

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

Topic: Improving Certainty and Incentives for Stakeholders

Session number: 38

Facilitator: Frank Dukes

Morning

Location: 261

A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion

- Agencies need to work together instead of against each other or protect turf.
- Trust provides & improves certainty. Need to find ways to create trust and facilitate dialogue earlier on. Groups that are trusted by many of the stakeholders.
- Voluntary conservation management practices work better because they're voluntary, driven by all parties and are integrated versus individual agency best management practices.
- Administration needs to continue emphasis on CC as a priority by administration leaders providing visible support, rewarding agencies that work together, continuing funding and bundling various incentives and certainty between agencies.
- Landowners care about their land (heritage) and hence are concerned about both conservation (being a good steward) & about its productivity (profit). The combination of these two improves incentives
- Effects at a broad scale need to be achieved with national or regional stated imperatives (goals).
- There are various ways to use Third parties to achieve CC (501(3)c's., Co-ops & task forces)
- Keep working landscapes working to achieve CC. Raise visibility and messages to public about how working landscapes achieve CC. (use examples).
- Uncertainty (e.g. changing regulations affecting what is "legal") keep landowners from stepping forward .
- Need to find ways to create trust and facilitate dialogue earlier on. Groups that are trusted by many of the stakeholders.
- Fragmentation of open space is a major concern.

B. National-level Practical Actions

- Expand regulatory certainty for landowners and companies to go beyond compliance and reduce risk of future regulation. E.G. Safe Harbors, Brownfields, Mitigation Bankers.
- Utilize policies & laws that reinforce early involvement by participants, e.g. organizations that come in at the end of a process to disrupt.
- Keep stewards on the land. Make it worth their while through easements, payments for services, etc.

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- Remove obstacles to using multiple programs under the Farm Bill and get rid of conflicting requirements. If landowner is part of collaborative or landscape ecosystem plan, allow more flexibility to use multiple programs and remove income caps that are a disincentive to large landowner participation
- Support suburban community forestry open space programs (S. 941).
- Support President's capital gains proposal.
- Expand markets for what you want & expand markets for ecosystem services.
- Federal govt. can set goals, but private sector should help design market based incentives. Then govt supports and monitors achievement.
- Expand use of third parties to achieve CC, e.g. broker mitigations and environmental services, disperse funding more efficiently by receiving funds from multiple sources and dispersing to individual farmers, facilitate landowner co-ops to develop their own conservation management practices, aggregate ecosystem service benefits across multiple landowners, get agencies working together to resolve differences and conflicts between regulations and regulators, contract with third parties to do remediation and negotiation..
- Use fines to improve CC on the ground, instead of returning funds to the Treasury, e.g. supplemental environmental programs., BUT avoid the reverse incentive (i.e. speeding ticket quotas).
- Support DOD encroachment initiative.
- Develop & expand pilots for Co-ops under the Farm Bill. They can distribute funds to farmers more efficiently, especially when Co-ops tailor & develop conservation practices.

C. **Local-level Practical Actions**

- Conservation constituents go to Congress with good news to support programs that are working.
- NGOs develop web based networks so landowners can connect & get service providers.
- Private sector should help design market based incentives.
- Support organizations that all parties trust. They are key to dialogue & getting people and agencies to work together.
- Rural communities should engage mayors of cities about what incentives will work to avoid open space fragmentation. Also include perspectives of land developers. This will broaden our perspective on fragmentation incentives & help develop creative solutions.

D. **Particularly insightful quotes from participants**

- “Too often we offer incentives as a hook with a hammer at the end. The incentive goes away but the hammer (or regulation) remains.”
- “US farmers have grown the best food in the world. If you want us to grow ducks, tell us you want us to grow ducks and help us make it profitable.”

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