

**INFLUENCING DECISIONS THAT AFFECT
COLUMBIA BASIN
FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES**

**A WORKSHOP IN COLLABORATION & CONSENSUS
BY CBFWA**

THE BASIC PROCESS - A WORKSHOP REPORT

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A WORKSHOP IN COLLABORATION AND CONSENSUS BY CBFWA

THE BASIC PROCESS – A SAMPLE REPORT

This report is written in the order of events as they occurred. The report is a compilation of collective statements developed from the flip chart notes taken during the workshop.

It must be emphasized that these are collective statements and not consensus statements. They represent the views of all the participants but not all participants would agree with all the assertions in the statements. These can be developed into consensus statements.

Consensus seeking and community building insights are inserted into the report at the time they were presented. The process is defined as the report progresses. Reading this report will allow the participant to re-experience the session, and to recall the beliefs, the process, and the art for seeking consensus.

In reading this report remember that these are real words, expressed and recorded by real people. This is not a professional report that replaces the personal statement with technical jargon. Very little filler information has been added to the individual statements.

Each statement in this report is intentional. All the words have meanings, both individually and collectively. Read it well. This report is significant.

The questions that served to create the information are stated at the beginning of each task. These can be used as a model for additional sessions.

The process for developing collective statements is in the APPENDIX.

PROCESS INTRODUCTION

An introduction to a basic process, the basic beliefs that motivate that process, and some of the art. This includes: introduction to the circle, a process for life-long learning, the worse and best outcomes, and an exploration of conflict. The participant will experience the application of the process on conflict, while learning how to develop a shared information base for wise decisions.

The participant will explore and experience the role of the facilitator and recorder in consensus building and in empowering others.

The participant will be introduced to the application of the process with “value” concepts like trust, openness and honesty, and leadership. The participant will learn how the exploration of these concepts can develop the necessary social agreements for consensus seeking.

Participants will leave with the ability to use the process on simple and everyday conflict issues.

THE CIRCLE

IF YOU:

LISTEN WITH RESPECT...

UNDERSTANDING

TRUST

LEARNING

A NEW TRUTH,

GROWING

RESOLVING

ADAPTING

WILL RESULT

GROUNDING AND GREETING

The session began, as it will each day with a grounding. This is done to establish relationships, to gain initial information for the facilitator.

INSIGHT ON GROUNDING

THE QUESTIONS:

- 1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF, GIVE A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUR BACKGROUND AND EXPLANATION OF YOUR CURRENT POSITION**
- 2. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF THIS WORKSHOP?**
- 3. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING HERE?**

This is a simple grounding task that does the following:

- Established a model for listening with respect, a knowing that each person will be heard.
- Establishes a verbal territory for each participant, a sense of potential equity.
- Requires access to both the left and right brain, engaging the “whole brain.”
- Allows apprehensions and hopes for the meeting to be expressed.
- Allows participants to express hidden agendas like leaving early, a flat tire, an illness, etc.
- Brings people into the “here and now.”
- Provides initial information to the facilitator.

Grounding is an important activity to start any meeting with. We all come to meetings with some measure of apprehension or uncertainty about what will happen. Grounding allows this apprehension to be stated.

This activity introduces the circle and the notion of listening with respect to each other. It is important that the facilitator listen fully to each person so they may experience being listened to. Once listening with respect has been established in the room, it becomes a model thereafter.

Using the circle allows each person to occupy the room with the sound of their voice, establishing verbal territory. Once a person’s voice is in the room, it becomes easier to speak, especially if they are listened to. The sound of an unchallenged voice is a rare event for people and this helps to allay the fears of those who are apprehensive.

We also come to meetings with recent past events (like a flat tire) or time concerns (like another meeting that will occur later) on our minds. If stated, these can be responded to, or may just become less important in the telling.

When you introduced yourself to another person, you accessed the left brain – the file cabinet for your knowledge. You took information for the past and used it for the present or the future. Thinking brings you out of the present into the past or the future.

As an example, think of the last time your boss asked you into the office. You probably wondered, “what did I do?” and began to think in the past about what you could have possibly have done to cause this request. Or, you may know what he/she wants and you begin to create a scenario in your mind about how you are going to deal with this situation.

On the other hand, when you talked about how you felt, you accessed your right brain – the intuitive sensor, which reports on the here and now. This moment of here and now is important to consensus because it allows you to tap your creativity – your wisdom.

Feeling brings us an awareness of how we are now, internally, with our emotions. Sensing makes us aware of what is going on externally. Each brings us in the here and now. Each “grounds” the person.

Thinking = Past or future
Feeling = Present, here and now, internally.
Sensing = Present, here and now, externally.

THINKING/FEELING/SENSING ARE ALL ATTRIBUTES THAT YOU WILL USE IN SEEKING CONSENSUS.

THE GREETING CIRCLE

The facilitator moves inside the circle and greets the person to their left; then continues inside the circle, greeting each person in turn. Those who have been greeted follow the person who greeted them inside the circle. When the facilitator returns to his/her original location, those inside the circle will continue to greet them a second time. This time, the person inside the circle is the greeter, not the greeted. This balances the circle.

No ritual is older and none more anxiety ridden, than that of greeting each other. The natural tendency of individuals in groups is to seek out those who they are comfortable with, those who are like them. This is “group think” behavior that limits the information base of the individuals.

The greeting circle establishes the opportunity for all participants to meet each other, friends and strangers.

It allows the anxiety and apprehension of the individuals to be confronted and encountered. It releases energy into the room in the sound of high voices, laughter, slaps on the back, and hugs.

It allows people to meet the person, in place of the role, or stereotype. As a result, it reduces the intimidation that people tend to perceive with each other.

It opens up communication allowing each person to seek a common interest or topic. It provides a basis for knowing people. It establishes a sense of community.

By being both a “greeter” and a “greeted person” the concept of balance is introduced. This causes the individuals to go beyond the ritualistic first greeting to finding a more real and common interest.

It is uncomfortable, apprehensive, uncertain, and sometimes feels “fake.” Yet, it is a necessary activity if the group is to open communications.

The activity has meaning only if the two questions: 1) how did you feel about the exercise?” and, 2) “what did you learn from it?” are asked and answered after the greeting. These two questions allow the individuals to be grounded again and to learn from the experience.

AN ADAPTIVE LEARNING PROCESS

- **WHAT IS THE SITUATION OR THE EXPERIENCE?**
- **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?**
- **WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM IT THAT WILL MAKE YOU SUCCESSFUL?**

These questions allow individuals to process any experience, to make sense out of any experience, and to integrate the experience into their being.

The question “How do you feel about it?” allows the person to react out of the situation with their emotional content. This allows expressions of anger, apprehension, doubt, as well as acceptance, excitement, and support.

This reactive, or emotional material, must be expressed first to allow learning to take place. Otherwise, the experience is left external to the person. It grounds the person in the moment and allows people to be real. It is OK to be angry or excited.

The next question, “What did you learn from it that will make you successful?” allows the person to be proactive and to use the intellect to make sense of the experience. The question can be linked to the situation:

What did you learn that will help you solve the problem?

What did you learn that will help you successfully perform the mission?

What did you learn that will create a sense of community?

This allows the person to relate the experience to the situation at hand. It integrates the experience into the knowledge base internal to the person.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR AND RECORDER

The participants were distributed into five small groups, each with the task of exploring the role of the facilitator and the recorder. The participants were distributed from “Group-Think” to “Community Think” by numbering off to five. This is just one way of creating diverse groups.

A member of the small group acts as facilitator and another as a recorder. **The facilitator is instructed to ask the question and see that each person has the opportunity to respond in turn. The recorder is instructed to record whatever is said.** This minimum instruction allows the group to establish the role of both these positions.

This activity distributes the participants into new relationships. It allows the group to focus on a common task and introduces them to facilitating and recording. They are “behaving” and “experiencing” these roles while they explore them.

This is a useful task to use with a group in conflict that has spent little time problem solving together. It allows the individuals to develop skills and relationships that will be helpful later. These skills are put to use in the tasks that follow.

Note the adjective “successful” preceding facilitator. This is purposeful. In framing questions, words that describe the past possible conditions are used by the facilitator. This focuses the individual and the group on “excellent” behaviors rather than average ones.

THE QUESTIONS:

- **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SUCCESSFUL RECORDER?**
- **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR?**

THE ROLE OF THE SUCCESSFUL RECORDER

(Words in *italics* are added during the collective statement process)

A successful recorder accurately captures *the* ideas expressed in the group: Ensures accuracy of discussions and captures viewpoints of each participant *using* the speaker's words. They do not judge what gets recorded and what does not get recorded, accurately recording the intent and is prepared to ask questions.

Does not interpret or paraphrase what the speaker intends, records as stated: *Queries* speakers to ensure what was said *and* summarizes participants' statements *to* be able to boil ideas into concise, bulleted, accurate statements that could be understood by *the* group. *The recorder should* listen and write and at the same time editing out "inappropriate" material using plain language and *avoiding* jargon in order to provide a clear and concise summarization of the discussion or action. Use what is being recorded to summarize and be precise.

A successful recorder must be prepared with the proper medium (flip charts, audio recorders, projectors, etc) to fit the environment; be familiar with the subject; be a good listener; record and write accurately and legibly; check for accuracy and spelling, *and* clearly identify who said what in the notes.

***The recorder should* record expectations of the group *and* project notes while being taken (so everyone can see notes).** *Have* a neat and clear recording system *and* make sure that *the* ink doesn't go through the paper on the wall or use the permanent marker on *the* eraser board.

THE ROLE OF A SUCCESSFUL FACILITATOR

The role of a successful facilitator is:

- 1) Define purpose, rules, and logistics of discussion specifically:
 - Keep meeting on track and on subject
 - Remain on task (said twice)
 - Keep the discussion on track (gatekeeper)
 - Keep conversation going
 - Enchant group with dynamic personality
 - Maintain control of meeting
 - Maintain order and direction of the group
 - Be prepared for the discussion
 - Define purpose and process of setting and forum, timeline, and structuring
 - Help group identify a clear purpose and a set of expected outcomes
 - Maintain structure but within a comfortable and safe environment
 - Create an atmosphere of respect and tolerance
 - Keep the discussion on time
- 2) Facilitate discussion, specifically:
 - Encourage full participation (said twice)
 - Encourage open dialogue
 - Ensure that participants have the opportunity to be heard (said twice)
 - Encourage group to look at a broader perspective
 - Ensure all viewpoints are heard (said twice)
 - Make sure all views are expressed (said twice)
 - Ensure views are interpreted by the group correctly
 - Ensure common understanding of discussion
 - Introduce participants
 - Challenge/probe for a better understanding
 - Provide opportunity to “dump their bucket”
 - Recognize conflict and manage discussion
 - Ensure there’s some sort of conclusion
 - Ability of group to listen and interpret message
- 3) Remain objective and neutral
 - Does not have a stake in the outcome
 - Remain neutral, except when asked
 - Maintain impartiality (said twice)
 - Assist but do not guide discussion
- 4) Keep accurate records
 - Accurate recording
 - Ensure recording and posting of progress
- 5) Miscellaneous
 - Everyone has an opportunity to facilitate

HAS EVERYONE SPOKEN AT LEAST ONCE? AN INCLUSIVE QUESTION

In our culture we normally will continue with an activity when half or slightly more of the group has completed the task. This is based on a competitive belief system. We believe in the “survival of the fittest,” and of the “law of the jungle.” This means that those who are faster should not be held back by those who are slower. “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link,” I have been told; get rid of the weak links.

Somehow those who can't keep up must be punished for this behavior. So we move ahead without them. Or we say, “let's move ahead, you slow ones can catch up later.” Later never happens. This separates the group into the “fast learners” and the “slow learners.”

There is a tendency to foster this difference between individuals and groups. As a result the slower individuals do not get represented in the group situation. They become sensitive to this discrimination. They will begin to feel more apprehensive and drop out, or will become resentful and prolong their slow behavior. Either way, their information and ideas are lost to the group.

We have preconceived notions about this belief in the “survival of the fittest.” If you are taller, faster, more beautiful, slender, outgoing, and have the best grades then it is assumed you are the top of the evolutionary heap. Not so, says Aesop, in his story of the “Tortoise and the Hare.” As fast as the Hare was, his arrogance got him, as he slept while the more persistent and humble turtle walked over the finish line.

The fact is, we don't know who the fittest will be. The tallest person may be the right one for the basketball team, but the shortest will be the best for traveling through space to the stars.

If we truly believed in the survival of the fittest, then why are we drawn to the smallest kitten in the litter? Why do we have a small business loan program? Why did we save Chrysler during its down times? Why not let the others win?

The fact is there is another survival and evolutionary mechanism. It is called “survival of all.” How can we make sure all of us make it? This is the basis for consensus building.

We all need to participate if we are going to resolve the conflict and reach a consensus. This requires that we allow all members to complete a task before moving ahead even if it appears to take more time.

In all tasks, especially those that require writing or recording, wait until each individual or group has completed the assignment. This means that the fast writer has time to just sit and think while the others are completing the task. This is a good time, a balance, for that person. Who knows what serendipitous material may enter his/her mind?

If the group finishes the task before the other groups, then they have time to dialogue informally. This is an uncertain moment at first. Who will speak? What will we talk about? Self consciousness dominates the moment. This is their dilemma to resolve and their opportunity to seize the moment. Often these discussions are more productive towards resolution of the issue than the assigned tasks.

Before moving ahead, the facilitator asks the question: **Has everyone spoken at least once?** If the group facilitators signal they haven't then the facilitator turn and walks away from the working groups. The message is clear...you are in charge. When the groups signal they have all spoken, then the facilitator moves the group to the next question of task.

We must be concerned with the survival of all when a conflict affects all of us. This requires that we allow all to participate fully. The process must be inclusive rather than exclusive. The process must allow for spare time to be experienced by some just for balance and serendipity.

When the process is inclusive, the "slowness behavior" moves around among individuals. The person who finishes fast this time is the last one the next time. The person who is slow now is faster later. This allows people to express a broader set of behaviors and to have a broader range of experiences.

WORST/BEST/POSSIBILITY

Worst Outcomes: These are feared future outcomes often based on past experience, with a presently experienced emotion and physical reaction. When people believe them they affect their perceptions, beliefs, values, and strategies. They tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies when strongly held.

Best Outcomes: These are hoped for future outcomes sometimes not previously experienced, but intensely imagined, with a presently experienced emotion and physical response. When people believe them they affect their perceptions, beliefs, values, and strategies. They tend to be self-fulfilling prophecies when strongly held.

Possibility Thinking: An acknowledgment that both worst and best outcomes are present and inherent in each moment up to and often after the event. This balanced view allows the movement toward desired outcomes.

WORST/BEST OUTCOMES

- **WHAT ARE THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE?**
- **WHAT ARE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE?**

In this task we explore the fears and the hopes of the participants. It is more important to explore the worst fears before the best hopes. Fears are uppermost in the minds of those who are apprehensive, uncertain, and unwilling.

It is normal and right to fear the worst outcome of any situation. As an example, think of a time when you were sleeping and the phone rang early in the morning. What did you think? How did you feel?

How about the time your child ran toward the road? How did you reach him? Did you yell to him and demand he stay away from the street? Even though there are no cars there, you experience the worst possible outcome – **THE CHILD BEING HIT BY THE CAR!** Not only that, you feel the potential emotion of that moment just as if it happened.

In such a way, people fear the worst outcome of any situation and operate emotionally out of that fear just as if it were really happening. This is a major motivator for most conflict.

Once your fears have been adequately expressed then your hopes seem more possible and easier to express and believe. This also leaves the images and words of the best hopes in

the minds of all the participants. This is the image that will guide their thoughts and behaviors during the workshop.

All events/issues have a potential worst or best outcome. Either is possible. Typically some of us choose to focus on either the worst or the best outcome (pessimists and optimists). When these views become pitted against each other, we tend to see the worst outcome or the best outcome as the exclusive possibility. This results in polarization of views.

The best outcome is often not experienced by people in conflict because they get focused on talking about the worst possible outcome. Rarely does anyone acknowledge their worst outcome as they can move to the best outcome.

The best outcome is just as possible. It is a way of expressing the potential in any event or issue. It is a goal, a direction, that all can agree to seek. It focuses on the positive efforts of people who are seeking the best. Consensus recognizes the possibility of the worst and the best outcome.

THE WORST AND BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE

The participants were provided the opportunity to express their worst and best outcomes of pursuing consensus to influence decisions affecting Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife. The facilitator asked the two questions listed below separately. The participants recorded their answers on the 3 x 5 cards while in small groups. This brings silence to the room. The participants then expressed their answers individually to the small group. The individual statements were recorded on flip charts as they were expressed.

The worse outcomes are all recorded first and then the best outcomes. This leaves the image of the best outcome in the participants' minds.

The facilitator is asked to select another facilitator from the group, and then become the recorder. This allows the position to move to other members of the group. This instruction is given in all the later activities.

This task allows each person to express his/her worst and best outcomes. It also allows silence, or quiet, to be present while writing. This allows each person to go internal, to relax, and to become balanced.

The individual statements were developed into collective statements to represent the collective view of the entire group. These collective statements follow. These statements represent the collective vision or mission of the participants. They are not consensus statements but can be developed into such statements.

(The process for developing collective statements is in the Appendix.)

THE QUESTIONS:

- **WHAT ARE THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE?**

- **WHAT ARE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE?**

THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS TO INFLUENCE DECISIONS AFFECTING COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE

Things get worse. *We increase the level of conflict and increase mistrust which inflames the debate rather than resolve the issues. We do not reach consensus but make matters worse by poor participation, polarization of discussion, and no alternate plan or process. Debate divides fish and wildlife entities in the Columbia Basin and creates more divisiveness (people/issues).*

Consensus Fails. *Fear of not reaching consensus results in no decision being made or no work on the issue. They think they are getting consensus but then don't get consensus. The lack of consensus leads to a policy vacuum that is filled by those who don't share CBFWA values. A lack of consensus is perceived as a weakness when not achieved or we get consensus but then it falls apart at a higher level and some or all parties do not get everything they want.*

Decisions are Weak. *The decisions made are ineffective and non-important. Reaching consensus may compromise the strength of positions (e.g. mushy, watered-down outcomes) resulting in achieving consensus only on minor issues not major issues. Final collaborative consensus decisions are diluted so as to be ineffective or represent the lowest common denominator.*

A slow time consuming process. *Increases the likelihood of discovering new problems and obstacles or discussion slows or stalls progress. An extended process precludes expedient effective decisions and actions, deflect managers attention away from working on resources, erodes CBFWA effectiveness by spending time and energy on issues over which we have no influence or control resulting in lost opportunities.*

**THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF PURSUING CONSENSUS
TO INFLUENCE THE DECISIONS AFFECTING
COLUMBIA BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Best outcomes of consensus is having everyone on the same page and able to speak with one voice. *It* provides a mutually satisfactory outcome that reflects a common understanding, position, and commitment of the group at large. *It also* represents a powerful and effective voice for fish and wildlife resources *resulting* in effective recommendations and action for fish and wildlife.

Development of policies and promotion of responsible decisions benefit fish and wildlife and the ecosystem on which they depend in the short term and in perpetuity. This represents what is best for both the resources and the involved parties *and leads to* better conditions for fish and wildlife.

Member Benefits: Consensus strengthens members' relationships and partnerships. It builds trust between parties. Resolved issues strengthen relationships and understanding among members and other parties. The outcomes make a positive difference and provides a basis for resolving future issues.

Influence on Regional Decisions. Consensus does not just influence decision makers it makes them a part of the decision. There is greater influence collectively than individually. Board support to decision makers and the strength of the decision *provides* greater influence on policy decision makers. *This could* result in fish and wildlife managers agreeing to a regional fish and wildlife plan that is adopted by the NPCC and fully funded by BPA. *Additionally this should result* in respect for and deference to a unified position or policy by others in the region that influences this decision and actions. Consensus decisions represent the strongest possible opinion and/or recommendations making it difficult to discount or ignore. *There is* strength in numbers during negotiations.

Consensus leads to durable decisions that save time and money by not having the NPCC and others duplicate the decision. *This results in* quality management of fish and wildlife resources with all groups *feeling* they were part of the decision.

EXPLORING CONFLICT AND UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

This activity allows the group to immediately focus on a common task using their new facilitating and recording skills. It allows them to explore and develop a social agreement on their behaviors while exploring conflict.

Exploring the definition of conflict allows the group to deal with this more as an abstract concept with less personal attachment. Exploring “unresolved conflict in your environment” allows the group to explore the specific reality of conflict in a more emotional context.

THE QUESTIONS: The facilitator selects a new facilitator and becomes the recorder.

- **WHAT IS CONFLICT AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?**
- **WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE OF UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?**

WHAT IS CONFLICT AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IT?

A SUMMARY OF THE INDIVIDUAL CIRCLE GROUPS RESPONSES

When people disagree - I don't like it, it doesn't feel good. Difference of opinion or interpretation – I don't feel good about it but it is a source of good solutions. Clash of values (different levels) – open for resolution. Difference in perception – opportunity for growth.

Disagreement – sucks but inevitable. Difference of opinion – opportunity to discuss and resolve. Parties having different goals/values – legitimate aspect of human interactions. Inherent part of human nature – often exploited and manipulated for self serving interest. Conflict is part of a diverse culture – can be part of the greater good.

Disagreements or misunderstandings – feel comfortable if there is earnest commitment to resolve. An inevitable state as is its resolution – must resolve in timely manner. Disagreement process towards consensus – a healthy thing if draws towards resolve. Conflict areas can help to focus on broken parts – towards consensus.

Difference of opinion/values – conflict can be good/negative if not managed properly or not resolved. Clash of opposing objectives based on misunderstandings, or value differences – conflict can be healthy. Disagreement fueled by negative emotions – conflict is unavoidable.

Conflict leads to creative thinking. Difference of opinion. Feels defensive. Different approach to solving a problem. “Positive/negative” conflict. Creates stress. Conflict happens.

CONFLICT IS MORE THAN DIFFERENCE A VISUAL EXPERIENCE

Most people initially define conflict as a difference of opinion, values, or beliefs. Or they may state it is a disagreement between two or more people.

“Conflict is a difference of opinion between two or more people.”

Understand that conflict is more than that and that something is added to that disagreement or difference to cause the conflict. To do this the facilitator used a visual activity that physically involves some members of the group and mentally and emotionally involves all the group.

Two members of the group (Tom Iverson and Gary James) were requested to stand in the center of the group and face each other. Tom was told to tell Gary that he wants to walk in the direction he is facing and Gary is to do the same.

Tom: *“I want to go that way” (pointing ahead).*

Gary: *“Well I want to go that way” (pointing ahead and in the opposite direction).*

They each walk in the direction indicated and turn facing each other again. **The facilitator points out to the group that this is a difference or disagreement.** They want to do something different than the other but this is not conflict. In the room, difference in dress, in colors, in hairstyle, height, age, and shoe type are all evident yet there is no apparent conflict because of it. Each person has made an individual choice and no one is threatened by it. Difference by itself is not conflict.

An added ingredient...Power: This time the two men repeat the previous scene but this time Tom tells Gary that he wants him to go his way:

Tom: *“I want to go this way” (pointing ahead).*

Gary: *“I want to go this other way” (pointing ahead and in the opposite direction).*

Tom: *“No, I want you to go this way with me.”*

Gary: *“No I want to go this way, not your way” (starting to walk ahead).*

Tom: *“Well, I want you to go my way” (standing in front of Gary and blocking him).*

Gary: *“You can’t tell me what to do, I want to go this way” (trying to step around Tom).*

Tom: *“I want you to go this way” (steps in front of Gary and pushes him back with his hands on Gary’s shoulders).*

Gary: *“No, I am going to go my way, not yours” (pushing back on Tom’s shoulders).*

Both men are now pushing against each other, shoving to gain ground. The facilitator has them **Freeze!** They stop shoving each other but lean heavily on each other straining their muscles at an impasse.

“What has happened to their energy? The facilitator asks rhetorically. “How much of this is available for the community focus? Conflict is difference, or disagreement with power attached to it.” It ties up your energy. The focus is now not on the work you will do, but on who will win.”

An Interpersonal Conflict Becomes an Inter-group Conflict: These two have created an interpersonal conflict between them over which direction to go and over who should decide. Their struggle and the loss of energy are plain to see by everyone in the organization or community. This struggle concerns those who watch it in the workshop and in real life situations. They are told to recruit help.

Tom looks over his shoulder and around the group and asks for help.

Tom: *“John, come help me” (John does this and pushes against Gary).*

Gary: *“Dave, come help me” (Dave does this, pushing against Tom).*

These people respond pushing in the direction of their friend. As the two continue to ask for help, others join in the pushing and shoving until there are two groups of pushing, struggling individuals. The facilitator asks them all to **Freeze!**

“What has happened to all the energy of these people? Why did they join this conflict? How much of their energy is now available for their work?”

People joined this fray out of loyalty to their friends. They may not even know what the argument is about. But they have chosen a side now and in doing so have created an inter-group conflict. This refocuses the energy of the group on the conflict instead of work.

This virtual example helps the participants see that conflict is more than difference; it includes power. When one person decides that the other must do what he wants, then energy must be exerted to make than happen. If the other resists, then there is conflict. This is interpersonal at this stage. But, if others are asked to join and they do so out of loyalty, then an inter-group conflict results. It takes power to make than happen.

**THE EVIDENCE OF CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT
AND
HOW WE FEEL ABOUT IT**

A SUMMARY OF THE INDIVIDUAL GROUPS RESPONSES

Evidence: Declining influence of the fish and wildlife managers in resource protection, mitigation, and enhancement. Lack of agreement on flow issues in the Columbia River Basin. Litigation in the Columbia River Basin (BiOp, Rate Case, ESA, etc). Disparate opinions/recommendations regarding hydro/juvenile salmonid relationships. Resident Fish/Anadromous fish needs. War. Divorce. Withdrawn CBFWA membership.

Feelings: Frustrated that resource decisions are made in the political arena not in the scientific arena (science ignored). General frustration – lack of progress towards resolution of long-standing conflicts. Concern. Relief. They suck!

Evidence: Flow controversy (up vs. down). Water management in the Columbia River Basin (anadromous vs. resident). **Feelings:** Frustration. Lack of respect. **Evidence:** ISS-Idaho Supplementation Study. Shoshone Bannock Tribes can't plant desired salmon. **Feelings:** Doubt assumptions of study. **Evidence:** NPCC, BPA, dismisses managers. **Feelings:** Feels like a losing game. **Evidence:** Equitable treatment clause of Northwest Power Act not enforced. **Feelings:** Frustrated, challenged.

Evidence (Feelings): Continued rehashing of the same topics with no resolution (total waste of time, energy, and money). Lawsuits – antithesis of consensus (total waste of time...). Listed species (last resort to lack of consensus). Ineffective governance in the Columbia Basin (results in unresolved disputes and perpetual conflicts over technical, legal, and policy issues). Increased process resulting in less resources going on the ground. NPCC (good attempt but...)

Evidence (Regionally): Litigation. Congressional hearings. Legislation. Lack of Recovery Plan. **Feelings:** It's like "ground hog day" – for every step forward, continually take step backward. **Evidence w/CBFWA:** Lack of consensus. Lower influence and reputation. Low meeting attendance. **Feelings:** CBFWA Members are missing out on a very powerful tool to influence fish and wildlife decisions. **Evidence CBFWA Context:** Group discussions suggest uncertain direction of plan of action. **Feelings:** Willingness to contribute to finding a direction

Evidence: Increased broken record positions. Decreased participation and disengagement. Decreased decision making role. Loss status. Not given important decisions to make. Decreased efficiency. Interrupted line of communication. Litigation. Politics. Federal laws in place to protect ESA, NMMPA, FPA, CERCLA. **Feelings:** Disheartened. Frustrated. Disappointed. Angry/sad. Helpless. Self-sufficient. Anxiety-hopeless/Anxious-hopeful.

THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING/NOT CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

The small groups explored the worst possible outcomes of confronting and not confronting unresolved conflict. Those who tend to confront conflict approach it with the “FIGHT” RESPONSE. Their response is based on a worst fear...that they will lose. The result is that they respond with exaggerated behaviors. Their response will be loud, conspicuous, and appear aggressive.

Those who avoid conflict use the “flight” response. Their worst fear is that confronting the conflict could endanger their life. They fear violence and vindictiveness.

Since each group has a different worst outcome focus, their communication is often incompatible and discordant. The aggressor will overstate the problem; the avoider will understate the response.

These worst outcomes affect the beliefs, strategies, and behaviors of the groups. They affect relationships so that information exchange is severely hindered. Openness and honesty are inconceivable. Hidden agendas are paramount. This actually may foster the worst outcomes of an issue.

Exploring the worst possible outcomes of confronting and not confronting unresolved conflict helps the participants to recognize that worst outcomes exist under either scenario, that the outcomes are essentially similar.

These worst outcomes are possible. They are probably present, at some level, in the environment. They create the reactive force that develops the actions, strategies, and behaviors of the participants.

These worst outcomes often describe the existing situation from the parties’ viewpoints. It indicates that they have, in fact, created the self-fulfilling prophecies for what they want to avoid.

THE QUESTIONS: (The facilitator selects a new facilitator and becomes the recorder)

- **WHAT ARE THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**
- **WHAT ARE THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF NOT CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

The risk of failure and disincentive to try more. *Where one interest steamrolls the other and there is a winner and loser and we may be the loser. For example in the case of divorce, you lose half your stuff.*

Enhanced conflict or the escalation of unresolved conflict and intensified divisiveness. *Thereby risking physical injury and increased alienation and animosity of parties that should be partners who are unable to manage the conflict and the conflict escalates.*

Wasted time and money with more talk and planning, without real action leading to distrust and inaction.

Permanent damage to or termination of relationships while making political enemies including political revenge with funding held hostage.

THE WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF NOT CONFRONTING UNRESOLVED CONFLICT

Problem worsens over time because human relationships become conflicted, polarized, and deteriorate at the cost of the resources.

Decision may be taken away from fish and wildlife managers through litigation.

No action taken or progress made toward a solution resulting in opportunities lost and potentially negative impacts in unrelated areas and decision making processes.

A RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

Of all the influences we have in our life, relationships with others are the most important. We cannot communicate without relationships, we cannot have conflicts without relationships, and we cannot have power without relationships.

During the 60's and 70's many studies were done with groups trying to understand the way in which groups are formed. A series of developmental stages were identified that apply equally well to one-on-one relationships. These have been described in many ways using different terms but the following description is easiest to remember because it rhymes.

Remember though that this is a road map. It appears linear because it is described in stages, each following the other. In actual experience we go about this in very different ways. Some stages are fast, others slow, some stages may be left out, and some stages may be repeated. Be aware of this as you explain it to others.

STAGE 1: FORMING:

We first meet as strangers seeking something that will bind us. Our initial conversation is a search...where do you live, who do you know, what do you do? Each of these seeks some commonality that we can talk about and begin to develop a relationship around.

This is the time when similarities are important. We like to be with people who are the same as us. This is the most non-threatening stage of a relationship. We develop a relationship that is safe.

There are some who seek difference, who purposefully seek out that which is different than them. Those they find are also seeking difference. This is their similarity as a basis for relationship.

STAGE 2: STORMING:

This stage begins when we are confronted with our differences. That which brought us together is suddenly threatened. Because we are curious creatures, we are normally unwilling to be satisfied with the boredom of sameness. We begin to test the boundaries of our relationship. We begin to mold the other person to meet our needs. This is a movement to the use of power in the relationship.

We are all different in some way from each other. We differ in our ages, our cultures, our experiences when we grew up.

In the forming stage we may agree on the value of family traditions at holiday times. We like having the tree with Christmas bulbs and tinsel. This is our similarity. But when it comes time to share Christmas together we find that there are differences in approach we

had not discussed before. I may want to buy a white fir for Christmas because this is the way it has always been in my family. But my wife wants a cedar tree because this is the way it has always been in her family. I want my soft light bulbs that I have used for years; she wants her bulbs, the kind that blinks on and off all the time. They make me nervous after being in the room for a while.

I like to just toss the package of tinsel at the tree and watch it naturally arrange itself as it floats to the ground. She likes to place each individual strand on the individual branches of the tree. Who decides?

Now we are entering the stage of storming. We have different approaches that have to be resolved. You can conform to my needs or if you don't conform that I must "force" you and that is the beginning of the "power struggle," the beginning of conflict. If I am a flight person, I will appear to comply and move the storming to the non-verbal arena by resisting quietly with passive aggression.

If I am a fight person, I will pit my power against yours. We are in a power struggle and a real storming is occurring. We are now reactive, emotional, motivated by worst outcomes.

I may deny the problem exists, or I may distance myself from the issue by not talking to you about it, by not speaking to you, or by placing myself where you are not seen. I may seek a divorce, terminating the relationship. Or if the unresolved conflict is too much to bear, death becomes an alternative. The inability to somehow resolve the storming phase of conflict is probably behind much of the violence we see in society today.

STAGE 2.A: PAUSE

This stage is not referred to in the behavioral literature but it is necessary. Once the confrontation occurs a pause is instrumental in facilitating the norming. The pause is similar to "distancing," in that it allows some time to consider, to adapt. This allows us to think of what was said, to re-assess our emotional reaction, to become more proactive. We can decide how much we overstated our case. We can decide how much of our connection to the way we do it is "loyalty" to the past. We can consider the points of the other party. Now we are ready for "norming."

STAGE 3: NORMING

In this stage the participants recognize that these differences must be dealt with in a mature and growing way. A decision must be made that the relationship is too important to end. The participants must first affirm that the differences exist. They seek to understand why they are present. This means learning to understand the other person better. Then the question is asked "How can we have these differences and still remain in the relationship?"

We agreed that the relationship was too important to be the cause of dissension. So, I agreed to buy a cedar tree if I could put my bulbs on it. She put the tinsel on it one piece at a time. I stayed away from this process. The Holidays were somewhat strained, because it was different, but enjoyable.

The next year it was easy to agree I would get my fir tree, use her blinkety bulbs, and I would get to decorate the tree with the tinsel my way.

We have begun to seriously norm adapting slowly so that we are able to accept and appreciate each others differences. We are proactive, thinking our relationship through, fostering best outcomes.

The following year we bought the prettiest tree we had ever seen, a noble fir. We bought some new bulbs and I found the patience to decorate the tree a strand of tinsel at a time. We enjoyed the experience together. Now we are entering the next stage, Performing.

STAGE 4: PERFORMING: From this point on, once the norming is established, the relationship can perform at peak levels. There is still difference, but it adds to the richness of the relationship experience because it is understood, accepted, and appreciated. The relationship flows in a natural way, saving time because there is a common focus and an understood approach.

STAGE 5: STORMING-REFORMING

Rarely will a relationship remain for long in the performing stage. The journey through the storming to the norming will cause movement and growth in each person. This changes the nature of their perceptions, and their information base. This in turn affects their beliefs and behaviors. They will become different people.

In time a new issue will arise between the parties. One party will want to do something new and different as a result of personal growth. The result is a movement to storming, and as resistance builds, a desire for re-forming. The other party resists, wanting to keep things in the new and accepted way, wanting the other to conform to this new way.

This will require the relationship to repeat the process for storming and norming in order to return to performing.

The cycle is continuous, to be repeated as each person continues to grow and seek to reach his and her potential. Yet the desire will continue to be to seek stability, to have conformity. It is easier, on the surface, and the reactive and emotional storming stage can be avoided.

A RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

CON - FORMING - RE

Coping
Approach

Response

Deny
Distance
Outcomes
Demean
Disable
Divorce
Death

STORMING

Reactive
Worst Possible

Power Struggle

PAUSE

NORMING

Proactive
Best Possible

Outcomes

Empowerment

PERFORMING

THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

The groups explored the best possible outcomes of confronting and resolving conflicts in their environment and then record them on the easel. This allows the participants to express their intended outcomes if they take the risk of confronting conflicts in the group.

Recording on the 3x5 card allows the individuals to go internal and deliberately consider the best possible outcomes they want to foster. Since they often do not think of best outcomes, this activity allows them to be more pro-active and deliberative. The worst outcomes are recorded in a more reactive way directly to the easel. This is because the worst possible outcomes are immediately and emotionally available in the memories of the individuals.

This task establishes what they want, a vision that will create new strategies, actions and behaviors that will tend to foster the desired outcome. These outcomes affect relationships so that information exchange is facilitated, and this may foster the best outcomes of an issue.

These best outcomes are possible. They are probably present, at some level, in the environment. They create the reactive force that develops the new beliefs, behaviors, strategies and actions of the participants.

THE QUESTION:

- * **WHAT ARE THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT?**

THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT

- **More effective and efficient mitigation *through science-based rather than political mitigation.***
- **Better working relationships** *with a clear understanding of our opportunities for agreement that clears the air and relieves stress/frustration, and maintains the dignity of participants; therefore the relationships are preserved.*
- **Strengthened relationships of those involved in the process** *leading to happiness, bliss momentum to get on with the next conflict. This assists the development of a broad-based coalition where a number of interests are met.*
- **A unified CBFWA voice and position that is heard and implemented by others whose decisions and actions affect fish and wildlife.** *United voice in making recommendations and actions in the Columbia River Basin. Everyone wins with a unified voice creating a net benefit to people and resources, a true win-win outcome constituting a win-win situation for the resources and the public.*
- **The collective power to influence important regional decisions,** *more visibility of, and dependency on CBFWA for fish and wildlife input in regional decision making forums.*
- **The status of the organization is enhanced maintaining control of the issue.** *This results in more effective resource management, more effective governance for fish and wildlife resources in the Basin, positive affirmation of the work we are doing, and feedback from time invested to resolve conflicts, better balance among resource users (hydro, irrig., etc), and best policies for productive fish and wildlife management. Decisions/populations, possible unified plan, long-term funding plan, consensus on what we're trying to accomplish, and what we must and will do to achieve those ends (decisions to act, common goals and objectives, limiting factors).*
- **This represents a major shift from process and litigation to on-the-ground management action, that is conflict resolution, not litigation and provides** *resources available for future generations, recovery of Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife for future generations fish and wildlife, people, their habitats, and fish and wildlife resources for future generations to enjoy.*
- **The above provides optimism for the future, demonstrates success, achieves our goals. . . and all with a little less talk and a lot more action!!**

FOSTERING THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Once the best outcomes have been established, then is the time to develop the movement to make them happen. Fostering the best outcomes will often require looking at beliefs, behaviors, strategies and actions. Each of these is a different focus:

- **BELIEF:** A conviction or opinion. These create the behaviors of the person.
- **BEHAVIOR:** Deportment or demeanor (a person's manner towards others). These are manners and attitudes that are created by the basic beliefs of a person.
- **STRATEGY:** A plan of action. A strategy is intended to carry out a vision or mission. It is also a way of actualizing a belief. Strategies are often developed that are incongruent with the person's beliefs. The behaviors will then override the intent of the strategy.
- **ACTION:** The act, process, or fact of doing something. These are specific deeds that carry out the intent of the strategy. If they are not congruent with the person's beliefs, they will be nullified by the person's attitudes and demeanor.

We are used to focusing only on action plans or strategies. This is appropriate if the change is one of modification, where the beliefs are congruent with the plan.

If the beliefs are not consistent with the plans, they will not be carried out. The behavior will tend to incongruent with the action. In this instance, the new and adaptive beliefs must be agreed to.

THE QUESTION:

- * **WHAT BELIEFS/BEHAVIORS AND STRATEGIES/ACTIONS WILL FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES?**

BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS AND STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS THAT WILL FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- **We find common ground to build from through active participation in meetings.** All interested parties *are* involved *and* broad participation in setting agendas ensuring all stakeholders have *the* opportunity to participate. *We* provide effective mechanisms for participation (travel, time, etc). *We* build partnerships with others *and* engage regional decision makers at the CBFWA policy level.
- **We identify appropriate issues with a chance for success, clearly identify and scope the issue, and define the deliverables and time frames.** *We also* decide what issues cannot possibly be agreed to and own it. *We obtain* formal commitment of policy and technical staff to address the identified issue through to the end. *We* engage as equals and agree to disagree. *We* produce value added deliverables related to status reports, goal-setting, RME and limiting factors.
- **We inform and demonstrate to others CBFWA's unique authorities, expertise and experience by appointing appropriate staff members, making the commitment and identifying all stakeholders.** *We* identify internal and external log-jams and bottlenecks that may impede accomplishing objectives and we work through them, providing *the* forum for *CBFWA* to foster and build united positions/approaches *to* develop a clear action plan with targeted objectives. *We* follow up on consensus recommendations to enhance potential for implementation *and* set goals to determine who is responsible to achieve the goals and document progress.
- **We develop group resolutions to take appropriate action (i.e. go to NPCC) and identify key tasks or gaps where the region most needs CBFWA direction.**

THE TIES THAT BIND

What is a relationship? That is the question I ask as I lead the group into an exploration of relationships, loss and change. The answer is diverse, as diverse as they are. The question is asked to get their definition and to bring them into the arena of discussing relationships. The definition provides an opportunity for the collective view before the next activity begins.

1. TWO PEOPLE, TWO RELATIONSHIPS: I ask two people, a male and female, to help me in the center of the circle. I have pieces of yarn in my hands, each about 40 inches long. I refer to them as relationship strings, the “Ties That Binds.” I hand each a piece of the yarn. I ask them to connect the relationship strings with each other. They look like this:

A B

Person A has a relationship with person B. Person B also has a relationship with Person A. Each of these relationships is associated with differing perceptions.

For example: Person A is Sally. She tells her friends, “Ted is the man for me. He takes me everywhere; to the movies, the ball game, and to picnics with his friends. He tells me his dreams and hopes. I know he is going to ask me to marry him some day.” That describes her relationship perception.

Person B is Ted. Ted tells his friends, “Sally is a wonderful friend. She is just like one of the guys. She goes to the ball game and is always available when I want to see a movie. I sure like to tell her these crazy ideas I have about life. I hope that when I meet the right woman she will let me keep Sally for a friend.” That is his perception of the relationship.

Obviously, these people have different perceptions of their relationship; yet, they believe and behave as if their perception is the same.

It is only when Sally wants Ted to go to the opera with her on Monday night and she finds that Ted has a date with the guys to watch football that he won’t change and their differing needs become obvious. Her disappointment and his confusion are a measure of their differing perceptions.

2. THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT: Let’s suppose though that Sally is right. They do get married. They decide to have a family. Soon they have a bouncing baby boy born to them. Cute little Roger arrives with a relationship string for Mom and a relationship string for his Dad. They each also have a relationship string for him. I ask another volunteer to come out into the center of the circle to be the baby and give each the appropriate number of strings. They connect them and this is how the relationship strings look now.

ROGER

SALLY TED

Be aware of the number of relationships strings. While they have introduced one new member of the family, they have increased their relationship strings to 6, a threefold increase. Each person added has a multiplier effect.

Baby Roger thinks “If I cry, Mom will drop everything to feed me.” Mom’s response is “I can’t leave this stove while the food is cooking, so he will have to wait.”

Dad buys his son a baseball mitt for Christmas. He wants him to play ball professionally. Roger is sad because he wanted a guitar. He wants to make music, to sing. Each is disappointed by this misperception.

Suppose they have a second child, a beautiful intelligent girl named Ann. Ann has three relationships strings, for her Mom, Dad, and Roger. They each have one for her.

ROGER

SALLY TED

ANN

There are now 12 relationships to be managed in this family. This is 6 times the original 2 relationship perceptions! Those who are married with children know how much additional energy it takes to manage this situation.

Ann loves her brother and wants to be anywhere he is. Roger is embarrassed by his younger sister tagging along. He teases her and sends her home crying. Each person has a different perception of the relationship.

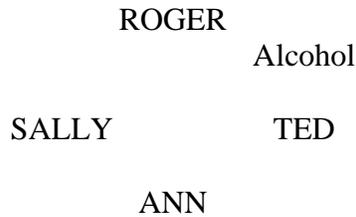
(The number increases as more people are added to the relationship circle. The formula is: Number of persons times the number of persons minus one (NXN-1). Ten people have 90 relationships (10 X 9). Twenty people have 380 relationships to manage (20 X 19).

A manager making a change presentation to an audience of 100 doubting publics is managing 9900 relationship (100 X 99). This is why it is important in these situations to use small group process. Each group of ten is then managing only 90 relationships.

3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THINGS: We also have relationships with things. You have a relationship with your car. You depend on the car to start until one morning it lets you down. It is not as dependable as you perceived.

Or you may have a relationship with alcohol. You believe you can stop drinking any time you want but the alcohol tempts you to continue.

This relationship with a thing may affect the entire family. If Mom complains to her husband about drinking all the time, she is connected to the alcohol. If the daughter is embarrassed by her Dad's drunken behavior at a ball game, she has a relationship with the alcohol. If our family above has an alcoholic father and this affects their relationship, the diagram looks like this:



When Ted comes home drunk he affects all the members of the family. Sally argues with Ted over the drinking. Roger and Ann may choose sides, one of them defending their father. This affects their relationship with their mother. They are now managing 20 relationship strings (5x4). This increases the energy it takes to manage their family by 67% (8/12).

4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORGANIZATIONS: We can have a relationship with an impersonal thing like an organization. Ted believes that the computer business he works for is like a family. He has no concerns about his job because they will take care of him. Then the organization sells out to a larger firm that replaces Ted. Ted feels betrayed because he thought the organization had the same belief that he has.

If Ted just works normal hours and doesn't take his work home with him, then the organization relationship is only with Ted. But if Ted works late at night and is unavailable for his family because he is always in deep thought about his work, then the organization relationship is connected with the family.

Sally will complain to him about his always being at work. Roger is mad because Dad can't attend his soccer game. Ann is miffed because he missed her birthday party.

They now have 30 relationships to manage (6 x 5) an increase of 50%.

If Sally has a relationship with the church that keeps her away from the family, this too affects them all. It increases Ted's reliance on alcohol. The children act out to get their mothers attention. They now have 42 relationships to manage (7 x 6).

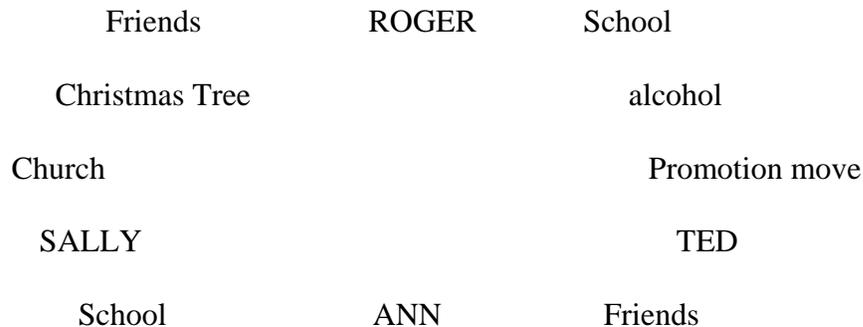
5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONFLICTS: Unresolved conflicts have a way of becoming part of the relationships in a family. If Dad and Mom have an argument over where to spend their holidays, this eventually affects them all. The children roll their

eyes and go to their friends' home. Again, they may take sides. Ted just drinks more, using the holidays as an excuse. Mom spends more time with the church.

Each unresolved conflict impacts other unresolved conflicts. Sally tells Ted he would not be so stubborn about the tree if he wasn't always drunk. He tells her he wouldn't drink if she would agree to move to a new location. They are now managing 56 relationship perceptions (8 x 7).

6. RELATIONSHIP WITH CHANGE: Ted wants to move to a new location where he can get a promotion. He can't understand why Sally won't move. Maybe they could start over in their relationship and leave the old one behind.

Sally doesn't want to leave the security of her work with the church. The children don't want to leave their school and friends.



This family is trying to manage 132 relationship strings (12 x 11). No wonder they feel stressed out when they get together. No wonder they don't get together very often. Sally is at Church, Ted at the bar, and the children at their friends' home.

These relationships take energy to manage. Each unresolved conflict and change event "piggybacks" energy on the other. When Ted and Sally argue about alcohol, the church, the tree, the promotion, the school and friends become instruments of war.

6. RELATIONSHIP WITH LOSS: If Sally gives in and agrees with a move this creates more stress. For each member of the family there is a process of "letting go" and "taking hold" that must happen.

Ted must let go of the old position and take hold of the new one. Sally has to do the same with the church and the children with their friends and school. The change doubles the number of relationships to manage from 12 to 24. This increases the number of relationship bonds to 552 (24 X 23).

In order to reduce the stress with change this family must confront the changes they are going through. This begins with reaching closure with the present and the past. The family members explore two questions:

"How do you feel about leaving this location (friends, school, job, etc)?"

“What did you learn here that you want to take to the new experience with you?”

This allows the family to acknowledge the change, express their feelings, grieve about it, and move on to acceptance. Answering these questions allows the past to be integrated into their memory and into their being. This reduces the number of relationships they manage by half, and the number of relationship strings from 552 to 132.

Acceptance continues by reaching out to make sense of the future experience. Similar questions are answered to take hold of the new location.

“How do you feel about going to the new location (friends, school, job, etc)?”

“What do you want to learn from this new experience?”

This process helps the family move through all the change stages.

CHANGE ONE, CHANGE THEM ALL

Some are panicked by the notion of all these strings. If you are facing the notion of working with 20 people, then there are 380 relationships to manage (20 x 19.) This appears impossible.

Yet, the real power is in the one-on-one relationship. All relationships are interrelated. Touch one and you touch them all. Improve on one and you affect them all. There is no way of knowing if the move is positive or negative but there is still movement.

THE QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION FACING THE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGERS IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN AS WE TRY TO INFLUENCE OTHERS?

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE NOT BEING SUCCESSFUL?

**THE CURRENT SITUATION FACING THE FISH AND WILDLIFE
MANAGERS IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN AS WE TRY TO INFLUENCE
OTHERS AND THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE NOT BEING SUCCESSFUL**

A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

Current Situation

- Many fish and wildlife extinctions, ESA listings, and declining trends
- Unclear roles and responsibilities of a multitude of stakeholders and decision makers
- Lack of credibility and respect for our unique authorities and expertise
- Not able to fully implement our mitigation programs
- Stalled decision making process
- Current administration has put sideboards on programs
- Engaged in a divisive multifaceted decision making process
- Water management targeting ESA listed species
- Vastly reduced historical range of anadromous fish
- Unresolved conflicts for managing water for ESA fish
- Power interests fighting fish and wildlife interests
- Administration run amok
- Lack of unified restoration approaches
- Lack of leadership (NPCC flawed)
- Politics and economics and processes drive decisions with science a distant second

Evidence

- Erosion of our status with NPCC, BPA, and others as key/critical players in regional decision making
- Continuous challenges by others to our (CBFWA) roles and responsibilities

- No leadership
- No unified restoration approaches (recovery plans)
- Duplication of efforts and processes
- Power struggles instead of collaboration
- Other than environmental factors, fish and wildlife population trends not increasing
- ESA listings are numerous
- Serious reduction in fishing opportunities due to reductions
- Ongoing litigation
- BPA is making decisions because of lack of CBFWA consensus
- A laborious and skewed project approval process
- General group dysfunction
- Absence of the third leg of the three-legged stool (CBFWA)
- Too little funding to address restoration needs

THE QUESTIONS:

- **WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS THAT CBFWA WILL EMPLOY TO FOSTER SUCCESSFUL INFLUENCE ON REGIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE DECISIONS?**
- **WHAT WOULD BE THE SITUATION IF CBFWA WAS EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCING FISH AND WILDLIFE DECISIONS IN THE REGION TODAY?**
- **WHAT WILL BE THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN IMPLEMENTING THESE STRATEGIES?**

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS THAT CBFWA WILL EMPLOY TO FOSTER
SUCCESSFUL INFLUENCE ON REGIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE
DECISIONS**

A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

- **To remain strong in conviction, united in purpose, *which includes keeping a united front, having a belief and member commitment in CBFWA.*** Members commit to CBFWA at a policy, technical, and legal levels and individual members devise *a* participation plan. CBFWA unifies on a vision to benefit fish and wildlife in the region *and works* together toward a common vision.
- **CBFWA will develop and communicate a plan by identifying priority fish and wildlife resource needs to guide basin actions (biological objectives and reporting, etc).** *We* commit to prioritize engagement in issues and follow through to the end point. CBFWA commits personnel to implement the plan *and* reconfirms the CBFWA work plan to accomplish *the* needs *as* identified above. *CBFWA* will emphasize *the* win-win aspects of enhancing fish and wildlife populations.
- **We will increase credibility with stakeholders *and* work with stakeholders to develop a shared vision of what successful conservation and recovery of fish and wildlife is and what’s needed for accomplishment.** We will engage NPCC & BPA and other interested parties early on in discussion of regional issues *by* facilitating transparent and comprehensive evaluation of actual risks to fish and wildlife and other public uses of decision alternatives. *To improve* public image *and* public education CBFWA *will* perform outreach to other stakeholders to bring them into processes. *We* will be publicly visible in being confident and proud (short of being boastful) of our contributions to regional decision makers.
- **We will not “air” dirty laundry; we will leave baggage at door prior to entering meeting.** *There will be* no more whining *because* it diminishes focus. CBFWA must develop mutual respect between members and must believe in our data and data interpretations.
- **CBFWA will manage resources to achieve full recovery which would meet requirement like ESA, but also other uses (e.g., harvest).** *CBFWA* will develop a “success” database for posterity (a document what works), report successes, and provide quality products in a timely fashion. *We will* let our actions (value added products) speak for themselves.
- Open a can.....

**THIS WOULD BE THE SITUATION IF CBFWA WAS EFFECTIVELY
INFLUENCING FISH AND WILDLIFE DECISIONS IN THE REGION TODAY**

A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

Native fish and wildlife populations would increase in numbers and range in a concerted effort to make up for years of abuse. *As we restore and conserve fish and wildlife, fish and wildlife resources will increase over time resulting in working toward delisting. There would still be conflicts over diminishing resources, but fish and wildlife will do better than they are now.*

NPCC, BPA, and other interested parties would defer to fish and wildlife managers and seek their input in decision making. *Consequently fish and wildlife managers' status would be recognized within their respective State. Because decision makers seek fish and wildlife managers input, there is no need for NPCC or Salmon Recovery Board. Thus the Feds would be looking to the agencies and tribes for leadership.*

A unified voice working in partnership with all stakeholders, protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife resources will result in less duplication in planning processes and more implementation action, more integrated, united, and scientific restoration approach for fish and wildlife, strong public and political support for the conservation and restoration of fish and wildlife habitats. *A clear public policy that places a high priority on minimizing risks to fish and to fish and wildlife, similar to policies for other public uses. For example; fish and wildlife managers arrive at collaborative solutions to the flow issue (river operations) which will cease the divisive cycle we're in and result in decreased BPA funds spent on process and decreased funds spent on mitigation with tribes and agencies working in harmony.*

Results in general optimism for the future. *Depending on how we achieve success, our relationship with other stakeholders in the Basin may be improved or may deteriorate. As a result litigation will be from the other side rather than fish and wildlife, e.g., irrigators, ranchers, and sportsmen. Ultimately developing a community-based environmental ethic will be vital.*

**EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN IMPLEMENTING
THESE STRATEGIES**

A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

We would witness trends towards fish and wildlife restoration as evidenced by well distributed and abundant native fish and wildlife populations towards historic numbers and range. This would provide healthy biological and local communities.

Evidence of success would be less litigation and reduced number of duplicative processes and improved job satisfaction for fish and wildlife professionals.

NPCC, BPA, and other regional decision makers would seek and use CBFWA input and influence and defer to managers to develop the integrated and unified fish and wildlife restoration plan and programs to conserve and restore fish and wildlife i.e., adequate funding, public will do what is needed, etc. This effort should balance risk management for fish and wildlife on par with other interests.

APPENDIX

COLLECTIVE STATEMENTS

Collective statements are based on the belief that each of us sees the world from a different viewpoint. Our individual views are like pieces of a puzzle – when we fit them all together we get the full picture.

In most meetings our views tend to be seen as competitive. When someone speaks, another person responds with a counter statement, and the meeting progresses with each trying to convince the other of his or her rightness. This behavior is based on a belief in the “one right answer” to all questions. Only one of us can be right, so our intelligence is used to establish that rightness firmly. It becomes a competition in which each person’s ego and intelligence are at stake.

This is either/or thinking – either you are right or I am! Often, two or three people will capture all the time in a meeting with this either/or conflict, while others listen, get bored, and drop out. It is a time-consuming, ineffective process. The meeting ends with some vaguely worded compromise that relieves the participants. They leave with little commitment to it.

Collective thinking assumes we can all learn something from each other. We have different views of a situation and all views are right.

This is done with many of the workshop tasks. The collective statements are the result of adding individual statements together, keeping each person’s words to the best extent possible, and creating a statement of the total group.

DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

A collective statement process is based on the notion that we all have different views of a situation and all views are right. Each of us perceives the world through our experiences, values, beliefs, and our desires.

In some tasks, statements made by each individual participant are recorded as accurately as possible. These statements are first segregated into common groups. The individual statements are then added together, keeping each person's words to the best extent possible, creating a statement of the total group.

At times it is necessary to add words to the brief recorded statements to clarify the intent. Or a word might be added to bridge two or more statements together. This is kept to a minimum in order to retain the original recorded thought.

While some grammatical improvements may be made, the original statement and the original words are kept as close as possible.

As an example, these were the original recorded statements of the *Senior Citizens Worst Outcomes of the Situation*:

SENIOR CITIZENS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:

1. Unsafe community to live in
2. Will regress, if no progress
3. Things are fine, no higher taxes
4. Our senior programs will be cut – lack of funds
5. My needs as a senior will not be considered and taxes will rise – skyrocket
6. More leave town, higher crime, higher taxes, less facilities
7. Leads to collapse of government
8. If not forward, then backwards
9. Become retirement community, kids leave, no industry
10. Uncertain, unhappy future

DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT (CONT.)

The statements are segregated to become like groups of statements:

SENIOR CITIZENS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:

Listed and grouped in order of selection:

2. Will regress, if no progress
8. If not forward, then backwards

3. Things are fine, no higher taxes
9. Become retirement community, kids leave, no industry

5. My needs as senior will not be considered and taxes will rise - skyrocket
4. Our senior programs will be cut – lack of funds

1. Unsafe community to live in
6. More leave town, higher crime, higher taxes, and fewer facilities
7. Leads to collapse of government
10. Uncertain, unhappy future

These statements are now linked together to form the final collective statement. Words that are added in the process are shown in parentheses (you can also use italics):

THE SENIOR CITIZENS WORST OUTCOMES:

(The community) will regress, if (there is) no progress. If (we do) not (move) forward, then (we slide) backwards.

(We all think that) things (are) fine, (as long as there are) no higher taxes. (We) become (a) retirement community, (the) kids leave, (there is) no industry.

My needs as (a) senior will not be considered and taxes will rise and skyrocket. Our senior programs will be cut (because) of (a) lack of funds.

(This will be an) unsafe community to live in. (More business and people will) leave town, (because of) higher crime, higher taxes, (and) less facilities. (This) leads to a collapse of government. (We face) an uncertain, unhappy future.

DEVELOPING A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT (CONT.)

This is another example of the process. Begin with the original recorded statements:

PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:

1. Extremely large classrooms (40/50 room).
2. Children won't have educational background to get into college.
3. If parenting skills not improved, what will it do to child's education?
4. If we can't solve drug problem, what is future of our children?
5. The children will never leave home.
6. My kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.
7. Dropping out!
8. The children won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school.
9. Parents' lack of concern will hinder ability of the child.
10. Drugs and gangs will come into community.
11. The lack of the best education and know-how to deal with life on their own.

Segregate them into the like statements:

PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION:

Listed and grouped in order of selection:

11. The lack of the best education and know-how to deal with life on their own.
8. The children won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school.
2. Children won't have educational background to get into college.
6. My kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.
1. Extremely large classrooms (40/50 room).
7. Dropping out!
5. The children will never leave home.
9. Parents' lack of concern will hinder ability of the child.
3. If parenting skills not improved, what will it do to child's education?
10. Drugs and gangs will come into community.
4. If we can't solve drug problem, what is future of our children?

PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES OF THE SITUATION

Then put the statements together, adding words where absolutely necessary keeping the original intent as much as possible.

THE PARENTS WORST OUTCOMES:

(The children will have a) lack of the best education and (the) know-how to deal with life on their own. (They) won't be happy and won't be prepared for the next step after high school. (Our) children won't have educational background to get into college. (Our) kids will waste their talents and be average like everybody else.

(We will have) extremely large classrooms (40/50 room). (The students are) dropping out (of school)! The children will never leave home!

(The) parents' lack of concern will hinder ability of the child. If parenting skills (are) not improved, what will it do to the child's education?

Drugs and gangs will come into community. If we can't solve the drug problem, what is (the) future of our children?

THE COMMUNITY IS TELLING A STORY

For years I sought for a way to help people understand at an integrative or organic level the value of the collective statements and all of the activities that lead up to it. It was the story telling approach of an Indian elder that helped me to see how to do this.

Everyone IS Telling a Story: I ask six to eight people who are seated together in the circle to stand and move one step into the circle. I walk out into the center of the circle and act as the director of this story.

“I have learned over time that every conflict has a community of interest that it brings together those who are influenced or impacted by the decision. I am asking these people to represent a community of interest.”

Another thing I learned is that each community that is brought together around a conflict has a community story to tell, but the individual members do not understand that. They each come to the gathering believing that *they have the entire story in themselves*, and they are there to convince the others of the “truth” of what they know.

To demonstrate this, I am going to ask this group to tell a story. They are going to do this like we did when we were in kindergarten and the teacher asked us to each tell a part of the story. We begin with Rob, who will repeat the first sentence that I give him. This is the beginning of the story. Then, Kathy will add her sentence to the story, followed by Laura adding a sentence, and so on, until Crista, the last person in the line, will create an ending for the story.

I state for Rob the first sentence for the story: “*A porcupine walked into the meadow.*”

Rob: “*A porcupine walked into the meadow.*”

Kathy: (Thinking first) “*It was a warm and sunny day.*”

Laura: “*He saw another animal in the meadow.*”

Jon: “*It was a bear, an angry bear, just waking up from a winter nap.*”

Debbie: “*The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.*”

Dawn: “*This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.*”

Crista: “*There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*”

With the ending of this story the large group will normally laugh and applaud. The members of the story group are often nervous and really think, trying to come up with the “right” sentence that makes sense.

I repeat the learning I have had about communities of interest.

“I have learned that every conflict has a community of interest, and that community which is drawn together has a community story to tell. But, they don’t know that. They each think they have the full story.”

Everyone thinks they have the whole story: I have Rob and Crista step out in front of the story tellers, turning to face each other. I encourage them to repeat their sentence to each other, to let the others know what the “true” story is.

Rob: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

They both looked at me, and I encourage them. . . *“The other person has not got it yet.”* Keep repeating it until he gets it.

Rob repeats to Crista: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista repeats: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life”* with a tone of voice that is impatient.

Rob repeats with more vigor: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista, her hands on her hips leans forward and repeats firmly: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life!”*

Rob: *“NO!!! The porcupine walked into the meadow!!”* He speaks with steely confidence . . . this is the truth!!

Crista, before he is done, loudly with emphasis and pointing her finger into his chest: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

Rob, leaning forward now, with more emphasis and a loud voice: *“The porcupine walked into the meadow . . .and that is all there is to it!!”*

Crista, now leaning nose to nose with him, and just as loudly: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

The group laughs, often applauds, they recognize themselves; they have seen this in many meetings. I ask them, rhetorically, *“Have you ever experienced this kind of argument before?”* They all nod their heads.

Everyone wants the group to repeat their story line. I have Rob and Crista return to the story teller group. I turn to the others:

“What Rob and Crista both want is to win this argument and have everybody else repeat their sentence as the entire story line.”

I ask Rob to repeat his sentence, and for the others to repeat it exactly as he said it.

Rob: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Kathy: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Laura: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Jon: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Debbie: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Dawn: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Crista (resisting): *“NO WAY! There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

Again, the community laughs. They understand the implications of this activity. Now, they know Crista wants everyone to repeat her sentence, because **she** has the truth.

The story is all mixed up: In addition to everyone wanting to be right with their “*story line*,” when the group meets, they are seated out of order. I move the standing participants around, mixing their order. Then I ask them to repeat their sentence:

Debbie: *“The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.”*

Laura: *“He saw another animal in the meadow.”*

Rob: *“A porcupine walked into the meadow.”*

Dawn: *“This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.”*

Kathy: *“It was a warm and sunny day.”*

Crista: *“There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.”*

Jon: *“It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.”*

Now, this discussion doesn’t seem to make any sense, especially if you are the manager who needs to make the decision. These people all appear to be in conflict with what they are saying. There is no similarity. Who should you believe? What can you base your decision on?

In the consensus process, we encourage each person to express their view, and, we record as it is being expressed. These are the different perceptions of the entire community. Then we take that information from this group, and any other group, and write a collective statement. When we do that it sounds like this:

(I move the story tellers to their original position and have them repeat their sentences.)

Rob: “*A porcupine walked into the meadow.*”

Kathy: “*It was a warm and sunny day.*”

Laura: “*He saw another animal in the meadow.*”

Jon: “*It was a bear, an angry bear just waking up from a winter nap.*”

Debbie: “*The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.*”

Dawn: “*This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear.*”

Crista: “*There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*”

These collective statements tell the “whole story” and are inclusive of everyone’s views. Now that you know the whole story as a manager, you can begin to take action to do something about what is happening. *It sounds to me like we have an angry bear up in the meadow. We better tell other humans about this to keep them away. Or, better yet, have the bear removed to a safer place, so the porcupines can climb down the tree and return to their home.*”

If we Exclude Others, We Don’t Get the Whole Story: I then remove four members of the group. Rob is removed because he looks like a hippie and we certainly don’t want to give him any recognition. Jon is always looking for the negative in things, so leave him out. Then, Deb is a member of the public, what does she know about these things? Finally, don’t include Dawn; she is part of that rabid environmentalist group. So, we are left with this story.

Kathy: “*It was a warm and sunny day.*”

Laura: “*He saw another animal in the meadow.*”

Crista: “*There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*”

Now. . . is that the same story? It is certainly a warm and positive story, but it is incomplete, and leaves out important information. If you made a decision to send a group of people up to this meadow, would they have all the information they need?

Coalitions Form and a Battle Begins: The four people who were excluded find they have a common purpose. They were not included, acknowledged, or their information listened to. They form a coalition to get the attention of those who make the decision. They form a line facing the “included group” and begin shouting their sentences at the same time to the others, wanting attention and acknowledgement of their views.

All Rob: “*A porcupine walked into the meadow.*”
Spoken Jon: “*It was a bear, an angry bear, just waking up from a winter nap.*”
At the Dawn: “*This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away*
Same *from the bear.* “
Time Debbie: “*The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached.*”

This causes the “included” group to come together as a block, expressing their point of view just as loudly and at the same time. No one listens, if they did, it would just sound garbled.

All spoken Kathy: “*It was a warm and sunny day.*”
At the Laura: “*He saw another animal in the meadow.*”
Same time Crista: “*There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.*”

Again, the message is visually and intellectually clear to the larger group. If you exclude people, or do not hear or acknowledge their information, they will form coalitions and oppose you. In doing so, while all the needed information is expressed, little of it is actually heard.

Including everyone, hearing the whole story, results in community. I bring back the excluded members and they are integrated into the whole story. I remind them that the collective statement includes all words expressed by the individuals in the group. The purpose of the collective statement writer is to write the story.

A porcupine walked into the meadow. It was a warm and sunny day. He saw another animal in the meadow. It was a bear, an angry bear, just waking up from a winter nap.

The bear growled at the porcupine when he approached. This frightened the porcupine, so he climbed a tree to get away from the bear. There he met a female porcupine who became his mate for life.

When this is done, Kathy sees her statement is in the story. It is between Rob and Laura’s statements (I have Kathy hold Rob’s hand and Laura’s hand). She is part of the story connected with them. In like manner, Laura is connected by the story to Jon, and Jon to Debbie, etc. Soon, all the storytellers are connected.

“This, I emphasize,” is community.” Everyone has had their say, been listened to and acknowledged. And, what they have said has been put into a collective statement, linking them together. Now, they can decide what do about this story they have created.”

I ask those standing to take a bow, still holding their hands, and then ask the members of the group to honor these people for helping them learn. They all stand and applaud.

THE VIEW FROM MY MOUSE HOLE

This story is written to demonstrate a collective statement in the process of development. It underscores the fact that we all have our different views from our different mouse holes, or perceptions.

As in real life, it sometimes takes a crisis to move from the individual view to the community view. It means that all of us need to be willing to share the mouse hole view, or perception of the others. This means suspending our normal narrow mouse hole vision to see the new view.

THE VIEW FROM MY MOUSE HOLE

In the countryside
stood an old barn.

In the barn
lived six mice,
each with its own
mouse hole.

One mouse lived
in the south wall.
This mouse was young,
with soft fur, gentle eyes,
and an innocent, trusting way.

In the east wall
lived another young mouse
with shiny fur, bright eyes,
adventurous and intelligent.

An older mouse lived
in the west wall.
This was a quiet,
deep-thinking mouse
with dark fur, deep-set eyes,
and long whiskers.

Another mouse
long in the whiskers
and long in the tail
lived in the north wall.
This was a wise mouse
who had a cold, crisp manner
and fur tinged with gray.

In the floor, in the center
of the barn
lived a friendly mouse with
an earthy manner whose way was grounded
in truth.
A mouse that loved life.

While high in the loft,
lived the oldest mouse of all,
with white fur,

gentle twinkling eyes.
A perceptive mouse
with much understanding.

Like other mice,
each of these had a
territory, or area,
which was its own,
which it protected and
which other mice respected.

Like other mice,
these had short-sighted
vision.
They smelled or touched things
with their whiskers
but could only see that which
was in front of them.

And that is what this
tale is about.

One winter, the farmer
stabled a new animal
in the center of the barn.
An animal the mice had
never seen before.

They were discussing
this new animal one
afternoon while
eating in the grain bin
which was along the south wall.
This is the only area
they would come together
to talk and eat.

“That’s such a strange
animal,” south mouse said
quietly,
“with only two legs and
a tail, and black all over.
It doesn’t even have a head.”

“Doesn’t have a head,”
west mouse said,

thoughtfully.

“Why, that can’t be.
From my mouse hole,
the animal I see has
a head with one horn and
it has two legs, but it’s black
all over with white spots.”

“You have lived in the dark too long,”
squeaked east mouse. “I can see much clearer.
From my mouse hole,
the animal has two legs,
a head with one horn,
as you said,
but it’s white all over
with black spots.”

“Neither of you sees very well
nor speaks very wisely,”
said the north mouse,
twitching whiskers and tail.
“The animal has two legs,
I agree, but it has
a head with two horns
and it’s white all over.
Without a head, it couldn’t
even live.”

“Strange,”
said the earth mouse,
“when I look up at the
new animal,
it appears to have four legs
and a soft, white underbelly.”

“We all seem to have a view
of a different animal,”
said the rafter mouse, loftily
and with twinkling eyes.
“My animal has no legs,
but it does have a head
with two horns, and a tail.”

“Surely this cannot be the
same animal,”
said east mouse,

“Since I have the
best view of all from the
sunshine in the window,
I think you should accept
my view.”

“Well,”
said the north mouse,
“I can’t see how
we can accept your view
without also accepting my view
which is closer to the animal.”

The mice then began a discussion
which inevitably led
to an argument
as to who had the proper view
of the new animal.

“I think,” said the rafter mouse,
“that we had better continue
our discussion somewhere else
as I can see
the cat
staring at us
from the top of the grain bin.”

“Run to my mouse hole – quick --,”
said south mouse, “you will have
protection there.”

This they did with much haste.
The cat narrowly missed the slower
rafter mouse.

“That was close,” said the
rafter mouse.
“It’s a good thing we saw the cat
when we did.”

“Hum...m!” said the west mouse
thoughtfully.
“Why is it that we all recognized
the cat?”

“Could it be”

said the wise north mouse
“that what we have been
arguing about is
really the same animal?”

“Look,” said the east mouse
excitedly,
“we can see the view of
the animal
from the south mouse’s hole
and it is exactly as described
by south mouse!”

“I wonder if the view would be the
same from each mouse hole?”
asked the rafter mouse.

“If we really want to know what
the new animal looks like,”
said the earth mouse,
“perhaps we need to see the animal
from everyone’s mouse hole.”

“Surely,” said the rafter mouse,
“if south mouse can trust us
in this mouse hole,
we would be willing to
allow everyone to visit
the other mouse holes.”

And so –
that is what they did.

And they saw that the view from
the east mouse hole
was exactly as
the east mouse described it.

And the view from the
west mouse hole
was exactly as
the west mouse described it.

The views from
the north and earth mouse holes
were exactly as

they described them.

And, finally, they had a view
from the rafter mouse hole
where they saw not only
the animal
but also
each of the mouse holes
along each of the walls
and in the floor.

They became very excited
with this new view of
the barn.

“What does it all mean?”
asked the south mouse,
innocently.

“It means that each of us
saw a different view of
the animal
from our mouse hole,” said
the east mouse.

The west mouse
thought for a moment,
and then said,
“Is it possible that
all of these views
put together
would give us a description of
the animal?”

The north mouse said
“If we really want to
know what the
animal looks like,
I think it would be wise
to do exactly that.”

“Yes,” said the earth mouse.
“I think it is important
to know the truth
about this animal.”

“We would then
have a complete view
of this animal,”
said the rafter mouse,
“rather than
single views.”

With that,
the mice began to put
together the different views
that they had
of the new animal.

What they came up with was
an animal that
had four legs, a head
and a tail,
with two horns on the head,
black in back and white in front,
with a black side,
and white spots to the west side,
and a white side
with black spots to the east side,
and a soft, white underbelly.

Just to be sure,
the east mouse
volunteered to venture
to the floor of the barn
and look at
the animal from all directions.

This he did
very carefully, and
running back to his comrades,
stated that, “Not only was
their description correct, but
he found out from the animal
that it was
a cow.”

With happy hearts, the mice
returned to the grain bin.

“Perhaps,” said the north mouse,
“the reason we know what

the cat looks like is
because we have all seen it
from different viewpoints.”

“Why, that’s right!” said
the south mouse,
“We have all seen the cat from
every side!”

“Not exactly,” said
the rafter mouse.
“You don’t have a view of the cat from
the inside.”

“And we can all be happy about that!”
said the earth mouse.