

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

Topic: Infrastructure Projects: Collaborative Partnerships for Successful Outcomes

Session number: 48

Afternoon

Facilitator: W. Steve Lee

Location: 266

This summary cannot be more than two pages; allocate space as needed among the categories.

- 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.*

Paradigm shift need in the process. The new paradigm should:

- Provide for early, upstream planning and involvement with agencies and stakeholders working together under one set of principles and guidelines. Another way to think about “upstream” is to frame the problem broadly and inclusively to identify upcoming challenges and opportunities for collaboration, as well as potential partners. Projects can take five-ten years until they are constructed. There is a need for single set of regulations from federal agencies that will not change over time.
- Allow for the question to be raised of whether a project should continue (e.g. if there are significant unintended consequences.)
- Allow for collaboration across the full life cycle of the project, including early planning for closure, continuation or reuse over a fifty-year or longer horizon.
- Allow agencies to assume the role of ally or resource to stakeholders, if that is more effective.

Agencies may have difficulty reaching and convening stakeholders in some communities and circumstances. Deliberated and tailored outreach is necessary to reach and bring to the table stakeholders who might not otherwise participate.

- Find a local partner that can reach out to stakeholders and be a convener. These partners should know and be trusted in the communities more than government agencies.
- Build trust through framing issues in ways that create mutual objectives, principles and transparency.

It is important to recognize the magnitude of the deteriorating and inadequate infrastructure problem that needs to be solved and the limits of federal commitments to address those needs.

- Partners are needed for creativity and funding and finding access to private markets.
- Identify the frame for multi-purpose projects that create the opportunity for unlikely allies.

Collaboration is more likely to succeed if convened pursuant to an agreed-upon set of principles and with people with the right set of interests and authority to come to the table.

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

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.*

Need for an adaptive management process that allows agencies to look at a project and, seeing positive and negative results, can account for changes in values and actions.

- This requires sharing of risk.
- Requires feedback loops to ensure that process and results continually improve, and that the process reaches the point of predicting problems.
- Need a review of policies to identify and remove disincentives to collaboration.
- Engage Congress so they understand agency actions and programs. For example, assess what happened in the FY 02 Farm Bill and inject lessons learned into the FY 07 Jobs Bill.

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

"Food is a great convenor."

"We have learned that we can't always come to consensus, but with trade-offs we can come to agreement."

"We need a fundamental change in the way we think about funding infrastructure needs."

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