

# Positioning Relationships for Success



**A Network Initiative  
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# What is Positioning Relationships for Success?



- ❧ The Forest Service is a large, multi-layered organization with a wide array of programs designed to accomplish its mission.
- ❧ Many Forest Service partners are large, multi-layered organizations with a wide array of programs designed to accomplish their mission.
- ❧ Partnerships between two large, multi-layered organizations can become operationally dysfunctional if they not clearly and articulately defined within the context of a mutually beneficial relationship and positioned with respect to the multiple layers of the partnering organizations

- ❧ Positioning a relationship for success involves:
  - ❧ Identifying the core mutual benefit value of the partnership
  - ❧ Creating role clarity for each partner relative to the mutual benefit
  - ❧ Matching working relationships to the clarified roles

# Positioning Relationships: Network Concept

## Managing by Network



Successful partnerships between two large multi-layered organizations are actually networks of relationships deliberately linked to accomplish organizational missions.

### Network Goal / Vision - Case Study

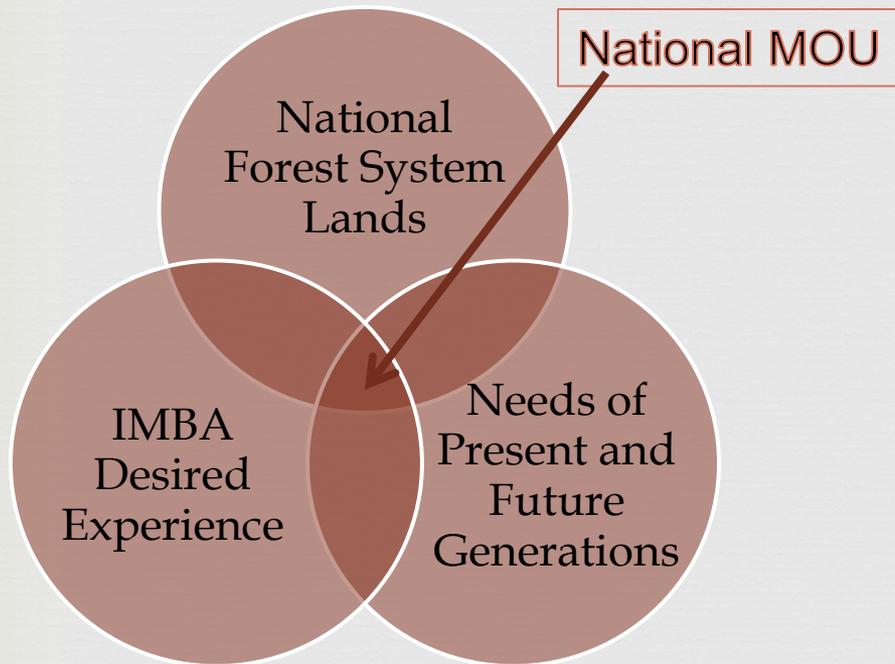
U.S. Forest Service: to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations

International Mountain Biking Association: to create, enhance and preserve great trail experiences for mountain bikers worldwide.

### Network Objectives

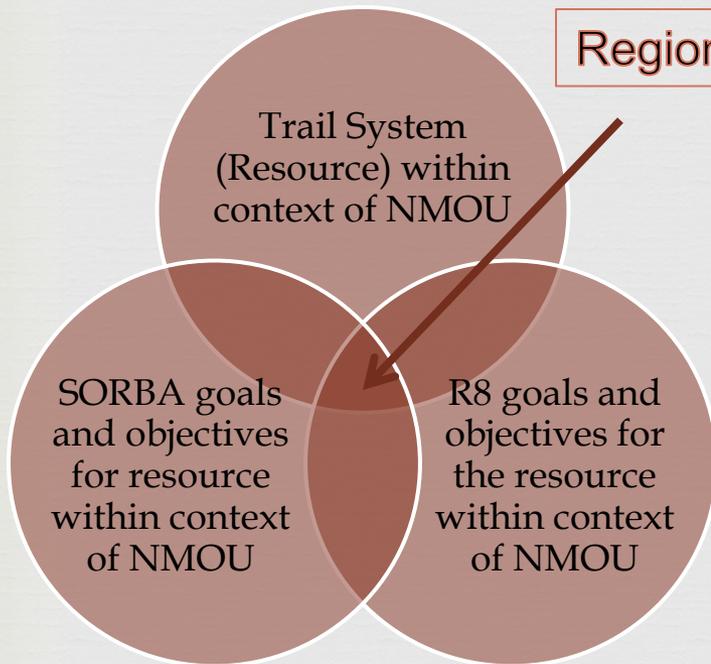
- ❧ National level (WO-IMBA):
  - ❧ Encourage responsible use of federal lands and disseminate information regarding conservation, recreation, and natural resources activities related to mountain bicycling.
- ❧ Regional level (R8-SORBA):
  - ❧ Create a common vision of excellent mountain bike trail systems and clarify working relationship roles of the Southern Region, Southern Off-Road Biking Association, and their affiliate chapters
- ❧ Forest level (NF-SORBA Chapter):
  - ❧ Achieve more by combining and focusing efforts towards the accomplishment of mutually beneficial goals and projects
- ❧ District level (District-SORBA Volunteers)
  - ❧ Create mutually agreed upon programs of work documented in sponsored volunteer agreements that ensure volunteer safety, and quality project implementation

## Case Study – Tools for Relationship Positioning



- ❧ The National MOU (NMOU) serves as a partnership framework:
  - ❧ Recognizes area of overlapping mission
  - ❧ Sets policy oriented partnership parameters and norms

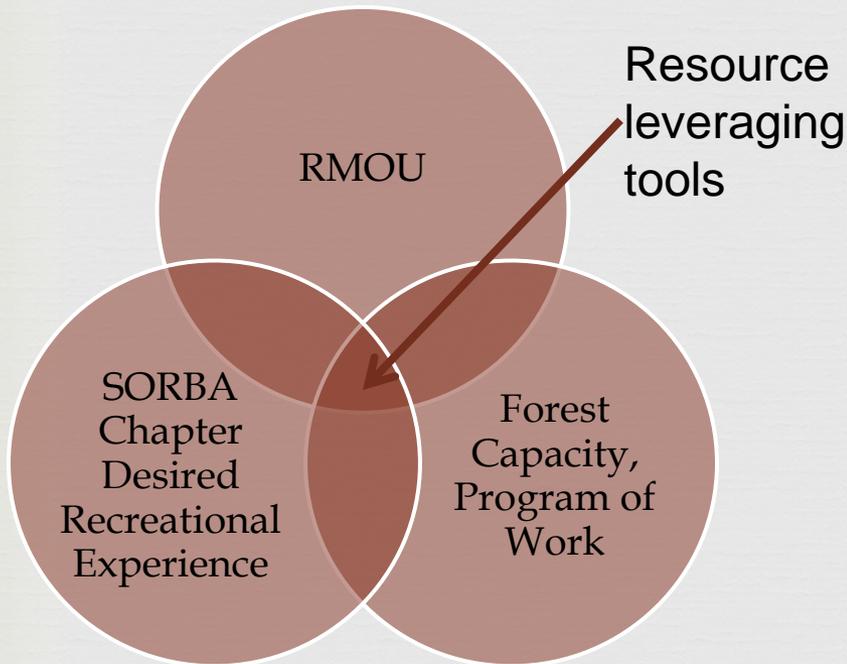
# Case Study – Tools for Relationship Positioning



❧ The Regional MOU (RMOU) clarifies the NMOU in a local context:

- ❧ Defines the resource
- ❧ Identifies areas of overlapping goals and objectives for the resource

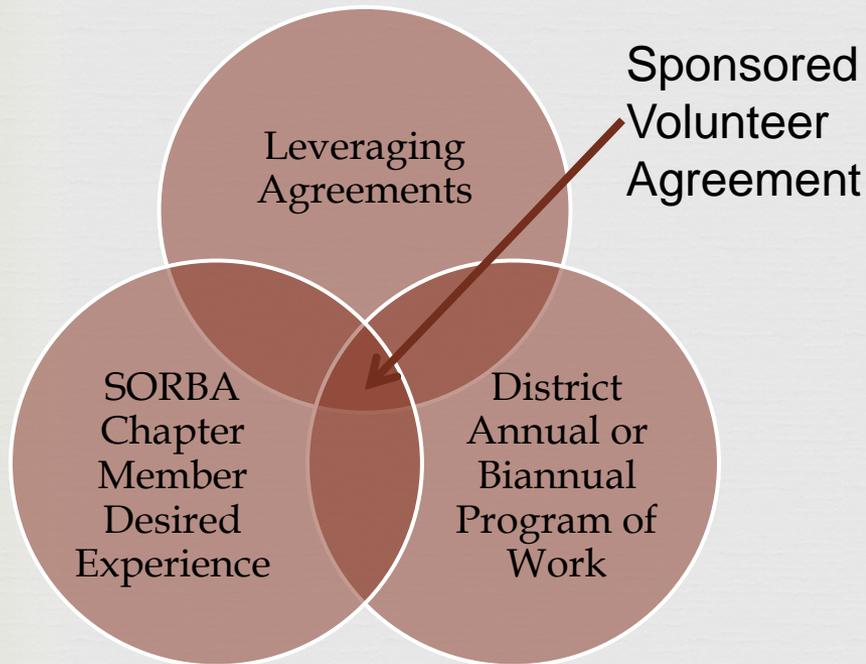
# Case Study – Tools for Relationship Positioning



## ❧ Forest level tools:

- ❧ identify overlapping implementation priorities
- ❧ Create a framework for leveraging:
  - ❧ Contracts (incl. IMBA Trail Care Crew)
  - ❧ Challenge Cost Share
  - ❧ Participating Agrmts

# Case Study – Tools for Relationship Positioning



## ☞ Sponsored Volunteer Agreements:

- ☞ Empower SORBA chapters to recruit and train volunteers to accomplish an agreed upon program of work
- ☞ Align citizen engagement with local Forest initiatives
- ☞ Create opportunities for public education aligned with partnership goals

# Stage of Network Development



What's the status of your network development?

- ✓ **Visioning:** all organizational levels complete to varying quality/clarity
- ✓ **Conceptual:** deliberately layered partnership approach is a new concept. Information and buy-in work is ongoing in both organizations
- ✓ **Research and Development:** National level complete; Regional level initiated; Forest/Chapter level initiated to varying degrees

- ✓ **Implementation Planning:**
- ✓ **Active:**
- ✓ **Evaluating:**

“Building The House While Living In It!”

What are you doing at this stage to manage the network and move to the next stage?

National MOU signed last month, Regional MOU in draft stage, Regional assistance in creating improved, interim Sponsored Volunteer Agreements

# Network Geography

## Communities of Place, Identify and Interest



Where does your network operate?



Who benefits from the development of your network?



# Benefits of the Network



List the current benefits of your network initiative:

- ❧ **Partner cultural awareness;**
- ❧ **Identification of partnership parameters by organizational position;**
- ❧ **Clarity in partner roles and responsibilities relative to organizational position;**
- ❧ **Multi-layered COMMUNICATION and ALIGNMENT!**

List the future benefits of your network initiative:

- ❧ **Reduced friction where partner advocacy initiatives are concerned;**
- ❧ **Elimination of unintended environmental consequences;**
- ❧ **Increased public understanding of mountain bicycling and public lands issues;**
- ❧ **Effective resource leveraging to accomplish more that we could independently.**

# Evaluating Network Potential and Performance

	Evaluation Criteria	Comments
1	Advance strategic priorities of the agency	Yes, but more importantly it advances the strategic priorities of both partners.
2	Leverages funding	Yes, but also reduces cost by aligning multi-level priorities and eliminating costly friction
3	Demonstrates big-picture thinking	Engaging people in quality experiences on public lands builds a constituency base for resources and multiplies our capacity well beyond the work accomplished through volunteer and partnership agreements
4	Demonstrates entrepreneurship	Models a new approach to partnership alignment
5	Management of formal agreements and contracts	Recognizes the need to match the right agreement with the right opportunity with the right organizational position
6	Demonstrates effective external and internal communication	Eliminates organizational and political noise at the ground/implementation level
7	Demonstrates accountability	Aligns action with mutual benefit outcomes
8	Potential as a network management model	We hope so!

# Lessons Learned About Network Management



- List two to three lessons learned about network management that you wish to share with colleagues within your agency:
  - **No one likes conflict, therefore conflict creates a unique leverage point to motivate partners towards conflict resolution and partnership improvement;**
  - **Partners don't have to agree on everything, but partnerships should be built on mutual benefit. Defining relationships relative to organizational position carves disagreement out of the functioning partnership and makes space for achievement of organizational strategic goals.**
  
- List one to two lessons learned about network management that changed the way you interact with partners and community representatives:
  - **Agreements are relationship tools, they are not the relationship.**
  - **Assuming your relationship with your partner is healthy because you aren't hearing from them is like assuming your marriage is healthy because your spouse is not talking to you.**