

Building and Sustaining Partnerships

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Note: This PowerPoint summarizes the ideas of BLM and non-BLM stakeholders as discussed during the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System Summit, November 15-18, 2010. This PowerPoint represents neither the consensus opinions of the group attending the session nor the official positions of the BLM.

Introduction to Focus Group

- Working with others is an increasingly important way for the BLM to leverage limited resources to address agency priorities, foster critical community-level support, meaningfully engage communities and stakeholders in stewardship activities, attract and inform visitors, and resolve complex natural and cultural management issues.
- The NLCS is well positioned to support and benefit from partnerships, collaborative ventures, and the services of volunteers.

Summary of Discussions

- Contributing factors to successful NLCS partnerships and how they can be fostered across system
- Growth opportunities for NLCS partnerships
- Barriers and challenges to developing and sustaining successful NLCS partnerships
- Actions and steps needed to address and overcome

Priority Topics/Key Ideas

- Relationship Issues:
 - Commitment
 - Trust
 - Shared vision/goals
 - Communication
 - Respect, honor relationship
- Institutional Issues:
 - Staffing/structure
 - Administrative process/bureaucracy
 - Doing partnerships w/some consistency
 - Attrition/turn over
 - Flexibility

Priority Topics/Key Ideas (cont.)

- Growth:
 - Youth
 - Planning
 - Friends groups
 - Funding/staff
 - Stewardship/citizen science opportunities
 - Model inclusiveness programs/partnerships

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Resources & Materials

- Develop a single partnership website for both the BLM and partners. MUST BE USER FRIENDLY!!!
 - One-stop external toolkit for both the BLM and partners with all key info on developing , implementing, and sustaining partnerships.
 - Also include a partnership agreement checklist developed by the WO.
 - Website should list training opportunities for both partners and the BLM.
 - Also include success stories, a searchable database for partnership activities, blog(s), leave no trace educational information, interviews and videos of employees and partners in the field, maps and information, and other mechanisms for sharing experiences.
- Establish an NLCS annual friend groups and partners workshop. Main focus of this workshop would be to continue dialog started at summit, improve communication, and ensure transparency.

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Policy & Guidance

- Develop clear and concise national guidance on developing and managing partnerships with non-federal entities.
 - Guidance should be clear to agency personnel, partners, local communities, volunteers, etc.
 - Should be developed via a working group made up of all levels of the organization. WO partnership coordinator should be lead.
 - Review (and possibly development) of guidance should also include partners.
- Develop and implement a national partnership strategy focused on efficiency and integration of BLM programs.
 - Utilize interdisciplinary working group, including field office staff and partners.
 - Draft strategy should be available for national review in FY11.

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Workload Planning

- Field and district office staff are responsible, but support from state and national level is crucial.
- Emphasize strategic planning for partnerships.
 - Develop visions and strategies that create unified management.
 - Consider partner work plans in this process so that a “joint vision” is developed for area management.
- Create opportunities to provide input in land use planning, plan implementation, and monitoring.
 - Examples include inviting partners to planning discussions and associated scoping meetings
- Allow for accomplishments in Performance Management Data System (PMDS) from stewardship and other projects beyond planned targets.
 - This would allow for accomplishments beyond negotiated targets, that show the benefits of partnering.
 - Thus BLM Offices could count targets not planned for, which are accomplished via partners. These would not be required targets, thus agreements (and not contracts) would still work.
 - This would allow for reporting targets accomplished via in-kind resources vs. allocated funding.
 - Could also have a specific program element for partnership work

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Grants & Agreements

- Develop national agreements to foster common goals and increase efficiency.
 - This would streamline many partnerships/projects which require multiple documents to work with the same organization. Examples include Conservation Corps, SCA, Rocky Mountain Elk, etc.
 - WO is responsible (should include procurement, recreation, NLCS, and other key programs).
 - Should have field office and partner input into final decision.
- Develop policies and procedures to make our use of grants and agreements consistent. This includes more consistent interpretations of the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).
 - WO & NOC are responsible for this. Needs review by all key parties, including solicitors. Once established, training on process will need to be developed.
- Ensure grants and agreements officer training addresses sole source issues. Current training and policies are not clear.

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Staffing & Transition

- Create partnership coordinator positions at appropriate levels.
 - Position responsibilities should be broader than NLCS.
 - Getting the right person in this position is critical.
 - Where possible, these positions should be solely focused on partnerships.
 - Position(s) need to work closely with communications and public affairs staff regarding outreach and education.
- Develop a protocol for transitioning new employees at the field level who deal with partnerships to provide consistency and transparency. This process would also allow for maintenance of field office priorities.
 - The WO working with SO, DO, and FO level employees should draft the protocol. It would be helpful to have partner review.
- Utilize our awards system to recognize individuals and partners.
 - States and field offices can showcase individuals and partners who win awards. In the case of partnerships these areas of showcase could be in areas visible to the public.

PARTNERSHIP ACTION ITEMS

Training

- Improve partnership training opportunities for both BLM employees and partners.
 - Ensure curriculum thoroughly covers all aspects of partnerships (e.g. partnership pathways).
 - Include overview of BLM, NLCS, and associated programs.
- Update and review the partnership grants and agreements training module that is available to both internal and external audiences.
 - Make sure the differences between agreements and contracts are clarified.
 - Include step by step process for partners and the BLM. It should reference checklist available on website (see resources slide).
- Develop a training that focuses on skills necessary for managing a sustainable partnership. This would include modules associated with communications, conflict resolution, administration, and project management, etc.
- Audiences for trainings would include management, field office program staff, procurement staff, and partners.