
Lessons Learned, Challenges, Solutions to Collaborating Across Landscape Conservation
Western Collaborative Conservation Network Confluence 2020 Conference
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A Framework for Collaboration: Positioning a Collaborative for Success

Do we have a clear vision/purpose that everyone is aligned around?

Articulating a vision of where your collaborative wants to go and what stakeholders perceive as achievement? is vital to success. Without it, people will not understand how their interests and experience align, thus, motivating their participation or not.

- Articulate a vision
- Identify the purpose
- Share an understanding of the problem
- Set goals/create evaluation processes/systems
- Set the stage for continuous improvement
- Determine relevance

Do we have trust? Are we cultivating an environment of trust?

Trust is the foundation for collaboration. The success of the collaborative depends on it. Positioning participants as equals and providing opportunities for quality relationships to be built are essentials to cultivating an environment in which participants trust each other.

- Develop/strengthen relationships
- Level the participation playing field
- Establish process and decision procedure
- Be transparent
- Create systems
- Common language; show people what you mean

Have we invited everyone that might be affected to participate? Do we have a clear sense of our strengths and weaknesses? Can we cultivate resources to support our weaknesses?

Assessing where the chinks in the armor are will help the collaborative plan for and navigate challenges ahead of when they arise. For example, it is really easy to want to move forward with the people who are interested in and motivated to participate in collaboration. However,

it is important to slow the process down and consider who might potentially be affected by decisions of the collaborative even if those participants might make collaboration more challenging. This will help to ensure that the product of the collaborative is accepted and ultimately useful.

- Decision makers
- Locals
- Diverse participation
- Potentially affected interests, end-users
- Leadership
- Neutral facilitation
- Funding
- Capacity

Are people feeling valued?

Collaboration is a long road and the people at the table need to be motivated for the duration. Also consider that not all people are process-oriented. Collaborative participants want to see progress.

- Consider stakeholders needs and values
- Run a good meeting
- Have clear roles/expectations
- Acknowledge contributions (say thank you!)
- Be responsive/adaptive
- Be realistic
- Have beer (aka, meetings need to be fun)

Resources

- RiversEdge West, Riparian Restoration Lessons Learned and Models for Other Initiatives, <https://www.riversedgewest.org/resource-center/documents/riparian-restoration-partnership-successes-lessons-learned-and-models>
- Dolores River Restoration Partnership, <https://www.drrpartnership.org>
- Network for Landscape Conservation, <http://landscapeconservation.org/knowledge-center/resource-library/>
- Western Collaborative Conservation Network, <https://collaborativeconservation.org/resources/>
- Collective Impact Forum, <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/>
- Colorado Water Conservation Board, River Network, <https://www.coloradosmp.org>
- University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law, Utah Program on Collaboration, <https://law.utah.edu/projects/edr/ut-program-on-collaboration/>
- Bleiker Citizen Participation Training, <https://consentbuilding.com/>