



Platte Valley Habitat Partnership

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Overview

- Summary of Situation Assessment regarding mule deer habitat in the Platte Valley.
- Some basic principles regarding collaborative processes and the use of collaborative learning methods.
- Proposal of Draft Process
- Logistics for process and next steps.



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.

Situation Assessment

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 Outcome – 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

Situation Assessment – Best Possible Outcome 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 Outcome

- Important stakeholders leave the table.
- We become another Pinedale.

Situation Assessment – Necessary factors for effective process

- Stakeholders remain at the table.
- 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 – Stakeholders who need to be part of process

- 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

Collaboration and Collaborative Learning



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.

Degrees of Collaboration

Increasing Degrees of Influence 

**One-way
Communication**

Inform	Low	Medium	High: UP & PVHP
<p>Agency provides others with information to assist them in understanding the problem being addressed, the alternatives considered, and the final decision made.</p>	<p>Agency informs others about decision-making process and also seeks their feedback on analysis, options and proposed actions</p>	<p>Agency works directly with others to ensure their issues and concerns are understood, considered and directly reflected in the options developed and decisions made. Feedback is provided on how their input influenced the final decision</p>	<p>Agency works directly with others to share information, explore options and potential solutions, and to seek agreement where possible on decisions and actions. Legal and policy constraints must be considered and addressed in the agreement-seeking process</p>
<p>Agency retains authority for final decisions in all degrees of collaboration</p>			

What is Collaborative Learning?

Collaboration is an iterative process and Collaborative Learning is the mechanism that facilitates each iteration.

- A framework and set of techniques intended for multi-stakeholder learning and decision situations. Everyone learns from everyone.
- It means designing and implementing events (meetings, field trips, etc.) to promote creative thought, constructive debate and effective implementation of proposals.
- Appropriate when there are multiple stakeholders who are interdependent and independent.
- Suitable for NRM situations that contain :
 - a. conflict and
 - b. complexity (wicked).

Characteristics of Collaborative Learning

- ❖ Stresses improvement rather than solution.
- ❖ Focuses on concerns and interests not positions.
- ❖ Encourages interrelated systems thinking rather than linear thinking.
- ❖ Recognizes that considerable learning (about science issues and value differences) will have to occur before implementable improvements are possible.
- ❖ Emphasizes that learning and progress occur through communication and negotiation interaction.

General Phases in CL Process with Diverse Stakeholders.

1. Identify issues, describe situation.
2. Identify improvements
3. Identify what is feasible within legal, financial, biophysical, etc. constraints.
4. Create a platform that allows continued CL, often combined with adaptive management (habitat management plan).

Tools

- A facilitator who is experienced in CL.
- Interactive Workshops.
- Field trips.
- Documentation
- Social Science that describes “silent majority”
- Participatory monitoring and/or research.
- Concept/Situation Mapping Exercises
- GIS as a learning tool using multiple layers.
- Web-based tools.



Advantages of CL

- A flexible, iterative process that enables experimentation based on a multiparty collaborative approach.
- Create a process that builds trust and communication, allowing for long-term resilience in the face of unexpected managerial outcomes or biophysical extremes.
- A way to combine meaningful public participation and adaptive management.

Draft Process



Platte Valley Habitat Plan Collaborative Process

DRAFT

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Gain common understanding of issues, definitions and process.	Collaborative Learning: Mule Deer Nutritional Needs, Vegetation Ecological Dynamics, Potential Improvement Actions	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
August	December	February	Late March	May 2013

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 require 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.
- My relationship with WGFD:
 - # 1 Priority: I am responsible to this process and to this group.
 - # 2 Priority: Work with WGFD to allow this process and this group's work to integrate into their processes and deliberations.
- 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.



Does the Group want to work together for a year to learn about habitat issues in the Platte Valley and find agreement on strategies to improve habitat for 2013 and beyond?

Next Steps:

- ❖ Dates, times and locations for meetings

Next meeting: Create common understanding of issues, interests and place:

- ❖ Explore stakeholder interests (create common interests).
- ❖ Explore the main habitat issues (find common ground on basic habitat issues).
- ❖ Explore the Platte Valley landscape: what geographical area will this group concentrate for Plan #1?
- ❖ Explore mule deer habitat zones spatially.

What do you need to do this?

Anything else?

