Multi-Disciplinary / Multi-Perspective Integration

Working Collaboratively on Landscape Scale, Sustainable Natural Resources Management

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Overview

working with individuals from different disciplines and perspectives

- Challenges
- Best Practices
- Engaging Stakeholders

- References

Collaboration Matters

- **There are a lot of perspectives–** *We have different interests, expertise, and perspectives about what is in the public interest.*
- **The problems are complicated –** *We don't always know what the answer is. We genuinely need one another's ideas and help, both to find better solutions and to implement them.*
- **Our institutions are complicated -** *No one person or entity can unilaterally impose their will (for very long).*

What is Collaboration?

And what it isn't!

- **Collaboration is:**
  - A mutual effort
  - Intended to achieve solutions that meet diverse interests
  - A variety of tools and approaches *(input, recommendations, shared decision making, joint action)*
- **Collaboration is NOT:**
  - A box to check
  - One size fits all
  - Quick and easy

History of Collaboration in Env/Natural Resources

- Context of the 1960s and 70s:
  - Environmental issues gained currency.
  - New statutes were game changers.
    … *and provided new forums for growing differences to emerge as disputes*.
  - Positives and negatives depended on one's perspective.
    … *opportunities for (and resistance to) new solutions and polarization/high transaction costs.*

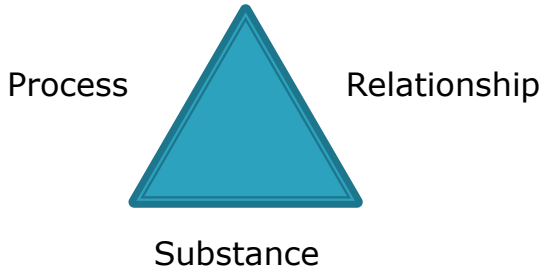
"There has to be a better way…" many voices

History of Collaboration in Env/Natural Resources

- Experimentation in the 1970s
- Expansion from the 1980s to today
  - *From dozens, to hundreds, now to thousands of collaborative processes around the country.*
  - *Almost any issue you could think of, and at all scales.*
  - *All combinations of parties, from all private to all public to a mix.*
- Institution building from the 1990s on
  - *Statutes and policies*
  - *Federal and state centers of expertise*
  - *A body of literature and training opportunities*

A Few "Best Practice" Basics

- Consider Three Dimensions of Success



- Good Listening Skills
  - *Really listen; it's not about your rebuttal*
  - *What's right in what another is saying? And ask why*
- "Principled" Negotiation *from "Getting to Yes"*
  - *Focus on interests not positions*
  - *Develop multiple options (separate inventing from deciding)*
  - *Use objective criteria*
  - *What's the alternative to collaboration?*

Think in Problem Solving Terms –
Key Concept: It's a Shared Learning Process

Stage	Desired Outcome
1. Situation Assessment and Process Design	Agreement on: ▪ purpose ▪ product ▪ process (who, when…)
2. Substantive Dialogue ▪ Opening ▪ Middle ▪ Closure	Achieving: ▪ Shared understanding of problem ▪ Exploration of possible outcomes ▪ Recommended solutions
3. Implementation	Observable Change

Ten Basic Principles*

- Clarity of purpose (*informed commitment and commitment to use the process to inform decisions)*
- Timeliness in relation to decisions
- Inclusiveness *(balanced, voluntary representation)*
- Collaborative problem formulation and process design *(group autonomy; process impartiality)*
- Focus on implementation
- Accountability *(good faith communication)*
- Openness *(transparency)*
- Adequate capacity and resources
- Commitment to shared learning
- Iteration between analysis and broadly based deliberation

**multiple sources, e.g. NRC 2008; CEQ/OMB guidelines*

What Are People* Looking For?

- Being *heard* – not just the opportunity to speak but to have interests, ideas, information be valued (decision makers that listen and *consider* what's said)
- Meaningful communication/relationships
- Improved understanding and better ideas
- Solutions that meet their interests
- Agreements with implementable results
- Less stress, less time, less cost

Bottom line – people want solutions
Best Practice – consult early and sincerely
(NEPA scoping is a good model, if results are used)

* *Applies to interagency collaboration and stakeholders*

Solutions Often Are Hard to Find

Challenges:

- Multiple issues
- Multiple parties/agencies
- Diverse interests/legal mandates/framing of issues
- Many "forums" for decision making
- Public/political dynamics
- Intra-organizational complexity
- Unequal power and resources
- Cultural differences
- Problems of trust
- Large geographic or temporal scales
- Technical complexity and scientific uncertainty

Integrating Science and Decision Making

Challenges:

- Adequacy of the information for the problem.
- Clarity of the decision-making process with respect to science.
- Problems parties have dealing with the data.
- Problems scientists have among themselves and in communicating with others.
- Problems of trust.

From the NRC report…

Iteration *between analysis and broadly based deliberation* WITH:

- Focus on decision-relevant information*
- Explicit attention to both facts and values
- Explicitness about analytical assumptions and uncertainties
- Independent review
- Reconsideration of past conclusions

* *Note: a personal view is that stakeholders and scientists each play important roles in these tasks. Defer to the stakeholders on what questions are decision relevant and to scientists on the information and analyses to answer those questions.*

Building on General Principles

- Generate multiple problem definitions
- Focus on decision relevant information
- Clarify the questions, define methods, and select experts – *jointly* – before gathering data
- Learn together
- Ensure participants understand the strengths and limitations of information, modeling, or other analyses and how it will be used in decision making
- Clear understanding of the time and cost considerations to accomplish goals
- Respect different types of knowledge and different ways of knowing (put info in users' vocabulary)
- Clear roles for scientists, facilitators, advisors, etc and some overlap in expertise/concepts

Summary

- Diagnose the challenges early and collaboratively
- Be inclusive
- Plan the process jointly
- Learn together – that's NOT negotiating the science
- Base decisions on interests (as criteria)
- Plan for implementation
  - Are key questions answered?
  - Is the solution technically sound?
  - Is the solution balanced and fair for all interests?
  - Make contingent agreements - can the agreement be re-opened if new data (or questions) emerge?
  - Openly discuss the implications of ongoing uncertainty

Resources

- Memorandum on Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution (OMB CEQ 2012)

  http://www.ecr.gov/pdf/OMB_CEQ_Env_Collab_Conflict_Resolution_20120907.pdf

- Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making (NRC 2008)

- When the Sparks Fly: Building Consensus When the Science is Contested

  http://www.resolv.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/When_the_Sparks_Fly.pdf

The Theme: Engage in Shared Learning and Collaborative Problem Solving

Thank you!

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