WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON

COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION

Supplemental Analysis of Day Two Facilitated Discussion Sessions

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Executive Summary

In August 2004, President Bush signed Executive Order 13352 to facilitate cooperative conservation in the United States. The Order directs federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource policies and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with tribes, states, local governments, community groups, private-sector organizations, and individuals. The full text of the Order appears in Appendix A and defines cooperative conservation as *"actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals."*

The Order directed the Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to convene a conference on cooperative conservation. The Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency co-hosted the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (the Conference) in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 29-31, 2005. The Conference included over 1,200 invited participants drawn from diverse sectors involved in cooperative conservation.

The Conference included presentations by Cabinet members and other senior agency leaders, as well as leaders from state, tribal, and local governments, business, and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community. Day One of the Conference also included breakout group presentations and discussions of cooperative conservation case studies.

On Day Two of the Conference, participants divided into smaller groups to discuss nine cooperative conservation topics. (See Appendix B for a description of the topics.) The goal of these discussions was to solicit the individual participants' insights and experiences with respect to each topic area. Participants did not have the opportunity to discuss ideas in great depth because each session lasted just under two hours and included a variety of perspectives.

The third day included sharing of perspectives on cooperative conservation by three individual Conference participants. It concluded with panel presentations from national leaders drawn from the business, tribal and environmental communities, and from the senior policy officials of the host agencies.

During Day Two, facilitators organized extensive efforts to document and summarize the discussions. Following the Conference, two of the facilitators—John Ehrmann and Juliana Birkhoff—led a review of these session summaries at the conference organizers. The review involved enhancing the summaries with additional information drawn from the notes taken during the small group discussions and analyzing the content by developing matrices that distilled key themes from all the discussion topics. This report is a summary of the facilitators' insights and perspectives gleaned from analyzing the materials generated during the Conference and the enhanced summaries and matrices.

The goal of the Conference was to stimulate idea exchange among participants and to elicit suggestions for action—not to reach group consensus. A review of the discussion summaries

reveals that the participants articulated the "building blocks" for strategies to implement cooperative conservation. The sections below briefly describe these building blocks, and Table 1 highlights the key themes and actions that comprise them.

Changing Organizational Culture

The participants emphasized the importance of cultural change that needs to take place in the federal agencies. The Conference sent a strong signal to federal agency staff that cooperative conservation is a priority of this Administration. Now, it is very important that the Senior Policy Team maintain the momentum the Conference established. Agency leaders should look for opportunities to demonstrate leadership in altering agencies' cultures so that agencies achieve their conservation missions in collaboration with other stakeholders. The participants stressed that federal agency staff must be "facilitative leaders and problem solvers."

It should be noted that the actions described in the other themes summarized in this report support this transition in organizational culture.

Maintaining Effective Communication

Participants stressed throughout their discussion on the nine topics the importance of developing and maintaining effective communication. Participants noted that federal agency staff use different definitions and language to talk about goals, programs, and policies. When people are speaking different languages, misunderstandings and conflicts often arise. Wherever possible, it would help advance cooperative conservation to develop clear and consistent protocols and systems to communicate across agencies and with local and tribal governments, NGOs, businesses, and landowners.

Another communication theme revolved around establishing a clearinghouse of success stories, lessons learned, "how-to" information, and links to resources. This clearinghouse would allow users to find information easily and in one place. In many topics, participants noted that information is currently fragmented, contradictory, hard to find, and not useful to developing cooperative conservation partnerships and projects. These problems can be addressed by improving the organization of existing information to make it more "user friendly" and accessible.

Building Trusting Relationships

A fundamental tenet of cooperative conservation is the need to establish trust among the federal agencies and external stakeholders. Participants noted that the process of building trust takes time and, therefore, agencies should sustain cooperative conservation efforts over the long-term. Transparency in decision making and the use of mutually developed measures of progress can contribute significantly to building trust. Participants also observed that it erodes trust when federal agencies change their goals and objectives, and move personnel from place to place and project to project. Consistency builds trust.

Other participants noted that trusting relationships developed when federal agencies shared or delegated control and authority to communities or collaborative groups. Finally, many participants noted that federal agency staff must take the time to get to know them

and to learn their cultures, local ways of doing things, and the problems and barriers they face. Showing genuine concern is another way to build trust.

Increasing Collaborative Leadership Capacity

Federal agency personnel should learn to lead conservation efforts collaboratively. This learning and capacity must have support from the highest agency levels. Cooperative conservation calls for the meaningful involvement of external stakeholders drawn from the diverse interests affected by conservation decisions. The federal government needs to lead through demonstrating an understanding of the principles of cooperative conservation. These principles shape the design and implementation of cooperative conservation efforts. Specifically, the federal agencies can play a leadership role by aligning decision-making processes to be supportive of and receptive to cooperative conservation efforts, disseminating best practices, and providing targeted resources. Participants emphasized that it is very important for the federal agencies to lead by improving interagency communication and consistency.

Planning for Action

Participants noted that one of the valuable aspects of cooperative conservation is that one size does not fit all. Citizens can design cooperative conservation efforts to fit their issues in their regions. The case studies on Day One of the Conference illustrated how well activities can fit local context and priorities. Participants suggested that the Senior Policy Team should consolidate and disseminate best practices as a way of helping people learn from the experiences of others in cooperative conservation. More information from successes would help groups plan and carry out successful projects. Participants emphasized that all stakeholders should be actively involved when planning and developing local and regional partnerships and cooperative conservation projects.

Further, participants underscored the creative tension that exists between providing for uniformity in practices and the flexibility to design an approach that fits the situation-at-hand. It was suggested that individual agencies look for latitude within their existing regulations and legislative authorities to build on opportunities and reduce or remove barriers wherever possible.

Bringing Science and Information to Problem Solving

There was widespread recognition of the importance of integrating accurate scientific and technical information and community-based and traditional knowledge into cooperative conservation efforts. Cooperative conservation can provide innovative ways of bringing information and knowledge to bear on decision making. This is accomplished through transparent discussion of the key questions and assumptions addressed through joint fact-finding processes. The participants encouraged the federal government to improve its capacity to systematically collect and analyze data, and provide information that participants could use in cooperative conservation activities. Participants also stressed the need for resources to collect baseline data, conduct monitoring, and evaluate projects.

Designing and Managing Meaningful Participation

Participants recognized that getting the "right people" to the table is a key element of constructing successful cooperative conservation efforts. Good cooperative conservation projects are inclusive, and they noted that the federal government plays an important role in convening stakeholders for cooperative conservation efforts. Participants also emphasized the importance of involving stakeholders in decisions about design and participation. They highlighted the critical role of financial resources in assuring that parties that might not be able to be involved otherwise can "get to the table." Finally, participants noted that it is important to limit "late hits" that can take place as the result of changes in decision-making frameworks or legal challenges.

Creating Incentives

Participants stressed the importance of incentives to encourage and sustain partnerships and collaborations. Agencies should strive to reduce disincentives and to recognize and use the range of incentives that can be effective in encouraging cooperative conservation across all participants. Cooperative conservation actions can take a long time to plan and implement before groups see any changes. Participants explained that people are motivated and rewarded by different incentives. These include economic, social, psychological, or cultural incentives.

Measuring Progress

If cooperative conservation is to flourish and endure, developing effective measures of progress—both at the level of individual projects and for the overall effort—is essential. Conveners and stakeholders should develop and apply clear goals, objectives, and criteria for measuring progress and success through consultation between conveners and the stakeholders who participate. Participants also suggested that the federal agencies incorporate considerations of cooperative conservation into both program and employee performance measures and systems. Participants suggested the concept of multi-party monitoring as a way to improve understanding of how effective cooperative conservation efforts are in reaching both their conservation and process objectives.

The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation marks a significant milestone in the evolution of conservation policy and practice in the United States. The Conference participants shared their experiences and suggested actions going forward in a very constructive and creative manner. The insights and information they contributed provide the necessary building blocks for a national strategy to expand the use of cooperative conservation. The conveners of the Conference now need to build on the momentum of the Conference and move forward with the design and implementation of that strategy.

Table 1 -"Building Blocks" for a Strategy to Implement Cooperative Conservation

Cross Cutting Themes	Suggested Actions
Changing Organizational Culture	• Maintain and build momentum the Conference established. • Learn to be "facilitative leaders and problem solvers" and make cooperative conservation (CC) a priority of the Administration. • Look for opportunities to demonstrate leadership in altering agencies' cultures so that agencies achieve their conservation missions through collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders.
Maintaining Effective Communication	• Develop mutually agreed-upon and understood definitions and language. • Develop clear and consistent communication protocols across federal agencies and with state, local and tribal governments, NGO's and landowners. • Continue and expand outreach and information sharing efforts.
Building Trusting Relationships	• Develop and implement transparent decision-making processes. • Sustain efforts long enough to provide opportunity to build trust. • Learn about what local people, local governments and tribes believe is important and the histories and stories of local efforts.
Increasing Collaborative Leadership Capacity	• Develop champions and proponents of CC efforts among a diverse set of stakeholders. • Establish CC through leading by example. • Improve interagency communication and align processes (especially at the federal level) to support CC efforts.
Planning for Action	• Consolidate and disseminate best practices to help stakeholders learn and develop plans to fit local context and priorities. • Continue and expand cross-agency coordination activities that share learning on how to remove barriers and implement CC activities. • Find opportunities within existing regulations and legislative authorities to build opportunities and remove barriers.
Bringing Science & Information to Problem Solving	• Integrate accurate scientific and technical information with community-based and traditional knowledge in CC efforts. • Improve capacity to systematically collect and analyze data and provide information for use in CC activities. • Provide resources for agencies and groups to collect baseline and monitoring information to gauge progress and success.
Designing & Managing Meaningful Participation	• Get the "right people" to the table. • Involve stakeholders early in the process and in process design where possible. • Provide financial incentives to help participants "get to the table".
Creating Incentives	• Provide a range of incentives; participants are motivated by different economic, social, psychological, or cultural factors. • Work to eliminate disincentives to involvement in CC efforts. • Develop market-based incentives to keep stewards on the land and to encourage restoration and recovery.
Measuring Progress	• Develop clear goals, objectives, and criteria for measurement of progress at the individual project level and the overall CC effort. This should be done in collaboration with stakeholders. • Incorporate considerations of CC into program and employee performance measures and systems. • Develop multi-party monitoring.

Introduction

In August 2004, President Bush signed Executive Order 13352 (see Appendix A) to facilitate cooperative conservation in the United States. The Order directs federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource policies and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with states, local governments, tribes, and individuals.

The Order directed the Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to convene a conference on cooperative conservation. The Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency co-hosted the Conference. The Conference was in St. Louis, Missouri, on August 29-31, 2005.

On Day One of the Conference, CEQ Chairman James Connaughton welcomed the participants. Invited representatives from the public and private sectors heard speeches in plenary sessions and participated in discussions of case studies of cooperative conservation. On Day Two, participants broke into smaller groups to discuss nine cooperative conservation topics. The final day began with three individual Conference participants sharing their perspectives on what they had heard and learned. There were also panel presentations from national leaders drawn from the business, tribal, and environmental communities and from the senior policy officials of the hosting agencies.

This report summarizes and analyzes the information and ideas that emerged from participants during Day Two of the Conference.

Day Two Organization

Day Two of the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation included 63 facilitated small group discussions focused on nine topic areas. (See Appendix B for a description of the topic areas.) Conference organizers designed these sessions to elicit dialogue on each topic, encourage the exchange of information, and develop networks among participants. Participants were not expected nor did they arrive at consensus or agree on recommendations on future actions to support expanded use of cooperative conservation.

Each discussion session included a facilitator, a compiler, and note-taker to capture individual participants' perspectives and ideas accurately. The facilitators were responsible for encouraging dialogue and keeping the group focused on the topics. The compiler worked with the facilitator to capture the individual participants' ideas and important concepts that participants shared. The note-taker produced raw notes from each session that the session facilitator and compiler used to write a two-page summary of the session discussions.

At the end of the day, the facilitators used these session summaries to write a summary of each of the nine topic areas. Conference organizers combined all the summaries to produce a 36-page "Compilation of Facilitated Dialogues," which was distributed to participants on Day Three of the Conference. This compilation (http://conservation.ceq.gov/day3resources.html) and the two-page summary of each discussion session (http://conservation.ceq.gov/day2resources.html) are available on the Conference website.

Finally, to prepare the panelists for the Day Three discussions, one facilitator from each of the nine topic discussions met with the two overall Conference facilitators—Juliana Birkhoff of RESOLVE and John Ehrmann of Meridian Institute—and the Day Three panelists to articulate which themes they thought had saliency throughout the topic sessions. They drafted a two-page document summarizing the lead facilitators' perspectives on the important themes from Day Two conversations. This two-page "Facilitated Discussion Themes" document is posted on the Conference website (http://conservation.ceq.gov/day3resources.html).

Brief Description of Analytical Methods

To prepare this report, staff from Meridian Institute, RESOLVE and SRA International reviewed all the notes from each small group discussion. As part of this review, when necessary, they added missing details or comments to the summaries. The Conference organizing group reviewed these enhanced summaries to ensure that, in their view, the new summaries accurately reflect the discussions that took place. The enhanced summaries are also posted on the conference web site (http://conservation.ceq.gov/day2resources.html).

Next, Meridian, RESOLVE and SRA staff reviewed all the summaries to capture similar themes, concerns, and ideas. They arranged these themes, concerns, and ideas in a matrix and noted if the ideas occurred frequently, less frequently or only once or twice. The matrices also categorize the types of actions suggested by participants.

Using all of this information, John Ehrmann and Juliana Birkhoff wrote this report guided by an initial list of questions developed by the Conference organizing team. (See Appendix C for more information on the analytical methods used and Appendix D for the initial questions.)

Summary of the Major Themes, Key Ideas, and Suggested Actions

The Day Two small discussion groups were divided among nine topics (see Appendix A). Through the analyses conducted to prepare this report, the authors examined the discussion summaries for common themes, ideas, and actions. Many of these themes, ideas, and actions arose in discussions under several of the topics. Accordingly, they should serve as the "building blocks" of a national strategy to promote cooperative conservation, because they resonate with many of the well-recognized principles of collaborative problem solving. (See Appendix E.) The description of each element below includes a summary of key ideas and actions that Conference participants suggested. Because the elements were derived from participants' comments, not every element includes all the possible categories of actions.

Changing Organizational Culture

Participants across the sessions said federal agencies should change their organizational culture. Discussions centered on criticisms of the federal government's approach as it attempted to work with private landowners, communities, corporations, and other levels of government. Many agency staff are not accustomed to "doing business" in the mode of cooperative conservation.

Participant Quote

"Make use of the bully pulpit."

The skills and strategies associated with initiating and managing cooperative conservation efforts differ from the traditional approaches to making decisions and interacting with external stakeholders. Many participants emphasized that federal agency staffs need to promote relationship building, communication, cooperation, and coordination. Senior policy leaders should create a vision, inspire commitment, build consensus within each agency, and catalyze organizational changes.

Attendees also stressed that cooperative efforts should start early—before conflicts begin. Starting cooperative activities early means that federal agency staff should change from a mindset that is reactive to one that is proactive, from one that is risk averse to one that is risk taking. Participants stressed in several topic sessions that there should be increased rewards for the risk taking and creativity exemplified in cooperative conservation efforts. There are currently too few incentives for people to think and act "outside the box."

Several breakout sessions discussed the need for cultural change within agencies to break through bureaucratic complexity. Participants explained that it was difficult to overcome the barriers associated with working with the federal government as a partner. They urged federal actors to be more open to changing relationships from authority to partnership and to working alongside local governments. Participants suggested that federal government leaders establish the decision-making authority for agency staff to engage in cooperative conservation projects.

Participant Quote

"Come to the table as peers instead of with hierarchical positions."

Participants also explained that agencies should adopt a new paradigm of conservation that is more complex and attuned to ecosystems. This new approach should break down barriers to a comprehensive understanding of environmental and natural resource problems. Participants in

several different sessions discussed adaptive management and adaptive monitoring as an approach more aligned with regional, contextual, and ecosystem issues.

In several sessions, participants identified how important it was for federal agency personnel to understand the culture of tribes and communities. Participants emphasized that federal agencies should expand their roles and responsibilities for conservation work to include communities and tribal governments more actively and respectfully. It was observed that cooperative conservation efforts initiated locally are often the most successful.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Participants suggested that federal agencies should focus on the relationship aspects of changing organizational culture. Agency staffs need time to build relationships during and after work hours.

Participants suggested fostering more federal/state/tribal/local interagency cooperation and coordination on cooperative conservation approaches. They noted that cooperation and collaboration has to be genuine, not just on paper. Partnerships and cooperative projects should involve genuine give and take, not top-down directions. Participants also complained of cooperative conservation projects that project designers conceived of as a way to save federal resources, not as a genuine way to achieve common goals in collaboration with others.

Federal personnel should also recognize that many times a tribe or community could be effective conveners of processes in which the federal government can participate—the federal government does not always have to be the convener. Participants also suggested developing and synthesizing guidance for federal agency staff to inform and encourage their use of cooperative conservation.

Budgeting and Grants, Procurement and Contracting Procedures: Participants in several topic groups encouraged federal government agencies to adequately fund partnerships and collaborative processes. In particular, this funding should be available throughout the life cycle of conservation projects. Participants noted how bureaucratic and difficult it is to create and sustain partnerships and cooperative conservation projects.

Agency leaders should analyze procedures for grants and contracting in federal agencies to remove barriers to partnerships and collaborative processes. Participants suggested making sure that partnerships are at least allowed, if not encouraged, in procurement and contracting procedures.

Agencies should build incentives for partnerships and collaboration into all funding mechanisms. Agencies and programs should create incentives and remove barriers to creative funding. Grants and contracting procedures should encourage community, foundation, corporate, and private matches.

Participants also suggested developing accountability mechanisms that reward success, but do not prescribe one way of accomplishing it. Counting widgets does not accomplish accountability.

Programs and projects should outline goals, but encourage local communities to figure out the priorities and appropriate processes.

Changes in Rules, Policies, Regulations, and Laws: Many participants encouraged federal agencies to analyze policies, procedures, and authorities to remove barriers to risk taking and partnerships. While this analysis was accomplished in several agencies, the recommended changes must be implemented to remove barriers. Federal leaders need to ensure follow-through.

Participant Quote

"Be willing to fail and learn from failures."

Similarly, participants suggested analyzing policies, laws, and regulations to remove barriers to ecosystem- and landscape-level problem solving and collaboration. Breakout group members criticized having to address comprehensive problems through narrow programs. They also criticized programs that changed mandates or goals before landscape-level changes were accomplished.

Training: Many training programs would support federal agency staff as they change organizational culture. However, training only works when participants find support for new behaviors at their work sites. The agencies have leadership networks and programs. It would be relatively easy for these programs to include peer collaborative leadership coaching and mentoring for project staff working on all conservation projects. They could also develop and support peer support networks that would help federal agency staff integrate new behaviors into their way of working.

Participant Quote

"We will never be able to institutionalize this until we see tools for the top levels to fully implement these ideas and actions."

Incentives: Conference participants encouraged federal agency leaders to analyze their personnel policies to create rewards for problem-solving and risk-taking attitudes and behaviors. Several participants suggested in particular that middle management staff should be rewarded for building relationships and taking risks. Again, while some of this analysis has occurred in different agencies, it should be implemented consistently across all agencies.

Maintaining Effective Communication

Participants discussed several ways that improving communication would strengthen cooperative conservation. One way is to establish clear definitions and consistent language to talk about goals, programs, and policies across agencies and with local governments. Participants were not encouraging staff to spend a lot of time to develop a common language. Nevertheless, they did think it would help to understand each agency's definitions. Further, when new programs are created, staff should use common language and definitions whenever possible.

Agencies are too focused on internal planning and organizing. Participants noted that this builds mistrust when nothing is happening on the ground and no one communicates with them about progress or timelines.

Finally, participants commented that scientists who supported cooperative conservation projects often could not communicate findings effectively to different audiences. They explained that scientists should learn to communicate science in language, context, and terms that the public understood.

Participant Quote

"I want people to come visit me."

Participant Quote

"Avoid recreating the wheel."

Participants also identified the difficulty of finding accurate and useful information to support conservation projects. Several sessions discussed the need for effective outreach and information dissemination. Participants also suggested the importance of developing and maintaining effective communication at all levels—from the federal government to the private landowners.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Federal agency leaders should develop clear and consistent protocols and systems to communicate across agencies and with local governments, NGOs, and communities. Participants also suggested that federal and state agency staff, NGOs, communities, and tribal governments should support and encourage each other to learn each other's languages.

Participant Quote

"Approach the change jointly, not from different silos."

The agencies should create incentives, processes, and policies to communicate across fragmented federal agencies and overcome the boundaries between agencies and programs. Participants noted how frustrating it was to work with several federal agencies when these agencies were unable to communicate with each other.

Participants encouraged federal agencies to work with other people engaged in cooperative conservation to create models and detailed "how to" guidance about how to communicate technical, scientific and risk information to citizens.

People also suggested communicating success stories and lessons learned. It motivates others to get involved and conveys what does and does not work. One individual referred to the Hawaiian "talk story" as a way to promote personal interchange at local gathering places. Another participant recognized the Humboldt University "Speaking Beyond America Program" as key training for the media on how to communicate about cooperative conservation to different audiences, particularly children.

Participants in several sessions explained that there is currently a lack of visibility for achievements. They suggested spending more time capturing best management practices. Attendees also stressed that federal agencies should communicate lessons learned on individual projects with clear, accessible progress reports. Several participants in different topic groups suggested developing a one-stop shop website with guidance, facilitator resources, project information, and case studies.

Participant Quote

"Create the 'Turbo Tax' of government programs."

Many participants also encouraged the Senior Policy Team to organize and support annual conservation conferences and regional cooperative conservation conferences. Participants stressed that these conferences should support learning and development of best practices.

Training: Several groups also noted that while citizen knowledge of science was incomplete, colleges, universities, and scientific societies should teach scientists how to communicate and problem solve. Participants suggested partnering with universities and scientific societies to highlight the problem and develop communication training programs for scientists. Conference participants encouraged federal and state government agencies to train agency scientists on how to communicate scientific and technical information in a manner that is accessible, yet comprehensive.

Participant Quote

"Make cooperative conservation as prevalent, mutually understood, and used as seatbelts."

Building Trusting Relationships

Participants in many sessions said that cooperative conservation planning and implementation requires strong trusting relationships between participants. Participants emphasized how important it was to take the time to build trusting relationships between federal, tribal, state, business, community, and NGO actors. They noted that trusting relationships take time to build and that federal agency staff did not devote enough time to establishing and working through these types of relationships.

Other participants noted that consistency and regular communication helped build trust.

Participant Quote

"Drink beer with people you do not normally drink beer with."

Some participants stated that cooperative conservation would be improved if project participants clarified, understood, and respected the roles of tribes and each level of government. Several groups discussed building trust through federal agency sharing and delegation of decision-making authority to groups working on cooperative conservation projects.

Actions for Consideration

***Administrative Actions*:** Participants suggested assessing personnel and hiring policies to ensure that staff members hired to work on cooperative conservation projects possess good communication and collaboration skills. Personnel policies should be reviewed to make sure that adequate rewards for building and maintaining trust relationships exist for each personnel level. Personnel policies should be reviewed to ensure that federal agency staff are able to meet with landowners, local communities, and NGO's at convenient times and places.

Participant Quote

"Sit at kitchen tables and drink bad coffee."

In particular, participants mentioned reviewing personnel policies that move staff around frequently. If federal agency staff must move around often to be promoted, then project and community relationships can suffer. Several groups discussed creating rewards for federal agency staff that do develop and maintain trusting relationships on the ground.

Training: Integrate the skills of building and maintaining trusting relationships into all leadership and management training programs. Federal agency staff need to learn that consistency, transparency, regular communication, and shared decision making all contribute to trusting relationships.

Increasing Collaborative Leadership Capacity

Participants stressed the need for collaborative leaders at the community, state, regional, and federal levels. Increased capacity would help strengthen the ability of both the federal government and other stakeholders to support and participate in cooperative conservation efforts. The case studies presented and discussed at the Conference demonstrate that groups have completed cooperative conservation projects and even more are ongoing. The participants felt, however, there is a clear need for more capacity building activities to support the development and implementation of effective cooperative conservation efforts.

Participant Quote

"A lot of people have the desire, but not the skill."

Participants also observed that capacity building is needed for other units of government (e.g., states, tribes, local government), as well as for stakeholder groups. To meet this need, training programs and materials should be developed and disseminated through all levels. Other participants suggested that the federal government could assist in the development of collaborative leadership capacity by providing financial support for participation in cooperative conservation efforts. One individual recommended expanding the model of the Conservation Security Program to fund projects that have cooperation and collaboration in place and have demonstrated the ability to work together. Another individual proposed that USDA amend the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP) to allow more landowners to participate.

People also noted that schools and colleges should prepare the next generation of leaders to participate in cooperative conservation projects. In several sessions, participants discussed the role of youth in projects and the importance of preparing them for future leadership.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Participants suggested that the federal government facilitate the development of a network of people familiar with cooperative conservation to increase the capacity to learn from previous experiences – both positive and negative. There was concern expressed about "silos" and barriers between agencies that inhibit this learning process. A peer learning network could facilitate the learning and risk taking that characterizes collaborative leadership. These learning networks need coordination and financial and human resources to function well. Finally, exemplary federal agency staff could coach and mentor others who are just beginning partnerships and collaborative projects.

Federal agencies could also reward collaborative leaders in cooperative conservation efforts from the community, state, tribal, and NGOs. This would provide visibility, as well as models for others to learn.

Training: Participants suggested that Agency staff should be trained in collaboration and the skills associated with establishing and maintaining partnerships. This training could be integrated into existing training programs or established as independent training programs. In addition to training, agency staff require ongoing support and rewards to integrate collaborative leadership skills into their repertoire. The concept of an employee exchange program may be an effective way to encourage cross-agency learning and integration of skills. One person proposed using the Department of Defense's mission and management of Threatened & Endangered Species approach to training as a model.

> *Participant Quote*
>
> *"Get trained or get lost."*

Planning for Action

One size does not fit all. Cooperative conservation efforts should be designed to fit the situation at hand—with the involvement of the stakeholders who have an interest in the issue. Federal agencies should recognize the need to tailor processes in partnership with stakeholders. The importance of follow-through was also noted—it can be problematic if processes are initiated but not carried through to completion.

Participants suggested that consideration be given to the regional application of cooperative conservation efforts, because local and community considerations can more effectively be taken into account at that scale. One individual highlighted the Fire Plan as a model for streamlining the process for working with different groups to achieve common goals.

Further, participants noted the creative tension that exists between providing for uniformity in practices and the flexibility to design an approach that fits the situation-at-hand. Individual agencies should look for latitude within their existing regulations and legislative authorities to build on opportunities and reduce or remove barriers wherever possible.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Participants suggested that they develop a best practices manual to assist in guiding the design and implementation of cooperative conservation activities—there is a growing amount of experience that should be built upon over time. Such a manual could also help to address the problems created when different agencies have different procedures and approaches, which can impede the ability to use cooperative conservation strategies. One participant suggested using the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration restoration program as a model for allowing state and local decision making.

> *Participant Quote*
>
> *"We need a fundamental change in the way we think about funding infrastructure needs."*

Resources, Grants, Procurement and Contracting Procedures: Participants suggested creating a cross-agency team to coordinate and communicate between agencies about cooperative conservation efforts. This could help to address differences between agencies that can be problematic from the perspective of the stakeholders. It would also facilitate cross-agency learning based on the experiences of the respective agencies. A participant proposed engaging Congress in the review of current policies to

identify and remove barriers to collaboration. For example, they suggested integrating the lessons learned from the 2002 Farm Bill in the 2007 Jobs Bill.

Participant Quote

"Our screw-ups are not with NEPA analyses but with flesh and blood relationships – the human element."

Changes in Rules, Policies, Regulations, and Laws: Participants suggested assessing and evaluating the existing legal incentives and disincentives that can influence the design and implementation of cooperative conservation efforts. They noted Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) as a specific example of a statute that should be examined and potentially refined. A participant felt that the National Environmental Policy Act needed to be streamlined, while at the same time preserving the public process intent of the Act. They also suggested that community decision-making networks be incorporated, and that competition between different interests be averted through NEPA alternatives. Another individual saw the need to streamline FACA, while preserving the original intent of the Act. Another participant suggested fully using Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act to enhance federal cooperation with states.

Participant Quote

"A complex overlay of laws and regulations stifles creative solutions."

Bringing Science and Information to Problem Solving

Participants discussed how important it was that decision makers use accurate science and information in decision-making processes. The participants emphasized this point and noted that data gaps should be addressed. They also observed the need for improved data resolution, standardized methods, and peer review. These objectives can be accomplished through cooperative conservation efforts that provide a framework for joint fact-finding and the synthesizing and understanding of data.

Several groups discussed how cooperative conservation processes could provide an opportunity to discuss what "good science" is and to develop a common understanding between government and stakeholders of the state of knowledge about the issue(s) at hand. This can assist in integrating "sound science" more collaboratively and effectively into decision making and regulatory actions. An individual suggested reinstating the Environmental Education Act and the US EPA Small Grants Program as ways to strengthen environmental and conservation education.

Participants also noted the importance of recognizing the critical role of community-based and traditional knowledge in decision making. Cooperative conservation efforts can provide a setting and agreed-upon processes for bringing this kind of information into decisions. One person suggested exploring or strengthening models that link science to practical applications with local landowners like the Extension Service and the NRCS state and local conservation districts.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Participants asked federal and state agencies to improve their capacity to use joint fact-finding approaches that involve stakeholders in the development of questions and assumptions needing scientific input.

> *Participant Quote*
>
> *"Ecosystem impacts do not respect borders – plan across jurisdiction."*

They also noted a need for innovative methods of bringing scientific and technical expertise into a cooperative conservation process in a way that improves trust in the reliability of the information. Several groups suggested integrating an adaptive management and joint fact-finding framework into agency-sponsored science and science-based decision making. One individual identified the bottom-up citizen-based model of Washington State Northwest Straits Community Wild Fire Protection Plans as successful models for cooperative conservation. They saw these plans as community-driven with government oversight. Another participant recognized the National Estuary Program as a successful model for a local initiative. A different participant noted that models that have worked include the Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Heritage Areas with the National Park Service.

Resources, Grants, Procurement and Contracting Procedures: Participants found that they often do not have resources to gather baseline data, and those federal resources have diminished recently for data collection. They also noted that while citizens can participate in all party monitoring, they do not have the resources or knowledge to analyze data. Several groups discussed the need for increased resources for data collection and analysis. Others suggested that the federal agencies could share frameworks and tools for monitoring to enable communities and local regions to collect important information.

Training: Participants noted that scientists, from federal and state governments as well as NGO's, need training on how to communicate information to non-scientists. Agencies could partner with Universities in increasing this literacy, as well as general science and decision-making skills and knowledge.

Designing and Managing Meaningful Participation

Participants stressed in all sessions that cooperative conservation efforts should involve all affected stakeholders meaningfully and consistently. This involvement needs to start early in the process with stakeholders being consulted about the possible design and scope of the process under consideration. Participants explained that inclusivity and participation takes time and can be frustrating, but that it is critical.

Several breakout group members noted that convenors needed to provide realistic expectations about the process, timing of results and the ability to deliver. Many groups noted that well led and facilitated groups were important for cooperative conservation efforts to succeed.

> *Participant Quote*
>
> *"Build relationships before you discuss issues."*

Participants also noted concern regarding "late hits" that can take place as the result of changes in decision-making frameworks or legal challenges. They urged agencies to try and limit these occurrences to the greatest extent possible.

Actions for Consideration

Resources, Grants, Procurement, and Contracting Procedures: Participants encouraged federal and state agencies to provide funding and other incentives (e.g., market incentives, awards,

streamlined permitting, endorsements, and MOUs) to encourage local participation. Several breakout groups noted how expensive cooperative conservation projects could be, in particular, how difficult they could be to fund at the beginning. Participants also urged federal agencies to explore grants, procurement, and contracting procedures to make sure they support cooperative conservation projects. An individual proposed as a model 'interstate compacts,' which can streamline funding and facilitate cross-border collaborative spending. To achieve this, they suggested establishing a state and local equivalent of the Economy Act to allow communities to reach across boundaries to access resources. One individual suggested replicating local citizen-centered programs that provide funding on specific geographic or regional criteria and involve local governments in decision making. They referenced the Conservation 2000 program in Illinois as a successful model.

Changes in Rules, Policies, Regulations, and Laws: Participants noted that many groups identify federal regulations and laws as barriers to authentic and sustainable participation on cooperative conservation projects. Senior policy leaders should assess if there are real problems with procedures for involving stakeholders or if these barriers are misperception, lack of knowledge, or lack of necessary skills. Once this assessment is complete, the federal agencies should widely disseminate information on how to participate without conflicting with policies or regulations. One participant referred to the 2002 Healthy Forest mandate in which communities provide input into plans as a possible model for a more flexible approach to achieve cooperative collaboration.

Incentives: Federal agency personnel hiring, promotion, and reward policies should provide incentives for federal agency staff that convene, participate in, or manage collaborations with multiple stakeholders. Performance measures should identify those that cannot work effectively in collaborative settings and provide training to address the identified needs.

Participant Quote

"Bring all parties together without getting whacked."

Training: Federal agencies should provide comprehensive and systematic training in how to lead collaboratively and how to work productively with communities, local landowners, businesses, other levels of government, and NGOs. Participants explained that while some federal agency staff possess these skills, too often they do not have the skills to lead or participate in ongoing cooperative conservation projects.

Creating Incentives

Federal agencies, other units of government, and stakeholder groups are all subject to "problem solving inertia." It is difficult to learn and adopt new ways of approaching challenging issues. Participants acknowledged this and stressed the importance of incentives to encourage and sustain partnerships and collaborations. They noted that incentives might be necessary to bring people to the table and to sustain their involvement over time. Participants stressed throughout the discussions that resources for cooperative conservation projects have shrunk considerably, and the lack of resources makes it hard to accomplish common goals.

The participants cited examples illustrating that different people are motivated and rewarded by different types of incentives, including economic, social, psychological, or cultural aspects. They

noted that incentives can include strategies such as cost reduction, increased flexibility in modes of conforming to regulatory requirements, and increased certainty as to the prospect of future regulatory or policy direction. One participant singled out the Healthy Forest Restoration Act as a good model for motivating versus mandating community designed projects.

The primary focus of the discussion on incentives focused on incentives for stakeholders to come to the table and participate in cooperative conservation efforts. Several groups identified incentives that would help overcome mistrust and would sustain projects until resource or landscape impacts were measurable. There were also some references to the incentives needed to change the culture and behavior of federal personnel.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Participants suggested that federal agencies work with the private sector to explore which incentives would be most meaningful and how to implement them. Participants suggested exploring cost-effective market incentives. They also suggested that the development of markets for ecosystem services could provide a fruitful area for further exploration.

Participant Quote

"Motivate, not mandate."

In addition, participants encouraged working with the IRS to develop tax credits and revising tax codes and audit guides to provide incentives for corporations and private landowners to conserve land and species. Other ideas mentioned by participants include farm/ranch savings accounts and wetland mitigation banks.

Several groups also discussed awards, ceremonies, and endorsements to encourage local participation. Many participants noted that the chance to learn and network in national conferences like the White House Conference was a significant incentive to continue cooperative conservation efforts.

Participants suggested that the reward system for federal agency personnel be adapted to incorporate incentives for positive actions for cooperative conservation. An award program, as well as development of innovative ways to acknowledge inter-agency cooperation, would also be helpful.

As incentive strategies are developed, they should focus on developing and implementing effective measures of progress. Incentives should reward agency staff and projects that actively monitor progress, revise project activities based on monitoring, and actively and effectively involve stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Resources, Grants, Procurement and Contracting Procedures: Participants said that reduced costs were a potential incentive. Several participants in different sessions explained that targeted grants were important. For example, grants immediately awarded following the development of an approved conservation plan can be very helpful. Other groups discussed the types of financial support that would assist stakeholders either directly (e.g., travel costs, process costs, or support for monitoring) or indirectly (e.g., reduction in some other cost of doing business that they are currently paying).

Changes in Rules, Policies, Regulations, and Laws: Several participants explained that regulatory certainty offered a very useful incentive for participation. Linking participation to environmental goals (e.g., structure the cooperative conservation effort toward achieving a specific environmental objective) is also critical. Several participants discussed the need to link incentives to existing environmental protection goals and laws, for example the Clean Water Act.

Several attendees opined that stakeholders should seek alternatives to litigation in solving problems. They noted that providing incentives as alternatives to regulation was a good way to reduce the potential for litigation.

Participants suggested analyzing laws and regulations to ensure that they provided incentives for cooperative conservation. One group suggested including cost-share investments in the Farm Bill and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Training: A training component could be developed to introduce federal agency personnel and others to innovative approaches to incentives for the design and implementation of cooperative conservation.

Measuring Progress

Participants in many breakout groups discussed how difficult it is to develop standards and measures when dealing with nature; however, they stressed that performance measures should be developed that measure aspects of project success. They explained that people involved in projects needed to know if they were on track and working toward success, even if progress is slow. Several topic groups discussed the importance of setting clear principles and standards for cooperative conservation that can assist in establishing meaningful measures.

Participant Quote

"Monitor to manage, not just measure."

Participants recognized the need for clear indicators by which to measure progress and success. They noted that these measures should focus on both the substantive outcomes of the cooperative conservation project and the process of working collaboratively over time to achieve results. They also noted that it was important to develop methods and practices that would enable the assessment of incremental progress. Participants explained that it takes time to design and implement cooperative conservation projects; therefore, project participants need to be able to gather information to make mid-course corrections. It was also suggested that indicators and measures of success should be as much as possible tied to issues that mean something to people (e.g., family income, acreage preserved).

Participants in several groups emphasized that local stakeholders need to be directly involved in the development of indicators and the monitoring and assessment of projects. They noted that it could be problematic if the measures of success are developed from the top down. This can significantly impair the credibility of the assessment results with people at the local level. They also explained that when groups are involved in the monitoring and assessment process,

Participant Quote

"We are talking about celebrating stories, not only metrics."

communities can include their own knowledge and can learn as they implement a project and participate in the evaluation process.

Actions for Consideration

Administrative Actions: Senior policy leaders from each agency should create an interagency task force to develop protocols for project monitoring and final project evaluation. Interagency systems for monitoring and evaluation should create consistent criteria, goals, and parameters. The system should include tools and indicators that groups can use to tailor the monitoring to their project, but that would ensure consistency across agencies and projects.

The Senior Policy Team should assess federal performance evaluation systems (both programmatic and personnel) to assess where they advance or create barriers to cooperative conservation. Once the assessment is complete, evaluation systems should be revised so they help to encourage and measure the use of cooperative conservation strategies. The evaluation systems must be flexible so that stakeholders can be involved in choosing indicators and data collection measures to improve on-the-ground learning and involvement. One individual suggested developing "key point models" for evaluation, like the ones used in the USDA food safety program.

Resources, Grants, Procurement and Contracting Procedures: Participants stressed the need for resources to develop good baseline data and ongoing monitoring. They explained that often the development and use of evaluation measures is under-funded and therefore does not receive the attention necessary to be effective. Budgets in support of cooperative conservation should be structured to include funding targeted specifically for the development and application of measures of progress. Several participants stressed that federal agencies should have multi-year funding cycles to support project monitoring.

Participant Quote

"Collaboration is not necessarily going to result in spending less federal dollars, but it will ensure spending federal dollars more wisely."

***Changes in Rules, Policies, Regulations, and Laws*:** Agencies should look for opportunities to address cooperative conservation in the context of their Government Performances and Result Act (GPRA) goals and measures. Agencies should assess GPRA and other evaluation systems to make sure that incremental measures and project documentation is encouraged and validated.

Participant Quote

"Whenever you are faced with barriers on any partnership – always turn to your vision."

Training: Federal agencies should develop training programs and modules that focus on monitoring and evaluation as a collaborative and learning activity. Efforts should be made to incorporate the development of effective measures into existing training courses that address measurement and evaluation issues. In particular, regional federal agency staff need to learn how to set local benchmarks with local partners that enable local monitoring but that match federal goals or standards.

Facilitator Summary and Response to Report Questions

Note: The authors of this report were asked to provide some summary thoughts based upon their participation in the Conference, a thorough review of the written summaries, and their experience. In addition, a series of crosscutting questions were posed early in the analytical process (see Appendix D), and this section has been drafted to respond to those questions.

The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation succeeded in creating a venue for focused discussion and mutual learning on the development and use of cooperative conservation strategies. The invited participants engaged in direct, fruitful, and creative discussions drawing upon their personal experiences and expertise. It is our sense that the vast majority of participants left the Conference energized and hopeful that their participation will spur increased use of cooperative conservation, leading to better decisions about natural resource, and environmental management.

Developing a Strategy for Moving Forward

Participants emphasized the importance of culture change within the federal agencies. This will not happen without an intentional effort guided by strategies that operate at several levels to infuse the practice of cooperative conservation into the way agencies carry out their missions. Components of effective strategy should address senior leadership direction and messaging, programmatic content, personnel reward systems, and monitoring and evaluation. While our role was not to develop such a strategy, we believe that the themes outlined in this report provide the building blocks with which to construct such an approach.

We suggest the following two strategies:

- Actions that should be taken in a coordinated fashion by all five agencies (e.g., a coordinating council, development of common definitions); and

- Actions that should be taken by each agency, but tailored to fit individual missions and responsibilities (e.g., assessment of legal and regulatory opportunities and constraints, targeting of funds that can be used in support of cooperative conservation).

While we believe that it is important to think strategically as the agencies move forward, we also want to caution against "paralysis through analysis." We believe the participants have provided many good ideas that should be acted upon without requiring extensive review and discussion.

Fundamentally, the participants believe the agencies should act as problem solvers and initiators of cooperative conservation. The federal government needs to lead the movement toward cooperative conservation by facilitating the creation and implementation of cooperative conservation efforts. This role requires a different understanding of leadership from what is often assumed—leadership does not mean top-down control. The participants strongly emphasized the importance of federal personnel respecting the interests and skills of people at the community level. If the federal agencies and their personnel could make this transformation, it would have very far-reaching, positive impacts on government practice.

We would also assert that the principles of cooperative conservation and collaboration should characterize decision making at all levels and settings. If the federal government could infuse these principles into the culture of the federal agencies, it would improve the quality of both internally and externally.

Action-Focused Agenda

Given the momentum that was created in St. Louis, it is very important that the federal conveners move quickly to act upon the many very good suggestions made by the participants, which are summarized in this report. Perhaps the most significant step that could be taken to produce results quickly would be for the federal agencies to determine several actions that could be taken in the short term, demonstrating to those who participated in the Conference and others that there is continuing commitment on the part of the federal government to demonstrate leadership. Actions that could be acted upon quickly include:

- Maintain the interagency coordination function developed to plan and manage the Conference, and announce that this will be a standing function designed to coordinate federal activities on cooperative conservation;

- Continue the efforts that have been initiated to ensure that the principles of cooperative conservation be taken into account in the hiring, training, and rewarding of federal employees consistent with agency mission requirements and individual employee duties;

- Each participating agency should develop and include statements about the use of cooperative conservation approaches in their outreach materials and in public statements by their senior leadership;

- Develop a coordinated outreach and communication effort to keep the Conference participants informed, engaged, and motivated. This outreach and communication effort should involve all the agencies and develop a recognizable symbol to popularize cooperative conservation;

- Initiate a review of existing resources that federal agencies can use to support cooperative conservation. It would be unfortunate if time was spent reinventing information and guidance (e.g., principles of effective collaborative problem solving, training materials) if they already exist and can be used as drafted or with only minor modifications.

Participants suggested a wide range of actions that fall along the continuum from immediate to mid-term (1 to 2 years) to long term (3 years or more). We believe it is important that the strategy going forward include action items that fit into each of these categories. Participants understand that some aspects of supporting and implementing cooperative conservation require mid- or long-term actions, but they will be looking for actions that can be taken in the short term that both signal commitment to cooperative conservation and build the foundation for subsequent actions.

We would also suggest that the Senior Policy Team think about the sequencing of action in the context of an overall strategy to promote cooperative conservation. For example, changes to personnel review elements to reward the use of cooperative conservation may need to be phased in and be responsive to the development of training that staff could take to increase their skills and knowledge.

We would also suggest that individual agencies or bureaus assess how increased use of cooperative conservation can support objectives or milestones defined in their strategic plans. Too often, an initiative such as cooperative conservation is seen as a new priority, but little or no effort is made to determine how it can be integrated to support existing goals and priorities. Agency staff should review strategic planning documents to assess where to prioritize resources, allocate training time, or realign incentives to advance cooperative conservation principles and projects. Agencies must recognize and pursue cooperative conservation as the means to accomplish current environmental and conservation goals.

Human and Financial Resources

There are, of course, many different types of recommendations that were discussed at the Conference, and they vary widely in the effort that would be required to implement them. Generally, however, we would suggest that there are many recommendations that have to do with "doing business differently," such as cultural change and personnel incentives. The level of effort required to implement these simply may be to generate new guidance or policy, which could be communicated throughout the relevant agency and to affected stakeholders. Other actions suggested would require new activities or initiatives, such as the development of a best practices manual or training courses. The level of effort associated with these recommendations might be greater. In many cases, existing manuals and training courses may need to be tailored to particular agencies or programs.

We would also like to emphasize the importance of sustained efforts. Cooperative conservation is a different way of doing business, and it cannot be implemented overnight. It will require a sustained set of efforts focusing on staff skill development, appropriate policy guidance, creation of internal and external incentives, carefully planned implementation, monitoring, and feedback.

We are not in the position to comment on the specific dollar amounts that might be needed to implement actions suggested by the participants. However, we would note that many of the actions suggested by participants do not necessarily require significantly increased expenditures of funds. These would include actions such as articulation of cooperative conservation principles and objectives by senior leadership, rewarding risk taken by staff when they initiate cooperative conservation efforts, incorporation of cooperative conservation strategies into discussions of policy development and implementation, and celebrating and communicating successes.

Some actions that might require reallocation or increased funds include: travel and per diem support for participants who otherwise would not be able to participate in cooperative conservation efforts; development and/or dissemination of best practices guidance; development of a shared database to help disseminate lessons learned; and increased grant incentives.

Implementation

Many of the actions suggested could presumably be implemented through agency guidance and/or policy and would not require formal regulatory or legislative action. We would suggest that the agencies determine which actions fall into this category, select actions for implementation, and move forward on those as quickly as feasible. Other recommendations would require formal regulatory or legislative actions, such as changes to the Federal Advisory Committee Act or the implementing regulations for a particular statute. There were also a number of suggestions about Presidential Executive Orders, but since such an order has already been issued, we assume that a specific new need would have to be identified before an additional Executive Order would be appropriate.

Summary

The White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation marks a significant milestone in the evolution of conservation policy and practice in the United States. The Conference participants shared their experiences and suggested actions for moving forward in a very constructive and creative manner. The insights and information they contributed provide the necessary building blocks for a national strategy to expand the use of cooperative conservation. The conveners of the Conference now need to build on the momentum of the Conference and move forward with the design and implementation of that strategy.

APPENDIX A: Executive Order 13352

Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this order is to ensure that the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in federal decision making, in accordance with their respective agency missions, policies, and regulations.

Sec. 2. Definition. As used in this order, the term "cooperative conservation" means actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among federal, state, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

Sec. 3. Federal Activities. To carry out the purpose of this order, the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations and in coordination with each other as appropriate:

(a) carry out the programs, projects, and activities of the agency that they respectively head that implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that:

(i) facilitates cooperative conservation;

(ii) takes appropriate account of and respects the interests of persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land and other natural resources;

(iii) properly accommodates local participation in federal decision making; and

(iv) provides that the programs, projects, and activities are consistent with protecting public health and safety;

(b) report annually to the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality on actions taken to implement this order; and

(c) provide funding to the Office of Environmental Quality Management Fund (42 U.S.C. 4375) for the conference for which section 4 of this order provides.

Sec. 4. White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. The Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations:

(a) convene not later than 1 year after the date of this order, and thereafter at such times as the Chairman deems appropriate, a White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (Conference) to facilitate the exchange of information and advice relating to (i) cooperative conservation and (ii) means for achievement of the purpose of this order; and

(b) ensure that the Conference obtains information in a manner that seeks from Conference participants their individual advice and does not involve collective judgment or consensus advice or deliberation.

Sec. 5. General Provision. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,

August 26, 2004.

APPENDIX B: Day Two Breakout Topics

Accelerating Cooperative Conservation as a way of Doing Business: Building Capacity, Skills, and Practices Across Organizations
The shared wisdom of the public and private sectors—non-profits, the business community, government agencies, Tribes, community groups, private landowners and interested citizens—needs to be effectively engaged for cooperative conservation to flourish and endure. This session will elicit suggestions on building capacity, skills, and practices that advance cooperative conservation.

Building Successful Partnerships
Strong and sustainable partnerships represent the foundation of every successful cooperative conservation endeavor. Participants will identify key principles for building trust and offer individual suggestions to integrate partnerships into conservation efforts. Tools for successful partnerships, case study presentations from Day One of the Conference and personal experience will serve as the basis for discussion.

Expanding the Role of Tribes, States, and Communities in Cooperative Conservation
Nonfederal participation is vital to the development and implementation of sound environmental conservation. This discussion will provide a forum for conferees to explore ways, such as shared stewardship and innovative management practices, to expand the roles of tribes, states, and local communities as partners with federal agencies.

Improving Certainty and Incentives for Stakeholders
Generating stakeholder participation is crucial to the successful completion of cooperative conservation projects. This session seeks to identify and improve existing incentives and mechanisms for providing certainty in conservation efforts by exploring opportunities for improving and developing policies and programs across government, business, private, and non-profit sectors.

Infrastructure Projects: Collaborative Partnerships for Successful Outcomes
Government agencies at all levels are engaged in infrastructure development and management that requires substantive communication and cooperation with communities, non-governmental organizations and the public for successful outcomes. Wide ranges of public infrastructure types are involved: transportation, facilities, utilities, and many other forms of physical infrastructure. Session participants will identify crosscutting themes, propose collaborative approaches, and discuss policies, processes, and legislative solutions.

Managing Diverse Resource Demands on America's Public Lands: A Cooperative Approach to Improving Conservation
Growing demands on finite natural resources increase the need for careful management of diverse uses. This session will address multiple use conflicts, cooperative resolution, and shared decision strategies. Conferees will explore collaborative approaches to improving use compatibility and suggest solutions to the obstacles inherent in potentially inconsistent resource demands. Examples may include the relationship between mineral development and habitat conservation, motorized and non-motorized recreation, irrigation, and fisheries needs.

Measuring Success of Cooperative Conservation Efforts
Setting common goals and measuring and monitoring the results of cooperative conservation efforts are essential, not only to substantiate the merits of a project, but for purposes of adaptive management as well. This session will provide a forum for conferees to explore collaborative approaches, and discuss policies, processes, and legislative solutions for optimizing cooperative conservation efforts.

Reaching Across Boundaries to Promote Shared Governance
A fundamental hurdle facing many cooperative conservation projects is that jurisdictional and political boundaries oftentimes do not coincide with landscape realities. Complex ecological issues are requiring more sophisticated landscape-level responses from society. This discussion will explore the strategies needed for shared governance to achieve conservation and economic benefits for communities through inclusive and adaptive structures.

Using Science and Technology to Reach Cooperative Conservation Goals
Science and technology play a critical role in successful cooperative conservation efforts. This discussion will provide a venue to identify the ways science and technology can be used to inform stakeholder decisions. In addition, conferees will explore new approaches to streamlining and improving the development and application of scientific and technological tools.

APPENDIX C: Description of the Analytical Method Used To Produce the Report

The Enhancement and Analysis Process

The enhancement and analysis process used to produce the "Day Two Sessions Compilation and Analysis Report" (Analytical Report) included the review and refinement of individual session summaries, and the organization and categorization of information in the enhanced summaries. This information forms the basis of this Analytical Report. The following steps were taken:

Step 1: Review Conference Session Products

The review process began with a review of the "raw notes" for each of the 63 individual discussions, cross-referencing them with the matching session summary to ensure that key ideas and perspectives were included in each of the summaries. The review and enhancement focused on clarifying the intention and substance distilled in the summaries, not the syntax and structure of the summary. The "raw notes" and session summaries were found to be sufficient in detail and clarity so there was no need to consult session facilitators or flipchart notes for additional information.

The RESOLVE, Meridian and SRA staff (the SRA Team) noted and recorded information related to the categories below when drafting the enhanced session summaries:

A. Relevant ideas, options, suggestions and/or actions expressed by participants;
B. Context, discussion of priority, or emphasis by participants; and
C. Details of all the ideas including:
    i. policy vehicle suggested (e.g., standard, policy statement, regulation, law);
    ii. federal agency referenced;
    iii. interest group referenced (e.g., federal, state, local, industry, environmental group);
    iv. timing of suggested actions (e.g., short, medium, long-term);
    v. mode of suggested action (e.g., procedural, substantive);
    vi. barriers and incentives as identified by participants; and
    vii. specific examples cited by participants.

Step 2: Enhance Session Summaries

Based on the information obtained during the review, the SRA Team augmented each of the session summaries to ensure that all information obtained during the review was included in each enhanced summary.

Categories: The resulting enhanced summaries included the same categories as in the original two-page session summaries, and one additional miscellaneous section to capture points that were not included from the notes or were categorized differently from the summary. The categories in the enhanced summaries are:

- Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion
- National-level Practical Actions
- Local-level Practical Actions
- Particularly Insightful Quotes
- Miscellaneous

Enhancement: The two-page session summaries were enhanced in the following ways:

- Formatting: The summaries were formatted in a consistent font and generally consistent style to improve the ease of reading. The footers were adjusted to include the document file name for easier reference in the future.
- Clarification: Some of the text in the summaries was cryptic and the reviewers completed sentences and clarified themes based on information from the raw notes.
- Order: To a limited degree the reviewers moved some points from one category to another for ease of reading (e.g., if a directive to reform FACA was included in section "C. Local-level Practical Actions" it would be moved to section "B. National-level Practical Actions).
- Enhancement: The style of writing (synthesized ideas in paragraphs versus brief concepts in bullets) was preserved. If the summary appeared to be missing any important points made by participants these were either added to one of the four existing categories (A-D) or included in a fifth category "E. Miscellaneous - Points that were not included from the notes or were categorized differently from the summary."

Observations: The two-page summaries were accurate and comprehensive. As a result, little significant information was added beyond some clarifying language. Where new ideas were added from the notes, they generally pertained to comments about cooperative conservation processes that did not fit within the four prescribed categories.

Step 3: Organize and Categorize Information

The SRA Team reviewed the enhanced summaries, and organized the information into an analytical matrix. In the review, SRA Team members used consistent categorizing methods to determine relevant themes or groupings of ideas. Ideas were tracked in the spreadsheet.

Themes and Ideas Spreadsheet Organization: The spreadsheet has nine data sheets, one for each of the nine concurrent topic sessions on Day Two:

Data Sheet Organization and Use: Each data sheet was organized to track and gather information related to the following questions:

1. What were the ideas, issues, or actions repeated across sessions? What was their frequency-low, medium or high?
2. Which, if any of these ideas were expressed with any indication of priority or emphasis?
3. At what level do these ideas need to be applied according to Conference participants?
4. What new policies or policy changes would promote cooperative conservation, in the opinion of participants?

5. What changes to laws and regulations would promote cooperative conservation, in the opinion of participants?
6. What capacity building activities are needed to enhance the capabilities of people to engage effectively in cooperative conservation efforts?
7. What suggestions may have only appeared once or twice but resonate or support other efforts?
8. What illustrative examples were shared that offer opportunities for shared learning?
9. In the view of participants, what incentives exist or need to be developed to overcome barriers identified?

Step 4: Analytical Report Development

Following the cross-session review of the enhanced summaries, Birkhoff and Ehrmann prepared this Report using as the primary sources of information the content of the Theme and Ideas spreadsheet, the enhanced summaries, other Conference documentation, including the final two-page green sheet of major themes that was produced at the Conference, individual recollection from the Conference, and other related professional experience.

The intent of the analysis is to provide insight into what the information means from a federal perspective as well as provide information to help frame issues to answer policy questions of concern to agencies at subsequent meetings.

APPENDIX D: Initial Report Questions

- What were the ideas, issues, or actions repeated across sessions and topics? What was their frequency? (The level of frequency analysis will be identified in the analytical framework document.)
- Which, if any, of these ideas were expressed with any indication of priority or emphasis? (The method for identifying points of emphasis will be called out in the analytical framework)
- At what level do these ideas need to be applied according to Conference participants?
- What new policies or policy changes would promote cooperative conservation, in the opinion of participants?
- What changes to laws and regulations would promote cooperative conservation, in the opinion of participants?
- What capacity building activities are needed to enhance the capabilities of people to engage effectively in cooperative conservation efforts?
- What suggestion may have only appeared once or twice but resonates or supports other efforts?
- What illustrative examples were shared that offer opportunities for shared learning?
- In the view of participants, what incentives exist or need to be developed to overcome identified barriers?

APPENDIX E: Basic Principles for Agency Engagement in Environmental Conflict Resolution and Collaborative Problem Solving[1]

Informed Commitment	Confirm willingness and availability of appropriate agency leadership and staff at all levels to commit to principles of engagement; ensure commitment to participate in good faith with open mindset to new perspectives
Balanced, Voluntary Representation	Ensure balanced inclusion of affected/concerned interests; all parties should be willing and able to participate and select their own representatives
Group Autonomy	Engage with all participants in developing and governing process; including choice of consensus-based decision rules; seek assistance as needed from impartial facilitator/mediator selected by and accountable to all parties
Informed Process	Seek agreement on how to share, test, and apply relevant information (scientific, cultural, technical, etc.) among participants; ensure relevant information is accessible and understandable by all participants
Accountability	Participate in the process directly, fully, and in good faith; be accountable to all participants, as well as agency representatives and the public
Openness	Ensure all participants and public are fully informed in a timely manner of the purpose and objectives of process; communicate agency authorities, requirements, and constraints; uphold confidentiality rules and agreements as required for particular proceedings
Timeliness	Ensure timely decisions and outcomes
Implementation	Ensure decisions are implementable consistent with federal law and policy; parties should commit to identify roles and responsibilities necessary to implement agreement; parties should agree in advance on the consequences of a party being unable to provide necessary resources or implement agreement; ensure parties will take steps to implement and obtain resources necessary to agreement

[1] These principles were developed by the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution.