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## **COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT -- CONFLICT OR CONSENSUS MANAGEMENT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Coordinated Resource Management, or CRM as it is commonly called, is a voluntary process which allows local people to provide input in making and implementing resource management decisions. CRM brings all affected interests (private landowners, federal, local, and state agencies, interests groups, and other specialists) together to set common goals and resolve resource issues as a team. CRM is working out solutions with local people to do what is best to meet the needs of all. Nationwide, CRM has been successful in addressing a number of controversial management issues, such as livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, fisheries, water quality, endangered species, wetlands, mine reclamation, forestry and timber, and many other issues. In addition, CRM has benefitted local communities in achieving cultural, social, and economic goals. Schools, hospitals, fire departments, and other local entities have also used the CRM process. CRM achieves individual and group ownership and support for the plan and its implementation.

### **WHAT MAKES CRM UNIQUE?**

In every situation that we know, CRM issues involve one or more management authorities. For example, the final authority for making a decision with broad reaching impact can rest with a weed board, a hospital board, a branch of state government, or a federal land management agency.

At worst, legally sanctioned authorities make their decisions without public input. Public decisions made in this way that are more than just "routine", run the risk of creating enormous ill-will, of never being implemented (perhaps the result of successful legal appeals), and/or unnecessarily creating adverse impacts on some.

At best, and more typically, decisions are made with more or less input from citizen advisory committees. Most of us have been members of advisory committees and experienced the frustration when the "decision makers" did not accept the advice of their committee. Notwithstanding, advisory committees often function satisfactorily when they make up a broad cross-section of the community and their advice is accepted by the decision makers.

CRM when properly functioning has several attributes that help to assure better decisions will be made when users are faithful to the process. Key to these are:

**Team work** In healthy, functioning CRM efforts, all are equal members of the committee, the **CRM team** if you will, includes the "decision makers". Understanding this point is key. Those who have decision making (management) responsibility do not relinquish their authority to the team. They do not abrogate their responsibility. Rather they work with the team as equal members, agreeing to group-arrived decisions only when comfortable and within their statutory authority.

**Consensus** Consensus is defined to be a collective agreement of the CRM team which is derived from open communications in a supportive climate where all members feel they have a "fair" opportunity to influence the decision. All must understand and be able to support decision even though they may not totally agree with every aspect of it. Consensus may not mean unanimity, implying that an agreement is accepted as the best for the group (and the community) as a whole, if not for each individual member. However, all members agree to give the decision a try.

**Commitment** Members of the team and those whom are represented by team members must make the commitment to the CRM process and plans which are developed. For example, it is completely inappropriate and destructive to be a CRM team member and at the same time initiate legal action on the issue to unilaterally accomplish what you want.

**Involvement** All interested and impacted parties must be members of the CRM team or be represented on the team. To exclude key interests is to invite failure through lack of support, lack of plan implementation, appeals, litigation, etc.

**Needs not Positions** Legitimate needs can be determined in the thoughtful deliberations of the CRM team. Needs can be met, usually. Individual member positions are unyielding and can be damaging in CRM deliberations. After all, positions are typically an individual solution to the problem being discussed.

**Voluntary** Those who participate as CRM team members do so voluntarily. They should view their presence as a better alternative than their absence. CRM is not legally binding, it is not mandatory. However, CRM team arrived decisions convey the sentiment of the impacted public and as such can influence legal decisions if necessary.

**Authority** CRM team members who represent others need to have the authority to speak for their group. Members who do not have this authority can intentionally or inadvertently subvert or kill the groups' effort.

**Threatening** CRM is neither threatening to private property rights or to management agency responsibility. As a voluntary effort, which uses consensus to make decisions, CRM cannot be used as a lever to achieve management decisions.

## WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF USING CRM?

The **time** required to make a decision through CRM will be longer than what most are accustomed. CRM might be more time consuming in the short-run than other approaches. But this must be weighed against the long-run, where CRM offers a better opportunity to make decisions supported by all rather than fought by many. CRM is not an overnight process, decisions are made as a result of through input plus thoughtful deliberation, and this takes time. CRM tries to overcome the question "How come there is never enough time to do it right the first time, but always enough time to do it over?"

Too high **cost** is another disadvantage, although this often is a mis-perception. Costs include the cost of time. Since CRM is voluntary, much of the participants cost is at their own expense. If paid facilitators are used to help the CRM team through to their decision, this too is a cost. These costs, necessarily must be weighed against the alternatives. These can include, making bad natural resource decisions, poor health care decisions, not being able to implement a practice (essentially no decision), the costs of court and endless appeals, and perhaps most important -- the loss of desired inter-personal relationships -- neighbor to neighbor or friend to friend.

**FACA**, the Federal Advisory Committee Act, is being interpreted by some federal personnel as preventing them from participating as equal partners in CRM. There are conflicting acts, including one which specifically authorizes the use of CRM by federal agencies. Some groups, including the Society for Range Management, are currently working with the Clinton administration and congressional delegates to resolve the matter. In the meantime, where the issue in question involves one or more federal agencies, CRM activity can be started. As an open, inclusive process, some agencies see no conflict in using CRM and are continuing to do so.

## HOW IS CRM USED IN SOUTH DAKOTA?

CRM is designed to bring people together to aid in conservation planning and wise use of the state's natural resources. However, as a people process, its application is powerfully useful in nearly any public decision making setting. Often it has been used to help people resolve natural resource management conflicts. CRM was first developed over public lands issues in the western states. In South Dakota it has been developed to assist with more private land matters as well as community resource development issues.

Among the first uses were Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction and Cattle-Grouse Competition. Recent, considered, and pending activities using CRM principles include Crow Creek Watershed, LaCreek Wildlife Refuge, Rapid City Urban Deer, Midland School Modernization, Waubay Lake Watershed, Bootstraps Expansion, Belle Fourche River Restoration, Sisseton Sewage Lagoon, Sedimentation and Erosion Control Standards, Shooting Preserve Rule Making, and Spearfish Canyon Land Use.

## **HOW DID SOUTH DAKOTANS LEARN ABOUT CRM?**

Over the past two years there has been an aggressive educational program to alert South Dakotans to the opportunities CRM offers. This has included 13, 2-day CRM process workshops with 280 participants; two 3-day facilitator training workshops for 58 participants; a 1-day executive seminar for 45, plus numerous 30 minute to 4-hour introductions of CRM to local groups of various interests. Additional training sessions will be conducted during the next four years.

## **WHY FACILITATOR TRAINING?**

Specific skills of facilitation are required to mold a team from a collection of people who may only be casual acquaintances or who may be so angry with one another that they have not spoken for years. South Dakota's efforts are unique in the nation in that we employ the use of trained facilitators to create a productive work atmosphere to resolve whatever topic is at hand. Facilitators help the team enforce the principles of CRM. Facilitators come from both public and private walks of life. After formal training, potential facilitators gain on-the-job experience by paring up with a more experienced facilitator in a mentoring process, ensuring enough trained facilitators are available to help with whatever situations might arise. South Dakota's development of trained facilitators is being duplicated in other states.

## **DO FACILITATORS MAKE THE DECISION FOR THE CRM TEAM?**

No. Unlike arbitrators, facilitators are responsible only for the CRM process. That is, they make the process work. The other team members are responsible for the product, or the outcome. They are the ones who set the goals, decide on a plan and its implementation, and monitor the results. Of course the facilitator helps in the entire effort, but is necessarily neutral to the outcome.

## **WHO IS INVOLVED IN SOUTH DAKOTA CRM?**

Cooperators pulling the CRM process together include public and private organizations. In addition to SDSU Cooperative Extension Service, they include SD Association of Conservation Districts, South Dakota Stockgrowers, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Ag Unity, The Audubon Society, SD Farm Bureau, Nebraska National Forest, Black Hills National Forest, Black Hills Multiple Use Association, SD Department of Agriculture, SD Water Congress, SD Game Fish & Parks Department, SD Mediation Association, SD Attorney General, private land owners, and many others.

## **WHO PAYS?**

The training efforts since 1994 have been underwritten by grants from the Northwest Area Foundation, SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources (mostly EPA 319), US Fish & Wildlife Service, Nebraska National Forest, and other agency cooperators. These grants

will continue to support training during the next four years for Information and Awareness Sharing, CRM Process Training, CRM Implementation Manual Development, Local Project Implementation Training, Mentoring Facilitators, and an Advanced Facilitation Workshop.

At the local level, what we call CRM Local Level Committees (teams), our state CRM organization pays for initial expenses. These can include costs associated with informing the local community about CRM, paying costs of the facilitator for the initial 1-3 sessions, and paying for the cost of the co-facilitator, possibly for the duration of the team meetings. After the initial meetings, facilitator costs are paid by the Local Level Committee. Ideally, costs are shared among all committee members or their organizations. Costs are negotiated between the local committee and the facilitator. Range of costs which we have experienced follow.

Facilitator Travel - \$5 to \$20/hr.

Facilitator Prep - \$5 to 40/hr.

Facilitator Meeting Conduct - \$20 to \$100/hr.

Facilitated sessions typically are blocked into 4-hour segments, sometimes two sessions in the same day.

### **IS CRM ALWAYS SUCCESSFUL?**

CRM should never fail. In any CRM process, there is enormous growth among participants from the information gained by sharing, realization of the breadth of human needs surrounding the issue, and an understanding of potential solutions to the problem. Of course it happens that the team may not be able to arrive at a consensus-reached solution. When this happens, and if a decision must be made, those who must make the the decision have better information to make it. The CRM process may have been successful in determining the issues, concerns, and options available about the resource in question.

In the case of a federal land management agency decision, much of the concerns, questions, etc. will be identified for the agency and will need to be addressed in their public information process. Individuals who continue to disagree with the decision, retain all legal rights to appeal and/or take other legal action.

CRM is not appropriate for all situations; however, where it is appropriate CRM has the potential for decisions and plans that are long-standing and are in the best interests of the resource as well as the parties involved.

## **HOW DO I LEARN MORE ABOUT CRM IN MY STATE?**

**Society for Range Management** SRM has an active national-level CRM committee made up of state representatives. They maintain videos on CRM. General CRM information or suggestions for contacts can be obtained at the address below.

Society for Range Management  
1839 York Street  
Denver, CO 80206-1213  
Phone: (303) 355-7070

### **Colorado**

Either the SRM office or  
Colorado Association of Soil Conservation Districts  
3000 Youngfield #163  
Lakewood, CO 80215-6550  
Phone: (303) 232-6242

### **Wyoming**

Wyoming Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources & Policy Division  
2219 Carey Ave.  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
Phone: (307) 777-7323

### **Nebraska**

Butch Ellis or Bob Sprentall  
Nebraska National Forest  
125 North Main St.  
Chadron, NE 69337-2118  
(308) 432-0300

### **South Dakota**

Jim Johnson or Martin Beutler  
SDSU Research & Extension Center  
801 San Francisco Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
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