

# Shared Governance: The Watershed Context

*How we decide and who gets to decide often determines what we decide.<sup>1</sup>*

## Context: Watershed planning

Watersheds are complex systems:

- Complexity of issues
- Issues have multiple dimensions (and scales)
- Different decision makers and jurisdictions<sup>2</sup>

No longer is water management simply about water allocation but about balancing ecological, social, and economic needs within watersheds. Complexity, multiple dimensions, and multiple players in watershed planning necessitate a shift from government to governance.

## Government to Governance

We need to match the solutions to the problem.

<b>Government</b> = the political direction and control exercised over the actions of the members, citizens, or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states; direction of the affairs of a state, community, etc.; political administration <sup>3</sup>	<b>Single jurisdiction Single sector</b>	<b>Multi-jurisdiction Single Sector</b>
	Local government policies and programs	Regional cooperation among local governments
<b>Governance</b> = to steer, the process of shaping private, public, and non-profit sector decisions and actions towards a common end <sup>4</sup>	<b>Single jurisdiction Multi-sector</b>	<b>Multi-jurisdiction Multi-sector</b>
	Local collaborative governance (public, private, and civic sectors working together in one jurisdiction)	Regional collaborative governance (public, private, and civic sectors working together across multiple jurisdictions)

Source: Alliance for Regional Stewardship, *Regional Stewardship & Collaborative Governance: Implementation that Produces Results. Monograph Series, March 2006; Denver, Colorado*

<sup>1</sup> World Resources Institute. 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Alliance for Regional Stewardship 2006.

<sup>3</sup> dictionary.com

<sup>4</sup> Alliance for Regional Stewardship 2006.

Shifting to governance means governments share the decision-making responsibility with other sectors, or stakeholders.

Shift from government to governance to respond to challenges:

- *Scale* – as regions grow, they expand beyond traditional boundaries; and need to deal with resulting political fragmentation
- *Speed* – rapid pace of change; innovative economy is based on speed; “internet time”
- *Participation* – scale, speed, & lack of trust in ineffective institutions discourage participation. But civic engagement necessary to respond to civic needs.
- *Effectiveness* – what matters is how well regional institutions respond to changing needs of the region<sup>5</sup>

## Response: Regional Collaborative Governance

### *What is Regional Collaboration?*

To co-labour, to cooperate to achieve common goals working across boundaries through multi-sector, multi-jurisdictional allies<sup>6</sup>

### *What is Governance?*

To steer, the process of shaping private, public, and non-profit sector decisions and actions towards a common end<sup>7</sup>

*Environmental governance* – “the processes and institutions we use to make decisions about the environment”, where good governance involves “sound institutions, prudent policies, transparent processes, open access to information, and equitable participation in decision making”. It also embraces full accountability, equity, coherence, attention to ethical concerns, responsiveness, and “integration of resource sectors and issues”.<sup>89</sup>

In the watershed context, good governance leads us to regional collaboration of government and stakeholders. It means “non-state actors” (NGOs, citizens, business)<sup>10</sup> should be meaningfully involved in decision making around water.

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<sup>5</sup> Alliance for Regional Stewardship 2006.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> World Resources Institute 2003, viii.

<sup>9</sup> De Loe, Rob and Reid Kreutzweizer 2006.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 87.

## Structures for Regional Collaborative Governance: Continuum of Responses

Informal structures	to	Formal structures
<b>Networks</b>	<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>New Structures (e.g. authorities)</b>
Build relationships, exchange information, identify common interests	Coordinate existing institutions, negotiate compacts	Create regional institutions Create intermediary institutions

Source: McKinney 2006.

## Principles for Regional Collaborative Governance in Watersheds

- **Catalyst** – a compelling reason
- **Leadership** – legitimacy, credibility, capacity
- **Representation** – the right people
- **Regional fit** – define boundaries according to people’s interests
- **Deliberation** – jointly name issues and frame options
- **Implementation** – move from vision to action
- **Evaluation** – learn and adapt<sup>11</sup>
- **Scientific Feasibility** – specific actions have a clear causal relationship to, and measurable improvements in meeting, priority issues
- **Motivational Feasibility** – how to maintain participation
  - Incentives (e.g. regulatory flexibility)
  - Norm-based approaches (stakeholders want to conform to norms)
  - Engaging emotional responses (e.g. civic pride)
- **Social Feasibility**
  - Meet local needs and priorities
  - Statutory framework to delegate authority
  - Established planning procedures
  - Technical & financial assistance<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> McKinney 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Ballweber 2006.

## Design Regional Organizations with the End in Mind

- Think about:
  - What are you trying to achieve?
  - What type of power or authority is needed?
  - Who needs to be involved?
  - What are their roles and responsibilities?
- It's about the network of people, ideas, and relationships, not institutions per se
- Be opportunistic and adaptive
- Build on and adapt existing organizations if appropriate; or create new regional institutions if necessary<sup>13</sup>

## Conditions Necessary for Successful Collaboration

- Develop a strong vision for achieving common goals and encourage regional political leadership to encourage cooperation
- Incentives to encourage cooperation among multi-jurisdictional stakeholders
- Adopt conflict-avoiding strategies<sup>14</sup>

Interest and patience of the public may be difficult to maintain over the long term. Willingness to participate will only endure if participants feel they are listened to and their recommendations being acted upon.

Good collaborative governance is possible if “stakeholders have both the *opportunity* and the *capacity* to participate; decision making is equitable, responsive, and transparent; and good accountability exists.”<sup>15</sup>

Variability in capacity among local governance processes should not “lead to weaker water management” and government should not use them to download their responsibilities. Instead, there must be “an appropriate balance between state and non-state actors” and among scales of water governance.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> PPRI and LILP 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Tyler and Quinn. Regional Planning Best Practices: A Synthesis of the Literature

<sup>15</sup> De Loe and Kreutzweizer 2006, 99.

<sup>16</sup> De Loe and Kreutzweizer 2006. p 99-100.

## What is the Role of Government in Regional Collaborative Governance?

To provide “constructive engagement to manage common problems within the parameters of a substantive policy framework set by government.”<sup>17</sup>

- Provide clear political commitment and leadership
- Provide context for the issue
- Take initiatives to facilitate the process
- Provide clear “impulse” or incentive—for example, impulse can be failure to participate in cooperative response may lead to government acting unilaterally
- Ensure the public interest

### *Cautions to government*

- Don't “oversteer” process
- Resist lure of micromanagement
- Process should not squeeze out creative interaction and innovative solutions
- Provide latitude for HOW problems are dealt with, subject to general policy guidance

### Conclusions

- Community with dissenting views can agree on solutions if they trust the process
  - Need sufficient time for group's education
  - Need reliable tools
- Getting 100 percent consensus is hard work. An effective chairperson is key to assure a fair process.
- Volunteer burn out must be avoided.
- Willingness to participate will only endure if participants feel they are listened to and their recommendations are being acted upon.
- Relevant government bodies must be involved and consistent in their representation and participation
- Consistent funding and expert support is necessary
- Government needs to provide **leadership**, with a clear “impulse” that things will change

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<sup>17</sup> Meadowcroft 2004.

- Government needs to provide **guidelines** within which decisions should be made (e.g., standards, minimum criteria)
- Government needs to provide a **backstop**, where status quo is not the default and if the collaborative model doesn't work, the government will step in and complete the task

## Investigative questions to identify whether the decision-making process encouraged cooperation/collaboration

What are the significant economic, social, political, cultural and biophysical issues for the community/ region? Do these issues affect resource management?

Do existing institutional arrangements support integrated management?

Are the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders clearly defined?

Does the mandate given to stakeholders allow adaptive management? Can the focus of the collaborative planning process change to suit emerging and changing issues?

Do stakeholders have control over each stage of the policy cycle (e.g. design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation)?

Are stakeholders provided enough time to develop relationships, share perspectives, and critically examine issues before decisions have to be made?

Are stakeholders provided sufficient resources to implement decisions?

Do all stakeholders possess the skills, capacity or experience to contribute to resource policy development?

Are all stakeholders committed to work in collaboration with others?

Do all stakeholders support and facilitate the collaborative decision-making process?

Do stakeholders communicate/interact with each other in an open and honest manner? Do the stakeholders demonstrate respect and trust for each other?

Are the interests of all key stakeholders represented in the decision-making process?

Are clear criteria applied when making decisions? If so, how was it developed? Does any interest hold more weight in criteria than others?

Is the decision-making process open, accessible and transparent?

Are temporal (e.g. a timeline for action) as well as spatial boundaries defined? How do these boundaries affect decision making?

Is the decision-making process supported by clear, focused and realistic goals that are shared by all participants? Do these goals provide advantage for any particular stakeholder's interest?

Is understanding and knowledge produced through mutual enquiry and learning, or is it imposed upon stakeholders?

Do all stakeholders have access to all of the pertinent information?

Do decisions include the interests of wider society? Are opportunities provided for public participation in the decision-making process?

How are decisions reached? Are any stakeholders marginalised from the decision-making process?

**Source:** Murray 2007.

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