

## CHAPTER 18: ACCOMMODATING DIVERSE INTERESTS

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### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

Collaborative groups that tackle natural resource issues often include participants with a broad range of perspectives. Accommodating these diverse interests poses inevitable challenges and opportunities. While having a greater number of heads at the table may cultivate creativity and insight toward reaching innovative solutions and lead to more broad-based understanding of the issues at stake, it may also require compromise that some fear leads to “lowest common denominator” solutions.

Part of our research explored the challenges faced by collaborative groups in accommodating diverse interests. We asked members and outside observers to describe how their group managed the diversity at the table. Interviewees were asked to reflect on the strategies that they had used and to offer suggestions, now having the benefit of hindsight, on how they might have accommodated diverse interests differently. Participants offered advice on how to deal with issues in a way that would ensure proper accommodation of all interests within a manageable process.

Both the challenges groups encountered and strategies they used reveal significant similarities as well as differences. By analyzing the way that partnerships accommodated diverse interests, we hope to provide insight regarding common barriers to credible processes and suggestions for maximizing the positive aspects of diverse representation while minimizing the shortcomings.

#### Summary of Core Findings

There are two main challenges associated with accommodating diverse interests. The first challenge is that of establishing a new form of interaction in the face of diverse interests. The second is that of decision-making given divergent interests combined with an undercurrent need to sustain this new relationship. Indeed, most of the obstacles confronted by these groups are challenges inherent in establishing a new type of relationship and a new type of approach when people come to the table with different understandings of the issues and each other and different expectations about how decisions should (or could) be made. At the same time, the presence of diverse interests at the table can increase the likelihood of addressing resource issues in a timely manner and gaining wider acceptance of approaches to managing the resource at hand.

## *Core Issues and Strategies*

### **1. Establishing a New Form of Interaction**

Partnerships learned to work together in this new process by building trust and developing relationships outside of the collaborative process.

#### **Strategies**

- Field trips
- After-hours interaction
- Small-scale projects
- Forums for information-sharing, education and addressing concerns

### **2. Decision-making given Diverse Interests**

Partnerships grappled with how to make effective and fair decisions by adapting decisions to reflect the goals, perceptions, and limitations of the group.

#### **Strategies**

- Seeking middle ground
- Avoiding controversial issues
- Forcing action
- Holistic approaches to management

#### ***Advice and Reflections***

- Establish the working relationship
- Enhancing this relationship
- Develop effective leadership
- Create a group process
- Other insights

## **II. SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES**

### **1. Establishing a New Form of Interaction**

#### ***Challenges***

With diverse participation in collaborative processes comes the challenge of establishing a new form of interaction. Groups mentioned three main aspects of this challenge:

- Developing and maintaining trust
- Handling differing approaches to management
- Dealing with group logistics

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### **Developing and maintaining trust**

The challenge of developing and maintaining trust that allows communication and problem-solving to occur is something that all groups in our study grappled with given the distrustful attitudes brought to the table. Two aspects of distrust: anti-government sentiment and distrust between group participants are evidence of this challenge.

In the Animas River Stakeholders Group, distrust of agency motives and anti-government sentiment run rampant. Many feel the creation of the Stakeholders group as an alternative to Superfund designation is merely a way for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to justify budgets. This local perception is compounded by the fact that meetings are very agency dominated. Although Greg Parsons, of the Colorado Water Quality Control Division and group participant, intended for the initiation of the group as an alternative to simply collecting data and “dumping it somewhere,” some participants feel that initial data revealed no water quality problem in the basin. There is also the additional challenge of overcoming the local perception that government agencies are wasteful and that cleaning up the water is coming at an enormous financial cost.

In the Darby Partnership, government distrust became an inhibitor to establishing a new form of interaction well after the initiation of the collaborative group when The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposed a refuge. Perceived as a major threat to the agriculture-based economy of the region, the proposal broke down trust and left participants feeling that the agency was less dedicated to the collaborative process than they initially lead everyone to believe. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) also felt the negative effect of this proposed refuge and one TNC representative commented that TNC's strong support of the refuge put her ‘neutral’ position at risk within the group. In the words of participant Dennis Hall of the Ohio State University Extension “Their (USFWS) process is not open and collaborative. In the end that has resulted in a lot of mistrust from the local people...Now they [local farmers] have taken up a competing perspective and are working diligently to oppose the refuge.”

Groups also experienced distrust among participants. Although collaborative partnerships can improve or provide a forum for trust-building, in the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, some participants represent large companies like DuPont and Chesapeake Forest Products, companies that carry the stigma of being environmentally unfriendly. For this reason, particularly in the initial stages, others in the group questioned their motives. In fact, Farm Bureau representative Ralph Harcum feels little trust for anyone who threatens his traditional way of farming his land. In his words: “I am a watchdog and make sure that things are not done that would be a detriment to the farming community...They have no concept of farming yet they dispute me.”

### **Differing approaches to management**

Groups also dealt with how to manage the collaborative process when participants come to the table with different ideas of natural resource management, perceive other management practices as incompatible to their own, and differ culturally. Related to the previous issue of trust and primarily based on perception, some ranchers, miners, and farmers view their resource management practices as incompatible with those of the agencies. Seen in the

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Animas River Stakeholders Group and the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, this can result in a lack of understanding between participants and creates a communication gap. Moreover, the rules and regulations of agencies are often looked upon as threatening to the local way of doing business although this would be a reality outside of the collaborative process as well.

For the Animas River Stakeholders Group, some participants tend to look at agency representatives, particularly the EPA, as “the people from Washington” who are not in tune with local traditional natural resource management practices. One EPA representative even received a death threat. Participant Greg Parsons states: “A lot of us feel that they [Federal agencies] have wasted a lot of money to do their little projects and that the projects do not even wind up telling you anything.”

Cultural differences are also a factor when addressing the issues of natural resource management. In the Scott River CRMP the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM and again, the Animas River Stakeholders Group, independent Western culture and difficulty matching traditional ways of rancher or miner business with collaborative decision-making underscores cultural differences. As Jim Allen of the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM explains, “I think for the most part that agencies are outside of the comfort zone of their rules and regulations when dealing with collaborative processes. I know that we need them when dealing with public lands, but they have a tendency to fall back on their bullshit rules when the situation demands that they try something new.”

Similarly, in the Scott River Valley and Siskiyou region of California in general, a Jeffersonian mind-set has resulted in multiple secession attempts. Recently, property rights activism has made reaction to lawsuits even more adversarial. With regard to the Scott River CRMP, controversy has arisen with the dual role of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) as a CRMP member and landowner representative. One participant captures the effect of this dual role: “RCD has been afraid to seek watershed restoration management changes too quickly for fear that they will lose their constituency.” Another participant states, “The RCD is effectively seeking to sanitize every CRMP decision so as not to scare ranchers off.”

### **Group logistics**

Group logistics is yet another aspect of the challenge of establishing a new form of interaction. Three factors loosely fall under group logistics: watershed size, participant commitment, and participant impatience. These factors put additional stress on partnership efforts of ensuring that all interests at the table are adequately accommodated.

#### *Watershed size*

For the Darby Partnership, the challenge has not focused on group size but rather the size of the watershed. With six counties and numerous townships and municipalities within the watershed boundary, each with their own zoning ordinances and regulations, it has been difficult to for the group to address land use issues, to manage the multi-jurisdictional efforts, and to find its own voice. Participant, Marc Smith, addresses this challenge: “Zoning and consistency in regulations is the biggest challenge. There are so many different government

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entities that have responsibility over the watershed...They each have different ideas of what should be done.”

### *Impatience*

Impatience of group members can also inhibit a collaborative group’s ability to establish a new form of interaction. For instance, people joining collaborative groups often view collaboration as an expedient alternative, when in reality, collaboration is not a one-step process and can take a great deal of time. Some individuals, like participants in the Animas River Stakeholders Group and Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, became frustrated by this unanticipated reality and demanded action at a point where a decision made would have been premature and even detrimental to the resource.

Bill Simon, coordinator of the Animas River Stakeholders Group states: “Our biggest challenge is time. Everybody expects action. In our case, we have 120 years of mining related damages and people want action right away. The challenge is in keeping the greater community patient and letting this process run its course.” Similarly, in the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, some participants claim that the group has lost its identity and that although it throws around ideas, nothing of substance really ever gets accomplished. Consequently, due to impatience, a few participants have decreased involvement in the group or have terminated their membership altogether. This reduced or terminated involvement has not shattered the diversity of the group but has increased group awareness of the importance of diversity at the table because the group noticed that it was losing players that brought a lot of ideas to the table. Lisa Jo Frech, Executive Director of the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, pointed out that although diverse interests remain, when one interest drops out, it is felt as a loss.

### *Participant commitment*

Different levels of commitment have caused tension in some of the groups studied. In the Blackfoot Challenge, for example, a specific private timber interest which is also the largest private land owner in the Valley, has clearly not exhibited the same level of commitment as others in the partnership. The need to increase their commitment is viewed by participants as necessary because so much of valley’s lands remain in their hands. This disproportionate level of commitment on their part has become taxing on participants who are dedicated to the process. The group, for instance, will make progress on weed control only to be delayed by an entity that sees little value in the collaborative process. This entity, while peripherally at the table, hangs onto the reality that ultimately, it is their land and they can do with it whatever they please and that profits are their bottom line. Greg Neudecker points out: “Every meeting we deal with some issue related to their property cuts or the selling off of subdivisions. Everyone comes to the table and says, ‘let’s work together.’ Plum Creek, when they come, make it quite clear that they would rather be somewhere else.”

## ***Strategies***

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Groups adopted the following strategies in establishing a new form of interaction given diverse interests at the table. Strategies adopted were to:

- Implement small-scale projects
- Encourage after hours interaction
- Develop forums for information sharing, education, and addressing concerns
- Conduct field trips

### **Implement small-scale projects**

Small-scale projects with local landowners were a key strategy used to build up trust of the agency representatives. In the Blackfoot Challenge, some of these projects were even taking place before the initiation of the group. These included activities such as installation of nesting structures on local landowner private property to help enhance avian habitat areas on private lands. Greg Neudecker of the USFWS illustrates: "When the Challenge started, people already knew who I was. To them, I was not just a USFWS representative, I was also Greg Neudecker." He now feels that this initial increase in agency trust has helped to accommodate diverse interests. In the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, meeting after meeting was taking place with very little being accomplished. Not only was trust diminishing, participants were becoming both weary and wary of the process. At the request of Executive Director, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance organized a clean-up. They recruited volunteers both inside and outside of the group, located an area that needed a face-lift, and got the job done. As a result, people had the opportunity to truly get to know one another. Lisa Jo Frech mentioned that the effects of the clean up were reverberated in following meetings and that it positively changed the entire dynamic of the group.

### **Encourage after hours interaction**

Relationship building was key for all groups, however three groups specifically encouraged after hours interaction. In the Blackfoot Challenge, Trixi's Restaurant and Bar is the local breakfast spot where participants often meet during times of the day when the Blackfoot Challenge was not discussed as the central issue. Viewed as a neutral territory, Trixi's Restaurant and Bar is one place where people are not looked upon as representing one point of view or another. Likewise, in the Animas River Stakeholders Group, whose meetings run up to twelve hours, participants spend time together after hours and often grab a pizza or a beer. Finally in the NW RAC, T. Wright Dickinson at one point invited Bill Shapley a former member representing Sierra Club, up to his ranch and said: "Bill why don't you like me?" Bill looked at him and said, "T. I do like you, I just don't like your damn cows."

### **Develop forums for information sharing, education, and addressing concerns**

In addition to groups such as the Blackfoot Challenge and the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, which were created as forums for information exchange and education, other partnerships such as The Darby Creek Partnership, Animas River Stakeholders Group, the Owl Mountain Partnership, and the McKenzie Watershed Council have developed similar forums. These open forums are a way for people to have the opportunity to state their feelings and to get the facts. The Owl Mountain Partnership, for example, provided a forum for the group to sit down with the water quality commission and the county commissioners to clarify an error in a proposal. This proposal was part of a grant to secure section 319 money from the EPA to design a water quality-monitoring program. In addition, The Darby Partnership tackled the issue of the proposed USFWS refuge by “providing a forum where all sides can be heard” (Hall, 1999). The type of forum utilized by the Animas River Stakeholders Group is what they call a library series that serves as a friendly non-intimidating forum to educate locals and out-of-town lay-people about the issues in the Animas Basin as well as the activities of the Animas River Stakeholders Group. Although these are also used in part to get more people on board, they have also proven useful in assuaging participant fears that certain issues are not being brushed under the rug but rather are being explained to the community as a whole.

### **Conduct field trips**

Also used as a strategy of ensuring scientific understanding, field trips forge interpersonal relationships and increase understanding of other participants. The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, McKenzie Watershed Council, the Blackfoot Challenge, Animas River Stakeholder Group, Darby Partnership, and the Scott River CRMP all encouraged field trips to share information and to build group understanding. In the Darby Partnership, for instance, canoe trips were a way for landowners to pair up in the same canoe with agency representatives and to build a relationship outside of a person’s interest. In the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance field trips often take the form of clean-ups (also small-scale projects) where NWA members and the community at large offer their time to clean a pre-determined site within the watershed. With reference to one of the first clean-ups in the watershed, Lisa Jo Frech, the Executive Director, pointed out: “We got to know people personally and I realized that it was important to find out what made someone really tick and to find out where their passion for issues really lived. One of the people who came happened to be someone we were fighting...I got to know him personally...when he came to meetings from then on and looked across the table, he saw a different person.”

## **2. Decision-making Given Diverse Interests**

### ***Challenges***

For a collaborative group to succeed they must not only establish a new form of interaction and build relationships, they must confront the challenge of decision-making given diverse interests at the table. Evidence of these challenges exists in the following forms:

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- Dealing with contentious and complex issues,
- Defining the role of the group,
- Working toward win-win solutions

### **Dealing with contentious and complex issues**

One aspect of the challenge of decision-making given diverse interests is dealing with contentious and complex issues when participants exhibit divergent views of the importance, source, and solutions to the problem. These complex issues can be felt both internally and by the community at large. For the McKenzie Watershed Council, this has resulted in macro policy recommendations rather than addressing micro land use issues. Moreover, social relations tend to take precedence over voicing concerns. Tony Cheng, outside observer and Ph.D. student studying watershed councils in Oregon, captures the fact that the group will not move forward without consensus. In his words: “Time and time again with controversial issues, they failed to get to the point where they took action.” He also adds: “There seems to be a desire not to hurt people’s feelings too much. There is too much emphasis on relationships. Someone might not step up to the plate if she’s going to piss off some of the people she really gets along with.” For example, the council does not address individual timber harvest plans but will provide general recommendations for important factors to consider when harvesting. In the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, one participant pointed out a similar concern: “There are some issues that we have not hit hard enough for fear of losing constituent members” (Corbitt, The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance). And although later resolved, The Owl Mountain Partnership experienced the challenge of dealing with contentious issues but the effect of this challenge was felt in the community at large. Here, the issue centered on a 319 EPA grant to design a water quality-monitoring program. Clearly a turf issue, one community became upset with the community who designed the grant and the ranchers tried to shoot it down because it referenced grazing in the grant proposal as a potential source of water quality degradation.

### **Defining the role of the group**

Another aspect of the challenge of decision-making given diverse interests is defining the role of the group. In the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, the issue of Pfiesteria was brought to a head. The group was unwilling to take a position on something for fear of it tarnishing their reputation as an information sharing group. Although other groups in the region, such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, blame Pfiesteria’s effect on water quality on current farming practices, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance has been unwilling to take a strong stance on the issue because the effect of Pfiesteria on the environment as a result of farming practices has not been proven beyond a shadow of doubt. Moreover, the group fears losing key players at the table and altering its image as a benign entity fostering information sharing and education. Judith Stribling highlights this concern: “Pfiesteria was something that was talked about a lot but we never came up with a policy position for how we stood on waste... We were able to agree on some things but we did not agree on the overriding idea of whether nutrient management needed to be changed.”

### **Working toward win-win solutions**

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Several groups mentioned their desire to work towards solutions that served everyone at the table. While challenging, none of the groups we studied felt like their decisions were diluted and took steps to ensure that this did not happen. In fact, participants outside of the collaborative process were the primary voices of concern. In the McKenzie Watershed Council, for instance, the group did not make decisions on things where they did not reach consensus as will be discussed below. In the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, however, some participants are concerned that some issues are watered down. Larry Walton, NWA participant and President of Chesapeake Forest Products exclaims: “I have seen them really compromise on principles in some cases to reach consensus on some things.”

### ***Strategies***

Most partnerships employed a series of strategies for handling decision-making given diverse interests. Three strategies groups adopted were to:

- Seek middle ground
- Force action
- Adopt holistic approaches to management

#### **Seek middle ground**

To seek middle ground, groups tackled those issues on which they felt they could have an impact thereby improving their ability to tackle issues at a later date.

The Scott River CRMP provides an example of this approach. Participants clearly recognized what falls outside of the acceptable parameters for resource management such as logging off the land without permission or allowing cattle to damage the river. Another tactic adopted by the McKenzie Watershed Council, the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, and the Blackfoot Challenge has been to recognize and table controversial issues. As John Runyon of the McKenzie Watershed Council explains, “There are times when we can’t tackle a really controversial issue and in fact we table them because we know we can’t deal with it in a consensus format, and we say, well we are going wait until the time is ripe or the organization is ready to deal with that issue.”

The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance tables controversial issues in order to keep participants at the table and to avoid the risk of being labeled as an organization that takes strong stances on issues where there is still scientific uncertainty. Comparatively, for the Blackfoot Challenge the strategy of avoiding controversial issues manifested itself in focusing its efforts of noxious weed control. Although the Blackfoot Challenge has taken a leadership role on an issue landowners can relate to, some feel that this has been at the expense of tackling more controversial issues in the valley.

### **Force action**

Acting outside of the group, one strategy that has brought participants together to make decisions given their diverse interests, was the use of species listings and Superfund designation as a way to force action by getting everyone to the table. In the case of Scott River, the species that was listed was the steelhead as a means of bringing attention to the politically sensitive issue of water flow. Felice Pace, the individual who advocated the listing of the species, states: “Lawsuits act as the fire under the feet that force all concerns onto the table. While some participants feel this is painfully necessary, others have threatened to leave the group.” In the Blackfoot Valley, the bull trout was the listed species. Although this listing was highly controversial among valley residents, it perhaps served the same purpose of bringing the issue to the forefront and to create creative ways such as the formation of collaborative groups to handle these realities. With regard to the Animas River Stakeholders Group, the threat of Superfund designation has brought people together in a collaborative forum to find alternatives.

### **Adopt holistic approaches to management**

Resource management that takes a more ecosystem management approach is another strategy used by the Blackfoot Challenge and Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM. In the Blackfoot Valley, for example, the USFWS representatives have been commended for adopting holistic management practices. In the Three Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, ranch owner Tony Malmberg is commended by others for incorporating innovative ideas into the CRM as a means of combining new strategies for management with older strategies through a holistic approach. Jim Allen describes Malmberg and what he has done for his ranch: “Tony is bold enough to put his whole ranch into this CRM thing. A lot of folks are afraid to do that because you really have to open up your dirty laundry for everyone to look at.” Malmberg himself sees what benefits the strategy of adopting a holistic approach has to offer: “Bringing people face to face with what the CRM is doing out here allows me to establish a connection.”

## **IV. REFLECTIONS AND ADVICE**

Participants provided the following advice and reflections for how to best assist participants in collaborative processes in creating partnerships that not only convene diverse interests and encourage equitable participation, but also encourage relationship building, promote effective leadership, and set group direction. District Ranger, John Allen of the McKenzie Watershed Council specifically refers to the benefit of forming relationships and the effect they have on accommodating diverse interests in a collaborative process: “When you have a good relationship with people of diverse interests, they’ll pose ideas to you that will put you outside of your own box and get you thinking about ideas that you hadn’t thought of or hadn’t been exposed to before. . . . You’re more willing to accept ideas outside of the box.”

## 1. Establish the working relationship

- *Go slow at the beginning*
- *Build up trust before (and during) the formal formation of the group*
- *Take time to get to know other participants*
- *Start off in the context of learning*
- *Identify workload up front*
- *Realize people's limitations*
- *Look to people for ideas*

“You really need to go slow in the beginning...take time to develop relationships, develop an understanding of shared interests and expectations. If you are not able to do that, you're not going to be able to productively take on the issues you might have conflict on” (Allen, McKenzie Watershed Council).

“Build up trust before the formal formation of the group. If you structure it right and build trust at the beginning it will go a long way. In our case, too many people had no idea what was going on” (Russell, Animas River Stakeholders Group).

“If you don't have trust and understanding and communication then the more the diversity you have, the quicker things are going to fall apart” (Grier, McKenzie Watershed Council).

“Keep your eye on the ball. Look at ideas that people can truly handle. Don't get hung up on issues over which you really do not have any control” (Goetz, Blackfoot Challenge).

“Pay attention to the people you have at the table. Identify the workload up front. Promote energy needed to get along” (Porter, Owl Mountain Partnership).

## 2. Enhancing these relationships

- *Go out in the field as much as possible*
- *Voice all opinions*
- *Use various communication techniques.*
- *Understand and respect each others perspectives*
- *Be open and flexible*

“I recommend some kind of hiking or getting out into the habitat on a one on one basis” (Devlin, Darby Creek Partnership).

“Encourage membership to vocalize averting positive and negative that they can about the ongoing process...but there is a right way and a wrong way of doing this. If you can't play nice then get out of the sandbox. You have to know how to talk to people and to give them the basic respect as a human being. See what about them makes them tick.” (Corbitt, The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance).

“It may not work just to post a sign in one spot announcing a meeting because some individuals may not be able to get to town to see those signs. Other options should be utilized as well such as announcements over the radio and word of mouth” (Garland, Blackfoot Challenge).

“It takes the right kind of people and on the ground stuff-not just sitting in on a meeting but going out and looking at something. If they have an impression that something is not right, well then let’s go out and take a look at it. Let’s go walk a mile in that person’s shoes before you make that decision. We all seem too busy to take the time but it is very important that all of our people take the time to do it” (Walton, The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance).

“Try hard to work together. Be able to look at both sides. You might need to give a little at times” (Haworth, Owl Mountain Partnership).

“People are people and if they think different, you need to look underneath what they are thinking about and see who they really are. Then, even if you don’t believe in the way they are thinking, at least you can be their friend...that way you can fight them without the bitterness and the hate that existed before this whole thing got started”(Schrieber, Clark County HCP).

### **3. Develop effective leadership**

- *Engage people and structure things to tap into people’s strengths*
- *Have a paid facilitator who can handle tasks and ask hard questions*
- *Have good leaders who are patient and can keep the process going*
- *Seek a well rounded leader who looks beyond participants to the community at large*
- *Ensure participants representing an organization are the most appropriate people to speak for that organization*
- *Identify leaders and spokespeople in the community and figure out who will need a greater amount of persuasion to come to meetings*

“Make sure that everybody is engaged all of the time. If you do not watch everyone, you can get into trouble. Thinking things out on the front end can help with this. You must structure it so that people out there who have a strong knowledge base of a specific aspect of the watershed are tapped into ” (Hirshenberger, Blackfoot Challenge).

“Seek representatives with patience, good communication skills, and willingness to work with others” (Kramer, Scott River CRMP).

“Like Tony, you need to reach out to the community to bring people into the process” (Trebelcock, Three-Quarter Circle Ranch).

“Make sure that the leadership of the organization has a degree of political sophistication and understanding of the larger issues. Planting trees is a wonderful thing but that alone is not going to cut it” (Cipolla, The Nanticoke Watershed Alliance).

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#### 4. Create a group process

- *Incorporate “check back in” goals*
- *Keep meetings open-create an open environment*
- *Permit everyone at the table an equal say*
- *Simplify*
- *Ensure diversity at the table*
- *Get rid of hidden agendas*
- *Be prepared for the future-cover all bases*
- *Don’t push issues*
- *Keep on looking for people who should be at the table*
- *Learn to pick your important battles*
- *Recognize that the group can’t do everything*

“Re-plowing that ground (check back-in goals) is often necessary, particularly for new members coming on board who don’t understand as clearly where the group has been and where it is headed. If you don’t do that, you don’t have a group marriage. You may even end up with a divorce in your hands” (Cunningham, Three-Quarter Circle Ranch).

“Keep the meetings open. Do not turn anyone away. Make sure that all groups are represented, but limit the control and input of any one group” (L. Perino, Animas River Stakeholders Group).

“I think that when you form a group one piece of advice is not to get caught up in the issues that are hot that have brought you together... The groups that I have seen fail are the groups that get on an issue that everyone is energized around changing. They go directly to that issue and solving that rather than looking long term” (Devlin, Darby Partnership).

#### 5. Other

- *New folks need to understand the norms of the group*
- *Accept that it is a long process*
- *Be dedicated*
- *Incorporate consensus training*

“New folks need to understand norms are always evolving. New people are afraid to change those norms. It’s like marrying into a new family or moving to a new town, you don’t want to be the one that disrupts norms that could be really deep seated” (Cheng, McKenzie Watershed Council).

“...You see you have to remember that it’s a slow step by step process...there is no way to evaluate your group except to ask if we are still working on the process” (Marx, Scott River CRMP).

“Consensus training is imperative. Base the whole collaborative process on the premise that everyone who’s there is entitled to be there and they have a part of the answer and if you all just listen carefully enough, you come up with a solution you would never have before”  
(Grier, McKenzie Watershed Council).