

“The goal is not to get rid of conflict but rather to manage it,” Van Riper noted.

But managing conflict and building effective partnerships take time, effort, long-term commitment, and energy. Above all, it takes skill at applying well-known principles on the ground.

Not everyone in a group is likely to have the necessary skills, however, at least not right away. The next section outlines how groups can begin thinking about applying social principles to conflict resolution and collaboration. Sometimes outside help can be an important catalyst for success. A sampler of specific resources for outside assistance is provided on page 18.

Applying social principles to restoration and management efforts

How do we bring—and keep—people together? Among the many public and private endeavors to better integrate the social and technical dimensions of resource management, several different approaches are being examined and implemented by Federal agencies and their partners. Underlying those differing approaches are numerous common principles that can be applied on the ground to enhance restoration and management efforts.

Different approaches

Creeks and Communities

In one influential approach—created and carried out by an interagency program known today as Creeks and Communities, coordinated by specialists in the Forest Service and BLM, in cooperation with Natural Resources Conservation Service—science and technical information are integrated with the human and social dimensions in support of collaborative decisionmaking. Concepts outlined in the “proper functioning condition” (PFC) assessment method are used along with other techniques to address riparian-wetland function while also equalizing stakeholder knowledge and supporting collaborative decisionmaking through workshops, coaching, and place-based problem solving (Riparian Coordination Network 2002).

To Creeks and Communities proponents, understanding the physical function and condition of streams and riparian areas provides a foundation—a critical first step—for addressing issues, because the physical condition of the resource is the

“We cannot do it alone. The issues are too broad, the land base too large, and the resources too scarce.”

—former Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck
(cited in Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest 2001).

CRM principles

- *Participation by all stakeholders is voluntary.*
- *Project is landowner initiated.*
- *Experienced, neutral facilitators form teams, train participants, and focus discussions.*
- *Ground rules and common goals are established early by group consensus.*
- *All participants have decisionmaking authority.*
- *All decisions are made by consensus.*
- *Participants talk about needs rather than positions.*
- *Teams foster trust and respect.*
- *Participants are committed to the process and each other.*
- *Management objectives and action plans move toward goals.*
- *Progress is monitored and measured.*
- *Plans are accountable, yet flexible enough to accommodate the unexpected.*

—adapted from Paulson 1998

local knowledge and technical expertise to reach agreement. If everyone doesn't agree, it's back to the drawing board to listen further to the dissenter's needs (Paulson 1998).

While unnecessary conflicts seem to be reduced through CRM's consensus framework, groups are said to sometimes avoid dealing with the really tough differences in values and interests by limiting group membership to like-thinkers, using broad goals, and agreeing to disagree over certain "facts" (Paulson 1998).

Nevertheless, CRM groups do promote an atmosphere of open communication, and participants have reported gaining knowledge and understanding through the process. "I have learned a lot more about ranching and some of the economics and problems [ranchers] face," said one environmentalist participating in a controversial CRM group (cited in Paulson 1998).

For more information on CRM, see

http://www.rangelands.org/education_crm.shtml.

Baltimore ecosystem study

A long-term multipartner approach to urban revitalization arose from a desire to form stronger connections between the people of Baltimore, MD, and the natural resources that once thrived in the city. Using four urban watersheds as their arena, scientists involved in the Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES)—which involve dozens of partners including the Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Census Bureau, along with numerous universities and organizations—are exploring the interactions among the human, natural, and built environments. Recognizing that information doesn't do much good until it gets to people who can use it, BES collaborates with a variety of organizations to link science to education, community activism, and government. Research results are being applied on the ground with the assistance of 20 organizations and the culturally diverse communities of the Baltimore metropolitan region. Other cities are looking to Baltimore as a model and source of guidance for collaborative watershed restoration and neighborhood renewal projects.

For more information on BES, see

<http://www.beslter.org/>.

Community-based environmental protection

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a holistic and collaborative approach known as community-based environmental protection (CBEP) (EPA 1999). CBEP considers ecological and social needs of communities, which are loosely defined by either natural geographic or political boundaries or by interests, depending on the situation. A few key principles are implemented in varying ways depending on the specific place:

- Focus on a definable geographic area.
- Work collaboratively with a full range of stakeholders through effective partnerships.
- Assess the quality of the air, water, land, and living resources in a place as a whole.
- Integrate environmental, economic, and social objectives and foster local stewardship of all community resources.
- Use the appropriate public and private, regulatory and non-regulatory tools.
- Monitor and redirect efforts through adaptive management.

CBEP focuses not on stakeholder participation for its own sake but rather on getting useful public participation to inform public decisions and on stimulating a shared responsibility to improve environmental decisionmaking and implementation (EPA 1999).

For more information on CBEP, see

<http://www.epa.gov/ecocommunity/policy.htm>.

Key Issues



- Riparian and wetland areas constitute a small percentage of the landscape but when functioning properly they provide important biophysical and social values.
- Many watersheds currently are functioning below their potential and are unable to sustain their ecological functions and social values over time.
- A coordinated, adaptive watershed approach is key to protecting water, riparian areas, and wetlands. Such an approach is best achieved through community-based collaboration.
- Collaboration is difficult to achieve because of a variety of individual, institutional, and community barriers, including insufficient guidance and support from Federal land management agencies to their employees and communities. ■

Management Implications

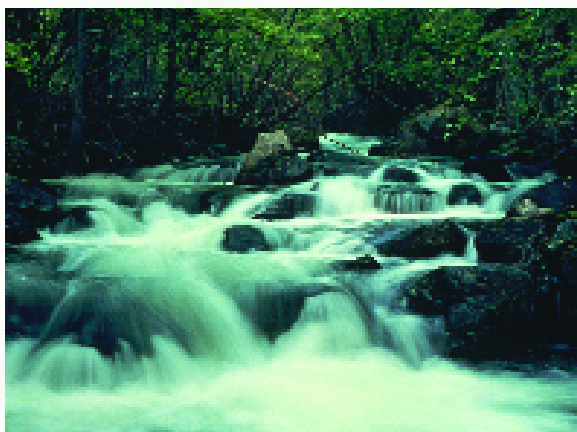
- A watershed approach should consider both the social and technical dimensions of riparian and wetland management and should integrate science with collaborative decisionmaking processes.
- Effective watershed restoration policies depend on provision of tools and effective training to improve individual and community capacity to collaboratively restore and protect watersheds.
- Revisions of the institutional framework within and among agencies are needed to reduce barriers to collaborative success and ensure that collaboration becomes an integral way of doing business.
- The use of applied sociological principles is one way to identify and remove barriers and help build capacity for collaboration. ■



References



- Cestero, B. 1999. Beyond the hundredth meeting: a field guide to collaborative conservation on the west's public lands. Tucson, AZ: Sonoran Institute. 92 p.
- Clark, J. 1997. Watershed partnerships: a strategic guide for local conservation efforts in the west. Prepared for the Western Governors' Association. <http://www.westgov.org/wga/publicat/wsweb.htm>. (Accessed March 23, 2005.)
- Committee of Scientists. 1999. Sustaining the people's lands. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. 193 p.
- Doppelt, R.; Shinn, C.; John, D. 2002. Review of USDA Forest Service community-based watershed restoration partnerships: analysis and recommendations. Portland, OR: Center for Watershed and Community Health. 26 p.
- Elmore, W. 2004. Riparian health? Paper presented at advancing fundamentals of science conference; October 22, 2004; San Diego, CA.
- Gray, B. 1989. Collaborating: finding common ground for multiparty problems. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 358 p.
- Lunn, M.; Elmore, W. 2000. Working with Creeks and Communities in the border region. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Texas Society of Ecological Restoration; August 11–13, 2000; Prineville, OR.
- Mitsos, M. 2000. Watershed restoration workshop. Slide presentation to the Clearwater National Forest; July 10–13, 2000; Missoula, MT.
- Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. 2001. Beyond boundaries: resource stewardship in the Skagit River basin—communities and national forests in partnership. Sedro-Woolley, WA: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mt. Baker Ranger District. 28 p.



- Oakley, A.L.; Collins, J.A.; Everson, L.B.; and others. 1985. Riparian zones and freshwater wetlands. In: Brown, E.R., tech. ed., *Management of wildlife and fish habitats in forests of western Oregon and Washington, part 1*. R6-F&WL-192-1985. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region: 57–80.
- Paulson, D.D. 1998. Collaborative management of public rangeland in Wyoming: lessons in co-management. *Professional Geographer*. 50(3):301–303.
- Paulson, D.D.; Chamberlin, K.M. 1998. Guidelines and issues to consider in planning a collaborative process. Final report submitted to the Institute for Environment and Natural Resources. Laramie, WY: University of Wyoming. <http://www.uwyo.edu/enr/ienr/DPRReport.html>. (Accessed May 12, 2005).
- Pinchot Institute for Conservation. 2005. The role of communities in stewardship contracting: a programmatic review of Forest Service projects. Milford, PA: Pinchot Institute for Conservation. 35 p.
- Riparian Coordination Network. 2002. *Creeks and Communities: a continuing strategy for accelerating cooperative riparian restoration and management*. Prineville, OR: National Riparian Service Steam. 16 p.
- Staats, S. 2000. Healthy streams. *Range*. 8(3): 70–72.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 1999. EPA's framework for community-based environmental protection. EPA 237-K-99-001. Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 40 p.
- Van Riper, L. 2003. Can agency-led initiatives conform to collaborative principles? Evaluating and reshaping an interagency program through participatory research. Ph.D dissertation, University of Montana, Missoula, MT. 321 p.
- Washington State University. 2004. Improving community involvement in watershed restoration. Satellite and video conference presented November 16, 2004, Olympia, WA. Yakima, WA: Washington State University, Yakima County Extension. <http://caheinfo.wsu.edu/video/>. (Accessed March 24, 2005.) ■

Wildland Waters

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.