

Tips on Initiating a Coordinated Plan

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Coordinated planning is usually initiated because a resource problem or conflict needs to be resolved or a plan is needed to keep potential problems from developing. A coordinated plan is usually initiated at the local level by a person, group, organization, or agency. Preferably, a request for a coordinated plan is processed through a Soil and Water Conservation District, which is a legal subdivision of state government with responsibility for land and water conservation. As an alternative, the request can be presented and discussed with landowners involved and local representatives of agencies and groups that should be involved. It is important that the initiators scrutinize several major factors at an early stage. Experience has proved that any one of these factors can stymie completion of an effective CRMP if not given adequate attention.

Manageability

Ensure that the proposed area or issue involved in the CRMP is actually manageable. A management plan cannot be formulated for something that is not manageable. If the proposed area or issue is too extensive, complicated, or involves too many interests and/or people, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the planning team to make specific decisions on what is to be done, where, and by whom.

An unmanageable situation may be handled by dividing it into manageable segments and planning each segment one at a time. For example, the nucleus of a manageable segment might consist of a sub-watershed containing an important riparian area, a critical wildlife wintering range, a common-use grazing allotment, or other such entity. This nucleus situation plus interdependent areas can make up a manageable segment. Formulating a coordinated plan for each manageable segment usually will accelerate on-the-land action. The idea is to help those who are most ready, willing, and able to get into action as soon as possible. If some segments never get planned, those segments that have been covered by successful plans are making progress. This is better than having the entire area stymied due to unmanageable circumstances.

If an owner decides his or her land will not be included in the planned area, one solution is to merely redefine the area to exclude that ownership.

Planning Team

Once the area or issue to be planned has been identi-

fied, the make-up of the planning team can be established. The planning team should be kept as small as practical. Representatives of significant user groups, plus owners and managers of resources within this specific area to be planned, should be invited to participate on the planning team. Local multiple-member organizations which are significantly involved in this specific area, such as a Rod and Gun Club, may be invited to appoint one representative to participate on the planning team. It is difficult and risky to not invite someone deliberately. But doing so may have less adverse effect on the final plan than having the planning session degenerate into a public meeting.

Agency representatives in the local planning team should be qualified and generally have the authority to make decisions for their agencies. Otherwise, individuals not involved in developing the rationale upon which decisions were based might veto parts or all of a plan. This brings about a repeated reconvening of the local planning team, which blocks progress and creates dissension and futility.

It is not unusual to find an extremist representing a particular faction within the planning team. Such people are often derogatorily labelled "environmentalists"; however, all good resource workers and managers have concerns for the environment and, therefore, are environmentalists. It helps the planning team if they will recognize that between the outer limits of nearly every conflict is a middle ground. This creates a situation ripe for compromise, which brings the moderator into power. Without extremes in conflicting viewpoints, needed changes and progress might not occur.

Extremism, of course, incurs obligation. It is not enough to be against something without recognizing alternative solutions and legitimate needs. Searching for and accepting these solutions and needs is required of the extremists themselves. Few causes are so noble that compromise can be ignored. Resource management planning itself is a compromise. If we are willing to accept Nature's own dynamic succession, most renewable resources might be protected if left completely alone. However, it is worth noting that uncontrolled ecology is a wormy apple. Is that what the public really wants?

Kinds of Problems

Are the kinds of problems or issues you intend to resolve really related to resource management or are some of them actually matters of land use? The significance of this analysis is that the land use planning process and the resource management planning process, although somewhat similar, involve entirely different groups of people who make the decisions. For example:

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Land use planning guides the uses of land usually within an administrative area such as a county, forest, or municipality. It is *strategic* planning and answers the questions "where?" and "how much?". General public meetings are characteristic of this kind of planning. Decisions, as well as subsequent revisions are made through a political process. If land use planning is needed, it should precede resource management planning.

Resource management planning, which is where CRMP fits, guides management of resources on a specific, manageable area or issue. It is *operational* planning in that once the land use plan specifies "where" and "how much", the CRMP process answers the questions "how?" and "by whom?". The public involved consists of those who have a direct interest in the specific area or issue: they are owners, managers, and users of the resources in the planning area. Owners and managers do not abrogate their authority and responsibility to make final decisions but they make these decisions while listening to the viewpoints, experiences and options of others. The CRMP process results in specific management decisions made by compromise and consensus and this is the kind of decision that cannot be made in an open public meeting such as involved with land use planning.

Sometimes the CRMP process cannot proceed until certain issues are settled by the land use planning process because the kinds of decisions that need to be made must involve a higher authority than the local CRMP planning team.

Project planning is *installational* planning in that it deals with the construction or installation of a project or measure, such as a fence, crop rotation, or grazing system, that has been decided upon during the CRMP process. The end product is a set of specifications for completing the project according to a required standard. Public input is specific and usually limited to those who will actually use the project or measure. Project plans are usually addenda to resource management plans and are deve-

loped sequentially according to the priority placed upon completion of each project.

The differences between these three forms of resource planning are significant when it comes to getting the resource management job done on the land and to communicating with others about resource planning in general.

Formulating the Plan

Too often planning teams become frustrated because they have met several times only to denote that they are aimlessly rehashing the same subject matter with little or no evidence of progress toward a goal. Once the coordinated plan is initiated, it is helpful to explain to the planning team how the CRMP process works to involve them individually and collectively in making specific decisions on what they want done. As a consensus decision is reached, it should be recorded concisely. As the list of decisions grows, the coordinated plan is taking shape and, when all decisions are made, based on current knowledge, the basic coordinated plan is completed. Later, if a member of the planning team thinks there is need for reconsideration of an item previously decided on, this can be done easily by the team. The coordinated plan should be considered as being open-ended so corrections and improvements can be made easily as new information becomes available and as progress on the land dictates.

The CRMP process, as it was originally developed, is a decision-making process, not a forecasting service.

Additional Details

Refer to the following references:

- Planning the use and management of renewable resources. 1977.** Rangeman's Journal. 4(4):99-102 August and 4(5):144-147 October.
- Coordinated resource management planning: Does it work? 1987.** Journal of Soil and Water Conservation. 42(3):161-166. May-June.
- How to do coordinated resource management planning. 1988.** Journal of Soil and Water Conservation. 43(3):216-220. May-June

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