

## Confluence 2020 Open Space Notes

### “Conflict Resolution, Negotiation, Facilitation, and Consensus Building”

#### Discussion Session Notes

Sectors discussion group participants work with: Ag, Recreation, Ecology across Rivers and Forests

Participants were interested in discussing conflict scenarios within the SMP Stream Management Planning processes

#### *Establish Group/meeting Culture*

How can we resolve this conflict together, the early foundation of roles and decision making protocol within a group is critical. Set meeting ground rules – group understanding of respectful meeting conduct to progress discussions, addressing conflict, and achieving objectives of each meeting is critical. Ask “what is today’s agenda and objectives” and “what do we need to do/act to get this done?” Set productive cultural norms, make them clear and visible during the meeting, and hold each participant accountable to them.

Dealing with intentional vs. unintentional sabotage within a group – these types of interactions/relationships can be detrimental to group productivity and effectiveness and need to be addressed and curtailed early in the process.

#### *Efficiency, Collaboration, and Latent Conflict*

Discussion of Efficiency and Collaboration which often are assumed to be conflicting, or at odds with the other. They are values that can be selected and prioritized and in the long run collaboration may more effective than efficiency.

Discussion of latent conflict is conflict that innately exists because of differing values/ideas, but has not yet surfaced or been fully developed.

- Having a neutral or non-invested party to manage the facilitation process is beneficial to:
- When to bring conflict forward
- Building trust
- When to utilize various platforms and techniques (1 on 1 conversations vs. small group vs. large group)
- Timing and strategy of bringing forward and teasing apart conflict
- Best to separate roles and individuals as facilitator vs. stakeholder

#### *Arriving at Outcomes*

Language use is critical – determine beforehand if you are seeking “win-win” scenarios of compromise and set expectations of this before discussion ensues.

BATNA – Ask individual participants within the group “what is the next best scenario/outcome for you (as a stakeholder), each participant should have a clear understanding of the next best option when going into negotiations in preparation for their best or priority option not being possible.

- Best
- Alternative
- To a
- Negotiated
- Agreement

Start easy agreements first. Go for the lowest hanging fruit first when it comes to decision making time, build agreement, communication, and group wins through smaller achievements as you build up to the more difficult or challenging topics.

“Beneficial conflict” – yes it does exist, and most conflicts can be beneficial in bringing differing interests to the surface to discuss, understand risk and pain points, and define outcomes that address various needs.

#### *Other*

Conflict Resolution Training/Resources exist

STOP. ASK. Proceed?

- Are there additional meeting topics or side meetings that need to be set up?
- Okay to stop the meeting and have a process check-in
- Is this meeting culture providing a safe place for different opinions and values to be shared?

Time management responsibilities are critical, especially for the meeting leader to maintain

Use Group members as channels of communication to or from constituents

#### ***Next Steps***

1. Free facilitation tools/trainings/toolkits/resources for collaborative groups
2. Panel discussion at the next Confluence conference with a Q &A
3. Case studies compiled to discuss the “how to” techniques and examples of conflict, resolution, the process, and how to achieve stakeholder supported outcomes.

#### ***Key Points***

1. Have strategy, intention, clear communication, and set expectations
2. Put decisions and processes back on the group, if not working, as the group to decide how to adjust and proceed.
3. Use process and structure to manage “beneficial conflict”