

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

Topic: Using Science and Technology to Reach Cooperative Conservation Goals

Session number: 52

Afternoon

Facilitator: Larry Fisher and Doug Sarno

Location: 227 & 228

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.*

- Scale and scope of information is important
- Personal value of information and societal value of information
- Need to translate science to a personal/community scale
- Use of modeling and simulation very useful for predictive purposes
- Need to communicate science in language, context, and terms that the public understands and trusts
- Science needs to be put in the proper context within the collaborative process. We need to understand the appropriateness and usefulness of scientific knowledge in helping to make decisions.
- Important to understand and translate measures of risk and uncertainty to the public.
- The science and scholarship of engaging people is just as valid as “hard” science.
- Better use of forecasting, modeling and simulation to aid risk assessment
- Packing information and assembling data to communicate uncertainty
- Better data reliability in data (e.g., ensure that governments keep their data updated)
- Originator of data is best suited to maintain it
- Use of neutral third parties to facilitate process and translate information between parties
- Sometimes we are too quick to use science. We sometimes try to understand a problem and then go directly to a solution. Need to get people together to determine the problem..
- Science can get you to know what the risk is, but then you must determine the acceptable level of risk. Adaptive management is about doing this. Monitor performing several actions and determine which action gives you the best outcome.

Obstacles	Solutions
Data sharing among federal agencies.	Use similar sources of data. Avoid redundancy. Work with universities for access. Convene at the state or local level.
NEPA planning horizon (10-15 years) versus longer term planning needs.	
Conservation education dwindling. Disconnect with the land, urbanization.	Advocate reinstatement of Environmental Education Act and general conservation education.
Ownership of spatially explicit information (public vs. private, FOIA impact, confidentiality issues)	Seek a third party, non-federal neutral keeper of the data and facilitate the process.

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Challenges of implementing adaptive management.	Treat adaptive management as an experiment with a more formal structure to test, monitor, adapt and implement.
Lack of scientific knowledge of judges in terms of environmental litigation.	Explore use of Master Scientific Advisors to help evaluate cases and make decisions.
Lack of trust in scientists or credible science.	Find and fund scientists who can interpret and communicate science to community.
NEPA as impediment to cooperative conservation	Encourage more cooperating agency and co-lead status for state and local government agencies.

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.*

- Facilitate relationships between scientists and users/communities.
- Strengthen environmental and conservation education, for example, by reinstating the Environmental Education Act and the EPA Small Grants Program
- Strengthen training of federal agencies in cooperative conservation
- Institute a reward system to encourage and foster cooperative conservation, recognize success and encourage innovation
- Engage greater Congressional inter-action and find ways to unify Congressional action, for example to overcome the constraints of committee structure
- Seek legislative relief to litigation related to cooperative conservation, for example, NEPA

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.*

- Explore or strengthen models that link science to practical application with local land owners, for example reevaluating and refunding the Extension Service, and the NRCS state conservation and local conservation districts
- Establish regional mechanisms to address environmental, ecosystem or issue based problems
- Facilitate personal understanding, relationships, and networks
- Utilize research and educational institutions to help facilitate local communication and problem solving.

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

- Sound science can engender trust and credibility
- Need to understand what the threshold for success. Strive for optimal, but know the threshold.
- Precautionary principle is dangerous because it inhibits risk taking.
- You live on earth, you have risk.
- "Citizen science" as an important element of cooperative conservation.

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