

Public Policy and the Positive Implications of Collaborative Processes

Capacity Building Session Notes

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Session Notes:

- Began with a Power Point presentation sharing the history of the Public Policy Working Group and examples of good collaborative conservation partnerships in the West (i.e., case studies)
 - Public Policy is one of four major Working Groups in the WCCN
 - An Action Plan was developed
 - Action items included a meeting in Sheridan, Wyoming and the development of a white paper and one page summary. The white paper is titled: Institutionalizing Collaborative Problem-Solving in Federal Natural Resource Agencies
- Discussion focused on suggestions and edits to the white paper and comments from the group on different sections of this document. The intended audience for the white paper is agency leadership and Congress.

Recommendations and White Paper edits from Session Participants:

- We want to institutionalize collaborative problem-solving as a way of doing business
- More is needed beyond FACA to ensure the people at the table have decision authority for the agency.
- To address training needs, especially for those in the field, there needs to be more coordination among collaboratives and agencies on existing training.
- Collaborative groups, including landowners, could send representatives to Resource Advisory Councils for the state. Having more input could help to transfer good ideas from local, regional, to national level. More opportunities to engage could help with this.
- Encourage some type of user feedback to supervisors and managers at the local levels with state and federal agencies. It could be like a “report card” system from the stakeholders as feedback to supervisor. How well are the employees working with local constituents? Then, incentivize good work and make corrections if needed.
- Evaluate programs to demonstrate efficacy (internal evaluation along with input from stakeholders).
- Communication about collaborative conservation is needed for/to upper leadership levels in federal agencies.
- We need to begin hiring differently—bringing in the skill sets to do better collaborative conservation.

- Individuals are what make a difference in communities. If agencies hire good people that work well in the local community, it makes all the difference.
- We need to emphasize and grow mentorship opportunities, working closely with universities to grow our future practitioners.
- Encourage more college professors and students in these types of settings, like WCCN Confluence.
- Consider re-establishing incentives. Hiring professionals to come in and help with a plan/report.
- Consider ways to have transferability of ideas and relationships when there is turnover in administrations and leadership. Also, transferability of collaborative ways of doing business if a great local staff person moves on (i.e., have overlap with the new person to have transferability of the good ideas that are working).
- Better understanding of FACA and how to navigate is needed inside agencies. Also, some simple language changes in FACA could make a tremendous difference in how it is implemented.
- Consider deleting the text box that includes just a few “policy” examples. It doesn’t seem to be value added for the white paper.
- Community-based collaboratives need space to be able to create flexibility.

Next steps and Outcomes/Takeaways

- Finalize white paper and complimentary one-pager
- Select key messengers to get the white paper and on-pager to leadership in agencies, as well as to Congress
- Consider ways to add new training for agency people, as well as others in the collaborative
- Work closer with universities, including both professors and students. Cultivate new collaborative people. Improve pipeline, mentorships/internships
- Meet with new BLM office leadership in Colorado
- More community involvement as part of process and solution
- Involve private landowners early and often, rather than after decisions are made