

The National Landscape Conservation System and The National Riparian Service Team

~ 2008 LEARNING LAB OUTREACH ~

The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) Office and the National Riparian Service Team (NRST) are jointly sponsoring the 2008 Learning Lab opportunity in an effort to build individual and organizational capacity for collaboration and partnerships within the NLCS system. The NRST and their Creeks and Communities approach has been selected as the venue for the 2008 Learning Lab because of their success in fostering community involvement and collaborative resource management through the use of facilitated communication and conflict resolution techniques, joint fact finding, and learning while doing.



DO YOU HAVE A RIPARIAN-WETLAND ISSUE THAT COULD BENEFIT FROM A COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING APPROACH?

This outreach notice is being sent to all NLCS units in order to identify those that would be interested in NRST assistance. The objective is to provide focused, place-based problem solving efforts while, at the same time, offering an opportunity for training and mentoring in the general principles and practices of collaborative problem solving.

If faced with a riparian-wetland issue that would benefit from this type of an approach, please send an email to Helene Aarons at Helene_Aarons@blm.gov providing the following information:

- Requesting unit or group
- Contact name, address, phone, email
- Location/situation
- Parties interested/involved
- Major issues
- Objectives for NRST
- Time frames for assistance
- Expected/desired outcomes

The NRST leads the implementation of an interagency effort *Creeks and Communities (C&C): A Continuing Strategy for Accelerating Cooperative Riparian Restoration and Management:*

- ❖ Designed to substantially increase the number of people working collaboratively to improve the management of riparian-wetland resources at the landscape scale.
- ❖ Outlines a way of working with diverse groups at the landscape level (across political boundaries) to create a common vision for cooperative and coordinated management of productive and sustainable riparian-wetland conditions.
- ❖ Addresses riparian related concerns through specific, case-by-case design based on collaborative principles - working directly with people, in their location, focusing on their particular issues.
- ❖ Provides a model for managing conflict and promoting joint fact finding in support of collective, community-based decision-making.

The fundamental activity of C&C, service trips, are typically a combination of technical training and place-based problem solving among diverse stakeholders. Recognizing that a 'silver bullet' or one-size-fits-all approach to collaborative, community-based resource management does not exist, the C&C strategy relies on a set of principles and practices for engaging in such efforts. Service trips are often multi-phased. Each trip or phase begins with a situation assessment and is customized (designed and staffed) to provide specific capacity-building efforts to fit particular biophysical and socioeconomic needs and objectives based on assessment findings. A critical component of the revised C&C approach is building the capacity of local communities, including agencies, so that long-term success is not dependent upon a specific person or entity. Considerable attention is also paid to ensuring participation of key individuals and organizations.

The assistance provided utilizes concepts and methods for integrating science into collaborative decision-making. The objective is to address riparian-wetland function, while also equalizing stakeholder knowledge and supporting collaborative decision-making through a variety of capacity building efforts. Emphasis is placed on adaptability – trying different combinations of tools and techniques, evaluating them as a group, and adjusting as needed. These activities foster understanding and acceptance of the relevance of science and its application to community problem solving.

Participants will be able to experience on-the-ground, community-based problem solving through:

- ✓ Working side-by-side with an experienced, *interdisciplinary* team of practitioners
- ✓ Building individual skills and core competencies for engaging in collaborative, community-based stewardship both within and outside government
- ✓ Learning first-hand what incentives *bring* communities of interest and place “to the table” and what incentives *keep* them there.
- ✓ Learning to put collaborative problem solving principles into practice by applying social science to natural resource issues.
- ✓ Learning techniques for maintaining productivity in the face of disagreement.
- ✓ Discovering common themes and strategies through a step-by-step process designed to enable joint problem solving and development of practical solutions to natural resource issues.



For further information:

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