Strategic Collaboration
Skills Building Training  Module #3

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group
Why collaborate?

Stakeholders jointly achieve a level/form of collaboration almost none of them thought possible, and which is essential for meeting the group’s objectives.

**Before**
- Low trust
- No or weak agreement
- Lack of shared vision
- No clear path forward
- No collective forum

**Over Time**
- Relational trust & confidence in group effectiveness increases
- Agreements and practices that manage & resolve disputes
- Shared vision & goals for the future
- Process for working together
- Ongoing forum for collaboration
Why collaborate?

Collaboration is rooted in a very practical motivation: to increase a group’s capacity to meet its objectives and individual parties to advance their own objectives in the process.

Kumbaya!
When is collaboration *strategic*?

1. Supports shared or complementary purpose(s)
2. Process maximizes potential value
3. *High likelihood* of producing effective: Agreements, Actions & Outcomes
1. Strategic Collaboration supports shared or complementary purpose(s)

- Coordinate between and among land managers, stewardship groups, private industry and other stakeholders
- Identify management actions & projects with multiple benefits (i.e., triple bottom line)
- Maximize scale of impact (across ownership/management boundaries/jurisdictions)
- Attract funding opportunities
- Measure & manage forest health together
2. Strategic Collaboration *maximizes potential value*

- Advances individual interests
- Advances shared and/or complementary goals
- Creates efficiency for stakeholders
- Achieves collective impact
- Leverages existing resources and attracts new resources
3. Strategic Collaboration supports *high likelihood* of *producing effective agreements, actions & outcomes*

*Goal: widespread understanding and support*

*Key factors:*

a) Participation  
b) Structure  
c) Process  
d) Transparency  
e) Trust building
A) Participation tied to outcomes

- Participation balanced to achieve broader thinking & greater buy-in
- Roles, responsibilities & decision-making well defined
B) Structure Supports Efficiency

- Different levels of involvement
- Stakeholders know where they can “plug in”
C) Process for Collaborative Natural Resources Management

Deliberation that enables Social Learning contributes to Collaborative Relationships.

Generates Knowledge About:
- Facts
- Values
- Problems and Opportunities
- Areas of Agreement and Disagreement
- Alternative Actions
- Possibilities for Working Together

Process Attributes that Foster Learning:
- Democratic Structure
- Open Communication
- Diverse Participation
- Multiple Sources of Knowledge
- Extended Engagement
- Unrestrained Thinking
- Constructive Conflict Facilitation

Requisites for Co-management:
- Capacity
- Knowledge
- Common Purpose
- Supportive Policy
- Collaborative Relationships
- Appropriate Processes
- Appropriate Structures
D) Transparency

People can figure out what’s going on and where they fit in
E) Strategic collaboration builds trust and sustainability
How do stakeholders achieve breakthroughs in collaboration?

**Build Trust**
- Ground rules
- Facilitator modeling
- Socializing and relationship building
- Story telling and acknowledging history
- Perspective taking
- Promise-deliver cycles

**Negotiate**
- Interests, not positions
- Multiple options
- Wise trades
- Fairness as a criterion
- Mediation
- Working with back tables

**Imagine**
- Reframing the problem
- Shared experiences
- Envisioning great outcomes/futures
- Exploring and inventing without committing
- Using diversity to foster divergent thinking

**Act Together**
- Joint fact finding
- Testing potential solutions
- Communicating about the group’s goals and work
- Bringing in additional resources
- Dealing with capacity gaps
How can collaboration be sustained?

1. Collaboration creates joint gains

2. Implementation requires ongoing effort

3. Stakeholders commit to an ongoing partnership
Characteristics of a Strategic Collaboration

- Participation is inclusive
- Participation reflects diversity of perspectives & demographics
- Explicit links to formal decision-making process
- Distinct forums for different levels of participation
- Forum promotes dialogue
- Outcomes linked to participation
Discussion

1. How does the ACCG demonstrate the characteristics of strategic collaboration?

2. In what areas could ACCG’s collaboration be strengthened (or made more strategic) in order to take its work to the next level?

3. What would breakthroughs in collaboration look like for the ACCG?
About CBI

CBI is a nonprofit organization with decades of experience helping leaders collaborate to solve complex problems.

Our staff are experts in facilitation, mediation, capacity building, citizen engagement, and organizational strategy and development. We are committed to using our skills to build collaboration on today’s most significant social, environmental, and economic challenges. We work within and across organizations, sectors, and stakeholder groups.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: CBI.ORG