

Meeting Notes for the Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable (SRR)

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

Naples, FL – April 19 & 21, 2005

Facilitated by Lou Romero, DeLaPorte & Associates, Inc.

Today's topic: Revisiting the strategic plan (can't be a static document)

Update on SRR -- John Mitchell

- Original vision & mission is Still relevant
 - Includes C & I, and has our goal for them be widely accepted – this also hasn't changed
- Old strategic plan had 5 guiding principles (goals) in it:
 1. Criteria & Indicator goal
 2. Coordination goal (across borders)
 - How review & combine data sets
 3. Outreach goal
 4. Research goal (promote research in universities & agencies)
 5. Funding goal
 - Keep roundtable funded (purview of the steering committee)

Overview of the Growth / Success curve of an organization -- Lou Romero:

- Need to revitalize/ revising over a long time for a successful organization
 - SRR Vision
- Need to get from SRR current reality to the SRR Vision
- Have come a long way since 2002 when first wrote the Strategic Plan
 - Are we rewriting the SP? Updating it?
 - Bringing important parts forward and begin new SP?
 - Old SP may be too broad, too operational – may be more of a strategic analysis

Charge for this meeting:

Come up with a few, vital strategic goals to continue bridging the gap between our vision and current reality (no more than approximately 7)

- Overview of process & plan for this afternoon's meeting & Thursday's meeting

- No "official leaders" with the SRR → this may guide who the audience is
 - * Collaboration seen as a major goal (among agencies)
 - * Much practical, applied interest with private land owners, managers (local and regional/national) – need to keep these in mind

- Past history & implications of Rangelands & Management:
 - Transition from previous range measurements to "range health"
 - Then started thinking about sustainability issue – start up with roundtables

- Have we identified whether we will supplement or replace range health?

Whether we want to be the “one & only”?

May used to modify the process / not a replacement?

- “Sustainability” replacing “health”
 - Agencies have problems when having to say how these programs will effect individuals (at least at the county level) socially & economically
 - “Change on the Range” / Ecosystem management
 - Taking care of the land / Serving the people
 - Equal weight to social, economic & ecologic parts

- They were initially at the table, then they were told it was just part of Forest Service
 - State Forestry Association wrote letter to Secretary-level
 - Good that we have both agency & private sector people on board with SRR
 - Did LUCID test – they had a hard time separating Forest Service & Rangelands
 - Where we want range to be, is based on where people want us to be
 - Do we bring Forestry & Rangelands together?

- What is the functional unit of sustainability??! (it’s not just Rangelands)
 - This is what we should be working on & evaluating
 - Where are Indicators a best fit?
 - not at the political level, more at an ecological level (watershed, ecosystem)...
 - Economic, Social, Ecological boundaries are ALL different
 - Community-based conservation (using the sage-grouse as Flagship indicator)
 - Phenomenal job, but not sure if practical long-term
 - BLM – have good local data, but doesn’t roll up regionally

- All this is speaking to the importance of what we’re doing
 - First time in 40+ years that actually moving forward towards overall sustainability of ecosystems (forest, cropland, rangelands)
 - Taking different view of same system & creating common language
 - Switch from reactive to proactive management style/strategy
 - Can keep future problems from happening

- All definitions expired two weeks ago
 - Provides great opportunities for input (ESD- Ecological Site Description, etc)
 - Probably one of the best times for having impact on these definitions
 - Political climate is one of the most promising right now
 - Gary Evans – just meet with Secretary & other high level officials about SRR
 - So even if we don’t know exactly where we’re headed, there is still interest

- Conservation for human use – implicit economic, social impacts
 - When Forest Service came out with Ecologic, Economic & Social, got slammed
 - But many private sectors do social
 - so it’s there that they can help agencies & carry this forward
 - NEPA issues – always contain social & economic

- Usually outside the purview of those people writing the reports
- Social scientists usually first to go

- How are we going to define sustainability if we can't categorize the land base (definitional problem)
 - Rate of moving towards sustainability
 - Evaluate the movement
 - Because sustainability is a value judgement, it's not quantitative
 - Sustainability will shift inter-generationally = it's a moving target
 - Adaptive management
 - Our work provides a level playing field
 - Indicators are value-free
 - you don't argue about the tool, just the data coming out of the tool

- We don't have a message for Washington
 - Are we More / Less – sustainable?
 - Don't want them to fall back on just #s of acres... we want other indicators evaluated

- Don't get too bogged down by the “sustainability” issue
 - On the cusp & is a very hot topic now
 - If it's only theoretical, then it loses its credibility
 - It's evolving & coming in fast

- Only 2 – 3% of population (US) directly related to agriculture
 - Many fewer farmers / much greater production

- We have reached a broad consensus about the C & I
 - Question is about HOW to use them
 - Broad range with the datasets in terms of quantity & how related they are
 - Also varies with long-term vs. short-term
 - Is the C & I goal still needed in the new Strategic Plan?
 - Switching from refining the indicators at these meetings to a Workshop-type model

- Validating the vision we already have
 - Marketing, grassroots
 - Lots of other people competing us for with resources, attention

- The whole Santiago declaration was predicated on monitoring long-term impacts
 - We have 30+ years of data – long-term datasets... it's a start

- We should coordinate with EPA/Others & work with each other
 - We need to operationalize the indicators

- Can help figure out where & how the capital needs to be allocated
- Need better training about the process

Group divides up to go over the goals to be inserted into the SP

Articulate the scope of each of the goals

(See Appendix A)

Next Steps & Timeline for completing the SP

- Three options:
 - Could send out to group to request objectives and tactics....
 - Can set aside time in agenda for next meeting to flesh out objectives and tactics...?
 - Steering Committee drafts objectives and tactics for large group feedback...?
- Need to relate new SP back to the old SP – salvage pieces from it
Review old plan
- Perfect for Delphi for whole group
 - Put more meat on it first
 - Gives ownership to whole group
 - Keep first short & focused just on the strategic goals alone
 - Next step on objectives & tactics (perhaps visited individually)
 - Keep Delphi's small & compact
 - Could ask about strategic goals (Likert scale – Agree/disagree)
 - Set parameters / constraints
 - No more than 5 objectives & 3 tactics for each goal – for example
- We'll have the workshop results before the Delphi
 - They'll help inform the Delphi
 - The authors of the sections w/o objectives can rework them after the workshop/pre-Delphi
 - May need the Steering Committee to de-brief after Ardmore
- Settle on the Charter soon...lets act on it and start using it...

APPENDIX A

THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE OF SRR

1.) Promotion of Rangelands Sustainability Paradigms

The SRR has many concepts or products it will encourage or market to other segments of society for them to adopt. Among these products are the concept of rangelands sustainability, the integration of social & economic indicators with natural resource indicators, and the actual criteria & indicators for sustainable rangelands.

Objectives:

1. Encourage private landowners to consider the benefits and costs of the use of the C& I to evaluate rangeland sustainability respecting private property rights when considering data collected using this process.

2. Promote the continued development of institutional capacities for implementing the organizational use of C & I in sustaining rangelands.

3. Succeed in convincing Congress to pass a bill institutionalizing the use of our C & I when dealing with issues of rangeland sustainability and health. This bill will include funding and requirements for periodic reporting on the sustainability of technical, social and economic components of rangelands in the USA at the point when data to populate the C & I's for this purpose are available.

4. Tailor a promotion plan to include the following audiences:

- Producers of products from rangelands
- Professional societies
- Environmental groups
- Conservation groups
- Trade & business organizations
- Policy-makers (Local, Tribal, State & Federal)
- Non-consumptive land users
- Other interested parties

2.) Promote Quality Data

Develop capacities to promote data accountability, data management, and knowledge information systems for analyses of rangeland sustainability indicators.

3.) Research

SRR will promote ecological, economic and social research to assess indicators of rangeland sustainability and their interrelationships/interactions. SRR will encourage research funding organizations to support the above activities. Research funding organizations include private foundations, federal research organizations (NSF, CSREES, etc.), federal natural resource and environmental management agencies.

Objectives:

1. The research objective is to provide an understanding of the interrelationships among indicators to assess the conservation and sustainable management of rangelands.
2. Research funding organizations will incorporate long-term funding objectives to support data development on each indicator of the sustainable rangeland program. Research funding organizations include private foundations, federal research organizations (NRI, NSF, CSREES, etc.), federal natural resource and environmental management agencies.
3. These data sets will vary in temporal and spatial scale and data sources.

4.) **Coordination**

SRR recognizes that rangelands are integrated with other ecosystems and that coordination with other roundtables and organizations is necessary to assess landscapes comprehensively and promote sustainability of rangelands. The SRR will facilitate coordination between other roundtables, agencies, and organizations involved or potentially involved in monitoring data collection and analysis, and criteria and indicator and dataset development

Objectives:

1. Facilitate development of a cross-walk among the rangeland indicator sets with the goal of promoting future integration of rangeland indicators using common definitions and protocols.
2. SRR will develop a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability.
3. Promote coordination between agencies that monitor and report on rangelands.

5.) **Critical Financial needs goal**

Ensure that SRR infrastructure and funding supports attainment of strategic plan goals and objectives between now and 2010.

Objectives:

--- need objective for 2007