



Platte Valley Habitat Partnership

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Overview

- NEPA Training with Elizabeth Spaulding
- Review of Situation Assessment, collaborative and decision-making processes.
- Determine PVHP Goal, Objectives and Criteria
- WGFD Vision for Platte Valley mule deer herd habitat improvements on a landscape scale.



Situation Assessment

Main Issues

- Habitat protection in all its many forms (need undisturbed areas; better monitoring of plant species; land fragmentation)
- Animal population dynamics, including elk numbers, predators, and whitetail deer.
- Adequate forage especially in transitions zones.
- Periods of drought and hard winters – weather related.

Consequences regarding not addressing habitat.

- Mule deer herd would decline.
- Some stakeholders are not convinced habitat focus would make a difference to deer/fawning numbers.

Would you be willing to participate in this collaborative effort?

- Yes (all stakeholders)

Situation Assessment

Reasons for Participating in PVHP

- Love of place and wanting to keep its wildlife populations viable for future generations.
- Feeling that mule deer are an essential species in the Platte Valley.
- If you're concerned about the problem, don't sit out on the process.

Situation Assessment – Best Possible Outcomes

After 1 year

- Have everyone still at the table.
- Improved communication and finding common ground.
- Habitat plan (90%).
- Identify uncertainties.
- Find measures to track change in habitat conditions and mule deer population.
- Other

After 10 years

- Identify real problems and doing something about them (plan and action).
- Land management agencies, WGFD and private landowners find ways to cooperate on a large scale.
- Improved forage conditions.
- A ten percent improvement rate in overall fawn survival.

Situation Assessment –

Worst Possible Outcomes

- Important stakeholders leave the table.
- We become another Pinedale.
- Stakeholders remain at the table.

Necessary Factors for Effective Process

- Stakeholders' willingness to be open, listen and learn.
- A strong learning component and looking at all the science.
- A leader/moderator who ensures the process stays on track and everyone is heard.
- Transparency is important.

Situation Assessment –

Who needs to be at the table?

- Private landowners.
- All local, state and federal agencies directly related to mule deer habitat and populations (WGFD, USFS, BLM, Conservation districts, USFWS).
- Sportsmen of all stripes
- Outfitters
- Stockmen, woolgrowers
- Conservation and environmental groups of all stripes (Audubon, Wyoming Outdoor Council, RMEF)
- Energy companies
- Tourism
- Governor's office

Draft Process



Fundamental Paradox

“People want to have a voice in public decisions that affect their lives but how can that voice be meaningful if the terms, concepts and technical trade-offs are new or distrusted by them?”

(Daniels and Walker, 2001)



Collaboration

- Collaboration: To work together on a joint intellectual effort (Webster's). To “co-labor”.
- International Association for Public Participation:”Lead agency works directly with other agencies and interested participants to work through issues and seek agreement on as many issues as possible. Agency agrees to implement any consensus-based recommendations.

What is Collaboration?

A process in which interdependent parties work together to affect the future of an issue of shared interests.

Five features are critical:

1. Stakeholders are interdependent.
2. Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences that otherwise would not.
3. Joint ownership of decisions is involved.
4. Stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the situation.
5. Collaboration is an emergent property.

Platte Valley Habitat Plan Collaborative Process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Gain common understanding of issues, definitions and process.	Mule Deer Nutritional Needs, Vegetation Ecological Dynamics, Potential Improvement Actions. Focus on Private and Public Lands in Separate Meetings	Determine what steps PVHP wants to take to address habitat improvement in Plan #1	Determine Monitoring Variables to track change. Monitoring logistics. Create Adaptive Management Feedback Loops in PVHP	Draft Plan Review Publish Plan May 2013 New: Step 6 Implement Plan and Collaboratively Adapt
August	December	February	Late March	

This can work if:

- We can create an equitable, legitimate process together that serves as our agreed method to create a habitat plan.
- We take an iterative approach. Need to create a first iteration of a habitat plan that starts exploring science, starts creating monitoring measures, starts to create agreement on effective projects to improve habitat.
- Don't reinvent the wheel: use a process that works, look at existing data (USFS, BLM, Conservation District, WGFD, UW).
- One outcome becomes real action taken on the ground to serve as demonstration sites, in summer 2013.
- The process is rooted in the principles of Collaboration and Collaborative Learning.
- Each stakeholder will use respect for the process and each other's viewpoints through active listening and active participation.
- This will requires commitment.

Other thoughts:

- Opportunity to learn from the past and move into the future, in relation to communications, process and methods/management.
- Need for flexibility, adaptability.
- Consider that there is a great deal of uncertainty – this is an exercise in reduction of uncertainty, not always of creating absolutes.
- Mule deer needs (the original incentive for this process) will primarily inform this first habitat plan. Funds are connected to the collaborative guidance created in the plan for WGFD and other partners to act on. Other species may be included now and in the future.



Time to make Collaborative Decisions

PVHP's Decision-Making Method

- ❖ We had a temporary thumbs up, level or down method to get the process going. Now need something that is more flexible, allowing the group to understand the nature of agreement and disagreement, providing a tool that helps the group move forward.
- ❖ **Remember:** the population size of the mule deer herd is now is unacceptable to all of you and habitat is an important criteria for improving its size and health. The current situation is unacceptable.
- ❖ **Remember:** in order to improve habitat allowing mule deer numbers to increase over time, progress has to be created by reducing uncertainty.
- ❖ PVHP has to start somewhere and some experimentation will be involved on several levels: purpose, methods, treatments, financial processes, etc. Through collaboration, taking an iterative approach, periodically checking on progress, and adaptive management, uncertainty will be reduced.

Thinking about Consensus and Collaboration

- ❖ Consensus (Latin: “to think and feel together”) is the process – a participatory process by which a group thinks and feels together, en route to their decision.
- ❖ Unanimous (Latin: A group acting as one) is the outcome. Everyone agrees. Anyone who perceives that his or her interest is not being taken into account can keep the discussion alive for as many hours or months it takes to find a solution that works for everyone.
- ❖ Conditional Unanimity: the definition most often applied in collaborative problem solving. A consensus decision is one everyone can live with because the group agrees it will create progress because.
 - it is the best alternative under the circumstances, and
 - it attends to each party's most important interests.
- ❖ This does not mean that everyone will be equally happy with the decision, but all do accept that the decision is the best that can be made at the time with the people involved.



Five Finger Scale:

A more precise indication of support for a decision. Everyone can judge whether the degree of support warrants continued action. Participants show by the number of fingers they hold up their level of agreement to a given proposal:

1 Finger: Complete Support (I like it very much)

2 Fingers: Support (I'm very comfortable with this)

3 Fingers: Agreement with Reservations (I can live with it)

4 Fingers: Mild Agreement (I don't like this, but my reservations are not enough to hold up the process)

5 Fingers: Disagreement (I won't support the proposal)

If all members of the group present express approval at levels 1, 2, 3 or 4, then the proposal is agreed to. If some members present continue to disagree (level 5), then agreement has not been reached. The challenge to the group is to see what interest must be addressed in the proposal to move people present at 5 to 4 (or higher) and from 4 to 3 (or higher).

It is important to find out the nature of disagreements with a proposal. It is often helpful to characterize concerns as follows:

- ❖ Minor concerns with wording or editing.
- ❖ Agreement with the main thrust of the proposal, but concerns with specific elements which, if changed, would lead to agreement.
- ❖ Major concerns: principled disagreement with the overall direction of the proposal, which if not addressed, would lead the member to block the consensus.

Move on to determining goal(s), objectives and criteria.

GOAL (Draft):

The Platte Valley Habitat Partnership considers the condition and size of the mule deer herd in the Platte Valley important to its landscape and communities to preserve biodiversity, economic, recreational, cultural and aesthetic values. The Platte Valley Habitat Partnership's goal is to improve habitat for mule deer by addressing vegetation and riparian conditions with the intent to maintain or increase the numbers of healthy mule deer.

OBJECTIVES

PVHP Interest #1: Biodiversity Value of the Mule Deer Herd

- ❖ Objective #1: To improve vegetation and riparian conditions to benefit the number and health of mule deer and other species.

PVHP Interest #2: Economic Value of the Mule Deer Herd

- ❖ Objective #2: To enhance economic benefits to landowners, communities and dependent interests by improving habitat to benefit the number and health of mule deer and other species.

PVHP Interest #3: Recreational Value of the Mule Deer Herd

- ❖ Objective #3: To enhance recreational benefits to Wyoming residents and visitors by improving habitat to benefit the number and health of mule deer and other species.

OBJECTIVES

PVHP Interest #4: Cultural Value of the Mule Deer Herd

- ❖ Objective #4: To maintain the cultural character of the Platte Valley landscape and culture by improving habitat to benefit the number and health of mule deer and other species.

PVHP Interest # 5: Aesthetic Value of the Mule Deer Herd

- ❖ Objective #5: To retain and enhance the aesthetic (sensory experiences) values attached to the mule deer herd by improving its habitat.

PVHP Interest #6: Mission Compatibility

- ❖ Objective #6: To facilitate state and federal agencies to serve their constituents in a manner compatible with their missions by working with the public to improve habitat for mule deer and other species and purposes.



Criteria



Daryl, these are Reindeer not Mule Deer!!!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE!!!