

## Confluence 2020

### Peer to Peer Learning Session: Lessons Learned, Challenges, Solutions to Collaboratives Across Landscape Conservation

Session Notes: (insert below any general notes below either from individual presentations, group discussion or small group activities)

#### Presentations:

- General overview of a collaborative framework:
  - 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

#### Key Questions:

- Do we have trust? Are we cultivating an environment of trust?
  - 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?
  - Are people feeling valued?
- Case study on the Dolores River Restoration Partnership (PPT attached)

#### Small Group Activities:

- Break out sessions to answer the following questions:
  1. Share an example of a challenge or shortcoming for your collaborative.
  2. Pick 1 -2 of the challenges shared and discuss potential action steps that can be taken on to overcome the challenge.
  3. What would you add or emphasize to the framework document?
- Challenges Discussed:
  - Long term engagement is difficult
  - Lack of vision/trust/leadership and purpose
  - The ongoing need to transition to the next generation
  - Trust issues with the federal government
  - Is desperation necessary for a collaborative to form and be successful?
  - Individual participants with their own agendas

- Stakeholder fatigue
  - Institutionalizing collaboration within government agencies
  - Instilling trust that collaboration is a valid process
  - Staff turnover in federal agencies
- Action Items Discussed:
    - Invite businesses to collaboratives
    - Engage higher level government leaders
    - Proving annual fact to face meetings and events
    - Effective story telling
    - Work on seeing other people's views and not being closed minded
    - Incorporate shared leadership
    - Survey outcomes/evaluation

References: (list (and email) any handouts or PPT presentations, or other supporting materials used)

- Collaborative Framework handout (see Appendix)

Key Points of Discussion: (insert final key points of discussion --- bold the top three)

- Challenges evolve and are unique/different to each collaborative
- People need tools that they can use/adapt to their situation
- Collaboration is long-term; having ongoing evaluation is imperative

Key Next Steps: (insert key next steps identified to advance work on this topic----bold the top three)

- Share out updated collaboration framework from session
- Develop/provide an evaluation tool for collaboratives
- Provide examples of proactive communication strategies

***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/>