Applegate Partnership

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The Applegate Partnership is a community-based project involving industry, conservation groups, natural resource agencies, and residents cooperating to encourage and facilitate the use of natural resource principles that promote ecosystem health and diversity.

Through community involvement and education, this partnership supports management of all land within the watershed in a manner that sustains natural resources and that will, in turn, contribute to economic and community stability within the Applegate Valley.

Case Description

The idea for the Applegate Partnership was born in the minds of two unlikely collaborators, Jack Shipley, an avid environmentalist, and Jim Neal, a long-time logger from Redmond, Oregon and co-director of the Aerial Forest Management Foundation. Together these two men, frustrated with the polarization of resource management issues in their valley and not willing to accept gridlock, decided that it was worth a try to get together and hash out issues face to face. The result has been a very successful community-based partnership.

In the summer of 1992, Jack Shipley and Jim Neal decided to begin discussing with others their ideas for a “different approach to managing the half million-acre Applegate watershed.” Located in southwest Oregon and northern California, the Applegate Watershed includes Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), state, county, and private lands. Shipley and Neal wrote a short white paper outlining basic tenets of their plan, such as responsible extraction, no clearcuts and no pesticides. Shipley solicited comments from environmental groups and natural resource agencies (mainly the Forest Service and the BLM) and Neal similarly approached industry interests.

Surprisingly, what they found was that there was considerable overlap between the desires and interests of the environmental groups and the industry groups, centered on maintaining the long-term health of the watershed and stability of local economies. Encouraged by this apparent common ground, Shipley and Neal organized a meeting in October 1992 with neighbors, representatives from industry, community groups, the BLM, the Forest Service, and several local environmental organizations to discuss a plan to make the Applegate Watershed a demonstration site for ecologically and financially responsible resource management.

Not wasting any time, this 60-person group elected a Board of Directors, members of which were nominated based on their willingness to “work toward solutions, leave partisanship at home, put ecosystem health in front of private agendas, and have the time to participate” in meetings. The group crafted the following vision statement for the Applegate Partnership at the first meeting and, over a decade later, it still guides the group:
The Applegate Partnership is a community-based project involving industry, conservation groups, natural resource agencies, and residents cooperating to encourage and facilitate the use of natural resource principles that promote ecosystem health and diversity.

Through community involvement and education, this partnership supports management of all land within the watershed in a manner that sustains natural resources and that will, in turn, contribute to economic and community stability within the Applegate Valley.

In addition to developing a vision statement, the board developed three core philosophical principles to guide the day-to-day operation of the Partnership. According to a Partnership publication, Applegate Partnership: Practice Trust – Them is Us, the purpose of the Partnership was to make “future land management in the Applegate Watershed ecologically credible, aesthetically acceptable, and economically viable.” The Board of Directors agreed that the Partnership would:

- Provide leadership in facilitating the use of natural resource principles that promote ecosystem health and natural diversity;
- Work with public land managers, private landowners, and community members to promote projects, which demonstrate ecologically sound management practices within the watershed; and
- Seek support for these projects through community involvement and education.

The Partnership also spent considerable time and energy working on developing trust and respect among the participants. “We were dealing here with arch enemies who in the past had only met across a courtroom,” noted Su Rolle, the first Interagency Liaison for the Forest Service and BLM to the Applegate Partnership. Today, the Partnership has inspired greater community identity through its widely distributed newsletter, The Applegator, and has strengthened community capacity to deal with economic and environmental problems in the valley through economic forums, workshops, and task groups focused on diverse issues like fire control and economic development and reinvestment. Because of these achievements and the fact that the community’s culture and economy has long been associated with the use of forest resources, the Applegate was selected as one of ten Adaptive Management Areas (AMAs) created under former President Clinton’s Northwest Forest Plan.

Predictably, over the Partnership’s ten-year history the group has undergone considerable structural changes and experienced a great deal of organizational learning. A testimony to the Partnership’s compelling vision and the commitment of its members, the group’s seventeen-member Board of Directors continues to meet twice a month in addition to sponsoring numerous other activities such as field trips and neighborhood presentations. The first meeting each month is a public forum for community members to discuss issues and voice concerns, while the second
meeting is an executive session for the Partnership’s board to discuss public comments and to manage the internal affairs of the group.

The Applegate Partnership has made significant advances to address the region’s ecological, economic, and social challenges. Early on, the group spearheaded initiatives such as a local community assessment to better understand the watershed’s social and economic attributes and values as well as ecological assessments of the valley’s many sub-watersheds. In order to better understand and communicate watershed-wide information and trends, the Partnership worked with others to merge multiple GIS databases from federal, state, county, and private lands to create a comprehensive GIS for the Applegate Valley – a powerful visual tool that has strengthened community identity and served as an analytical tool for decision-making.

The Partnership has formed the Applegate River Watershed Council (ARWC), which, according to Shipley, is the “implementing arm of the Partnership.” The ARWC – which has its own facilities and five full-time staff – was established in order to be eligible to receive funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, a state agency that provides funds and information to watershed councils throughout Oregon. The ARWC’s own five-member board of directors work as a sub-committee of the Partnership’s seventeen-member board. This sub-committee meets regularly to make management decisions for ARWC staff, including which projects to pursue and how to allocate funds. While the Partnership as a whole focuses on public and private land management, the ARWC works exclusively on restoration of private lands and environmental education and outreach.

Another key distinction between the Partnership and the ARWC is that the ARWC, with its full time staff including a coordinator and monitoring and restoration professionals, has the capacity to administer on-the-ground projects, whereas members of the Partnership itself are volunteers who lack the time or necessary skills for long-term projects involving restoration and monitoring. Commenting on the strength of the relationship between these two entities, ARWC Coordinator Daniel Newberry stressed that the Partnership has provided a critical sounding board for community needs. However, he notes, “like anything else, you can only do so much if you have a volunteer Board of Directors. Unless you want to quit your job and work full time for free, you want to hire people who have professional experience…to do the on-the-ground work.”

**Current Partnership Initiatives**

More recently, the Partnership has launched four major initiatives: a community fire plan, a dam removal and river restoration project, a pilot study to merge the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA), and some long-term aquatic monitoring initiatives.
With federal funding for localized fire planning through the National Fire Plan, the Partnership developed a Community Fire Plan for the valley – a strategic plan that discusses the region’s fire history and presents strategies that agencies, community members and local landowners can employ to minimize the threat of catastrophic fire in the valley. The plan pulls together data from dozens of organizations in the valley involved in fire management and prevention into one document that serves as a strategic guide for organizations to coordinate projects and more effectively address fire hazards. [www.snre.umich.edu/emi/cases/communityfireplan/](http://www.snre.umich.edu/emi/cases/communityfireplan/).

The Partnership has also spearheaded a major aquatic restoration project involving the removal of two irrigation dams on the Little Applegate River, a tributary to the Applegate. The dams are over 100 years old and have historically been used to irrigate approximately 1,200 acres of land owned by over forty property owners. Each year, water withdrawals dewatered the Little Applegate in late summer, which eliminated spawning habitat for endangered salmonids. Over a five-year period, members of the Partnership spoke with property owners to find out if they would be willing to replace their irrigation water from the Little Applegate with water pumped in from the main stem of the Applegate. Eventually, after several face-to-face conversations and creative fund-raising, all irrigators agreed to switch to the main stem. The conversion is still underway and when complete will open up 37 miles of viable salmonids habitat along the Little Applegate. A testimony to the collaborative, bridge-building work of the Partnership, this $2.5 million project is being funded by several organizations including $600,000 from the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s EQIP Program, $500,000 from the Forest Service, $100,000 from the World Wildlife Fund, and additional support from other agencies such as the Oregon Department of Ecology and EPA, as well as fishing equipment companies. According to Newberry, one of the secrets to bringing together such a large group to fund the effort was to involve as many organizations as possible in the early conceptualization of the project. He noted that a number of the agencies who have or will be providing funds for the project were heavily involved in the planning phases of the project from day one. Moreover, Partnership members took advantage of the fundraising expertise of the Portland-based non-profit Oregon Water Trust. This group helped write grants for the project and was also instrumental in convincing the Oregon Congressional delegation to make possible the $500,000 contribution from the Forest Service.

Due to the community capacity in the valley, the Applegate Partnership was selected by EPA, the Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and other federal and state agencies to be one of ten projects across the country to explore conservation opportunities afforded through the integration of the ESA and CWA. According to Shipley, landowners often have difficulty navigating the complexity of federal laws to determine what they can and cannot do on their property, a problem that is compounded when landowners
must comply with multiple federal and state environmental laws. To address this problem, the Partnership worked with faculty at Lewis and Clark Law School to research areas where the two acts overlap and to develop conservation strategies that address the two goals of the acts: clean water and biodiversity protection. With their research complete, the group developed a user-friendly manual for private landowners in the watershed that features a comprehensive list of voluntary activities landowners can follow to protect endangered species and clean water. For example, if a rancher needs stream access for cattle, he or she can use the manual to learn how to properly maintain vegetation along the stream bank, an action that will address both water temperature and filtration concerns under the ESA and CWA. In conjunction with the user-manual, the Partnership has also worked with Environmental Defense to develop a program to indemnify landowners for a period of time for taking steps to improve habitat for salmonids on their land. This program was modeled after ED’s Safe Harbor Program for the Red Cockaded Woodpecker.

**An Emphasis on Monitoring**

Another strength of the Applegate Partnership has been the group’s strong emphasis on aquatic monitoring as a critical element to advance the goals of the Partnership. The monitoring program is administered by the ARWC, which, since its founding, has been heavily focused on stream restoration to improve habitat for endangered salmonids and water quality. Given this focus, the ARWC recognized early on the need to develop solid baseline data for core constituents of water quality including temperature, dissolved oxygen, and stream flow. By tracking these constituents over time, ARWC will be better able to determine whether or not their restoration initiatives are having a beneficial effect.

In 1997, the ARWC received funding to monitor water quality in the Applegate River and its tributaries through the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in order to collect baseline information to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Applegate basin. With this support and additional funding from restoration grants, the ARWC has been able to maintain a state of the art water quality monitoring lab and several water chemistry and temperature-monitoring sites. Mike Mathews, ARWC Monitoring Coordinator, noted that recent monitoring initiatives have served two immediate purposes: they allowed DEQ to develop TMDLs for the basin and list impaired water bodies and, moreover, has provided a “logic foundation to base restoration plans on.” Mathews noted that collecting this information over time will help them identify water quality trends useful to defining progress. Until now, identifying trends in water quality has been difficult because much of the data collected in the past has not been standardized or brought under one roof. He emphasized that the ARWC has invested considerable time in making data collection methods consistent such as testing the same sites year after year and applying uniform sampling
methods so that, in a few years, the group can analyze trends in water quality and have confidence that they are scientifically robust and sound.

In addition to collecting baseline information for the Applegate River and tributaries, the ARWC is monitoring the impact of specific restoration initiatives to learn from these initiatives and adapt future activities accordingly. Newberry stressed that monitoring is essential for accountability, “an issue that comes up over and over again when you talk about restoration projects [is whether] you are throwing your money [away] or is it really doing some good long-term. It’s not an easy question to answer and the only way you can answer it is by having some real formal monitoring going on year after year to determine what your success is.” With this in mind, Newberry highlighted the two forms of monitoring involved in ARWC’s riparian planting monitoring program: implementation and effectiveness monitoring. The implementation monitoring component of the project involves setting milestones each year such as planting vegetation buffers along a certain percentage of streams and then determining whether those milestones were met. He contrasts this type of monitoring with effectiveness monitoring which, in the riparian example highlighted above, involves ARWC staff returning to sample plots year after year to measure the survival and growth rate of restoration plantings.

A major strength of the ARWC’s aquatic monitoring initiative is that the information is being used to advance the goals of the Applegate Partnership in general which involve not only improving resource management, but enhancing support for these initiatives through community outreach. With new information, the ARWC has been able to pinpoint areas for restoration action such as hotspots of poor water quality, while also using the data to communicate the state of the watershed to the public. Indeed, ARWC staff have used the information in a number of conferences to discuss the health of the streams in the watershed and have also made local presentations to neighborhoods and individual landowners to communicate problems affecting local streams and some of the steps local landowners can take to fix them. During these meetings, community members have also been able to communicate areas of concern in their own neighborhoods such as leaking septic tanks, which has helped the ARWC identify new areas to monitor and carry out restoration activities. According to Mathews, “the information is being used to establish restoration priorities in the basin…It points us in the direction of where we want to go.”

In addition to their work on aquatic monitoring, the ARWC has also taken significant steps to organize monitoring data from state and federal agencies into the Partnership’s watershed GIS map. According to Shipley, “if you came in tomorrow and were looking for certain data on the Applegate, you would have to go to the BLM, the Forest Service, ODF, EPA, DEQ, and on and on. Everybody has a piece of it. There is not a place where all the data is kept together, where it is
actually being used as a management tool.” With all the information stored together, the GIS map can serve as a shared database of information for all parties active in the Applegate, enabling them to make more integrated, landscape-scale management decisions. For example, the GIS system will allow parties to ask questions like: where are salmon laying their eggs and is the aquatic habitat along those stream segments healthy? With this kind of information readily accessible, all parties in the basin – including the ARWC, private landowners, and resource agencies – can be more strategic about where to act to address common goals. A testimony to the ARWC’s path-breaking work, adjacent watersheds are looking at the group’s watershed monitoring program and GIS system for insight to find ways to structure and coordinate an information database across the entire Rogue River Basin, the major river system in southern Oregon.

What has fostered progress?

Many factors have contributed to the Partnership’s progress. One major factor is the group’s focus on people and interests, not on affiliation and positions. Former interagency liaison to the Partnership, Su Rolle stated that, “the Partnership isn’t as much about issues as it is about relationships.” Early in its formation, Partnership members invested considerable time and energy into building trust and mutual respect. This investment has helped members listen more effectively to one another’s concerns and debate issues on a deeper level. Shipley noted, “we don’t get bogged down in simple ‘owls versus jobs’ kinds of conversations. People understand that the oversimplification of jobs versus owls melted down to a two second sound-bite and what we really need [to discuss] is the complexity of the ecosystem.”

Relationships are made stronger by the involvement of dedicated, energetic, and competent people. According to Shipley, “we have people who put in gazillions of hours. Passionate people who are committed and conversant in natural resource problem solving can make a powerful engine of force.” Members share a deep commitment to place and community and there is a certain esprit de corps among them. People hotly debate management issues, but there is an understanding that everyone’s future is inseparable. Shipley noted, “there has been a willingness that we can agree to disagree and then come back together and kiss and make up. Kissing and making up isn’t easy sometimes, but we generally always do.” Shipley contrasted the Partnership’s approach to dispute resolution with that of other groups: “In many other communities, they’ve agreed to disagree and then hate each other.” Because members of the Partnership have wrestled with watershed-wide management issues together, they are in a better position to tackle the inevitable new ones. According to Shipley, “you have to go through a process where you agonize together over these issues, otherwise there isn’t that shared experience.” Ten years of visible accomplishments has
inspired members with opposing views to continue to participate in Partnership meetings and to strive to reach consensus on contentious issues.

Urgent issues have also fostered commitment to the Partnership. In less than a year the group was able to raise funds and develop a watershed-wide community fire plan with guidance for and input from dozens of agencies, organizations, and neighborhoods in the valley. Referring to the remarkable speed with which this project was accomplished, Applegate District Ranger Erin Connelly remarked, “it really didn’t hurt, as far as keeping [the fire plan] in people’s minds, that we had the Quartz and other fires last year on Federal and private lands.” Thus, the dedication of the people to the Partnership’s vision of ecological and economic health, juxtaposed against the urgency of action, inspires consistent and active involvement in the Partnership.

What challenges were faced and how were they addressed?

Over the Partnership’s ten-year history, group members have confronted numerous challenges. Shipley recalled that before the Partnership began, nobody knew what collaboration looked like, “we have kind of bumbled through in the last decade by hook and crook…we are all learning.” Perhaps one of the strongest traits of the group is that when faced with a significant challenge that might fracture the group, members continue to work to resolve it, being driven by an internal belief that they are better off working together than apart.

Consensus decision-making has both benefited and challenged the group. It has given board members veto power over group proposals, which has strengthened the group’s resolve to seek common ground and has inspired creative problem solving. Shipley noted that early in the group’s history, consensus decision-making helped the Partnership overcome concerns over power imbalances, particularly between industry and the agencies. He noted, “when we first began this process, the environmental community railed at us believing we would be co-opted by the industry or the agencies.” While consensus decision-making has been possible on many issues, there have been times where full agreement has not been possible. Recognizing this reality, Partnership members are seeking ways to balance the need to maintain the group’s open and inclusive decision-making processes, while still moving forward to make decisions despite disagreement. The group is currently considering proposals to shift decision-making at times from consensus, to near-consensus, or a supra-majority. As Shipley explained, “we can’t be held up by somebody who wants to hardball a particular issue.”

Another challenge facing the Applegate Partnership and the AWRC is the need to procure sufficient funds to support ongoing monitoring initiatives. DEQ’s TMDL process is ending and,
consequently, the AWRC’s monitoring dollars are beginning to dry up. Newberry stressed that raising money for monitoring is particularly difficult because “[funders] like to say we were responsible for fixing this problem or removing this dam. But if you say monitoring, what did that get you?” He continued, “You have a grant for two years, and when it’s done, it’s done. [The funders] want the project finished, and yet they want it monitored, [but] by then there’s no funding to do the monitoring.” Echoing Newberry’s concern, Mathews noted that monitoring is usually “first on the chopping block for budget cuts because it is not directly related to getting a project implemented.” Given increasingly limited funding to support the AWRC’s monitoring work, the group is shifting to “maintenance monitoring,” which involves scaling back monitoring efforts at various stations and choosing, for example, ten key sites to continue to monitor in order to develop and analyze trends over time. In addition to maintenance monitoring, the AWRC plans to continue to perform implementation and effectiveness monitoring for its ongoing restoration projects and to more directly incorporate funding mechanisms for monitoring into their restoration project proposals.

Continuity in the Partnership has been difficult to sustain over time. While several key people have been involved in the Partnership since the beginning, there have nonetheless been changes in the culture of the Applegate Valley and membership in the Partnership. According to Shipley, the group has not always paid sufficient attention to helping new members of the Partnership develop a “historical perspective of what has occurred [in the Partnership] over time and…subsequently, as new people come in they don’t have the benefit of the trials and tribulations we’ve been through in the early years… there is this lack of connectivity to those things we have done together.”

Perhaps the greatest challenge to group cohesiveness has been integrating the Forest Service and the BLM – the largest landowners in the valley – into the partnership process. After the Clinton Administration’s Northwest Forest Plan was challenged under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), high level agency officials forced local agency staff to resign from the Partnership’s board and government lawyers recommended that agency staff stop attending regular meetings. According to current Applegate AMA Coordinator John Gerritsma, “it has been a struggle ever since to try to find some real meaning for how the partnership should operate.” District Ranger Connelly seconded Gerritsma’s concern, “there have been struggles as far as what is the relationship between the Forest Service and the Partnership…we know we want to work together, we know they have expectations, we have expectations, we want to achieve greater things together, but something is not working.” With this in mind, Gerritsma has proposed to formalize the relationship between the agencies and the Partnership, suggesting the Partnership could serve as a Federal Advisory Committee to the agencies.
A continuing source of conflict between the Partnership and the agencies is the degree of influence of the Partnership in public lands decision-making. According to Connelly, “Some in the partnership would like to have a stronger say as far as making decisions. But it’s up to me as a line officer to ultimately make decisions…they would like to have decision-making more in the hands of the public.” Shipley lamented that, “A lot of the outreach from the institutional folks is that ‘well we are doing NEPA, there’s a comment period.’ We are saying, ‘no thank you, we are talking about something much deeper than that.’” He stressed that, in the past, relations between the Partnership and the agencies were stronger because the parties shared a long history together and it was that shared history that kept agencies coming to Partnership meetings even after they formally withdrew from the Partnership. He believes that today, because of the threat of FACA violations, agencies are less comfortable working within the Partnership’s informal structure; a situation made worse because, as agency staff have turned over, individuals now lack that shared history and understanding that once was the glue for collaboration.

The deterioration of the relationship between the federal agencies and members of the Partnership is, to some extent, a bi-product of agency downsizing. After Rolle retired, the group was without a consistent liaison or AMA coordinator for over two years. According to Shipley, “this was a strong message back to the community that this AMA business isn’t very important.” Today, only one agency representative has remained with the Partnership since the beginning, which Shipley indicated, “takes a huge toll on the community, particularly in that we are doing all this work as volunteers.” Commenting on the agencies’ revolving door, he noted, “we can’t afford to keep retraining agency people. Our expectation of the agencies is that they are astute enough to know we’ve got an active community organization and when these new people come in that they have some understanding of our process and are open to it. That’s not the case. It’s almost like their decisions are made in a black box. I’m sounding cynical and I am. I’m angry.” Shipley noted that over eight years ago the Partnership drafted a formal petition signed by over 1000 local citizens asking that the agencies try to accomplish specific goals, such as: identifying different measures of success for the Forest Service besides the volume of board feet harvested and implementing fire prevention measures on a certain percentage of lands in the Applegate basin. Today, according to Shipley, “Nobody knows about these goals and none of those things have occurred…Part of the difficulty we are having as an organization is that with rotating leadership, there is no continuity…[t]here is no corporate memory within the agencies.”

Gerritsma acknowledged the lack of continuity with the partnership, and noted, “[When we did have somebody [temporarily] in the position, [they were] a detailer…a band aid really…and that definitely contributed to the declining relationships between the Partnership and the agencies.” With
Gerritsma permanently on board as AMA coordinator, members of the Partnership are optimistic about rebuilding relationships with federal agencies in the valley. Considerable uncertainty remains, however, about what this relationship will entail because, as Gerritsma noted, “My position here is more than a partnership liaison and sometimes the members of the Partnership forget that. I try to effectively implement the intent of the AMA between the BLM and the Forest Service and that’s my primary job. It is because of the community involvement component of the AMA that I have become the liaison to the Partnership and to any other partnerships or community groups.”

Shipley believes that the agencies are more cautious about engaging in the Partnership because the new AMA Coordinator and interagency liaison to the Partnership has much less decision-making authority than Su Rolle, the former liaison. Before becoming the AMA coordinator and liaison to the partnership, Rolle was the District Ranger for the Applegate Ranger District so she had the same decision-making authority as other agency line officers in the valley. After Rolle retired, the agencies restructured and downgraded the AMA Coordinator position to a lower level than other line officers which, according to Shipley, “makes a huge difference in terms of what gets done because…John [Gerritsma] is beholden to all the line officers and is accountable to them and that makes a real different relationship.” Shipley stressed that the community lost a great deal of influence when the agencies downgraded the AMA Coordinator position, and this action was interpreted by the community as a clear message that the AMA concept was not a serious initiative.

Recognizing the need to improve the relationship between the Partnership and the agencies, both parties are taking constructive steps to build new bridges between them. In addition to the Federal Advisory Committee proposal that the Partnership is considering, the Forest Service itself is looking into new proposals for greater collaboration that may entail involving Partnership members earlier in federal resource planning processes. Connelly stressed that the Partnership wants “greater focus or better communication of what our focus is [because] sometimes our work appears piecemeal. They want us to provide longer term, larger scale planning…to look at the watershed and plan what are all the projects we might be doing rather than only looking at the timber projects and our wildlife projects which are scattered all about.” The recent completion of the Community Fire Plan has also helped mend fractured relationships between the Partnership and the agencies. Indeed, Gerritsma remarked that there appears to be considerable opportunities for cooperative planning associated with fire management in the valley, and noted, “there is a lot of emphasis right now on trying to coordinate across the boundary kind of planning…so that we [agencies and private parties] can get the same thinning contractor, for example, which is cheaper.”
What lessons have been learned?

According to Shipley, a major lesson that can be learned from this partnership is that nurturing relationships over time is essential for success. Conflicts over land use are inevitable when working in a 500,000-acre valley with a growing, diverse population. People can learn to manage conflict constructively if they look beyond disagreements and build upon what they have in common. Shipley noted, “People who have good relationships with their neighbors can find some agreement on some really contentious issues.” But he warned, “if those relationships are not nurtured or maintained then it becomes easier to do something that is not in the best interest of your neighbors and that’s part of our concern with this revolving door issue with the agencies.”

When there is high turnover of participants in a partnership, the common bonds of trust and shared vision are lost, which can quickly lead people to resort back to an “us versus them” perspective.

Despite recent challenges to include federal agencies in the partnership process, today dozens of individuals and organizations continue to come to Partnership meetings representing local environmental groups, industry, farming, ranching, schools, and state and local agencies. For over a decade, the Partnership has provided a forum to help parties search for common ground, turning conflict into opportunities for creative problem solving. As people regularly come together and debate issues, they have developed a deeper community identity composed of shared community values and goals for the future. This identity has reinforced members’ commitment and enthusiasm to the Partnership and it is this continued commitment and enthusiasm that continues to drive the Partnership’s success.

Nurturing relationships not only inspires a spirit of cooperation and creative problem solving, these relationships help parties leverage new opportunities. From an agency perspective, partnerships can be particularly valuable. Gerritsma noted that partners are essential to success because ideas are coming from people with a non-agency perspective. Moreover, he noted that through partnership, learning can flow both ways because there is “an opportunity to educate those about agency policies and procedures.” In order to leverage new opportunities, it is important to clarify the expectations of the parties. Since the agencies withdrew formally from the Partnership there has been no formal agreement between the Partnership and the agencies about how they should work together, and, consequently, Gerritsma feels it has been difficult to know whether they are meeting one another’s expectations.

Another important lesson from the Partnership is the value of planned and systematic monitoring and evaluation. As described earlier, the Partnership, operating through the ARWC, designed an aquatic monitoring program to meet specific informational needs: to develop TMDLs for DEQ and to generate solid baseline water quality information to identify restoration priorities and measure the impact of restoration activities over time. Newberry emphasized that in designing a
monitoring plan, it is critical to “choose the parameters [for monitoring] based on how that information is going to fit in with the organization’s mission. Otherwise, you are just gathering information.” Mathews expanded on this point, emphasizing the importance of asking “the right key questions before you monitor, otherwise you can be monitoring for monitoring sake…your data has to be useful for someone or you are wasting your time and energy.”

According to Mathews, it is often difficult for people to identify exactly what kind of information they need to help them make management decisions, which can lead them to monitor more than necessary. He noted, for example, “[people] might say, oh, salmon is our issue. Well, what about salmon? Is it the adults? Is it the juveniles? Is it the holding water? Spawning?” He stressed that before embarking on a monitoring effort, one should, “state specifically what the key question is because otherwise [you] could be studying the whole salmon life cycle and ten percent of [your] data might be useful.” On a related note, Mathews pointed out that identifying and clarifying those key questions that you can only answer through a monitoring initiative can often be instrumental in raising funds to support such initiatives.

The Applegate Partnership provides multiple insights into the potentials and pitfalls of long-term partnerships. Shipley commented, “It was desperation and gridlock that brought us together, but it is trust and respect that keeps us going.” The Partnership has moved beyond people and issues and the deeply ingrained gridlock that had been so pervasive in the watershed. Working together, members have spearheaded watershed-wide initiatives such as the community fire plan, a monitoring program emulated by others, advanced policy changes such as a shift from clear cutting to selective cutting on federal lands, and have also fostered a greater sense of community among residents. Sustaining a long-term effort, however, takes a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication, and, perhaps most importantly, a willingness and ability to modify the group’s focus and structure to deal with emerging issues and unique challenges associated with long lasting partnerships.

**For further information**

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