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 MAKES A PLANNING PROCESS COLLABORATIVE?

To measure the degree to which the eight cases were collaborative, the research team identified three central characteristics of collaboration: breadth of stakeholders, transparency of the process and shared influence on decision making. The collaborative processes examined in this report each contain elements of these characteristics. This chapter explores the three characteristics of collaboration, comparing and analyzing the presence and importance of each in the cases.

DEFINING COLLABORATION

Scholars of collaboration define collaboration in a variety of ways, but all share the common theme of people working together to achieve a goal. Gray describes collaboration as "The pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources … by two or more stakeholders … to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually."[1] Other scholars emphasize the element of shared authority by describing collaboration as "a joint decision-making approach to problem resolution where power is shared and stakeholders take collective responsibility for their actions and subsequent outcomes from those outcomes."[2]

Drawing on these and other definitions in the literature, the research team developed the following definition of collaboration to inform our research on collaborative planning processes on state trust land:

> Collaboration is a process whereby individuals or organizations, often with widely varied interests, work together to share knowledge and resources to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

From this definition, the research team identified major characteristics of collaboration as:

- Breadth of stakeholders
- Transparency of the process
- Shared influence in decision making

Breadth of stakeholders refers to the meaningful involvement of a diverse set of stakeholders such that all key interests are represented. Effective collaborative processes also require transparent communication among participants in the process, through meetings, agreements and decisions. Collaboration also calls for at least some degree of influence on decision making for all participants. Influence differs from authority. Agencies alone must exercise their statutory obligation to make management choices, but other parties can be given power to influence these choices through involvement in a meaningful problem solving process that measurably changes the outcome to all parties' satisfaction.

This chapter explores these three characteristics of collaboration, as found in each of the eight cases, and the effect that each had on different aspects of the process.

BREADTH OF STAKEHOLDERS

Finding an effective balance of interests is important for the success of collaborative processes. Having too few interests represented may make implementation of the final decision more challenging because of an inadequate amount of support built within the group. However, sometimes having too many interests represented can overwhelm the process and make it less effective. In the Castle Valley Planning Process, Castle Valley Mayor Bruce Keeler noted the importance of this balance: "You've got to know that your collaborative group is representative of the overall community, because you could go through all the collaborative efforts you want, but if the group representing the community is not accepted, then it's all for nothing."[3]

Representation, or "breadth of stakeholders," varied across the cases (Table 12-1). The breadth of stakeholders involved in each of the eight cases was evaluated according to the following scale:

- **Low:** Too many or too few interests were represented. Several interested parties either chose not to participate in the collaborative planning process or were actively excluded. The progress of the process was significantly affected.
- **Medium:** One or two parties were under- or over-represented. One or two interested parties did not or could not participate in the collaborative planning process. The progress of the process was minimally affected.
- **High:** There was a balance of interests represented in the process. No important parties were precluded from participating in the collaborative planning process. The process did not suffer from problems relating to representation.

Table 12-1: Breadth of Stakeholders

CASE	Breadth of Stakeholders
Castle Valley Planning Process	Medium –
Elliott State Forest Planning Process	Medium
Emerald Mountain Planning Process	Medium –
Houghton Area Master Plan Process	High
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	Medium
Mesa del Sol Planning Process	Medium +
Southeast New Mexico Working Group	Medium +
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process	Medium

The Houghton Area Master Planning Process is a clear example of a process with a broad and inclusive breadth of stakeholders. All of the participants interviewed thought the City of Tucson's Department of Urban Planning and Design did a good job identifying the range of interests to be included in the process and that the Citizens Review Committee had balanced representation from among these interests.

In contrast, the limited breadth of stakeholders represented in the Emerald Mountain Partnership created some challenges for the planning process. At the outset of the Emerald Mountain planning process, a diverse set of representatives from grazing, recreation, wildlife and open space interests worked together to try to come up with ways to enable the State Land Board to achieve revenue from Emerald Mountain without development. However, when the solution of a large-scale land exchange became the focus of the Emerald Mountain Partnership's (the Partnership) planning efforts in 2002, the group neglected to reach out beyond the Steamboat Springs community to bring county-based stakeholders into the Partnership's membership. Yet the project's scope had shifted from a city conservation effort to a county-wide land exchange. The Partnership had attempted to create this balance in their original bylaws by establishing two appointed membership positions for both the Routt County Commissioners and the Steamboat Springs City Council. However, the County appointees in 2002 happened to be residents of Steamboat Springs. This narrow geographic representation made some county residents resent the Steamboat Springs-based group selling off Bureau of Land Management land to create a "playground" in their backyard. Had the county had clearer representation on the Partnership, it is unclear whether they would have selected the land exchange at all, or perhaps have designed it to be less controversial to surrounding communities.

Participant Selection

One factor that influences representation is the way that participants are selected and recruited to be involved. In the eight cases, participants were chosen in a variety of ways: using a pre-determined set of criteria to make up the group, recruiting participants based on potential interest, providing an open invitation to join the group and allowing membership to evolve throughout the process (Table 12-2).

Among the eight cases, the ways that participants were selected varied greatly between processes. The Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process was the only case where the make-up of the group was pre-defined, as the process was legislatively created. Five cases had a structured recruitment process to fill seats at the table, though the final make-up was not completely pre-defined. This left room for permitting interested parties to join the process, but also gave the state trust land agency the power to permit or deny some interested parties. Leaders of the Elliott State Forest Planning Process were explicit in selecting only parties with an economic interest in the forest's management. The Department of State Lands and Oregon Department of Forestry recruited several state forest and wildlife experts, a county government official, and later, a local beneficiary representative. Though they could not participate directly in Steering Committee meetings, the public, environmental and timber lobbying groups could give input on the process during public meetings and submit comments on all of the draft management plans.

Table 12-2: When and How Participants Were Chosen to be Involved

CASE	Group make-up defined at the outset by the state or beneficiary	Final make-up not completely pre-determined; Members recruited	Open invitation; Final make-up not at all pre-determined	Evolved as process went along
Castle Valley Planning Process				✓
Elliott State Forest Planning Process		✓		✓
Emerald Mountain Planning Process		✓		✓
Houghton Area Master Plan Process		✓		
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	✓			
Mesa del Sol Planning Process			✓	
Southeast New Mexico Working Group		✓		
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process		✓	✓	

Two of the cases included an open invitation to participation in the collaborative effort, and there was no pre-defined group structure. For example, in the Mesa del Sol Planning Process, the State Land Office worked closely with the beneficiary on the development of the plan, but welcomed the participation and input of other interested groups. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, newspaper and email advertisements were used to solicit participants from the community for the Advisory Committee. Mayor Andy Feury and Flathead County Commissioner Gary Hall, the two community leaders tasked with determining Committee membership, received approximately 45 responses to these advertisements. The Whitefish Advisory Committee Charter, which was jointly developed by several community members and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, outlined the Advisory Committee's purpose and listed an initial set of interest groups who should be represented. Using this Charter as a guide, Mayor Feury and Commissioner Hall selected approximately 12 members and two alternates to sit on the Advisory Committee.

This final group did not include representatives of the trust land beneficiaries, motorized vehicle users, or Whitefish lakeshore residents. It remains to be seen if the absence of the latter two groups resulted in a flawed plan, however conflict already has arisen over motorized vehicle use on the planned recreational trail around Whitefish Lake.[4] In contrast, the exclusion of a beneficiary representative from the planning process fueled existing tension and mistrust between the DNRC and the Advisory Committee during the planning process. Once the Whitefish Neighborhood Plan was complete, beneficiary groups lobbied the State Land Board to reject it and these groups may pose future challenges for the Plan through lobbying efforts or litigation.

Three of the eight cases began with one set of representatives and concluded with a different set. The Emerald Mountain Planning Process invited a mix of community interests to participate in an informal Core Group at the outset, which then evolved over several years. This eventually resulted in the formation of the Emerald Mountain Partnership (the Partnership), a 501(c) (3) organization that included a Board of Directors with appointees from both the city of Steamboat Springs and Routt County, and a set of additional community members elected by those representatives. The Partnership also had an Advisory Council composed of non-voting parties with "a land ownership interest who would benefit from Emerald Mountain," or possessed knowledge or expertise helpful to the process.[5] The segregation of those with vested interests in the Emerald Mountain parcel into the Advisory Council disillusioned one stakeholder who had been involved with the planning process from the beginning. Rancher Jim Stanko describes how the shift left him disenfranchised: "When it comes down to actually making the decision, or coming up with something, I don't have a say in it."[6] Perhaps the decision to distinguish between the two classes of stakeholders was necessary to maintain credibility, as was legally advised; however, it is unclear whether that benefit outweighed the cost of losing the participation and endorsement of such a critical stakeholder. Also, as mentioned above, Routt County representation in the Partnership eroded over time, leaving an organization comprised only of Steamboat Springs residents. This narrowing of stakeholder representation fueled the controversy and opposition that erupted when the Partnership proposed a land exchange, which benefited the City at the cost of other areas in Routt County.

Beneficiary Involvement

Trust beneficiaries receive revenue from state trust land activities and therefore have an interest in trust land management decisions. Whether beneficiaries are formally organized and how they are involved in state trust land agency decisions varies from state to state. For example, in many states, beneficiaries organize via the Children's Land Alliance Supporting Schools (CLASS), a group that actively engages state trust land agencies regarding land management. In states like Arizona, however, beneficiaries are not formally organized. Trust beneficiaries were involved in the eight cases of collaborative planning in a variety of ways (Table 12-3).

Table 12-3: Beneficiary Involvement

CASE	Group participant	Consulted/ informed of group's progress, but not at the table	Not involved
Castle Valley Planning Process		✓	
Elliott State Forest Planning Process	✓		
Emerald Mountain Planning Process			✓
Houghton Area Master Plan Process			✓
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	✓		
Mesa del Sol Planning Process	✓		
Southeast New Mexico Working Group			✓
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process			✓

In three cases, representatives from beneficiary groups were directly involved in the collaborative group. The Steering Committee in the Elliott State Forest Planning Process did not originally include a beneficiary representative. However, three years into the planning process the Oregon Department of State Lands decided to bring a beneficiary representative into the Steering Committee to share their perspective. This move to include beneficiaries in the Elliott State Forest decision-making process was part of a state-wide movement in which the beneficiaries are becoming increasingly active in Common School Land management. While beneficiaries were not involved directly in the Castle Valley Planning Process, the Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) Director and staff met regularly with Margaret Bird, the Beneficiary Representative for the Utah State Office of Education and one of the directors of the Children's Land Alliance Supporting Schools (CLASS).[7] This close contact helped ensure that SITLA honored the beneficiaries' interests throughout the planning process.

There are different perceptions of how beneficiary involvement in collaborative planning efforts affected the outcome. For example, Chuck Bennett, Director of Government Relations for the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, a state-wide beneficiary lobbying group, mentioned the importance of "literally showing up at the meeting where the discussion is occurring … We have gotten more money because we have gotten more involved."[8] In the Mesa del Sol Planning Process, the beneficiary, the University of New Mexico, became involved when they sued the state over an auction they believed to have sold state trust land for below market values. The University's lawsuit spurred close collaboration with the state, resulting in a revenue-maximizing development plan sensitive to community interests.

In four cases, the beneficiary was not involved, which also affected the outcome of the process in a variety of ways. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, for example, the Advisory Committee explicitly voted to exclude the beneficiary from the process. Some parties felt that the beneficiary's interests already were represented on the Committee because the group included the former superintendent of Flathead County schools, as well as the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC). However, some people argued otherwise. In the end, beneficiary representatives spoke out against the Neighborhood Plan and requested that the State Land Board not approve it, believing the Plan may not generate the necessary revenue to satisfy the DNRC's fiduciary responsibility. Though the State Land Board approved the Plan, it appears that active beneficiary involvement may have helped avoid the suspicions and discontent that arose when the beneficiary was excluded.

Sometimes the beneficiary may not be directly involved in the planning process but can still influence the outcome. For example, in the Castle Valley Planning Process, the beneficiary did not actively participate, but nevertheless influenced the trust land agency's position and actions through conversations outside the formal process. Additionally, in some states like Arizona, there are instances where there is no organized beneficiary group to get involved in the process. However, in the case of the Houghton Area Master Plan Process, this did not appear to have a deleterious effect on the potential revenue for the beneficiaries.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency fosters trust and positive relationships among group members, and in some cases figured prominently in the success of a collaborative process. Increasing access to information for outside parties, the public and between group members promotes transparency. Transparency can also be built into the structure of a process. For example, the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process incorporated a ground rule that permitted dissenting voices to draft a report detailing their opposition to a proposed decision. This strategy encouraged consensus on all decisions and made it explicitly known why a party or parties disagreed with the majority.

The eight cases of collaborative planning explored in this report varied as to how transparent they were (Table 12-4). The level of transparency in each of the cases was evaluated using the following definitions:

- **Low:** Little information was shared among group participants. It was difficult or even impossible for the public to obtain information on the process. It was not unusual for actions to be taken without the entire group's knowledge.

- **Medium:** Most information was shared among group participants. Some effort was made to ensure public access to group information. Some actions may have been taken without the entire group's knowledge.

- **High:** All or nearly all information was shared among group participants. Public access to group information was not a problem or was even encouraged. The group rarely, if

ever, encountered problems with actions being taken without the entire group's knowledge.

Table 12-4: Level of Transparency

CASE	Level of Transparency
Castle Valley Planning Process	Medium –
Elliott State Forest Planning Process	Inside = High; Outside = Medium
Emerald Mountain Planning Process	High
Houghton Area Master Plan Process	Medium
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	High
Mesa del Sol Planning Process	Medium +
Southeast New Mexico Working Group	Medium +
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process	Medium

The variation in the degree of transparency in the processes is evidenced by the contrast between the Castle Valley Planning Process and the Emerald Mountain Planning Process. For the Castle Valley Planning Process, the level of transparency varied over the course of the project. While members of the Castle Rock Collaboration (CRC) tended to share information freely, the decision-making processes of participating organization such as the town of Castle Valley's Planning and Zoning Commission were not always clear to other members of the group. Also, the CRC minimally shared information and progress with the Castle Valley community, which contributed to the disintegration of the planning process as it continued. In contrast, the Emerald Mountain Planning Process was highly transparent. To inform and include the public, the Emerald Mountain Partnership (the Partnership) advertised meetings in the paper, posted agendas, minutes, documents and plans on their website and allowed the public to attend and participate in all meetings. The Partnership also held public meetings in Steamboat Springs and several other towns in the county, joined by the State Land Board (SLB) and eventually the Bureau of Land Management, to gather input and share ideas, educate people about the land exchange and solicit public comment. The process was also highly transparent among the different and organizations and individuals involved. Between the Partnership and the SLB, former Director Charles Bedford described the process as "a constant stream of communication."[9]

Availability of Information

Making information available to the public can alleviate feelings of mistrust. When outside groups and the general public enjoyed a high level of access to the collaborative process, less public scrutiny and controversy were evident. Groups accomplished public involvement through a variety of methods (Table 12-5). For example, opening meetings to the public can enable the public to understand how and why decisions were made. The Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process allowed the public and media to attend committee meetings, resulting in several press articles and a high sense of transparency.

Table 12-5: Methods for Involving Parties Outside the Process

CASE	Info open to public	Public comment welcomed	Meetings open to public/ media	Newsletters / websites/ other media	Tours of planning area	Open houses/ Townhall meetings
Castle Valley Planning Process		✓	✓ (some meetings, not all)	✓		✓
Elliott State Forest Planning Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emerald Mountain Planning Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Houghton Area Master Plan Process	✓	✓				
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process		✓	✓		✓	✓
Mesa del Sol Planning Process	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Southeast New Mexico Working Group			✓ (some meetings, not all)			✓
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Five of the eight cases distributed information via newsletters, the Internet, or other public information outlets. Because the Castle Valley Planning Process group struggled with making its activities known to the general public, one resident published information in a local newspaper column, the Moab *Times-Independent*, entitled "The Castle Valley Comments." This method of sharing information helped residents not involved in the process to better understand what was happening.

Without a formal working group, the Mesa del Sol Planning Process relied heavily on a series of informal collaborative strategies. These strategies included an "open-door" policy instituted by Commissioner Ray Powell, permitting the public to come to the New Mexico State Land Office (SLO) and ask questions at any time. The SLO also attended many neighborhood meetings to promote and explain Mesa del Sol. These strategies were successful in overcoming a widespread negative attitude in Albuquerque surrounding the Mesa del Sol project.

By touring areas under study, facilitators helped the public build a connection to the land. In five cases, the public was invited to tour the affected state trust lands. In the Elliott State Forest Planning Process, the Oregon Department of Forestry led several tours of rare species habitat for members of the Steering Committee and public. This trip allowed the Steering Committee and others to make a visual connection between the planning process and the land. Likewise, members of the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process took periodic walks of the planning sites, which appeared to increase group awareness of the issues affecting the land.

Insufficient transparency can sometimes cause problems, which can require restructuring a process. For example, the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process originally did not include an Advisory Committee. Instead, the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) initiated a series of public meetings and smaller focus groups to obtain public input. Consequently, while the DNRC solicited the public's feedback on the neighborhood plan, decision making took place essentially behind closed doors. This approach upset Whitefish community members who petitioned the Montana State Board of Land Commissioners to create a more transparent process. The result of their efforts was a chartered Advisory Committee that gave the community and other stakeholders a formal seat at the table and thereby ensured that they would be involved in decision making.

Sharing Information Within the Group

Making information available to each member of the process by sharing scientific data, distributing meetings notes and being forthright with agreements and alliances can foster trust within a collaborative group. Though all eight cases made efforts to openly share information within the group, processes suffered when this rule was not followed. This disregard resulted in strained relationships and spurred the formation of coalitions within the larger group, resulting in varying degrees of mistrust. In the Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process, for example, several Advisory Committee members formed an outside "shadow group" that met and made important decisions outside of the Advisory Committee. This faction created mistrust throughout the process and impaired progress.

On the flip side, effective internal group transparency can foster better relationships and enable progress. The Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process Committee instituted a "No Surprises" rule prohibiting the release of information to the media before it was shared among all group members. The Committee also shared meeting minutes and other informational material among its members. These practices were aimed at ensuring that Committee members learned of information and decisions together at the table rather than indirectly through the press. This high level of communication within the Committee helped build trust among its members. As one

participant noted, "There was more mutual understanding, respect and to some degree trust" after the planning process.[10]

SHARED INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING

Collaborative processes take a different approach to decision making than traditional, top-down approaches in that they assume a certain amount of joint decision making.[11] This decision-making power describes a party's ability to influence the final decision on an issue. It is important to clarify that the term "decision-making power" is different from "decision-making authority," or the ability to make the final decision. State trust land agencies cannot, nor should they abdicate their decision-making authority to outside parties. However, other parties can have a chance to influence decision making to create mutually satisfactory outcomes.

The eight cases of collaborative planning explored in this report had varying degrees of influence on decision making (Table 12-6). This influence could affect decisions within the group as well as outside policy and implementation of management strategies. The degree of influence on decision making in each of the cases was evaluated using the following definitions:

- **Low:** Decision-making influence was concentrated among one or few parties. The working group as a whole felt it had little or no influence on decision making.

- **Medium:** Decision-making influence was shared to an extent, but was still somewhat concentrated. Some in the working group felt they did not have adequate influence on decision making.

- **High:** Decision-making influence was shared to the maximum amount possible. The working group felt it had adequate influence on decision making.

Table 12-6: Influence on Decision Making

CASE	Shared Influence on Decision-Making
Castle Valley Planning Process	Medium +
Elliott State Forest Planning Process	Low (Decision-making influence was diffused)
Emerald Mountain Planning Process	Medium
Houghton Area Master Plan Process	Medium
Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process	Medium
Mesa del Sol Planning Process	High
Southeast New Mexico Working Group	Medium +
Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process	High

The Whitefish Neighborhood Planning Process's Advisory Committee had a large amount of influence on decision making. Members of the Committee shared decision-making power with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation in crafting the Whitefish Area Neighborhood Plan, since both were participants at the table. This plan, which defines future uses for area trust lands and provides a framework for reviewing and evaluating future land use

proposals, has been approved by the Montana State Board of Land Commissioners, city of Whitefish and Flathead County. In contrast, the Elliott State Forest Planning Process afforded the Steering Committee and Core Planning Team members with a low level of decision-making influence. Due to the fact that multiple agencies were at the table and working within the confines of the federal Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) process, the Planning Process had to occur within a highly bureaucratic environment. Both plans had to be approved by separate Boards and the HCP had to also be signed off on by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. As the plan moved through these multiple rounds of consideration, the Committee had to work within an increasingly restricted space and ultimately had a diffused degree of influence on the decision-making process.

Influence on Group Decision Making

Seven of the eight cases were rated to have a medium or better level of shared influence on decision making within the collaborative group. This degree of influence was most often accomplished by establishing a set of rules or guidelines to ensure that most or all parties had an adequate say in decision making. State trust land agencies did not give up their ultimate decision-making authority, but rather allowed management strategies to be shaped by participant input.

One method to promote shared decision making within a collaborative group was a consensus rule. For example, for its final conservation plan, the Southeast New Mexico Working Group conducted decision making with a simple "thumbs up or down" approach. One "thumbs down" could block the process, a rule that gave all parties a significant amount of influence on the final decision.

Shared influence on decision making was also possible without a formal working group. In the Mesa del Sol Planning Process the New Mexico State Land Office met with the community to listen to concerned parties and made honest attempts to incorporate their suggestions where feasible. As a result of this informal collaborative strategy, several community-suggested design elements were incorporated into the final development plan, including a large open space buffer adjacent Sandia National Laboratories, water wells located away from the Isleta Pueblo and new urbanism design. By and large, this approach was successful in creating an atmosphere where most parties felt they had adequate opportunity to influence the development plan.

Influence on Agency Decision Making and Implementation

Collaborative processes can also impact agency management policy decisions. While agencies must retain decision-making authority, other parties can be given power to influence policy choices to all parties' satisfaction. How the parties are able to influence the process is also dependent on how agencies participate. In seven of the eight cases the collaborative groups played an advisory role for the state trust land agencies. The Southeast New Mexico Working Group was the exception because the State Land Office (SLO) was a participant in a process convened to solicit options for a Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plan Amendment Process. However, the SLO was not bound by the decisions made in the Working Group but rather worked to create broader land management strategies and better coordination

among agencies at the table. The Working Group approved its final conservation plan and is hopeful for its successful implementation.

Unclear or misinterpreted levels of influence on decision making can be problematic in collaborative processes. In such cases, interactions became tense and participants felt confused and frustrated about their roles in the process. This dynamic required additional time spent addressing these issues and sometimes negatively affected relationships among participants. For example, in the Lake Whatcom Landscape Planning Process there was disagreement between the Lake Whatcom Interjurisdictional Committee and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) over how the Committee's decision-making authority should be interpreted from the legislation requiring the collaborative effort. The issue centered over whether the DNR was a member of the Committee and thus shared decision-making authority among all participants, or whether the Committee was advisory to the DNR. After prolonged disagreement on the interpretation, the group asked for an official interpretation of the Committee's decision-making authority from the Washington Attorney General's Office. In officially clarifying the Committee's decision-making authority, the Attorney General's Office decided that the Committee was advisory to the DNR.[12] Until this decision was made a year and a half into the process, the group's progress had been considerably slowed.

The Houghton Area Master Plan (HAMP) Process highlights a slightly different aspect of the importance of having decision-making authority clearly defined in a collaborative process. It was clear that the Citizens Review Committee (CRC) for the HAMP and the City of Tucson were working in an advisory capacity to the Arizona State Land Department. However, some members of the CRC felt unclear as to how their suggestions on the HAMP were influencing the city's final decisions on the plan.[13] This lack of clear communication, and some participants' perceptions that their input was not influencing the final product, led to attrition within the Committee.

IMPACT OF THE DEGREE OF COLLABORATION ON THE PROCESS

While several of the cases in this report exhibit a high level of breadth of stakeholders, transparency or influence on decision making, none of them ranked consistently "high" in all of these areas. Similarly, no case was rated as "low" for all elements. As the three elements of collaboration define a multi-faceted collaborative "space," each case in this report occupied a different region of this space. Thus, directly ranking or comparing processes as a whole is not possible. For instance, while the Emerald Mountain Partnership did not have a particularly broad stakeholder membership in relation to the scope of the issues it addressed, the Emerald Mountain Partnership had a medium degree of influence on decision making and the planning process was highly transparent. Many other collaborative efforts, such as the Elliott State Forest Planning Process, had broader stakeholder representation but less influence on decision making. The Elliott State Forest Planning Process further differed from other processes in its distinction between the high degree of transparency among group members and the low degree of transparency for those outside the group. Therefore, each case illuminates different elements of collaboration through the diverse and dynamic nature of these processes. Overall, as is evidenced

in later chapters, the three characteristics of collaboration shape the successes and obstacles groups faced throughout the process.

Endnotes

[1] Barbara Gray, "Conditions Facilitating Interorganizational Collaboration," *Human Relations* 38 (1985): 912.

[2] S. Selin and D. Chavez, "Developing a Collaborative Model for Environmental Planning and Management," *Environmental Management* 19(2) (1995): 190.

[3] Bruce Keeler (Mayor, Town of Castle Valley), interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Eirin Krane, August 18, 2005, Castle Valley Community Center, Castle Valley, UT.

[4] Marshall Friedman, interview by Jessica Mitchell and Lisa Spalding, August 18, 2005, Great Northern Bar and Grill, Whitefish, MT.

[5] Ben Beall (Chairman, Emerald Mountain Partnership), interview by Lisa Spalding and Matt Stout, August 2, 2005, Steamboat Springs, CO.

[6] Jim Stanko (Rancher), interview by Lisa Spalding and Matt Stout, August 3, 2005, Steamboat Springs, CO.

[7] Margaret Bird (Beneficiary Representative, State of Utah Office of Education), interview by Stephanie Bertaina and Eirin Krane, August 15, 2005, State of Utah Office of Education, Salt Lake City, UT.

[8] Chuck Bennett (Director of Government Relations, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators), interview by Eirin Krane and Drew Vankat, August 22, 2005, State Capitol Building, Salem, OR.

[9] Charles Bedford (former Director, Colorado State Land Board), interview by Lisa Spalding and Matt Stout, July 26, 2005, Great Divide Lodge, Breckenridge, CO.

[10] William Wallace (Northwest Regional Manager, Washington State Department of Natural Resources), interview by Alden Boetsch and Matt Stout, August 9, 2005, DNR, Sedro-Woolley, WA.

[11] Selin and Chavez, 189-95.

[12] Wash. Op. Att'y Gen., January 18, 2002.

[13] Linda Morales (Principal, The Planning Center), interview by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 3, 2005, Tucson, AZ; Ken Abrahams (Executive Vice President, Diamond Ventures) interview by Alden Boetsch and Jessica Mitchell, August 5, 2005, Tucson, AZ.