

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

Topic: Expanding the Role of Tribes, States and Communities in Cooperative Conservation

Session number: 37

Morning

Facilitator: Christine Carlson

Location: 130

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.*

- Defining true collaboration – flexibility in partnerships, funding, objectives setting needs to be collaborative, and all stakeholders and levels of government need to be at the table.
- Respect for roles and responsibilities at all levels
- Recognition of local knowledge as well as technical and scientific knowledge.
- Working relationships are needed, they take time to build and so need to be long-term and flexible.
- Collaborations need to be flexible and not one-size-fits-all, and they should not be mandated from above.
- Idea that there is tension b/c governments/tribes/local so building trust over time seems to be a key.
- Keep creativity in the collaborative process. Currently there are successes that we do need to model and make sure not to cover old ground.
- Collaborative relationships need to be built from the ground up.
- Be optimistic, work through and build relationships.
- Clear communication both up and down.
- Need commitments and assurances about funding and working together to get funding. Money does help create success.
- Improve relationships – Trust Relationship is about trust and not abusing that as a way to manipulate (or perception of it being manipulative).
- Tribal sovereignty needs to be recognized from the out set.
- When you talk about collaboration, there are places with a wall there (ie., species at brink of extinction) and “no, you can’t do this” because limit to actions. E.g., at Yucca Mtn nuclear waste issue.

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.*

- NEPA and FACA process need evaluation.
- Tribal sovereignty government needs to be implemented in all Federal policy development and action.
- Danger in calling something cooperation when really a hierarchy. If one entity has resources and ability to punish, it’s not really cooperation it’s really hierarchy. If one person is doing all the accomodating it’s not cooperation.
- Cultural shift is needed in Federal agencies stressing integrated planning with local and state governments.

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- Funding is crucial to ensure successful partnerships. There are no specific fund sources for partnerships at present.
 - Federal agencies need to consult with each other to get on same page.
 - Constraint came up here on what we're saying = "we can't do that b/c rules are that way". Please don't do that.
 - Cooperative projects need to be institutionalized. People want locally driven, long-term projects. Institutionalizing the process should accommodate collaboration but not prescribe it.
 - Most of federal laws do not allow collaboration. There needs to be some legislative changes to accommodate this cooperative conservation. There needs to be some enabling legislation to allow more flexibility. E.g., Healthy Forest of 2002 mandated that communities decide who they are, how big they are, and provide opportunities for input in developing plans. This could be a model.
 - Reward Federal officials for collaboration and build into annual performance valuation.
 - Federal government should dust off the Executive Order that call for consultation with tribes. Get tribes involved from the get-go on issues. Tribes are sovereign entities (separate govt).
- 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.*
- A lot of projects should be community-driven.
 - Recognize the convening role that local governments and tribes can play in gathering the views of their respective communities.
 - Communication between federal and non-federal entities is a two way street. Recognize local groups as cooperating agencies, and the full role they can play in a lot of these processes.
 - Separating the technical and practical aspects from the political aspects of an issue.
 - States, local governments, and tribes should take the initiative and go to the federal government to leverage funds
 - Integrate the different knowledge sources, ensuring prioritization so that all social and economic communities benefit, ensuring environmental justice.
 - Put more priority on conservation issues at the local and tribal level.
- D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants** that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.
- "It's all about relationships"
 - "You can be cynical, but we really should try to be hopeful and try cooperative ways to do these projects."

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