

Collaborative Planning on State Trust Lands:

A University of Michigan Study

*for the State Trust Lands Partnership Project
of the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy*



About the Study:

Collaborative planning on state trust lands was identified for further research at the 2004 State Trust Lands Research and Policy Analysis Roundtable convened by the State Trust Lands partnership project of the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. In March 2005, under the guidance of Dr. Steven L. Yaffee, a team of eight graduate students from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment began conducting a region-wide survey and analysis of eight case studies in which state trust land agencies collaborated with stakeholders in trust land planning and management. The research team conducted 117 on-site and telephone interviews, each lasting roughly one to three hours. Through these interviews, the team answered a set of research questions concerning the benefits, challenges, costs and outcomes of collaborative planning on state trust lands. The goals of this research were to:

- Capture on-the-ground experiences of collaborative planning on state trust lands
- Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of this trust land management approach
- Distill a set of best management practices
- Provide broader recommendations for overcoming barriers to collaborative planning on state trust lands

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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND FACILITATION IN A COLLABORATIVE PLANNING PROCESS?

Leaders and facilitators guided each of the eight collaborative planning processes on state trust lands examined in this report. While in some cases a single individual fulfilled both leadership and facilitation roles, these two functions assist a group in different ways. Facilitators can either emerge from within a group or be hired externally to impartially assist the group in running meetings, communicating and making decisions. Leaders serve in both formal and informal roles to guide, inspire, or represent others. Most simply, leaders are those that others follow.

This chapter will explore how different kinds of facilitators and leaders impacted the collaborative processes in which they served. This section explores the following the facilitation and leadership issues:

- Dynamics of third-party and internal facilitators
- Sources and impacts of facilitator neutrality
- How different facilitation techniques helped or impeded the process
- Key benefits and challenges of facilitation in collaborative planning.
- Role of official leaders
- Role of unofficial leaders
- Role of agency and municipal leaders
- Transitions in official leadership

FACILITATION

Facilitators help collaborative groups organize a process and navigate through conflict. In some cases, third party facilitators are brought in as neutral, non-partisan mediators. In others, individuals from within the collaborative group or state trust land management agency staff may fill the facilitation role. Regardless, facilitators can fill an important organizational role for any group by setting agendas, maintaining the momentum of meetings and helping the group clarify and focus on issues.¹ But they also fill a conciliation role, mediating between conflicting opinions, personalities and political dynamics to enable the group to make progress towards an agreement.² While facilitators are not a panacea that will ensure a group's success, effective facilitators can help groups overcome barriers and make progress toward their goals.

According to mediation scholar Chris Moore, mediators and facilitators can take on a variety of general roles within a group to help parties resolve the conflict that brought them to the table. These roles can include opening communication channels by initiating or facilitating communication, drawing out quiet parties and keeping dominant voices in check. These individuals also lead the process forward by providing a procedure and procedural tools and can train participants in how to effectively represent their interests. They can also help the group explore problems, often by enabling participants to examine a problem from different viewpoints, assisting in defining issues and interests and looking for mutually satisfactory

outcomes.³ In some cases, facilitators can legitimize the process and its outcomes by imparting fairness and neutrality. Finally, in many situations facilitators can help expand resources to provide procedural assistance to parties or link them with outside resources or experts, with the aim of enlarging the overall range of options.⁴

The eight cases of collaborative planning on state trust lands examined in this report reveal important lessons about how different kinds of facilitation affect a collaborative process. This section explores the following the facilitation issues:

- Dynamics of third-party and internal facilitators
- Sources and impacts of facilitator neutrality
- How different facilitation techniques helped or impeded the process
- Key benefits and challenges of facilitation in collaborative planning.

Table 18-1: Number and Types of Facilitators Employed at Different Stages in Collaborative Planning Cases

CASE	Third-party (#)	Agency or Municipality staff	Chairperson	Hired third-party later in process to replace agency staffer or chairperson
Castle Valley Planning Process	1			
Houghton Area Master Planning Process	1	1		✓
Elliot State Forest Planning Process			1	
Emerald Mountain Planning Process			1	
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	2		1	✓
Mesa del Sol Planning Process				
Southeast New Mexico Working Group	2			
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process	2 (successive)	1	1 (co-facilitated with DNRC)	✓

TYPES OF FACILITATORS

Of the eight cases researched, five used professional facilitators from outside the group at some point in the process while five used group members to fill this role at some time (Table 18-1). As these numbers imply, many cases employed multiple facilitators at different times in the process.

The distinction between internal and third-party facilitators is critical, because individuals in these roles have differing responsibilities and expectations placed upon them by the group. Third-party facilitators have no authoritative decision-making power, but help participants educate each other on the issues and reconcile their competing interests.⁵ These neutral parties help ensure that a consensus decision can be reached, especially in conflicts with interpersonal tension and widespread distrust. For example, some members of the Southeast New Mexico Working Group felt that professional facilitators were essential for their planning process. New Mexico Department of Fish Game staffer Bill Dunn describes, “if I’d gotten up there, then okay, there’s a slant toward wildlife. If Jeff Harvard got up there, a slant towards oil and gas. If John Clemmons, a slant toward ranching. With [third-party facilitators] Toby and Ric, there was no slant. That’s what’s key about having a neutral facilitator.”⁶

In three of the cases examined in this report, effective facilitators emerged from within the collaborative group, itself. These group members were able to look past their own interests and serve in a more neutral role to help their peers make progress toward a joint decision or plan. While these individuals are clearly not impartial, they can play an effective facilitation role if all others in the group perceive them as legitimate and fair conveners.⁷ For example, soon after the Advisory Committee formed in the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, the Committee elected local realtor and Committee member Alan Elm to chair the group. For a while, Elm and professional facilitator Janet Cornish ran the Committee meetings. When Cornish left the process, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation assigned planner Lisa Horowitz to staff the project.⁸ Together, Horowitz and Elm facilitated the Committee meetings, while Committee member and Whitefish Chamber of Commerce President Sheila Bowen picked up meeting coordination tasks such as setting up venues and overseeing meeting minutes.⁹ Emerging naturally from the group, these facilitators were more effective than Cornish because their fellow Advisory Committee members perceived them as relatively impartial and fair.

NEUTRALITY

One of the most critical issues influencing the effectiveness of facilitators, especially when they are third parties, is that the group perceives them as neutral, with no predisposition towards certain outcomes. Even if the chosen facilitator feels he or she is unbiased, participants may feel differently. Several underlying elements affect whether a facilitator appears neutral. First, a facilitator who is an employee of one of the interested parties, or contracted by an interested party, can be assumed by participants to be partial to that group’s interests. In many of the cases examined, facilitators appeared more legitimate when they were hired and paid jointly by diverse interests, rather than directly contracted and paid through an agency or a donor.

In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, the Advisory Committee felt that because facilitator Janet Cornish had been hired by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to run their neighborhood planning process, she was biased towards their interests. Furthermore, the fact that the DNRC declined to reveal its source of funding for the process raised suspicions among community members. These suspicions were confirmed when the group discovered that the funds were donated by two local private landowners and Cornish lost all credibility in the eyes of participants. In the Castle Valley Planning Process, participants trusted facilitator Marty Zeller’s guidance of the process because he was jointly hired and paid

by all stakeholder groups. However, when one stakeholder group, the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), contracted him as a consultant on other concurrent projects, community members began to question whether his other standing arrangements with SITLA created a conflict of interest. These concerns increased when Zeller's costs for the Castle Valley process exceeded the original bid amount by \$6,000 and SITLA covered these additional expenses despite a prior agreement that SITLA and the community would split Zeller's contract. This extra financial contribution from the state trust land agency made some community members feel that Zeller was "taking a side."¹⁰ In contrast, in the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process, the Washington Department of Natural Resources paid for the facilitation services after the members of the Advisory Committee jointly searched for and selected their preferred facilitation team.

How a facilitator was selected also impacted his or her perceived neutrality. If several parties worked together to jointly find and decide on a third party facilitator, they likely perceived him or her as credible and trustworthy. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process, the Committee spent months debating what their level of decision-making authority should be. Responding to this tension and anticipating challenging negotiations ahead, the group decided to search for a third-party facilitator. Hiring a facilitator helped alleviate concerns that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had too much control over meetings and allowed the Chairperson to devote more time to representing his organization's interests.¹¹ Once the DNR and the Committee agreed on a facilitation team, Committee members found that the group's relationships and efficiency improved. As mentioned above, while the DNR funded the facilitators, the joint selection process seems to have provided adequate credibility to the team.

How a facilitator operated also determined whether he or she was perceived as neutral. Third parties must be constantly aware of how their words and actions might be perceived to the diverse parties in the group. In the Southeast New Mexico Working Group, both of the two facilitators were accused of having biases toward either the oil and gas industry and the ranchers or the conservationists. While the facilitators noted that they would occasionally play off one another to help expedite the process, both the conservationists and the oil and gas industry representatives construed these tactics as preferential treatment for the opposing interests.¹² For some members of the Working Group, perceived biases made it difficult for them to fully trust these third parties.

FACILITATION TECHNIQUES

Facilitators employ different intervention strategies to help manage collaborative processes. Several variables influence the kinds of interventions they use: the level of conflict, the capability of participants to resolve their own differences, power balances, procedures in place, the complexity of the issues at hand and the expressed facilitation needs of the group.¹³ In addition, the stage at which a facilitator enters a process determines the strategies they use to help the group. If a facilitator enters a process early on and the emotional intensity is low, the group may need different kinds of assistance than if parties have become more polarized and tensions are high.¹⁴

Some facilitators meet with the individual interests prior to the first group meeting to learn more about the issues, interests and personalities at play in the conflict. In the Southeast New Mexico Working Group, Toby Herzlich and Ric Richardson conducted private interviews with each participant to understand their concerns, interests and fears about the collaborative process in hopes of increasing their credibility as facilitators and of the process itself. These early interviews also contributed to the facilitators' greater understanding of the issues the working group would address as neither facilitator had significant prior knowledge about the problem at stake.

When a facilitator perceives that some members of the group are not contributing to the discussion, he or she can draw out quiet voices to ensure their interests and ideas are heard. This function helps ensure all members contribute to a final agreement by enabling individuals who are shy, uncomfortable interrupting, or feel outnumbered to share their point of view and help move the process forward. Not only does this additional participation increase the range of ideas and options on the table, it also helps ensure the durability of any final agreement reached because all participants played a hand in crafting the solution. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process, the facilitators work included always, "making sure there was a flow of communication, making sure no one could hide and not participate and, conversely, that no one dominated discussion, preventing other people from talking."¹⁵ Similarly, in the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, where a few dominant voices often monopolized the Advisory Committee discussions, Marty Zeller effectively drew quieter parties into the group discussion, enabling everyone to express their perspective at some point.¹⁶

While some groups need facilitators to run highly organized meetings to help structure the discussion, others need more freedom to let the group develop its own dynamic and energy. In the Houghton Area Master Planning (HAMP) Process, facilitator Freda Johnson followed the City of Tucson's instructions and ran "an amazingly structured meeting" that always "got out on time," but in doing so would cut short discussions that some members of the group felt were necessary to fuel the creative process.¹⁷ This strategy was therefore a stumbling block to the group, even though it perhaps could have been useful at a later stage or with different participants.

Some facilitators were effective at reminding individuals of what would happen if they did not reach agreement. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process facilitator Mary Dumas used this strategy to remind participants why they were involved in the collaborative process in the first place. This technique was especially useful given the situation after the Attorney General rendered his opinion that the Committee was advisory in nature and therefore did not have decision-making authority, which may have caused some participants to consider leaving the table. According to Dumas, the question of "what it would mean if they did not come to an agreement" helped individuals remember what their alternatives were to a collaborative decision and motivated them to persevere with the process.

BENEFITS OF FACILITATION

Facilitation can be extremely beneficial to a collaborative process. Such benefits include finding common ground from which the group can create options and find solutions, designing and

directing meetings for effective communication and keeping participants at the table to ensure parties continue to work towards a durable final product.

When coming to the table, diverse interest groups often struggle to identify common goals. Facilitators can help stakeholders discover common ground on which to focus their planning efforts and construct shared principles for success. The Castle Valley Planning Process planning group developed a set of shared principles that acknowledged participants' diverse interests, but established that these interests were not mutually exclusive. According to Facilitator Marty Zeller:

The principles basically were an exercise at the beginning of the process to get [the participants] to start talking to each other, to define some areas of common ground and to create an initial focus for the planning effort. [The principles] got them engaged constructively as opposed to destructively in the process.¹⁸

This process encouraged members of the fledgling collaborative group to interact constructively with each other, abandon preconceived notions and open their minds to new ideas.¹⁹

Facilitators can design and direct meetings to be venues for open and productive communication. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process, the facilitators enabled such communication by organizing agendas, meeting venues and minutes. Some members of the Southeast New Mexico Working Group felt that Toby Herzlich and Ric Richardson created highly effective meetings by keeping the group on track and encouraging compromises.²⁰

Effective facilitators also keep participants at the table by reminding them of why they chose to pursue a collaborative solution. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, Marty Zeller worked to reign in group members who held meetings about the planning process outside of the regular Advisory Committee sessions. Zeller also helped convince Committee members that calling on political favors would not create a long-term durable solution.²¹

Facilitators can also contribute knowledge to a collaborative process. Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation staff involved in the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process found that facilitator Marty Zeller's understanding of state trust land mandates and legal constraints enabled him to articulate the agency's interests to the group. Due to Zeller's background knowledge as well as his neutral status in the group, the stakeholders were more receptive to his trust land explanations than they had been when the agency was expressing them.²²

CHALLENGES OF FACILITATION

Some participants felt that facilitation increased the length of a process. Jeff Harvard of the Southeast New Mexico Working Group felt that stakeholders could have identified their own set of goals and developed a conservation plan more efficiently without professional facilitation. He described the facilitation as "counterproductive," dragging out a process that was "probably a year longer than it should have been."²³

In one case, a facilitator focused so much on emphasizing common ground that group members felt unable to negotiate about key differences. The facilitators of the Southeast New Mexico Working Group asked the oil and gas representatives, conservationists and the agency representatives to each come up with their own proposals for the conservation plan. The science writer in the group, Scott Noris, then created a matrix of their three proposals to “lay them side-by-side” so the group could see the major issues and differences each highlighted.²⁴ Several participants recalled large differences between these texts but recalled that facilitator Toby Herzlich insisted that the group only focus on the commonalities. According to participant Jennifer Parody, Herzlich felt that “by highlighting the differences, we were just highlighting our disagreements and that we needed to focus on what was common. And in my opinion, that prevented us from getting to the meat of the problem and actually hashing out solutions. When we finally sat down and talked about our differences in the small group, that's when we made progress.”²⁵ The group ultimately took the major categories of issues highlighted in the matrix and convened a small working group of one representative from each major stakeholder group to hammer out a plausible agreement for all parties. Neither facilitator was present for these subcommittee meetings.

In a few cases, uninformed facilitators impeded a process. Participants found that facilitators need to familiarize themselves with the issues at play in a conflict prior to the first meeting. Some of the Castle Valley Planning Process's town government officials wondered why facilitator Marty Zeller had not been aware that the planning process had to be implemented through town ordinances via the town Planning and Zoning Commission.²⁶ A participant in the Southeast New Mexico Working Group noted that their facilitators had inadequate understanding of prairie chicken biology and the regulatory constraints under which the committee was operating.²⁷ However, some participants would argue that these issues were not the responsibility of the facilitator, but were the domain of those who set up the collaborative process.²⁸

Participants rely on facilitators to sort out rhetoric from legitimate debate. Jennifer Parody of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service noted that while the Southeast New Mexico Working Group had established a ground rule that debate was only acceptable on legitimate arguments, the facilitators “treated everything like it was debatable.”²⁹ She continued:

So when people would say things like, “There's no science to show that” or “Prairie chickens like oil pads” or something, I wanted the facilitators to call bullshit and say “we've covered this ground, can we just agree on the basic biological data and agree that there are some things that should just not be on the table.” I thought we wasted a lot of time because they wouldn't sort through what was just rhetoric and what was actually legitimate debate.³⁰

This inability to enforce a key ground rule extended the length of the planning process and added to frustrations within meetings.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership can take many forms in collaborative processes. Some efforts are mobilized by a single, charismatic leader.³¹ In other cases, dedicated individuals step forward later in the process to help maintain energy and commitment.³² Many groups chose to elect an official leader to serve as a chairperson, while others are led by a designated agency official. The literature on collaboration reveals that regardless of the structure of a collaborative process, certain dedicated and energetic individuals tend to stand out as leaders.

According to Wondolleck and Yaffee, effective collaborative efforts often have one or two participants who enthusiastically model a “we’re all in this together” attitude that breaks through adversarial dynamics and sets a tone for the rest of the group.³³ In some cases, this individual is an agency official who may be taking a dramatic step away from conventional agency approaches.³⁴ In others, it is the “movers and shakers” in the community who catalyze a joint-problem solving effort and garner community support for taking a collaborative approach to a problem.³⁵ These “local champions” can be dedicated community members, elected officials, project leaders or landowners who rally activity and drive the process forward.³⁶

Participants in the eight cases of collaborative planning on state trust lands identified many different qualities and functions of “leaders:” those who were deeply committed to the process, motivated others, kept the group focused on its objective, or provided new ideas that galvanized support for the process from both within and outside the group. Laura Kamala, a participant in the Castle Valley Planning Process emphasized the importance of strong leadership in this way, “You have to have some leaders that really care, to the point where they’re willing to go through hell and keep showing up. That’s the only way you can have success, ultimately.”³⁷ Overall, the mosaic of leadership functions was filled by a number of notable individuals who served the process in different ways. These leaders fill both formal and informal roles in the group and lead both by making deliberate choices and influencing others more subtly.

OFFICIAL LEADERS

Four of the eight collaborative processes involved planning groups that elected a chairperson to lead the process and meetings. Chairpersons were chosen for a variety of reasons, including legitimacy, committee experience, interest and dedication. In the Elliot State Forest Planning Process, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Director of the Southern Area district was chosen as chair. As the most senior ODF official in charge of the Elliot State Forest, he was at the top of the chain of command and thus an obvious choice for Chairperson. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, the Advisory Committee selected local realtor and Committee member Alan Elm to chair the group not only for his several years of experience as Vice Chairman of the City/County Planning Board, but also for his interest in helping the group expedite their work.³⁸ Similarly, in the Emerald Mountain Planning Process, Ben Beall was elected Chair of the Emerald Mountain Partnership because he had already been leading the process since its inception as a County Commissioner. Ultimately, it was Beall’s dedication to protect Emerald Mountain that pushed this project to completion. In Lake Whatcom, Steve Hood was elected chair because group members perceived him as being capable of keeping the group

on track and, most likely, because he had experience working on environmental issues pertaining to Lake Whatcom as a staff member of the Department of Ecology.

The roles of chairpersons varied, but ranged from facilitating meetings, reaching out to the media, representing the group to trust land management agencies, or even making final decisions when consensus could not be reached. Because these individuals were elected by process participants, they were trusted to wield their extra power responsibly and represent group interests fairly. In all cases, most participants felt that their elected chairpersons fulfilled these expectations.

A particularly critical function of official leaders was to help stakeholders with opposing views at the table and smooth interpersonal dynamics. This function was especially critical when, in the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, some individuals jeopardized Chamber of Commerce President Sheila Bowen's job by telling the Chamber's Board of Directors that Bowen was misrepresenting their development interests in the process. Participants in the Whitefish case credited Chairman Alan Elm with calming the waters when trying situations like these arose and persuading Committee members to stick with the process despite personal challenges.³⁹

Official leaders also tended to serve as a bridge between multiple parties, maintaining critical communication flows and fostering relationships outside of meetings. Often, the chairperson in the Emerald Mountain Planning Process, Chairman Ben Beall served as the primary liaison with the State Land Board.⁴⁰ Charles Bedford observed that when Beall met with him about the Partnership's progress, he was "very respectful of others involved" when there was still significant dissent within the Partnership, clarifying when someone was "still holding out."⁴¹

Similarly, chairpersons also reached out to the broader community to galvanize political and financial support via partnerships, fundraising opportunities and the media. The Castle Valley Planning Process's Dave Erley spearheaded many fundraising efforts and engaged the outdoor industry and climbing community. Through his outreach to the climbing community, Erley garnered advertisements in big climbing magazines like *Rock and Ice*. The Castle Valley cause also got the attention of world-renowned climbers who gave talks about the need to preserve Castleton Tower. This publicity brought the issue into the mainstream climbing community, and fueled further fundraising.

In some cases, chairpersons were chosen based on an individual's track record of persistence and determination that had already driven the process forward over several years. This perseverance was key in the Emerald Mountain Planning Process, where Chairman Ben Beall painstakingly cultivated the planning process and individually liaised between the community and the State Land Board for twelve years. According to many, Beall "is just driven and he does not give up."⁴²

UNOFFICIAL LEADERS

Many individuals who did not serve in formal leadership positions often played key, unofficial leadership roles. In many cases, these participants were recognized as having facilitated important progress or offered creative solutions and resources. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape

Planning Process, Linda Marrom's emotional commitment and passion for the project helped the group push through the process.⁴³ The city of Bellingham's Bill McCourt observed that that citizens such as Marrom are better positioned to affect change than agency insiders:

I worked for 31 years for the city of Bellingham, and I have watched how things work within the agencies. For the most part, we seem to work to protect the status quo. We do not do a very good job with leadership. We really owe most of what happens in situations like this to people like Linda Marrom and Jamie Berg, people that are on the outside of the organization who somehow get this idea burning in their mind that they are willing to do what it takes and stick it out and challenge the professionals and the status quo. It's amazing how much impact they can have. They are the ones that affect change. The rest of us are just protecting our turf.⁴⁴

In the Southeast New Mexico Working Group, Mack Energy Corporation's Dan Girand played a key role in Oil and Gas Technical Subcommittee by finding opportunities for his oil and gas industry constituents to make compromises. By understanding the perspective of oil and gas representatives and proactively identifying opportunities for mutual concessions as well as options that were not feasible, Girand helped this group hammer out the key oil and gas components of a conservation plan. In the same case, participants noted that retired biologist Jim Bailey brought a wide range of creative options to the table and was extremely reasonable and thoughtful in his comments and ideas. As the sole representative conservation interests, Bailey's experience, personality and creativity earned him the respect of his peers.

Unofficial leaders were motivated by fervent emotional commitment to the cause, or naturally strong personalities. The Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process' Linda Marrom was passionately committed to the process because any additional landslides put her house and family at risk. At the same time, because she was the first to rally public support, along with her neighbor Jamie Berg, others viewed her as the community's leader in the process; therefore she naturally filled this role and met their expectations.

Some group members were particularly influential in ways that both facilitated progress and rallied others around them. However, in the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, this kind of leadership sacrificed group input. Advisory Committee member Marshall Friedman's innovative suggestions motivated others into action and his enthusiasm and commitment helped the group craft a plan that satisfied most Committee members. Advisory Committee Chairman Alan Elm has credited Friedman and others who had more "extreme" positions with being able to bring the group to a middle ground: "by being way over there, they did help us meet in the middle."⁴⁵ Yet, his involvement in the "shadow group's" ex parte conversations hindered the process from fairly incorporating diverse input.

AGENCY AND MUNICIPAL LEADERS

Agency and municipal leaders often assumed active leadership roles that created, supported, or promoted the collaborative planning processes. In some cases, however, the mere presence of these officials enhanced the credibility of the process and support for it.

Agency leaders assumed a unique role in the collaborative planning cases. Often, one or a few leaders within an agency set the tone of the agency's response to a conflict and designed its role in the collaborative process. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Trust Lands Management Division Administrator Tom Shultz was instrumental to completion of the process. Schultz coached his DNRC staffers through their work with the Whitefish Advisory Committee and worked hard within his agency to enable staff to respond to the local community's interests, a relatively new role for the agency.⁴⁶ New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands, Patrick Lyons sent a powerful agency message to the Southeast New Mexico Working Group by removing a portion of trust lands in prairie chicken habitat from oil and gas leasing. This act also gave the Working Group a large portion of trust land now off-limits to leasing with which to work into their overall conservation scheme. Given the autonomy of the State Land Office (SLO), this was a symbolic and purely voluntary act by Lyons that assured the Working Group that the SLO supported the Working Group's goals.⁴⁷

Several of the collaborative planning processes researched in this study were catalyzed by one or two proactive individuals who tried a new approach to planning. Indeed, Wondolleck and Yaffee have found that many effective collaborative resource management partnerships have been initiated by a few entrepreneurial individuals who saw joint problem-solving as a desirable alternative to traditional, adversarial approaches to resolving conflict.⁴⁸ In the Castle Valley Planning Process, Mayor Bruce Keeler initiated a conversation with Utah's School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration Assistant Director Ric McBrier about working together to find a "win-win" solution instead of pursuing further rezoning, litigation and land sales. This initial contact and other early conversations between McBrier and Castle Valley resident Brooke Williams led both groups to drop their activities and convene a joint planning effort for trust land in Castle Valley.⁴⁹ The Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process's Bill Wallace, the Northwest Regional Manager for the Washington Department of Natural Resources, is another example of an agency leader, especially because of his commitment to the process during two different commissioners. Despite having a new Commissioner that was less supportive of the process, Wallace adapted to the new commissioner's style and never faulted in the face of the Committee, even when group members believed the new Commissioner did not support the plan the group was developing. One member of the Committee commented, "Bill Wallace was terrific. Overall, I am impressed with the DNR."⁵⁰

Participants also noted that effective leaders created and reinforced an overarching vision for the project. In New Mexico, many participants of the Mesa del Sol Planning Process credited former Commissioner Ray Powell with creating and marketing the vision for the project. Powell had an ability to translate his ideas to other parties to fuel a collaborative process around a shared vision.⁵¹ As he describes it, "At the end of the meetings they were right there with us. That was *their* project."⁵² This shared vision helped keep parties involved in the collaborative process and facilitated progress in planning.

In several cases, agency leaders also espoused the collaborative planning process early on. In the Mesa del Sol Planning Process, Commissioner Ray Powell chose to open the New Mexico State Land Office's (SLO) doors to the public and personally visited with neighborhood groups, businesses and other stakeholders in the process to bring them on-board with the planned

development. Because the Commissioner himself went to meet stakeholders, these meetings helped to build trust and respect between the SLO and the community in ways that may not have occurred without Powell's commitment and involvement. In the Castle Valley Planning Process, School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) Assistant Director Ric McBrier championed the collaborative process and represented the process to the SITLA Board of Trustees. The agency had never undertaken a similar process and McBrier's willingness to work with the community enabled new relationships and trust to be built.

Agency leaders dispelled misperceptions about government plans and activities and built a foundation of trust with the stakeholders. The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's (DNRC) Unit Manager Bob Sandman assumed this role during the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process. After a previous staff member had inspired mistrust among community members by failing to share information, Sandman took a more active role in the process to prove the agency's willingness to provide real answers to the Committee's questions and concerns. His willingness to collaborate and his inspiring and energetic "pep talk[s]" in Committee meetings bolstered community confidence in the DNRC.⁵³ At the same time, the DNRC's Trust Land Management Division Administrator Tom Schultz became more involved in the planning process by making himself more accessible to Committee members to ensure they had access to all necessary information. This new approach helped dispel the community's impression that the agency was an inconsistent, "many-headed beast"⁵⁴ or "the big bad wolf looming on the horizon."⁵⁵ The increased involvement and openness of both Bob Sandman and Tom Schultz improved the transparency of agency activities and helped dismiss conspiracy theories about the DNRC's intentions.

In some situations, the mere presence and involvement of public officials boosted the legitimacy of a convened group, making both participants and outside parties take the process more seriously, and perhaps more amenable to the outcome. In the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process, the presence of elected officials "elevated the stature" of the Committee, making participants feel that the process was "being taken seriously." This increased legitimacy in turn boosted participants' own level of emotional commitment to the process and kept them at the table working together.⁵⁶

Agency officials, especially those who were elected to their offices, also catalyzed support of parties who may have otherwise been skeptical of a collaborative process. Many participants in the Southeast New Mexico Working Group laud Commissioner Patrick Lyons' ability to gain support and buy-in from other stakeholders. As a Republican in a high-level government position, Lyons was "at a better place to catalyze support of some of the industry that typically is Republican in nature, both the agricultural and oil and gas industries."⁵⁷

TRANSITIONS IN OFFICIAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership transitions can either enhance or impede collaborative efforts, depending on the context. In some cases, changes in process leaders hindered progress by causing the group to lose momentum and commitment. In the Houghton Area Master Planning (HAMP) Process, the city's project leader retired only a few months into the process. Michael Wyneken, the new planner assigned to lead the Citizen's Review Committee (CRC) and manage the process felt that the

project “got dumped” on him and was frustrated by having to work within the parameters set by the previous manager.⁵⁸ This change in leadership, combined with delays, lack of data and confusion over the various parties’ roles in the process, caused CRC attendance and participation to decline.⁵⁹

In the Mesa del Sol Planning Process, changeover in State Land Commissioners required participants to adapt to new policies and visions for the process. In some cases, the different beliefs of a new Commissioner derailed projects begun in previous administrations. When Commissioner Ray Powell began his first term, he experienced some backlash when he tried to institute more planning and collaboration into the State Land Office’s land management activities. According to Powell, “folks wanted [the old policies] to continue, including Mr. Baca.”⁶⁰ Conversely, when Commissioner Patrick Lyons came into office, he chose to continue Powell’s collaborative strategy for Mesa del Sol even though he has a markedly different business philosophy. While Lyons may prefer to minimize the State Land Office’s role and require the private developer to manage the collaborative process, he chose to honor the precedent already set and continue to invest agency resources into the collaborative process. According to Commissioner Lyons, “We’re supportive of [Mesa del Sol] ... We’d like to see it happen.”⁶¹

Endnotes

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- ³ Moore, 18; Michael Doyle and David Straus, *How to Make Meetings Work* (NY: Jove Books, 1976).
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- ⁶ Bill Dunn (Predator and Gamebird Biologist, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish) interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Emily Kelly, August 23, 2005, Frontier Restaurant, Albuquerque, NM.
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- ¹¹ Alan Soicher (Citizen, city of Bellingham), phone interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 29, 2005; Linda Marrom (Citizen, city of Bellingham), interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 9, 2005, Tino's Pizza, Sudden Valley, WA; Clare Fogelsong (Environmental Resources Manager, city of Bellingham), interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 8, 2005, City Hall, Bellingham, WA.
- ¹² Dan Girand (Regulatory and Environmental Affairs, Mack Energy), interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Emily Kelly, August 26, 2005, Mack Energy, Roswell, NM.
- ¹³ Moore, 31.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Clare Fogelsong (Environmental Resources Manager, city of Bellingham), interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 8, 2005, City Hall, Bellingham, WA.
- ¹⁶ Bob Sandman (Area Manager, Northwestern Land Office, DNRC), telephone interview by Jessica Mitchell and Lisa Spalding, September 7, 2005.
- ¹⁷ Linda Morales (Principal, The Planning Center), interview by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 3, 2005, Tucson, AZ. AND Ken Abrahams (Executive Vice President, Diamond Ventures) interview by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 5, 2005, Tucson, AZ, Suzanne Bott (former Project Manager, Sonoran Institute),

telephone interview by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 22, 2005; Linda Morales (Principal, The Planning Center), interviewed by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 3, 2005, Tucson, AZ.

¹⁸ Marty Zeller (President, Conservation Partners), telephone interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Eirin Krane, September 28, 2005.

¹⁹ Laura Kamala (Director of Utah Programs, Grand Canyon Trust), interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Eirin Krane, August 19, 2005, Castle Valley, UT.

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²² Bob Sandman (Area Manager, Northwestern Land Office, DNRC), telephone interview by Jessica Mitchell and Lisa Spalding, September 7, 2005.

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- ⁴³ Richard Rodriguez (Regional Planner, Washington State Department of Health), interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 11, 2005, DOH, Kent, WA.
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