

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

Topic: Measuring Success of Cooperative Conservation Efforts

Session number: 50

Afternoon

Facilitator: Kirk Emerson

Location: 241

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.*

- Plan well, monitor effectively, celebrate often
- Incentivize risk/reward risk-takers
- Improve communication among agencies and with state, local and tribal governments as well as among all stakeholders

CHALLENGES:

- It's important to set achievable goals and agree on goals
- Tension between needs of leadership (agency heads) and project managers
- Limited capacity or funding for monitoring program outcomes
- Differentiate between what you can and can't control
 - It takes time for relationship-building—how and what level to initiate/develop partnerships and develop trust
- OMB constraints on employees to evaluate non-federal parties (ICR process)
- Purpose of evaluation—what are we trying to measure; what will that take (don't confuse outputs with outcomes)
- Hard to collaborate with performance based budgeting; performance based on the number of widgets produced; performance-based budgeting makes it difficult to develop partnerships

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Evaluation creates opportunity for flexibility and information to encourage investing in and sustaining cooperative conservation efforts
- Evaluation can tap into important local knowledge from older generations and inform the new generation of property owners and resource users

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.*

Setting goals and desired outcomes

- More funding for monitoring; must be flexible
- Realistic time tables/parameters
- Agency protocols and policies don't match up; feds should develop common policies; be more streamlined and flexible
- Streamline rules and work through OMB to shift money between federal and state agencies (inter-agency transfer and coordination)
- Get MOUs for buy-in from federal agencies for funding

Monitoring and evaluating progress

- Risk aversion is big issue; support risk-takers "up" through the chain of command; alternative performance review processes

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

- Multi-year funding essential for partnerships
- Measuring incremental progress toward goals
- Accountability—commit to the process; be patient with collaboratives

Measuring success/outcomes

- Regional conferences to share evaluation/performance

C. **Local-level Practical Actions** *that could be taken at the local or community level by Tribes, state and local communities, private citizens, and local organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Setting goals and desired outcomes

- Get all viewpoints on the table to obtain shared goals; find ways to engage all participants
- Performance goals/benchmarks set at local level and approved at (higher) national level
- Interdisciplinary backgrounds for baseline data—measure for certain indicators rather than long term objectives; blend science/expertise into the discussion; adaptive management; readjust or refine goals with more data; add science into goals
- Establish training component for communication/facilitation to identify gaps in data and engage everyone; explain data/definitions

Monitoring and evaluating progress

- Measuring trends, direction based on indicators
- Evaluation isn't punishment but celebration of progress (how to make this fun) (adaptive management)
- It's not just about goal-setting; program theory – establish strategic map for monitoring, recognizing complexity
- Monitor over appropriate time period

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

- “Plan well, monitor effectively, celebrate often”
- “You've got to be able to measure end product”
- “It's a business to make the environment better;”
- “We need to create knowledge not just information”
- “Engage local people more than we already have;”
- “Goals need to be inclusive of all stakeholders”

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