

Fisheries Management Council Member Training

Collaborative Decision Making

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Characteristics of Natural Resource Decision Making

- Multiple parties with diverse perspectives
- Some parties are more vocal than others
- Parties value societal “goods” differently
- Scientific and technical uncertainty
- Geographical, ecosystem and political disconnects
- Sustainability triangle of environment, economic and social/community is very important and challenging
- Often hard to measure success

Underlying Assumptions

- Having people with a range of perspectives, experience, and opinions is important in making good decisions on complex issues – surrogates for the complexity of the issues
- Groups make better decisions when they are aware of the interests and concerns of others
- Decisions regarding public resources should be based on the best available information from a range of sources
- Collaborative process is compatible with and supportive of a formal decision making

Characteristics of Collaborative Decision Making

- Work toward a common objective – making a decision
- Need to understand the difference between interests and positions
- Careful listening is very important
- It takes time to gain an understanding of interests
- A collaborative approach can be designed to fit the situation – not a cookie-cutter methodology
- Can fit different scales – including small committees or task forces, public input, council deliberations

Characteristics of Collaborative Decision Making

- “It’s the people, stupid, not the stupid people” – mutual respect is key
- Provides opportunities to build trust – is vital to success
- Integrate understanding of data and scientific information into the decision making process
- It takes focused attention and hard work

Interests and Positions

- Need to understand the difference between positions and interests
 - Position: the end point you want (e.g., “don’t build the road”)
 - Interest: needs and concerns that stand behind the position (e.g., noise, traffic and access)
 - Positions do not give you much information to work with; Interests provide information that can be analyzed and arrayed and can serve as the “building blocks” for agreements
- It is very difficult to successfully develop a policy or management action if one does not understand the needs and concerns of those who might be affected.

Building a Decision Making Plan

- **Issue:** frame the decision(s) to be made
- **Involvement:** include the perspectives and views that need to be taken into account
- **Interests:** gain an understanding of what is important to people – what do they care about?
- **Incentives:** what will motivate people to do the hard work involved in collaborative decision making?
- **Information:** what information is needed for decision making?
- **Implementation:** making sure it all makes a difference at decision making time

Defining Consensus

- Can people “live with” the outcome?
 - Does not require that everyone support every aspect with equal enthusiasm

Examples of Collaboration in Fisheries Management

- Sector allocations – Georges Bank Hook Fisheries
- Harvest cooperatives – New England Red Crab Harvesters Association
- Gentlemen's agreements – Montauk Tilefish Association
- Community-based management initiatives – Downeast Groundfish Initiative
- Cooperative research – Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank ecosystems

Examples of Collaboration in Fisheries Management

- A range of initiatives in terms of purpose, scale, and function, suggesting there are alternatives to the existing decision making model exist and opportunities for innovative decision making approaches.
- Also opportunities to incorporate collaboration as the style and approach used to make decisions within the Council

If you don't remember anything else . . .

- Hear and understand diverse interests
 - *Don't get tunnel vision*
- Carry out your responsibilities with mutual respect and build trust
 - *Make deposits in your trust account*
- Collaborate on the development of a decision making plan
 - *Work together to organize and understand the complexity*