

White House Conference On Cooperative Conservation
• **Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

Topic: **Building Successful Partnerships**

Session Number: **45**

Facilitator: **Robin Roberts**

Morning

Location : **RM 125**

A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion

- Build relationships around common goals – this will allow trust to build.
- Clearly lay out roles, responsibilities and expectations
 - everybody should know what it is expected of them, what others can contribute, and ensure that actions aren't redundant.
- Rules of conduct are essential.
- Good partnerships cannot be forced.
- All players need to realize that their individual goals can best be met by being at the table, and moving with a group.
- Strong leadership is essential to allow for full communication and trust
- Shares leadership and knowledge, speaks all languages, sense of humor, thick skin, a respected diplomat
- Divergence – some view partnership as a means to a long-term relationship, while others view partnership as a means to conflict resolution
- The Federal government is organized in a non-intuitive manner, and working with them can be cumbersome and convoluted.
- Funding would work best in for multiple years – prioritizing und distribution to those with proven track records.

B. National-level Practical Actions

- Establish long term funding programs (5 years or more), as
- Often one-year funding going away leads to the partnerships going away
 - A lot of energy is spent in obtaining grants on an annual basis (both for staff and for volunteers)
 - Partnerships with a long term, good track record, need to be endorsed through prioritized, long term funding
- Let's not forget we also need to continue to be building capacity for partnerships; for these groups – let's first fund them for developing some strategic similar type plan.
- Streamline requirements for comprehensive/strategic/community plans – so that all federal entities have the same requirements and one plan can be developed to meet all agency needs
- The Federal Government agencies need to do a strategic plan to clarify, streamline and improve its communications amongst and within agencies
- Define what cooperative conservation means commonly across the federal sector, and then develop the appropriate set of tools that provide all of the information public needs.
- Develop one guide that clearly states what folks needs to do to partner with federal agencies.
- We almost need a Presidential mandate to fully implement (streamline horizontally and vertically) cooperative conservation.
- Realize that often it's the local community or state level folks that are doing the work – so feds – hand out the funds and get out of the way.
- Instill the partnership value in the federal culture

- Reinstated excellent, “tried and true” programs that have a long-term record of success
 - USDA FS “Economic Action Programs” particularly ‘Economic Recovery Grant’
 - Fully fund the land and water conservation fund.
 - Create incentive programs (similar to that of CREP) that force you to look beyond just the landowner to consult and achieve goals.
- Move away from economic indicators such as ‘new home starts’ that are really just indicators of urban sprawl

C. Local-level Practical Actions

- Report upward when programs are really working.
- Private and non-profits could focus on establishing the connection between urban dwellers and where the need for conservation.
- Be at the table to plan actions and include the conservation focus.
- Private and NGO’s should focus energy on conservation education in the schools.
- Build on the successes of short term projects.
- Partner with other local entities to strengthen local entities
- Work across political and economic boundaries.

D. Particularly Insightful Quotes

“Partnership is a way of life for us.”

“Steer from behind.”

“When it’s all said and done, the people say ‘We did it ourselves’”.

“Sometimes the best partnerships are born in separate rooms.”

“Odd that we’ve got the Department of Defense here, but where’s the Department of Energy? That’s where we have our largest conservation need.”

“Collaboration costs.”