White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation  
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation  

Topic: Infrastructure Projects: Collaborative Partnerships for Successful Outcomes  
Session number: 39  
Facilitator: Rapheal Montalvo  

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 memorandum 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.”

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