

FORMING A NEW COLLABORATIVE

CONSIDER STEPS TO GET STARTED

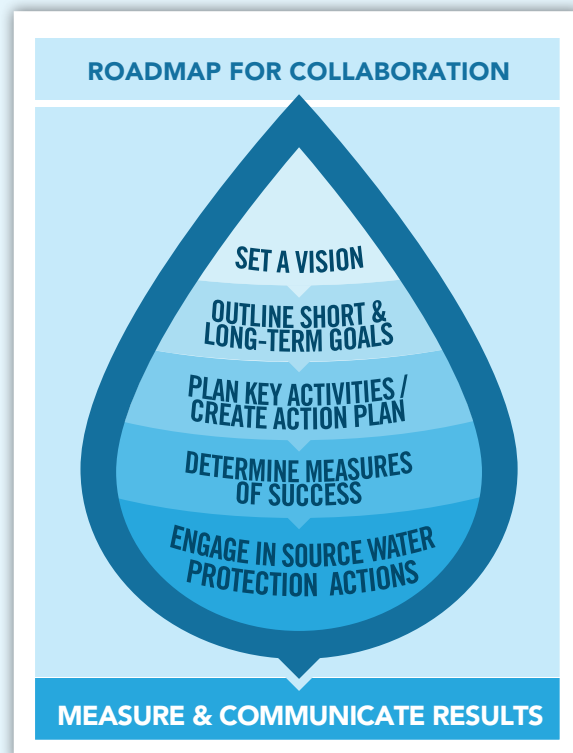
If you're ready to begin forming your collaborative, you should have a clear concept outlined to share with partners. If you haven't done this yet, you may want to review the Considering a Collaborative stage tips. [Click here for the Considering a Collaborative stage. \(link\)](#)

If you outlined your concept and secured initial partners, you may be ready to formalize a process and bring members together. The process of building and sustaining a collaborative is ongoing. It might feel a little overwhelming to figure out how to get started. These three key steps can help pave the way:

1. CREATE THE BIG PICTURE FOR YOUR COLLABORATIVE

Begin with the end in mind. Have a clear picture of what you want to accomplish.

- ✓ Do you have a specific project, or particular opportunity to take action?
- ✓ Is your group best positioned to address one priority or multiple threats to drinking water?



2. IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PARTNERS TO HELP YOU IMPLEMENT A SHARED VISION

If you followed our tips in the Considering a Collaborative stage, you've already had conversations with trusted partners and created list of potential collaborative members. A collaborative should consist of members who have the knowledge, skills, influence and/or ability to act.

Local Level

For a local collaborative based on a specific problem or resource, leaders may want to hand pick and limit the membership to a specific group of people. For example:

New England Watershed Managers includes managers of 15 large surface water public water supplies.

Oregon supports local-level stewardship efforts to address a specific problem by working with decision-makers, land use authorities, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Colorado conducts education and outreach for land use planners

Several collaborative leaders pointed out that it is helpful to include state source water coordinators and other state partners, who can be helpful in identifying tools and resources to address local issues.

State Level

Identify state agencies with a role in protecting the resource.

[Click here for a list of state agencies you might consider.](#)

Include key local organizations that impact land use decisions, or who are information resources for local land use decisions.

For a state collaborative, the state agency leaders should consider the role the state will play and whether a goal is to wean the group away from a primarily state-directed effort to one that involves more ownership by collaborative members.

It may be helpful to have different levels of membership (e.g., "members" who vote and "supporters" who don't vote) to ensure that decision-making is not dominated by people or groups with single narrow objectives.

Regional/Watershed Level

At the regional level, leaders may send "blast" invitations that welcome as many people as possible. In this way, the circle of interested and engaged parties can be expanded beyond the "usual suspects." This approach can also be used for collaboratives at other scales. For large memberships, it can be helpful to create a Steering Committee or working groups to drive action and sustain communications.

Find examples of collaborative members from other SWCs:

Local SWCs

[Berks County Water and Sewer Association \(PA\)](#)

[Ostego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee \(NY\)](#)

State SWCs

[Ohio Balanced Growth Program \(link\)](#)

[North Carolina \(link\)](#)

Regional/Watershed SWCs

[Hamilton-New Baltimore Ohio Consortium \(link\)](#)

[Potomac Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership](#)

[Salmon Falls Watershed Collaborative](#)

National SWC

3. PLAN A KICK-OFF MEETING TO DEVELOP A SHARED VISION AND PATH FOR ACTION

- Effective SWCs recommend getting started quickly and planning meeting agendas that focus on creating tangible deliverables as soon as possible.
- In some cases, leaders may plan to spend time during the kick-off meeting educating partners so that the group can develop specific goals and actions based on a more informed understanding of the challenges faced and possible paths forward.
- It can be important to have a convener of some status to initially launch the group.
- Consider a field trip or visit as part of your kick-off meeting to connect partners with the water they are working to protect. Depending on the focus of your collaborative and the best practices or outcomes you hope to achieve, a trip might include:
 - A visit with local farmers on their farm/ranch.
 - A tour of the local water utility to showcase best practices and discuss on-the-job challenges.
 - A walk through an estuary or wetland.
 - A tour of an intake area.
 - A boat/ferry ride on a river or lake.