

Building Partnerships

Defining Partnerships

A Partnership is a voluntary collaborative agreement between two or more organizations in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common goal. Partnerships may involve one organization utilizing another's unique abilities, equipment or services, or it may be a "sharing" of resources (money, time, knowledge, equipment, etc.), to accomplish short or long-term objectives for one or all of the participating partners.

A Partnership Is

- ◇ A handshake, not a handout.
- ◇ A written or informal agreement between the parties
- ◇ An agreement that outlines the parties', mutual interest in, mutual benefits from, or mutually desired goals of a common objective
- ◇ An agreement that involves voluntary participation
- ◇ Consistent with the partners' plans, policies, and priorities
- ◇ Wholly owned by each partner organization
- ◇ An agreement that demonstrates real benefits to the public/communities

Why Partner

- ❖ Partnerships add value by drawing on the expertise of a variety of people and leverage different types of resources and competencies
- ❖ Partnerships mobilize people and resources to create changes
- ❖ Partnerships operate with the understanding that everyone has a piece of the truth
- ❖ Partnerships multiply the creativity and solutions! Two heads (or more) are better than one!
- ❖ Partnerships increase citizens' personal sense of responsibility, involvement, commitment, and develops a shared vision for long term change

How to Start a Partnership

- Get to know a community; including its human and natural history
- Learn about common issues and concerns
- Learn about differences and challenges/conflicts
- Learn about what has been done before and what has not
- Determine who are the leaders and willing participants and who are not
- Determine who affects change/action and who does not
- Bring willing community members together to share the above and find common ground and identify where to start
- Collectively identify what to do and what is needed and who will need to be a participant

The 80/20 RULE

Ability to view a partnership project through a different "Lens"! Focus on what people have in "common" (i.e. resources- land base, water; economics; community) not on the contentious view points. By doing this you may only get 80% of the partners to agree. However, you may get 100% agreement later in the process which comes with *trust* and *credibility*.

Key Elements of Successful Partnerships

Relationships-founded on reciprocity, honesty, trust, integrity, & open communication

- Working beyond individual boundaries with all parties involved-collective ownership
- Founded on a shared need/vision-acknowledges differences
- Agreed upon decision-making process

- Willingness to give up or share control and authority
- Based on credible data, local and indigenous knowledge-recognizes knowledge gaps
- Willingness to learn & listen to others, negotiate/compromise, seek creative win-win solutions
- Shared roles, risks, responsibilities and resources
- Involves and embraces inherent complexity- results are longer lasting
- Process for monitoring and evaluating and adapting
- Celebrate successes and learning
- Implement innovative solutions for longevity and funding

Managing Partnerships

TAKES TIME!

- ✓ ENERGY and COMMITMENT!
- ✓ STRATEGIC PLANNING!
- ✓ THINKING!
- ✓ MANAGING W/ INTEGRITY!

Spotting Trouble

- ❖ When people don't show up
- ❖ When resources don't become available
- ❖ When time passes and action does not follow
- ❖ When rumors start
- ❖ When results are not being achieved

How to Proceed when a Partnership is not Working

- ✓ Act quickly but strategically
- ✓ Identify what is not working and why-what has changed, why
- ✓ Do not assume anything
- ✓ Use open and inclusive and non-threatening communication- in person
- ✓ Look for positive solutions and not for opportunity to create blame
- ✓ Bring the group together to discuss, identify if there is a problem and a resolution

Sustaining & Transitioning Partnerships

- Recognize and plan for change-avoid perception of “abandonment”
- Start with an adaptive approach-monitor, evaluate and redefine over time-create a process that can respond to new threats, new partner situations, etc.
- Be willing to pass on or share responsibility and leadership
- Create resilient & sustainable partners-well supported with sufficient and appropriate resources, capacity & commitment
- Re-engage if needed-talk about when, how and who? – assess the cost of leaving versus rejoining

A Partnership Is Not...

- * A conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest or preferential treatment of one entity over another
- * An endorsement of commercial products, services, or entities
- * A way to get around laws that apply to things like recreational use, procurement of goods and services, etc.
- * Marketing or promotion of partners in any way, except for recognition of the contribution
- * A one way street
- * A pretense of allowing others to be heard and then decision making that is not inclusive of others