

**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

Topic: Infrastructure Projects: Collaborative Partnerships for Successful Outcomes

Session number: 39

Morning

Facilitator: Rapheal Montalvo

Location:

A. **Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion.** *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

- Change in paradigm – regional, contextual, ecosystem focused, includes environment from the beginning. Joint planning rather than in silos.
- Need for vision, shared purpose to initiate a collaborative effort
- Need for policy that enables
- Need for someone to play the convening role, bringing folks together
- Need for leadership, authority, ability to make decisions, rewards for risk (need to overcome risk aversion of agencies and agency leaders), champion
- Identify mutual benefit
- How to effectively involve stakeholders and reach out to the public
- Role of NGOs, letting NGOs and other stakeholders take the lead and the risk.
- Need for a shared information base, common understanding of current state of the science or facts.
- Communication – how do you find, communicate and engage with the stakeholders
- How do you effectively share of resources

B. **National-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Overarching – Need for a Paradigm Shift

- There is a need for a different approach that:
 - ✓ Is proactive, discussing opportunities and issues up-front;
 - ✓ Is driven by a vision; bolder, regional;
 - ✓ Not infrastructure first, but infrastructure and environment together
 - ✓ Produces multi-purpose projects – ones that address environment and infrastructure, and take advantage of resources associated with infrastructure projects for multiple purposes.
 - ✓ Culture change
 - ✓ Focus on future rather than blame for the past;
 - ✓ Recognize economic driver and economic value of conservation;
 - ✓ Creates a climate for collaboration and risk sharing.
 - ✓ Defines success in way that seeks to learn from failure.
 - ✓ Doesn't stop trying – ducks will never all be all in line.

Actions for Administration and Congress

This document represents the views of the individual participants and does not reflect group consensus.

- Clear administration statement of conservation as a national commitment from the President and Congress.
- Reflect incentives, actions, and outcomes that implement the new paradigm in the appropriations and reauthorizations.
- Allow longer project timelines that allow for collaboration.
- Provide direction to agencies that reflects the new paradigm.
- Provide incentives for agency to work across normal lines of authority.
- Provide clarity in the legislative directives to agencies.

Actions for Agencies

Direction

- Develop internal policies and direction to:
 - ✓ move decision-making authority to local agency offices;
 - ✓ provide incentives flexibility, collaboration and partnerships;
 - ✓ reward risk taking;
 - ✓ insulate risk takers;
 - ✓ reward based on outcomes.
- Recognize that collaboration takes time and money. Include time and dollars in budget and schedule. Change budget process to allow longer timelines, if necessary.

Training

- Cross cultural training between NGOs and government.
- Training regarding what is possible under current law.
- Assess internal agency competencies to collaborate, and train to remedy weaknesses.

Partnerships

- Work with NGOs, let them take lead and risk.
- Support and incentive local government actions and participation. Local governments often have more flexibility than federal agencies.

Other Specific Suggested Actions

- Continue collaboration throughout the life of the project, collaborate with stakeholders to evaluate. The project and therefore the collaboration never go away.
- Incentivize collaboration within current cost-sharing rules (ACOE).
- Ensure regulatory consistency over life of the project.
- Use regulatory negotiations.
- Use memoranda of agreement.
- Assess the impacts of proposed projects on stakeholders.

C. Particularly insightful quotes from participants that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.

“Don't stop trying – the ducks will never all be in a line.”

“We need cooperative conservation between the three branches of government.”

“Incorporate environment as part of infrastructure and build deliberately into our planning.”

This document represents the views of the individual participants and does not reflect group consensus.