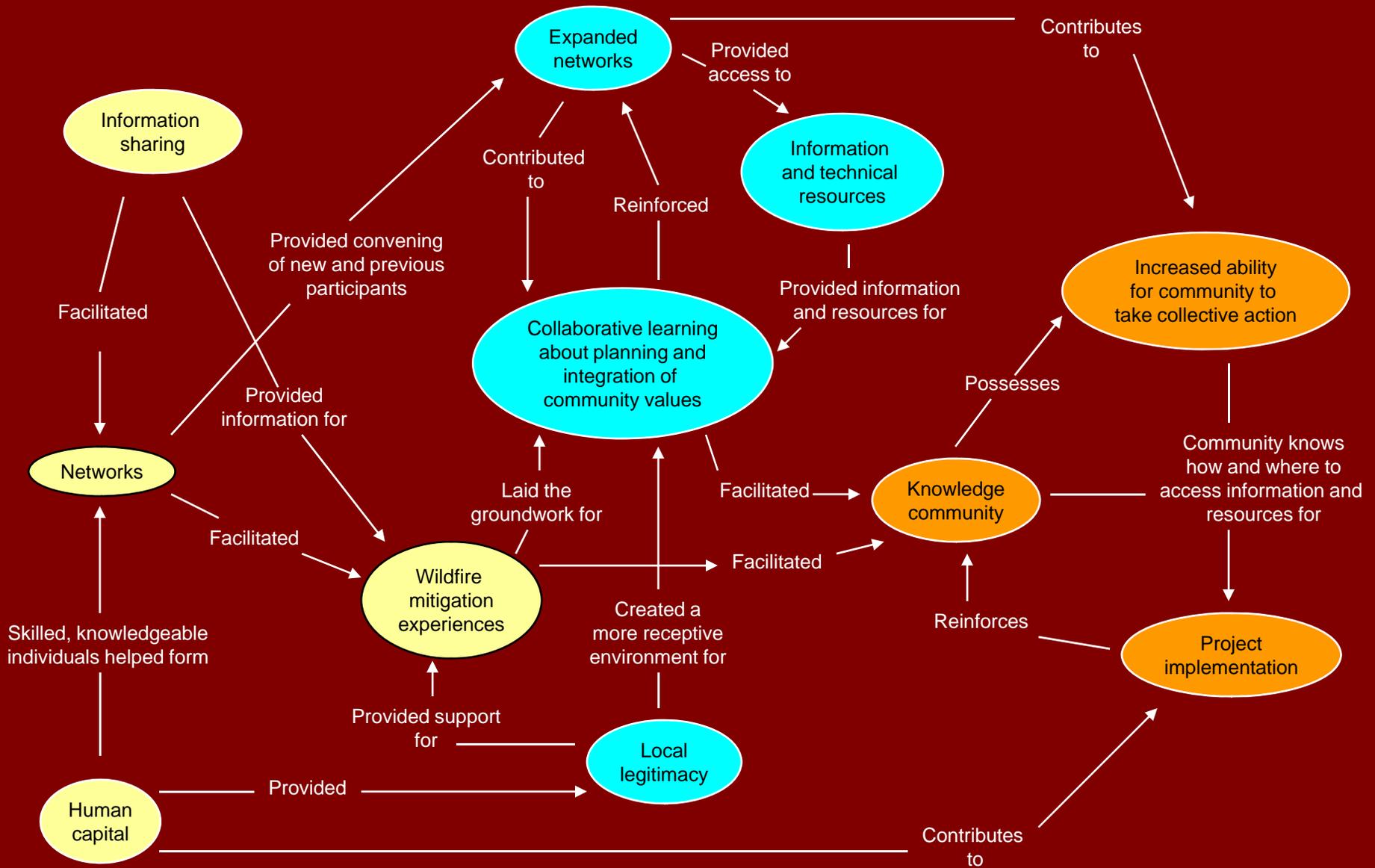
# East Portal CWPP

- Participants:
  - Four subdivision representatives (three interviewed); two NGO representatives (one interviewed)
  - Local fire authority (one interviewed)
  - County wildfire mitigation specialist
  - State agency (one interviewed)
  - Two federal agencies (one interviewed)



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# East Portal CWPP Process



*“It’s a yin and yang thing. You need somebody in the community who has the heart and passion for it, and creates the environment, but will be rejected because of his pedestrian competency. That has to be melded with someone who is outside of the community, and has the technical competence. So you take the internal enthusiasm, I’m speaking to you as a neighbor and have good scientific proof and rationale for what I’m going to tell you we ought to be doing. You marry those two and you’ve got a deal. If you have only one or the other, you’ve got nothing.”*

*-- George, East Portal community member*

*“It takes a lot of work and a lot of time commitment involved. You have to share the work load, you can’t expect one agency or one group really to be the lead agency and do most of the work. It has to be a cooperative effort between as many agencies as you can get involved to split that work load up, and using their expertise. Because we all certainly don’t know everything there is to know about wildfire protection and risk management, so sharing that expertise really helps.”*

*-- Tim, East Portal fire authority representative*

# Conclusion

- In all three cases, the intermediary function is filled by actors in the CWPP process rather than by external entities; *it is represented by a series of roles rather than by a specific entity*
- Intermediary roles are complimentary and overlapping



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# Implications

- Consider the desired end result, and determine the processes and resources necessary to reach that result
- Strategically utilize the resources and services possessed by or within access of CWPP participants
- Develop and utilize internal and external networks

# References

- Berger, P.L. and R.J. Neuhaus. (1996). *To empower people: from state to civil society*. Washington, DC: American Interprise Institute. 223p.
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Photo Compliments of Joe Walsh

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# Questions/Comments?



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