

Confluence 2020 CB #2 Building Organizational Capacity Session Notes

Session Host(s): Heather Knight, Associate Director of Practice-Center for Collaborative

Session Facilitators/Note Takers: Nicole Reese and Rox Hicks

Session Design by: Russ Schnitzer, Program Officer-Natural Resources, Gates Family Foundation and Heather Knight

Session Description:

Success of collaborative conservation groups is equally dependent on two factors: technical expertise in conservation and natural resources, and the capacity and effectiveness of the conservation organization itself. The leadership of many collaborative conservation groups are highly skilled and resourced in the former, but need more support, training and coaching in the latter. Capacity building programs are limited, but report that investments that build stronger and more effective organizations and leaders, and result in more lasting conservation solutions and durable organizations. Funders are more inclined to support organizations that can achieve higher levels of impact and sustain these efforts over time.

This session will: a) review case studies that illustrate successful capacity building programs, including program components, lessons and impacts, b) discuss the idea of developing a pilot program to provide more support for more collaboratives and to create a framework and best practices for organizational capacity building, and c) start to design components of such a pilot program.

Session Outline: (90 minutes)

5 minutes: Introductions and Framing the Topic-Heather

36 minutes: Presentation of 3 capacity building programs describing program components, lessons learned and impacts (12 minutes each) - High Divide Collaborative Capacity Building, Advancing Conservation Excellence Program- Amanda Hill and, Wilburforce Foundation & TREC capacity building & leadership services-Gary Burnett as grantee and alumni.

10 minutes: Whole Group-Question & Answers for Case Study presenters – Nicole Reese note taking

5 minutes: Introduce the idea for developing a capacity building pilot program-Heather

15 minutes: Small breakout group activity-start designing components of a pilot program (see below)

15 minutes: Breakout groups share results-Nicole Reese note taking

5 minutes: Session wrap up, summary of main outcomes and next steps and wants to be involved-TBD write up 2 final flip charts and summarizing PPT slide

Case Study Panel: Key Points of Discussion:

TREC/Wilburforce Foundation Leadership Program: presenter Gary Burnett (ED Hearot fo the Rckies) as program grantee

- Bringing together Science + capacity + capital
- Re-grant program: pooling and redistributing funds
- Providing Leadership training
- Can only access if Wilburforce grantee
- Evaluation using their Theory of Change: Supporting leaders -> building relationships -> increases capacity -> achieves conservation outcomes -> leads to change

High Divide Capacity Building Program: presenter Dennis Glick (ED Future West)

- Foster regional vision
- Conducts a capacity assessment survey
- Provides training workshops, webinars, small grants, 1-on-1 training
- Realizes that the process needs to be as easy as possible to participate because participants are already so constrained (that's why we need to build capacity) so they subsidize costs as much as possible

Advancing Conservation Excellence (ACE): presenter Amanda Hill from Land Trust Alliance

- Another case study of a re-grant program
- Texas Advancement Initiative: assist with building capacity to create strategic conservation plans, broaden and diversity of constituents
- Provides an executive director leadership program, as well as training for BOD and staff
- Conducts an organizational needs assessment

Small breakout group activity:

Starting to Design the Components of a Capacity Building Pilot Program

Attendees will divide into four groups. Each group will develop one of the components of the pilot program by addressing one of the four questions. Dennis Glick, Heather Knight, Nicole Reese and Rox Hicks will divide up amongst the 4 groups. Each groups records key discussion points and next steps for each group on flip charts.

1. How might we select collaboratives for a capacity building pilot program? (Dennis)
 - a. Community support/legitimacy
 - b. Level of collaboration
 - c. Need
 - d. Potential impact
 - e. Geography/landscape scale
 - i. Tipping points
 - ii. leverage
2. What criteria might be measured to assess the organizational capacity and effectiveness of each group and how often would it be measured? (Heather)
 - a. Mission
 - b. Strategic plan
 - c. Succession plan/ transition plan (for staff and BOD)
 - d. Goal setting and achievement
 - e. Measurable outcomes and evaluation
 - f. Board effectiveness
 - g. Depth of relationships
 - i. Internal & external
 - h. Capacity to build capacity
 - i. Competencies to build capacity
 - j. Ability to prioritize
 - k. Measure of resiliency
 - l. Board recruitment and skills
3. What conservation criteria might be measured to be able to assess the change in conservation impact of each group and how often would it be measured? (Nicole)
 - a. Short term (awareness and connection) vs. long term (conservation outcomes)
 - b. Social-ecological connections: how does CBCC support their community's hierarchy of needs
 - c. Working with funders to support building social capital
 - d. Maintain durability to change with the issue of high turnover; changing mindsets, behavior, and ensuring web of connections is woven instead of just one person
4. What organizations or resources could be identified to help provide training and or coaching for each collaborative in the pilot? (Rox)
 - "Super-charging" local organization
 - o at local level, deeper learning
 - o knowledgeable people sharing their successes from local communities. What the circumstances look like with successes and challenges
 - Shared peer-to-peer learning

- Learning from places that have had successes
- Compile resource lists (education) that communities can use as a “go-to”
- “How-To” use of social media, use of story-tellers, invest money in story-telling

Whole Group Thinking:

Key Points Discussion

- Challenge: connecting CBCC’s (that are independent or without formal memberships) with capacity building opportunities
- Challenge: connecting community in ways that are ecologically, economically, and politically relevant

Key Takeaways:

- Combine training (in-person and online) with small grants to support capacity
- Capacity building needs to be accessible (ie. subsidize costs) for constrained participants
- Pool and redistribute funding for strategic impact

Key Next Steps

Convene an interested group to:

- Inventory all existing capacity building programs and
- Review their criteria for evaluation and measuring impact, then
- Identify and prioritize gaps to develop a pilot project for the WCCN

Resources

1. Organizational Ecology Model-Key Indicators of an Effective Organization-TREC
2. Partnership Impact Evaluation Guide-Amy Mickel and Leigh Goldberg
3. Organizational Capacity Assessment-Sustainable Northwest & High Divide Region
4. Wilburforce Capacity Building Program
5. Wilburforce Theory of Change
6. LTA ACE assessment tool and survey