Sustainability Linkages in the Federal Government

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World Wildlife Fund

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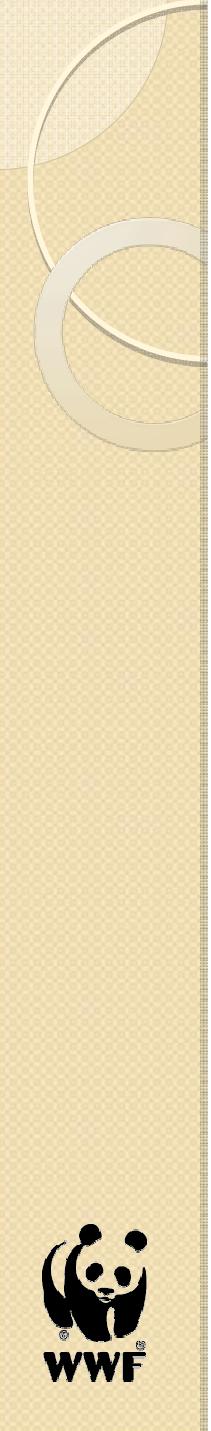
World Wildlife Fund

- Mission: Conservation of Nature
  - Finding common ground for species, places, people and business
- Established in 1961
- Operates in more than100 countries
- 4,000+ employees
- 5+ million members (1.2 million in U.S)
- Local to global presence

WWF

Challenges

- Bringing a systems approach to decisionmaking
- Solving for our economic, environmental/conservation goals in ways the respect and enhance people and communities

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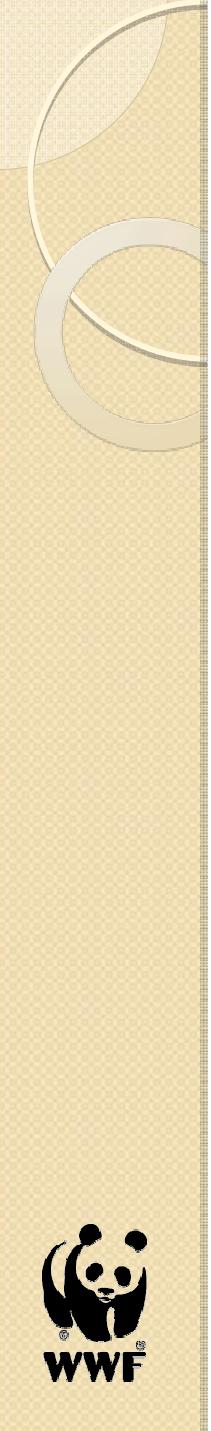
Key Technical Issues

- Valuing future needs
  - Discounting
- Valuing nature
  - Good work going on here at WWF & elsewhere
- Addressing uncertainty
  - Low probability of high consequence events
  - Quantitatively and qualitatively
    - Can we assign plausible values to key uncertainties
- Calculating benefits
  - Quantitatively and qualitatively (we know they are non-zero)
  - Expanding the boundary for benefits and costs

Then a Miracle Occurs…
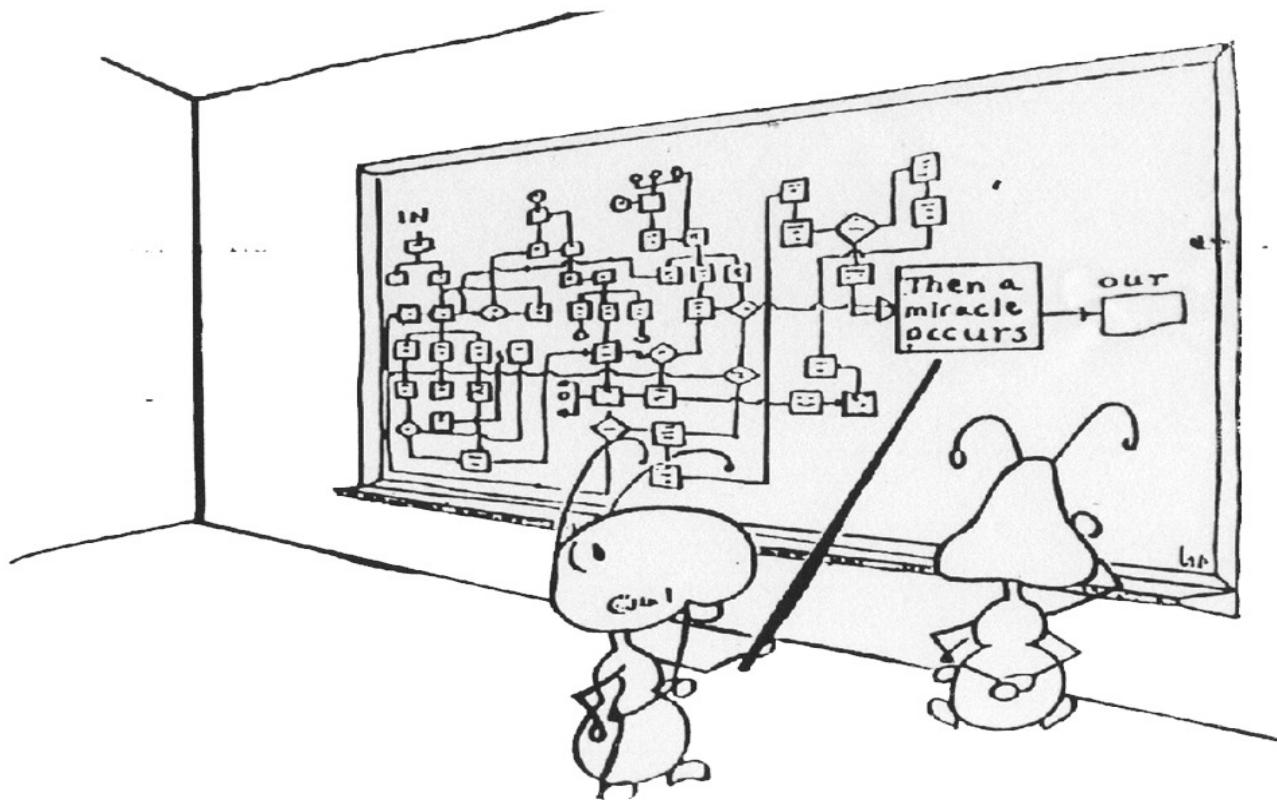
Good work, but I think we might need just a litte more detail right here.
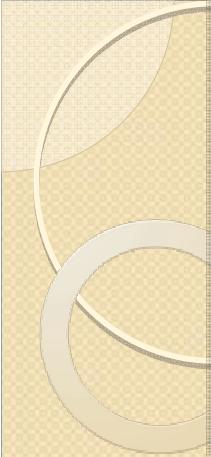
Key Practical Considerations

- People
  - Can't deal with too much complexity
  - Aren't paid or rewarded for systems thinking
- Government Agencies
  - Report to different authorizing and appropriations committees
  - Even connected issues, not connected (transportation/climate)
- Legislation
  - Operating from different organic statutes
  - Deadlines for related regulatory and policy actions within and across agencies are typically out of sync
  - As long as laws provide different and usually somewhat narrow decision criteria, laws themselves are barriers
    - Some Exceptions – e.g., National Environmental Policy Act
- Politics
  - We live in challenging times; seemingly more resistance than ever to connecting issues

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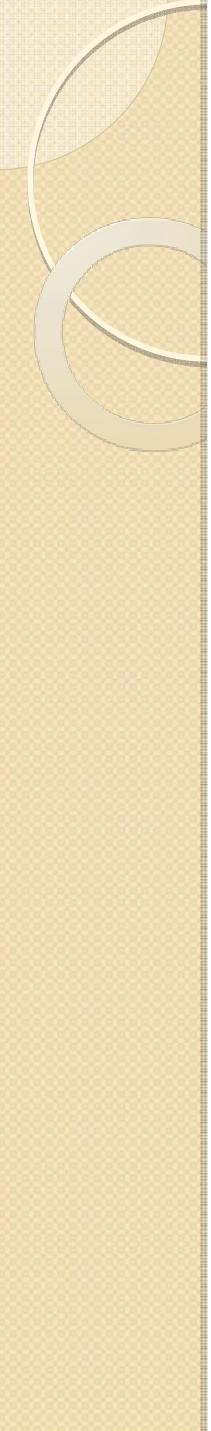
Key Question for Committee

- Is the Committee developing a new decision framework or tweaking existing ones?
    - The choice will affect its likely adoption and deployment
- Will you recommend demonstrating or piloting the decision framework?