

Forces Shaping Range Resource Management— Coordinated Resource Management

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I see Coordinated Resource Management as a powerful force shaping resource management. Bear in mind, however, that it is a social more than a technical force. It is primarily a function of altering human behavior.

We have available an abundance of technical knowledge and skills. The problem has been getting adversaries to listen and understand one another's needs so they know what knowledge and skills to bring to bear on problems.

My experience with the Modoc/Washoe Experimental Stewardship Program (ESP for short) in NE California and NW Nevada strengthens my confidence in Coordinated Resource Management. I want to share some of what has been learned that makes ESP a good example of Coordinated Resource Management.

ESP was authorized by the Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978. Congress asked the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to develop and implement an experimental program providing incentives or rewards for the holders of grazing permits whose stewardship improved the condition of the lands. I believe Congress was searching for a way to allow special interest groups and resource managers to settle issues at the local level.

The founders of, and participants in, the Modoc/Washoe Program see range management, or stewardship, as more than livestock management. We address all resources of the rangelands to accommodate, if possible, all needs of public land users in our planning and management. Thus, we attempt to incorporate representatives of those agencies, organizations, and associations having direct interest in management of the resources. Livestock and timber industries, county government, university range science departments, Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service (SCS), Resource Conservation Districts (RCD), Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), Audubon Society, State Game and Agricultural Departments, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Wildlife Society joined the Forest Supervisor and myself as equal participants in operating the program.

Our organization is highly structured, guided by a Steering Committee composed of management level representatives.

The technical experts belong to Technical Review Teams (TRT) assigned to problem solving for specific issues or specific allotments. Each TRT has a minimum of five people with an environmental representative, a rancher, a Fish and

Game Department employee, a SCS employee, and one from the Forest Service or BLM. Others, such as representatives concerned with wild horses or archeology, are added if warranted. Additionally, we have over two dozen standing subcommittees on Incentives, Wild Horses, Riparian Habitat, Grazing Fee Credit Experiment, etc. Work constantly flows at all levels of the organization.



A Modoc/Washoe Technical Review Team hard at work resolving a land management conflict.

Rancher representative Jean Schadler, who served as Steering Committee Chairman for the first 2 1/2 years put it this way:

The Modoc/Washoe Program is successful, in part because we spent several sessions developing a common understanding of each other's philosophical viewpoints. Then, we agreed to the philosophical principles under which we would act. We agreed that our long-term goal is to "foster cooperation and coordination among the various users . . . and agencies' to achieve three objectives:

1. Environmental improvement.
2. Integrated and improved management of all ownerships.
3. Through improved management, long-term stability of the economy.

We still frustrate and anger each other with our biases, assumptions, and fears. However, we agreed, early on, not to just let each other live, but to strive to improve the quality of life for all of us by advocating our own needs clearly and hearing the needs of others."

The program enjoys nationally recognized success. ESP is endorsed by the Range Resource Management Task Force

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of the National Governor's Association. In a letter to former Secretary of the Interior William Clark, Montana Governor Ted Schwinden, Chairman of the Committee, urges "expansion of the program and its management processes throughout the West." The letter is co-signed by former Wyoming Governor Ed Herschler and former Idaho Governor John F. Evans. The three governors agree, "if compromise and stability can be achieved among social, environmental, and economic interests surrounding the vast public rangelands, they can be achieved in other areas of natural resource management." They told Mr. Clark: "The Experimental Stewardship Program should be expanded because it:

1. Has become the most outstanding example of a state/federal/public/private partnership in natural resource management.
2. Has saved legal fees through the prevention of conflict and litigation and, by targeting money and resources for the most needy areas, has secured a better return for dollars invested in range management.
3. Involves all people and interests at all levels in the decision-making process governing specific land resource units.
4. Places the highest priority on rangeland resources and their improvement and allows the management process to transcend administrative and jurisdictional boundaries.
5. Encourages agency cooperation—reducing administrative duplication—and facilitates cooperation among public and private interests."

I believe the single most important factor that shaped the success of the Modoc/Washoe program is an operating principle we adhere to without exception. All decisions, recommendations and actions taken are with unanimous agreement, or they aren't taken. We agreed at our first Steering Committee Meeting to take this ultimate risk in a negotiation setting. Any issue not receiving unanimous resolution is sent back to a working committee for further study or is tabled. We extend this operating rule to all levels. No level of the structure can pass a recommendation onto the next level without unanimous agreement.

I feel the unanimous agreement rule has been particularly instrumental in the success story. Yet, the idea is controversial itself. It is frightening to some, a threat to others. Without

fail, the idea has generated the greatest reservation. Frankly, it creates a remarkable change in behavior. Folks soon realize they alone may bear the burden of voting against and killing a proposal. With that in mind they listen better, hearing the needs of others. They search harder for solutions satisfactory to all.

All at once it becomes contagious with everyone seeking new solutions to old problems. No one wants to admit defeat in not being able to find a solution and immense group pride is generated in the creative solutions that are found.

The Cambridge Study, a human behavioral study conducted in Massachusetts, summarizes behavior of thousands of people as they worked in small groups to solve problems. We in the Modoc/Washoe ESP unknowingly experienced the same characteristics identified by the researchers as vital to successful problem solving and conflict resolution.

Successful groups were found to have a number of common traits: (1) motivation and commitment to seek a solution and carry it through; (2) willingness to listen to and understand others, weighing both the advantages and disadvantages of an idea; (3) dealing with an *idea* rather than a *person*; (4) fewer ideas were "lost" and a higher proportion of these ideas were developed into practical alternatives.

I believe that the unanimous agreement rule effectively helped us develop this kind of behavior and results.

Within the Society for Range Management, I have had the chance to encourage broader application of Coordinated Resource Management. The SRM has formed a partnership with the National Association of Conservation Districts in designating a team of two in each state. An SRM and an NACD representative are appointed to these advocacy teams to foster and encourage Coordinated Resource Management. Teams have been designated for fourteen states and more are in the mill. Ultimately, every State is a candidate to have such a team.

This joint venture is off to a slow start, but it is a solid foundation to build on. Most of the teams aren't sure what they should be doing yet, but all the appointees are committed to furthering Coordinated Resource Management in principle. Workshops are being scheduled to generate more specific ideas on what they can do to help.

As coordinated Resource Management gains momentum, it will become an even more potent force shaping resource management.



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