

CHAPTER 17: ENSURING REPRESENTATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Overview

The issue of representation---or who is at the table---is one of the first consequential issues that a collaborative group must address. It is the question of who comprises a collaborative partnership and the factors that a group must consider and weigh when developing representative structure. Indeed, there are inevitable trade-offs that groups must make: such as whether to involve more versus less stakeholders; at what level (individuals or organizations); or if the process will be open or limited. In turn, these choices affect the group's reach, credibility and ability to work in a productive and efficient manner.

Given wide variation in objective, issue focus, geographic location, community culture, and organizational structure among collaborative partnerships there is, not surprisingly, no magical formula for achieving perfect representation nor a single representation template that can be applied to all groups. As environmentalist Felice Pace of the Scott River Coordinated Resource Management plan states, "You just have to muddle though [the representation issue]. You can never guarantee it will be perfect. I only suggest that the bottom line be that the door be left open for democracy to function. And that should be both ways --- if someone wants to walk out, they should be allowed to do so as well." Indeed, we found that the groups we studied recognized and struggled with the issue of representation, asking similar questions of themselves and weighing the advantages and the disadvantages of different approaches to their objective. Ron Cunningham of the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch Coordinated Resource Management Group notes, "We need to remember that dealing with representation is different in every situation. There is no cookbook for it. There are no two ranches alike, no two families alike, and no two communities alike. You kind of have to feel your way as you go." Additionally, the representative composition of groups tended to vary over time as the groups learned, gained credibility, and their issues and objectives evolved. John Allen of the McKenzie Watershed Council observes, "Over time there's been continual concern over [having] the right people at the table. But you have to remember that representation is an evolutionary thing...over time, as issues mature and change, you realize that somebody should be there that is not. Some partners have dropped out completely because they realized their stakes weren't that large. It should be an expected and dynamic process that representation will change over time, and we've got to work with that."

Summary of Core Findings

The following is a summary of the core issues and strategies case study groups encountered when developing their own representational structure, as well as advice they offered to others considering similar issues.

Core Issues and Strategies

1. Identifying stakeholders

Groups struggled with how to identify stakeholders among multiple groups of similar interest, dual roles, and variation in commitment and ability to work together.

Strategies

- Sought out community leaders
- Had groups choose among themselves
- Held public workshops to explain and disseminate information, consequently attracting participants

2. Balancing strength of representation

Groups worked to determine sufficient levels of representation for all interests, so that one group or interest did not dominate the process.

Strategies

- Active recruitment
- Targeted and defined goals to narrow stakeholder concerns
- Formal representation

3. Improving access to the process

Groups grappled with altering the structure, timing and form of partnerships to help participants engage more fully in the collaborative process.

Strategies

- Developed flexible meeting structures
- Used working groups
- Paid attention to convenience (meals, meeting locations)

4. Overcoming distrust

Groups strove to overcome distrust among agencies, environmental groups, landowners and citizens. This distrust affected the willingness of some individuals to participate in collaborative processes.

Strategies

- Used a facilitator
- Adjusted the agency role
- Engaged in relationship-building activities

Advice

- **Maintain an open process**
Keeping partnerships open to all interested parties is imperative to the integrity of the collaborative process.
- **Realize that perfect representation is ideal but not always possible**
Groups should aim to maximize sufficient representation but also realize that cultural and resource restriction can limit representation goals.
- **Involve capable and committed individuals**
Involving those individuals with the necessary skills and capability to participate in collaborative processes is imperative to the functionality of a group.
- **Realize that representation is a dynamic and evolutionary process**
Understand that the issue of representation in collaborative groups is not static, but rather will change in accordance with evolving group objectives and stakeholder concerns.

II. CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

1. Identifying stakeholders

Challenges

All groups struggled with the process of identifying stakeholders when confronted with challenges of:

- Choosing among multiple representatives of a single interest;
- Separating dual roles and responsibilities of participants; and
- Finding capable and committed people to work together

Choosing among multiple interests

Choosing a representative among multiple interests was a challenge among most groups. In the case of McKenzie Watershed Council, for example, former member and landowner George Grier describes the challenge of having too many groups representing one interest: "It's hard to find someone who has enough support from all the local organizations that also have different missions. There are over 100 resident associations and many factional interests, so it's impossible for the council to provide seats for all of them." Coordinator John Runyon adds, "[Getting one person to represent a constituency] sounds good in theory, but doesn't always work in practice. It's a fine line between working on a representation basis and opening it up to a broader range of folks and bringing them in."

Similarly, the Clark County Habitat Conservation Planning process (HCP) initially grappled with choosing among multiple off-road vehicle user groups to be on its Steering Committee. Mark Trinko comments that it was at times "impossible" to make fine distinctions between more radical albeit similar recreational interest groups. Indeed, the same held true for

environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, who have resisted joining collaborative processes for fear of losing their identity through association with other environmental organizations.

Separating dual roles

Separating dual roles was also a challenge to identifying stakeholders. This was particularly evident in the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council (NW CO RAC). As representative of The Nature Conservancy Geoff Blakeslee states, "I am in the environmental category in terms of my job but I am also involved in the cattle industry." National Wildlife Federation representative Cathie Zarlingo voices similar concern: "If there is anything I would look into changing, it's making environmental and conservation concerns more separate. In fact, I think they can be very different. An environmental group may look at me and say, 'well, she is not really representing our constituents,' and that is probably true." Sierra Club member Clee Sealing, who attends RAC meetings complains that this confusion further jades the representative selection process: "Our coordinator is choosing representatives for the RAC who are elected officials and also own ranches. In fact, he owns a cattle operation and BLM decisions impact his land tremendously." In the same vein, several participants in the McKenzie Watershed Council mentioned 'wearing more than one hat,' with both organizational and personal interests fundamentally intertwined. Tony Cheng, a doctoral student studying the McKenzie, captures the strain involved in separating categories of stakeholders or interests: "It eats up so much of people's energy to discuss who you represent, what hat you wear, what you are and are not allowed to say and do, as if your interests are divisible."

Finding capable and committed individuals

Finally, finding the few individuals with the right skills for working in collaborative environments made identifying stakeholders challenging. Ann Schrieber, a local miner participating in the Clark County HCP process remarks, "It's really the people on this thing that have made it work. It could be a totally different ball game if we didn't have the folks we have that are able to work with each other." Sari Sommarstrom, former coordinator of the Scott River CRMP agrees: "You have to have people on these groups willing to work in the consensus process...and it's not always easy to find them." George Grier of the McKenzie Watershed Council adds: "It's tough to find someone who's militant enough to not take any guff but still centered enough to keep their cool. [Participants] need to be able to establish a trusting relationship with the farmers---in other words, those people who see your organization as trying to undermine six generations of [their way of life]."

Strategies

Strategies used among groups to help identify stakeholders were:

- Representative self-selection; and
- Considering individuals, not just interest groups

Representative self-selection

Self-selection refers to multiple groups of similar interests choosing an individual to voice their concerns as a whole. In the case of the Clark County Habitat Conservation Planning process, representative self-selection was used to help identify a representative for many off-road vehicle stakeholder groups. Bureau of Land Management representative Sid Sloan recalls Clark County officials going directly to interest group leaders and requesting them to identify suitable representatives: "Given western culture here, folks operate better over a cup of coffee and a personal invitation than they do with a formal letter...so we went out there, met with the groups, and had them make the decision on their own." Jim Moore, The Nature Conservancy representative of the same group further elaborates: "It's imperative that you contact folks with standing in those communities and really pick their brains like we did. Then get them to choose among themselves in terms of who they would like to participate. Otherwise, you get too many bodies at the table."

Considering individuals, not just interests

Many groups also directly sought participation of community leaders. In the case of The McKenzie Watershed Council, the group requested participation of individual community leaders who they felt could work effectively and collaboratively in the group. According to former environmental representative Louise Solliday, "There was a real effort to find individuals who were respected in the broader stakeholder arena and who represent a broader community than just their own organization."

2. Balancing Strength of Representation

Nine case studies cited balancing strength of representation of stakeholder groups as a challenge to ensuring representation. In particular, participants noted the importance of greater involvement on the part of citizens, landowners, and environmentalists while others felt it was important to clearly define and, in some cases, limit the role of agencies. It should be mentioned that the role of agencies was of particular concern among participants in our research in part because of the strong government role in three cases: namely, the Clark County Habitat Conservation Planning process, Three-Quarter Coordinated Resource Management Group, and the NW CO RAC.

Challenges

Involving Environmentalists

The presence of environmentalists at the table was considered vitally important yet not as strong as most participants would have liked. This was attributed in part to the limited time and financial resources available to environmental organizations to be part of the growing number of collaborative efforts across the country. Indeed, some participants felt that environmental groups were, in general, focused more on crisis issues and could not afford to be a part of time-consuming collaborative groups. In the case of Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, for example, ranch owner Tony Malmberg has been unable to bring environmental organizations to the table despite consistent effort: "I've asked environmental groups to participate many times," Malmberg recalls "but they always say no thanks, pat me on the back, and tell me I'm doing a great job." Similarly, Jack Terry of the Owl Mountain Partnership states, "We tried to get [environmentalists] to come that should be there. We had no problems with livestock and business interests, but we sure had one hell of a time getting anyone to step forward from the environmental community." Greg Sherman an environmental representative in the Owl Mountain Partnership believes large environmental organizations perceive the cost of participation as "an unwise use of funds when objectives may be compromised [in a collaborative process]." Finally, George Grier, formerly a member of the McKenzie Watershed describes the absence of environmental representation in collaborative groups: "There is a general perception, right or wrong, that if you're an environmental organization, collaboration is a dirty word and you need to be out there being more of an activist, putting out fires and taking no prisoners."

Increasing Citizen and Landowner Participation

Participants also noted the need to maximize citizen and landowner participation in their collaborative processes. In the Darby Partnership, for example, coordinator Teri Devlin recognized the trade-offs involved in giving participation a backseat to accomplishing group objectives: "[The group's] greatest need now is to become more citizen-based. The landowners kind of got put over on the side [of the process] because we were just steam-rolling our way to getting things done. Now as soon as you have funding or resources removed from those involved agencies, what have we got? What I think Darby [Partnership] can show is that if you don't start with citizen-based involvement, down the road you may end up with nothing [after agencies leave the process]." Similarly, the McKenzie Watershed Council is concerned with balancing representation of landowners in its process. As landowner George Grier of the McKenzie Watershed Council notes, "If the mix [of our participants] is deficient in any way, it's deficient by not having enough private landowners or folks who aren't agency reps or elected officials. For now, we are perceived as a Eugene group coming [up river] to dominate the lives of landowners, [and that could really limit our effectiveness]."

Finally, the Owl Mountain Partnership exemplifies the need to increase participation of citizen and city government officials in its process. Dennis Hall, a representative from the Ohio State Extension Office notes, "Increasingly, [these individuals] are important [to our collaborative process] and I do not think we have done the job there in terms of bringing that

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perspective in. Only in hindsight do our participants recognize the fact that the partnership has not worked as hard as it should to get [these] missing factions involved."

Managing agency roles

The need to manage agency involvement was prevalent in a number of studies. While agency openness to collaboration brought useful technical input to a number of collaborative partnerships, participants expressed concern that their role could become dominant. Group issue focus and amount of public land involved and were key factors determining the level of agency participation. In the case of Three-Quarters Ranch CRM---located on a 33,000 acres mix of public and private property---Jim Wiles notes "the large size and cattle-grazing focus of [the CRM] lends itself to a high level of agency participation." Moreover," he adds, "agency interests tend to dovetail in terms of goals and interests, which can augment their presence on particular issues like wildlife protection or grazing rights." Similarly, off-highway vehicle representative Mark Trinko in the Clark County HCP process felt "heavily outnumbered" by the number of agencies involved in tortoise protection on public lands. "Sometimes I'd look around the round the room and see forty of them and only one or two of us [ORV user group representatives]," Trinko recounts. "That can be damn intimidating."

Finally, economic concerns on public land played a role in bringing agencies to the table. In Scott River Valley CRMP, for example, farmers and local land conservation agencies combined to maximize the number of participants they could bring to the process when they sensed the possibility of influencing outcomes. As Sari Sommarstrom remarks, "they thought that by loading the process with representatives, they could somehow alter [the process]."

Evolution of membership

Lastly, dealing with changing membership was a factor two groups dealt with. In contrast to the common view of membership as static in some of the literature on collaboration, coordinator John Runyon of the McKenzie Watershed Council describes the process of maintaining group participation as an evolving factor: "Over time there's been continual concern over [having] the right people at the table. I think [participation] is an evolutionary thing...over time as issues mature and change, you realize that somebody should be there that's not. Some partners have dropped out completely because they realized their stakes weren't that large. It should be expected that representation is a dynamic process and will change over time."

Likewise, analysis of the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM showed how the structure of public land agency representation can influence turnover in the collaborative process. Because resource agency personnel undergo regional rotations, a representative may form a working relationship with a group, only to be assigned to another area some months later. As Tony Malmberg of the CRM remarks, this factor is a "representation wildcard that can make or break a group, particularly in a small community where there are few folks to work with and tight relationships."

Finally, keeping part-time summer residents up to date and involved in collaborative partnerships, particularly in rural areas, is a mounting task that a number of groups felt was important. As Animas Stakeholder Group member and EPA representative Carol Russell summarizes, "These members go away for six months, come back, and are anxiety ridden over the sweeping changes that the group has made without knowing the full context of those decisions." "Moreover, she adds, "when they are away, they do not keep up with the group."

Strategies

Active recruitment

In order to balance representation, a number of groups used active recruitment to bring needed skills and interests to the table. This strategy is best illustrated by the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, the Clark County HCP process, and the Nanticoke Partnership. In the case of Nanticoke, Executive Director Lisa Jo Frech describes the basis of this approach. "I never let myself think for one minute that absolutely everyone is at the table because there are always new organizations and businesses sprouting up---There is always someone who should be there who is not on your list." Similarly, in the Clark County HCP process, a specific effort was made by the Clark County government to hold rural community public information sessions to solicit community interest. In addition, meetings were kept open to all interests to encourage representation. Facilitator Paul Seltzer notes "our meetings have always been public and advertised and anyone who bellied up to the bar can say whatever they wanted."

Perhaps most effective among interviewees was the one-on-one effort of coordinators. Tony Malmberg, coordinator of the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM exemplifies this best by identifying needed expertise or constituent interests and continually seeking to broaden involvement through personal invitations to potential participants over a cup of coffee.

Targeting goals / defining expectations

Targeting group goals and defining the expectations and parameters of concern for groups also helped bring the right stakeholders to the table. Mark Zankel of Nanticoke notes that by building his group's efforts on tangible projects, people were attracted to the group by its success. He states, "Having a clear agenda that defines what kind of commitment you want from people is helpful. Everyone [in the resource management field] is so busy that, if you're asked to get involved in something, it's important to know what you are going to get out of it. [Also], success really sells. So accomplish things and show people what you have done. People are often initially hesitant to get involved but once they see something up and running they do not want to miss the boat or be out of the loop." Jim Wiles, a partner and ranch owner in the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch also felt focusing the group's activities on specific goals helped tremendously: "We spent the first year of meetings on our goals without taking any action. [That's] particularly important with landowner initiated processes like CRM, in which you need to map out where you're going from the beginning. Otherwise, these [collaborative efforts] end up all over the show with everyone under the sun involved." The Scott River CRMP took similar action. According to former-coordinator Sari Sommarstrom, "it took three years to formulate our first steps and get everyone up to speed," time she feels

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helped strengthen awareness and involvement that were also critical to broadening representation.

Formal representation

Formal representation was used by two groups to manage multiple stakeholders and improve their opportunity to be heard in the process. In the case of McKenzie Watershed Council, a "representational strategy" was used such that each member represented a larger constituency. According to former environmental representative Louise Solliday, "There was a recognition that the table would otherwise get so big that you can't get anything done." In the words of George Grier, this also "prevented over-representation of a particular interest at the table."

In the Clark County HCP process, a formal legal representative was hired to represent rural concerns. According to participants, this decision helped tremendously to alleviate fears on the part of rural constituents. As local miner Ann Schrieber recalls, "we felt we would have otherwise been taken advantage of because we didn't always understand the technical language [used on the Steering Committee]. Having a legal representative changed all that."

3. Access to Process

Access to partnerships in our cases was influenced by how the process was organized. In particular, frequency, timing, and location of meetings posed specific challenges to participants facing limited time and financial resources.

Challenges

Meeting structure

Meeting times and length were key factors that many groups struggled with to make participation more convenient for participants. In the Clark County HCP process, nine-hour meetings made ensuring representation a constant challenge. Rural participants, in particular, drove 140 miles round-trip to attend meetings. Rural representative Ann Schrieber noted that this inconvenience resulted in low representation in the process from surrounding rural communities.

Financial resources

Whether or not participants were paid to take part in collaborative processes also created a challenge to participation. For example, Mark Trinko of the Clark County HCP process commented that he had to give up a full day's work to attend meetings. Likewise, in the Animas Stakeholder Group, environmentalist Mike Black vented that "it really ticked [him] off" that he was "one of the only people not getting paid." Outfitter Jim Allen of the Three-Quarter Ranch CRM explains that agencies encourage being part of CRM processes but attributes this in part to the fact that they are receiving salaries to participate: "I look around

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the room and all I see are paychecks....Paycheck, paycheck, paycheck! And when it comes to the rest of us there are none. Not only is that discouraging, I think it also limits whether agencies are willing to take the risks needed to explore innovative strategies since they don't have to put as much on the line. Commitment of time and energy required for these things is not going to work out in the long run without providing those resources."

Cultural barriers

Finally, the culture of a community can limit access. As Bob Lanka, a former Wyoming Department of Fish and Wildlife representative on the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM remarks, "while the CRMs I've been involved in have been useful, in the setting of ranch life there has to be some careful calculation between idealizing the [collaborative] process and the realities of time required to make a living as a rancher."

Strategies

In response to issues of access to collaborative partnerships, efforts were made by a number of groups to make meetings more convenient for the general public by:

- Keeping the process flexible;
- Alternating meeting structure; and
- Improving convenience

Flexible structure

Adjusting the structure of meetings was used by a number of groups to increase participation. In the case of Animas River Stakeholder Group, coordinator Bill Simon claims their "loose structure" has fostered a higher and more consistent level of involvement because [participants] feel that [they] can jump in at anytime. Mining representative Larry Perino further points out that "This has resulted in a slower process, but it has been well worth it." Similarly, the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch has shaped its bi-annual meeting structure around the calving and wintering season of local ranchers in order to ensure convenience for ranchers.

Use of working groups

Breaking larger collaborative groups into smaller units in order to improve access to citizens is another strategy used to improve access. In the Animas River Valley, for example, a Library Series was developed in an effort to form a friendly and non-intimidating forum to educate locals, out-of-town lay people and part-time residents coming and going from the process about the latest activities of the group. Discussion centers on current issues of the collaborative group and served to clarify information without having to be present at the more formal and sometimes contentious regular meetings. As facilitator Bill Simon points out, "The thought was and still is that people may be very interested but not want to participate in the political debate that stakeholder meetings encourage." For convenience, meetings are also scheduled during the summer and right before regular meetings so participants could stay or go if they as they wished. Similarly, the Clark County HCP process and Scott River CRMP also use less formal working groups to address specific issues.

Meal provision

In a number of groups, providing meals at either regular meetings or social events was considered critical to improving access and participation in the process. In the Clark County HCP for example, ample funding allowed Clark County government to provide meals at meetings. According to Mark Trinko, "not having to leave the table for a meal or pay for them made huge difference in our attitudes towards the amount of time discussions required, and it gave us a crucial social experience as well."

Taking turns

Finally, creating rules for allowing all to speak at meetings was a basic strategy that enhanced access. In the case of McKenzie Watershed Group, a 'round-robin' approach was used at meetings to go around the room giving everyone equal designated time and opportunity to speak their mind about the issue at hand. Similarly, with the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, the group chairperson is rotated on a regular basis depending on the knowledge of the individual and the current focus of the group. Coordinator Tony Malmberg notes that this allows everyone equal opportunity to take on leadership as well as understand the requirements of what it takes to make the CRM process work.

4. Building Trust

Groups struggled with distrust of government involvement as well as internal trust issues among partnership members in the Owl Mountain Partnership, The Animas Stakeholder Group, NW Colorado RAC, Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, and the Scott River CRMP.

Challenges

Relationship between agencies and rural participants

Groups dealt with a cultural divide between agencies and rural communities when trying to build trust. In the Owl Mountain Partnership, Stephen Porter comments that "county officials have extreme distrust for federal and state governments" whom they see as "promoters" of collaborative processes. Greg Parson, the Water Quality Control Division representative on the Animas Stakeholder Group adds that members of his group fear government entities will control the process: "[Landowners] saw a bunch of bureaucrats getting together to decide our future [in the Animas Group] so they did not see their place. The idea of a collaborative approach was distant to them. They did not feel any empowerment and, if they did show up, they felt technically overwhelmed." Jim Allen, a hunting outfitter on the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM in Wyoming feels similarly: "[Agencies] just don't have the same stakes involved as the rest of us. Moreover, I don't trust their information. It never matches up with what I see out in the field, so why should I work with them? Finally, Peter Butler, participant

in the Animas elaborates that in his group "Landowners are afraid of potential liability. Many people feel that the government has come along and created a problem."

Local / National tension

Another factor affecting trust is the tension which sometimes arose between stakeholder groups that avoided involvement in collaborative efforts for fear of compromising control of their interests. In the case of the Northwest Colorado RAC, BLM Associate Director Rich Whitley explains, " Because the governor politically appoints representatives, the composition of statewide RACs have greater potential to be influenced by politics." Indeed, RAC critic Dick Loper, notes that "Most Wyoming residents have reacted in fear that national interests will override local [concerns]...It's the main reason many [Wyoming residents] shun the RAC process. Regulations from Washington scare the hell out of us. I was involved in the Wyoming RAC until the governor stepped in and would not let us run with our decisions." He added, "I have a baseball cap with the letters *R-A-C* printed on the cap but I crossed the *Resource Advisory Council* wording out and wrote in *Ranchers Against Collaboration*."

Similarly, outfitter Jim Allen, member of the Three-Quarter Circle Ranch CRM, sees the federal government as a "900-pound gorilla that just doesn't fit in its cage back in Washington D.C." In contrast, Marty Higgenbothan, an environmental representative notes concern that "what's happening with public grazing land does not always reflect broader national concerns."

Managing strong personalities

Finally, the presence of strong personalities in groups had an acute affect on trust *between* members. In the case of Scott River CRMP, for example, an environmental representative filed an Endangered Species listing unannounced to the group. Members reacted with feelings of angst and betrayal, interpreting the behavior of the individual as 'going outside the group's process' to address personal concerns. In turn, the group cites the loss of membership including two coordinators who mentioned extreme difficulty working with this particular member. Coordinator Jeffy Marx recounts, "Trust is now at an all time low. Even the Resource Conservation District, the major link to the involvement of landowners, is threatening to pull out and start their own CRMP."

Strategies

Strategies employed to build trust within groups include:

- Use of facilitator
- Limiting agency role
- Taking time to build relationships

Facilitation

In nearly all cases, a designated facilitator or group member was used to guide the dialogue and focus of the group. In Clark County, for example, the facilitator was considered key to

preventing one interest from becoming dominant in the process as well as helping solicit the involvement of stakeholders. Comparatively, in the Scott River CRMP, a facilitator was hired to help manage internal conflict *between* group members that was causing angst and loss of participants. Though successful for two years, the Scott River group has since experienced more problems and is now considering establishing a rule to vote to remove some individuals from the group who do not abide by discussion ground rules.

Defining the agency role

Some groups limited agencies to a technical advisory role in order to quell concern that government interests would dominate the process. In the case of Scott River CRMP, for example, agencies were given a *non voting member status* in which they could be consulted for technical information but could not vote on critical issues. Likewise, in the McKenzie Watershed Council, agencies are allowed to recuse themselves, or refrain from voting, when issues arise over which they are legally responsible (It should be noted here that this measure, while useful in some cases, is not appropriate when public resources or other public interests are at stake, thereby necessitating the direct involvement of agencies in collaborative decision-making processes).

Taking time to build relationships

Finally, in the Three Quarter Circle Ranch CRM and the Scott River CRMP cases, a specific effort was made to allow time to simultaneously build trust and the flow of information that came with it. In both cases, nearly three years went by before plans were established to address their respective resource issues. Many participants regarded this purposeful time as critical to relationship building, attracting more stakeholders to the decision-making process, and building a better information base.

III. ADVICE AND REFLECTIONS

Interviewees offered five categories of advice and reflection for others about how to ensure representation. They are:

- *Maintain an open process;*
- *Realize that perfect representation is ideal but seldom reached;*
- *Involve capable and committed individuals; and*
- *Understand the dynamic and evolutionary nature of representation*

Maintain an open process

Participants in nearly all cases made specific mention of the importance of keeping the collaborative process open, both in terms of initiating a partnership as well as managing collaborative processes over the long term.

Clark County representative Chris Robinson summarized the feelings of many participants: "No matter how frustrating, you must include all stakeholders. Limiting the group because

you are worried about it being too big or having the wrong people is never good. On the other hand, controlling the way it happens [adjusting meeting structure or using a facilitator, for example] is something you can do."

In contrast, Sari Sommarstrom, former chair of the Scott River CRMP commented to the contrary of other interviewees based on her difficulty with working with particular members. "I'm not sure if [collaborative processes] can run fairly and allow adequate representation if just anyone is allowed to participate. In my experience, the difficulty of working with one obstinate member can nearly destroy an entire group."

Understand that representation is seldom perfect

Participants also felt that achieving perfect representation in collaborative processes was ideal, but difficult to do. Indeed, environmentalist Felice Pace of Scott River CRMP, saw a the issue as a process of "muddling through" with no guarantees.

Paul Selzer, facilitator of the Clark County HCP process reflected similarly that achieving [adequate and fair] representation should be the goal but acknowledged that it is seldom reached. "I liken folks participating in collaborative processes are voices in a chorus, and that chorus may never be perfect."

Ron Cunningham of the Three-Quarter Ranch CRM adds, "We need to remember that dealing with representation is different in every situation. There is no cookbook for it. There are no two ranches alike, no two families alike, and no two communities alike. You kind of have to feel your way as you go."

Involve capable and committed individuals

Involving those people in collaborative processes who have the skills and perspective to work in consensus was considered key to ensuring representation. According to Jeffy Marx, current coordinator of the Scott River CRMP, "Adequate representation in collaborative processes has everything to do with choosing the people who know how to operate in a consensus process. This means good listeners, containing violent anger, and someone who can remember what they learned in kindergarten during a heated argument."

Chris Robinson, a local government representative in the Clark County HCP process adds that, "The functionality of the group is as much a matter of having the right chemistry of individuals at the table as it was having the right rules."

Personality also makes a vital difference to the representation issue. As Mike Black, environmentalist formerly of Animas Stakeholder Group, states: "Players are important, not only in terms of who they represent but their personalities. When you're putting together a group you should stress that you want people who are willing to work towards solutions. Obviously, you want people with opinions, strong opinions, but you want people who are willing to listen and be flexible."

Finally, Bill Simon, a former facilitator also in the Animas Stakeholder Group emphasizes that the coordinator should know both their constituency and community well: "[The coordinator] needs to know who to go to when they need to maintain that balance. I brought people into this process that made people shudder. But that is what I wanted. I did not want them to think they were operating in a vacuum."

Realize that representation is a dynamic and evolutionary process

Finally, and most critical, is understanding that ensuring representation is a dynamic and changing factor in collaborative efforts. As John Allen of the McKenzie Watershed Council notes, "Over time there's been continual concern over [having] the right people at the table. But you have to remember that representation is an evolutionary thing...over time, as issues mature and change, you realize that somebody should be there that is not. Some partners have dropped out completely because they realized their stakes weren't that large. It should be an expected and dynamic process that representation will change over time, and we've got to work with that."