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Goal-Directed Management:

Application to Coordinated Resource Management Planning

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Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) has recently become a "buzzword" in natural resource management fields. Although the concept of people working together to develop resource management plans has been with us for many years (Anderson, 1977 and 1977a), the process was not popular for federal rangeland management in the late 1970s and early 1980s. During that period, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service shifted planning from the grazing allotment level to the entire resource planning unit. Time commitments, imposed by federal legislation and legal actions, and limited staffing made it necessary for the agencies to shift to broader resource issues.

Recently, federal land planning efforts have come full circle with emphasis again being placed at the local level. In Idaho, a memorandum of understanding developed in 1989 commits seven major state and federal agencies to using the process. In addition, conflicts over resource use have again come to the forefront. Population growth, increased leisure time and demands for access to public lands have raised the general public's interest in uses of public lands. New issues are facing our society that will require resolution in the near future. Water quality preservation, pesticide and herbicide use on public and private lands, wildlife and pest depredation (grasshoppers, jackrabbits, big game), competition between domestic livestock and wildlife, forest and mineral management practices and several other issues are again causing attention to be focused at the "micro" level of land management.

These same types of conflicts are also taking place on private lands. Conflicts between "public interest" and "private property rights" appear as the next hurdles that private and public resource managers must overcome.

In most cases, a CRMP is no different from any other planning and management process. Participants in any planning effort determine goals, develop alternatives for reaching goals, select the most feasible management plan for achieving the goals, implement the plan and evaluate, monitor and possibly modify the plan. The major difference between CRMP and "conventional" management is that, in the case of CRMP, consensus of the group is required at each step of the process.

This publication provides information on using a goal-directed process to address natural resource issues. Goals are defined and placed within the context of CRMP and natural resource management. The process involves determining:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there?
- Are we making progress or did we make it?

The process is not a detailed, step-by-step approach. There are several reasons for this. Each resource issue that will be addressed within CRMP is unique. A "cookbook" approach may not work for all of these issues. Participants must decide what, when, how and who to do things that will best fit the resource issues being addressed. This is quite different from the structured approach recommended by Anderson and Baum (1988). CRMP participants should review that publication for an alternative, structured CRMP process.

Where Are We Now?

An important first step in any management process is determining where we are. Many times real and perceived conflicts over uses of natural resources are based on lack of information about the current situation. Livestock producers concentrate on the amount of forage, water and other resources available for livestock production. Fishermen may concentrate on stream conditions. Agencies are charged with monitoring range conditions, water quality, wildlife and other factors. Others focus on their specific area of interest related to resource use. Little or no attempt is made by each of these participants to "look at the big picture." So the first step in the process should be to accumulate information relative to the resource issue under consideration. Until all participants are dealing with the same set of information, there is little or no chance to reach agreement on goals and management plans.

Where Do We Want To Be?

Goals: What Are They?

Gessaman (1987) presents an excellent discussion of goals within the context of farm business management. He presents an analogy of an imaginary plane ride between Hawaii and the mainland.

> "Your airplane has just taken off from Honolulu Airport for a non-stop flight to the mainland. You hear this announcement: 'Ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain. As you know we just left Honolulu and now we are travelling east across the Pacific Ocean. If all goes well, in a few hours we should be able to look down and see land. If we do, we'll hunt for a city. If the city we find has an airport, we'll land and find out where we are. Then we'll decide where we are going on the next leg of this flight. Meanwhile, just sit back, relax and enjoy the flight. The jet stream is behind us, and we'll soon be travelling at more than 550 miles per hour.' "

He concludes by stating that if you want to be an effective manager of your life, you must know **where** you are going, **how** you are going to get there and **when** you intend to arrive.

Savory (1988) uses the same plane flight analogy with a different twist. "If you leave on a plane flight with no maps or instruments, rest assured that you will head directly to the crash site." Setting goals works in navigation, and it works in management.

Goals are the important statements of where you want to go, a target toward which you are willing to work. If properly developed and specified, the target will not be a "crash site." A basic philosophy of directing management toward the attainment of these targets should be an initial point of agreement of any management group. Until consensus is reached that goal-directed management will be the procedure to follow, conflicts and "crashes" will continually arise. This is not to imply this management philosophy is a panacea that will make all resource management a nirvana. The potential for conflicts and crashes will always be present. However, conflicts will be minimized when the planning group agrees on what it is shooting for, how it is going to get there and what it will measure to know when it has arrived.

Goals: Complements and Conflicts

Participants in CRMP should recognize that goals can be both helping and hindering. Individuals, families, groups (businesses and organizations) and agencies will have differing and often conflicting goals.

Realize too that goals are derived from different sources. Savory (1988) classifies sources of goals into production, non-production and personal categories. Another way of viewing this is to remember that goals are derived from needs, desires and values of the participants of the planning effort. Conflicts over goals are often seated in those same needs, desires and values of the participants. This observation suggests that the first step in the management process may be to gain an understanding of each participant's personal value system.

Goals can and should be classified by time frame. Those targets that can be achieved in a month, a year or a couple of years are classified as short-term goals. Those that will take many years to achieve are classified as long-term goals. Short-term targets may be those that are fairly easy to attain or are needed to resolve an "emergency" situation before going further with the plan.

Wherever possible, short-term goals should complement or feed those needing longer time frames. For

example, a short-term position of wanting to reduce sediment loads in a stream should complement the longer-term position of increasing salmon spawning beds from 2 to 50 per stream mile. In a personal vein, your long-term goal of burning your home mortgage would be aided by setting a short-term goal of paying an additional $50 per month on the principal of the loan.

Participants should also realize that many long-term goals will not be achieved in their lifetime. However, monitoring programs should include benchmarks that can be assessed and evaluated during the interim. For example, a long-term goal of improving a specific range site from the current "early seral" condition to "climax" condition may take decades. The key variables relating to range condition (species composition, ground cover, etc.) should be monitored over the course of the plan to alert members of progress (or lack thereof) toward this long-term goal. In fact, short- and intermediate-term targets may be developed that would feed into the long-term goal of climax condition.

Clearly defined goals have a number of important characteristics. For example, goals should:

- Be derived through consensus of the group.
- Be specific, realistic and measurable.
- Require effort to attain.
- Specify responsibility (and ownership).
- Include deadlines for attainment.
- Be flexible.
- Be written down.
- Be used to develop action plans.
- Be used to evaluate management.
- Be prioritized by degree of importance.

Each goal proposed for group action should also be checked against these guidelines:

- Is it measurable? (What?)
- Is it realistic, clear and concise?
- Does it address short- and long-term needs?
- Does it specify a time frame for attainment? (When?)
- Does it specify responsibilities? (Who?)
- Does it address monitoring and evaluation?
- Does the group agree? (acid test)

How Do We Get There?

The next step in the management process is developing alternatives for reaching goals developed in the earlier step. Clawson (1975) mentions five criteria that should be considered in any discussion of forest and range policy. They are:

1. Physical and biological feasibility and consequences
2. Economic efficiency
3. Economic equity
4. Social acceptability
5. Operational practicality.

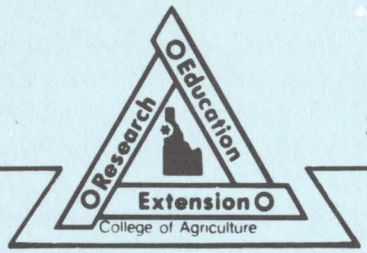
Consideration of all these is necessary for determining the preferred action plan for meeting goals. Schroeder (1977) mentioned the lack of social science training of many resource managers and commented, "It is presumptuous of man to suggest that he is able to manage the primordial forces of nature and something called 'land' or 'water' or 'wildlife.' You are not going to manage them at all... What you are doing is managing the use of natural resources... You are managing people."

The underlying current of Schroeder's speech is that natural resource managers tend to narrow their focus to the areas they understand and have an interest in — primarily Item 1 and possibly Item 5 of Clawson's list. Because of this, economic efficiency (do the benefits exceed the costs?), economic equity (who gains and who loses, how much and should the losers be compensated?) and social acceptability tend to be ignored in the development of management plans. These three items, however, are very important in adopting policy at the local level.

Savory (1988) speaks of problems associated with making resource decisions from the "perspective of a narrow discipline." His view of "holism" is rooted in the fact that we must get out of our narrow, discipline- or interest-oriented perspectives and use an interdisciplinary approach to look at the big picture. Holism also depends upon goals as the foundation for management decisions. This same philosophy is rooted in CRMP and the development of a resource management plan.

After alternative management strategies are developed and considered by the group, selection of **the** management plan to reach goals must be undertaken. Consensus of the group should be followed, with consideration of existing resources and the five criteria mentioned earlier, to select the preferred management plan.

Responsibilities of participants (who is doing what?), time frames (when is it getting done?) and monitoring (how to tell if we are making progress?) must all be addressed. These activities will form the basis for evaluation of the plan in terms of the goals specified at the start of the process.



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