Problem Solving or Social Change? The Applegate and Grand Canyon Forest Partnerships

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Abstract—Natural resource conflicts have resulted in attempts at better collaboration between public and private sectors. The resulting partnerships approach collaboration either by problem solving through better information and management, or by requiring substantial social change. The Applegate Partnership in Oregon and the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership in Arizona illustrate each approach. These approaches show the formative influences that shape the evolution and activities of a partnership, and show the need for multistakeholder participation.

Introduction

Over the past decade, numerous communities, agencies, and interest groups in the American West have turned to collaboration to manage natural resource conflict and develop and implement plans for managing, preserving, and restoring the landscape. These collaborations take many different forms because they emerge in response to local political, economic, and ecological circumstances. Yet all must respond to a common challenges: complex problems, diverse and often conflicting interests, fluid and often shifting relationships of power and authority, and the need to develop local capacity and resources.

These collaborative initiatives, often referred to as "partnerships," have attracted increasing attention as communities, agencies, and interest groups create, join, or actively resist these multistakeholder initiatives. A growing body of literature has attempted to comprehend and characterize these groups (Brick and others 2000; Cestero 1999; Conley 2000; Kenny 1999, 2000; Moore and Koontz 2000; Moseley 1999; Sturtevant and Lange 1995; Weber and Herzog 2000). Our assertion is that many of the efforts to explain partnerships and collaboratives overlook a fundamental distinction among groups that explains variations in group character, configuration, focus, and success.

We argue that a partnership chooses between at least two fundamentally different ways of seeing and defining its problem. One approach views the challenge as a quasi-technical problem requiring better information, technical expertise, organizational efficiency, and public education. The other views the situation as requiring substantial social change—the reorganization and redistribution of the decisionmaking authority, responsibility, and resources, and the allocation of costs and benefits associated with land management/stewardship.

We draw on two partnership initiatives—the Applegate Partnership of southwestern Oregon, and the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership of northern Arizona—to illustrate this distinction. Using these two groups, we further suggest that a group's choice between these two orientations depends on the characteristics of the founding group—those who initiate the partnership, define the problem to be addressed, and recruit the rest of the participants. We assert that the disposition of this founder group will largely determine a group's choice of strategies. Therefore, it is essential to understand what factors determine who assumes the founding role, shaping both the partnership, its perception of the problem, and the strategies it will create to address that problem.

Method

In this paper, we compare the Applegate Partnership in southwestern Oregon and the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership in northern Arizona. The Applegate Partnership came together in 1992 to address forest conflict and create ecosystem-based management in the Applegate Watershed. Founders created the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership in 1996 to reach agreement about how to reduce fire hazard and restore the forests surrounding the City of Flagstaff. The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership and the Applegate Partnership offer fertile grounds for comparison, in part, because they share similar ecological challenges and yet developed markedly different forms to address them. Both the Applegate Valley and northern Arizona are naturally fire-dominated ecosystems with the federal land management agencies controlling a large percentage of the land. In both regions, extensive timber extraction, grazing, and fire suppression had led to dense stands of small trees. Many participants in both groups were worried that these forest conditions would lead to large-scale, disruptive change especially wildfire, species loss, and habitat degradation.

The material for this paper is drawn from the authors' participant observation in these two groups. Brett KenCairn was a founding Applegate Board member and was active with the Partnership from 1992 to 1997. KenCairn was involved in the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership in 1998 and 1999. Cassandra Moseley was a board member of the Applegate Partnership and also conducted extensive interviews and participant observation in the Applegate Valley between 1995 and 1998.

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Formative Influence of Local Context

Kingdon (1984) argues that political change occurs when a "window of opportunity" opens that creates the political space for a new policy or idea to be introduced into politics (see also Moseley 1999). These windows open for a variety of reasons, ranging from regular events such as elections to extraordinary political crises. In both of our case studies, political crises created the opportunity to realign institutional arrangements. In the Applegate, the injunction that halted timber harvest in the territory of the northern spotted owl created the window of opportunity. The anger and administrative chaos that the injunction created allowed a community leader to pull together people to talk about new forms of land management.

In northern Arizona, disputes over federal forest management coupled with dramatic wildfires that threatened Flagstaff created a sense of crisis. This crisis pushed natural resource agencies, elected officials, and other community leaders to search for common ground that would allow federal managers to implement new forms of forest management.

Despite similarities of political crises, the partnerships that emerged were markedly different. In Flagstaff, the institutional dynamics of participant agencies dominated the Partnership. In the Applegate, a hybrid community/institution-based group emerged that eventually evolved into a community-based group.

Participant Worldview and Perceptions of "the Problem"

The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership (GCFP) was founded as a collaboration of government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to reduce fire hazard and improve forest health on the 100,000 acres of public lands surrounding Flagstaff. GCFP founders believed that legal and political conflict and disagreement over federal forest management were preventing the formulation and support for a new approach to active forest management. Participant groups were selected based on their technical expertise or their role as opinion leaders in the region. Partnership founders believed that they could get the public to trust their efforts if they recruited a diverse collection of leading organizations to support the work of forest restoration specialists. The group focused on convening experts to develop a solution and creating public support for the proposed solution.

When faced with a similar if more extreme political crisis, Applegate leaders founded a very different partnership. The Applegate Partnership founders wanted to develop a comprehensive management strategy at a watershed (500,000 acre) scale. New management strategies would be "ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially acceptable." (Unattributed quotes come from anonymous interviews of Applegate Partnership participants.) At the outset, Applegate leaders choose to address the ecological problems they faced at a larger scale—ecologically and socially—than-the effort in Flagstaff. But more importantly, Applegate leaders viewed the central causes of the problem they faced—and how they could be best addressed—in a much different way. The Applegate founders believed that the model in which government agencies developed plans and then put them out for public review was not working. This process left out too many people until it was too late in the process, which created a narrow problem definition, and offered too few sources of ideas for solving complex problems. Applegate leaders saw problems as being so complex that no one person or set of people with particular perspectives or interests could hope to solve them.

Why were these groups so different and what have been the effects? We argue that the difference in group form and problem definition was caused by the different political context, especially institutional arrangements. These different visions affected partnership organization, accomplishments, and how the groups responded to outside challenges.

Political Context and Locus of Authority

Although Kingdon (1984) points us toward political crisis as an opportunity for change, he offers us little guidance for understanding which ideas and changes will flow through the window and who will push them. Historical institutionalists encourage us to look at institutional form and "thickness" to understand what shapes change (*sensu* Skowronek 1997). Skocpol (1979), Orren and Skowronek (1998 to 1999), and Skowronek (1982) argue that past institutional development will shape the form of change in the present and future. Following their lead, we argue that, although there is no guarantee that partnership groups will choose social change over pragmatism, this is more likely to occur when private citizens are able to play a major role in the group's founding and problem definition than when leadership is primarily representatives of pre-existing institutions, especially government agencies.

The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership came together in an institutionally thick environment. Flagstaff and its surrounding forests were at the center of the jurisdictional interests of numerous elected officials, local, and state government agencies. Flagstaff is the county seat of Coconino County and hosts most of the county government and services. It is also the location of the Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office and two of the four Ranger District offices. Flagstaff maintains a full-time wildfire specialist and coordinates multiagency wildfire responses. Flagstaff is also an administrative center for a variety of other organizations that were to become important members of the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership including Arizona Game and Fish, the Arizona State Land Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nature Conservancy. In addition, several regional environmental groups and chapters of national groups are headquartered in Flagstaff including the Grand Canyon Trust, the Sierra Club, and the Southwest Forest Alliance (a consortium of more than 90 environmental advocacy groups).

The consequence of this institutional thickness was the dominance of institutions in the formation of this collaborative. The thickness privileged institutional representatives over private citizens. This difference between citizens and institutional representatives matters because of the ways that these representatives are tied to their institutional mandates and cultures. Our argument is not that citizen innovation was impossible but rather that it is difficult and

unlikely in these circumstances without extraordinary energy on the part of citizens.

In Flagstaff, leadership from government agencies did not divorce itself from their organizational perspective. Consequently, rather than seeking social change, the leadership sought to solve technical problems. What happened in Flagstaff reflects more generally what we might expect in an environment thick with bureaucratic institutions. People working in particular organizations bring with them the mandates of these agencies and are seeking to solve the problems they face.

This tendency is heightened because many natural resource agencies were formed with Progressive Era ideology in which problems were seen as primarily technical and experts were the best qualified to solve those problems (Hays 1959, 1991; Hirt 1994; Kaufman 1960; Moseley 1999; Thomas 1999; Luker 1984; Ross 1991). Technically trained experts could manage resources efficiently for the greater common good (Pinchot 1990). Through the application of scientific principles, nature could be simplified and ordered to bring it under human control (Scott 1998). By implication, citizens were either too self-interested or too ignorant to participate. Even when people in natural resource agencies take a broader view, formal and informal institutional processes have already been shaped using a Progressive Era model. Thus when faced with a crisis, or a failure of the old order, these agencies seek change but still find themselves tied to older institutional processes (Moseley 1999; Orren and Skowronek 1998–1999; Skocpol 1979; Skowronek 1982). Exceptional leadership, complete breakdown of normal institutional politics, or intensive outside pressure, we argue, would be required to shift these politics.

The jurisdictional conditions and social development could not have been more different in the Applegate Valley. There are no incorporated communities in the Valley and, thus, no city government. A county line divides the Valley in half, and thus no county-level elected officials see the Valley as their territory. No state or local agencies locate their offices in the Valley. The major exceptions to this are the federal land management agencies. The Forest Service has a Ranger Station in the Valley and major portions of two BLM resource areas are located in the Applegate Valley. With the exception of the Applegate Ranger District, all government offices are 30 to 45 minutes away.

In addition to the relatively weak organizational bases of local and state government, few staffed nongovernmental organizations focused on the Applegate. Headwaters, the longest standing regional environmental organization in southern Oregon, was active in the Applegate but was housed in Ashland, a town outside the Applegate. Similarly, the Sierra Club and other national organizations had active members living in the Applegate but local chapters were located in towns outside the Valley and were servicing an area several times the size of the Applegate.

Instead of thick formal bureaucratic and political institutions, the Applegate Valley had a long history of small-scale social and political organizations (Moseley 1999; Preister 1993; Sturtevant and Lange 1995). Particularly important for natural resources were a number of small-scale, volunteer environmental groups that had monitored federal timber sales during the 1970s and 1980s. They opposed federal actions by mobilizing networks of residents to attend public hearings, write letters, and submit appeals. These small, volunteer groups developed a cadre of community residents who understood the basics of forest management and Forest Service and BLM administration.

These community residents, moreover, were not stereotypical rural community residents but rather people who had moved to rural areas in the 1970s and 1980s to escape traditional suburban life. (For a description of "back-to-the-landers" see Jacob [1997].) Social change had long been a part of their personal ideology. Several of the core group of Applegate Partnership founders had long been acting upon their personal social change agendas by protesting federal timber sales. Through these protests they came to see the limits of old political processes and developed ideas for alternative approaches to citizen involvement.

Instead of numerous government agencies and sophisticated nongovernmental organizations facing the limits of old management strategies first, it was community residents and the federal land management agencies. Instead of placing leadership from formal organizations at the center of change, the jurisdictional paucity in the Applegate put community residents at the center. With the Forest Service and the BLM in crisis, it was community residents who stepped forward to create change.

Core Group Formation and Participant Recruitment

In these different institutional climates, the initial leaders drew upon different networks to identify and recruit initial participants. In the institutionally rich environment of northern Arizona, organizers used formal networks of existing institutions and agencies to identify representatives. In the Applegate, organizers frequently turned to the informal network of community residents to recruit individuals known.

In the Applegate, Jack Shipley, the organizer of the initiative, was a private citizen. Shipley had a long history as an environmental activist. He was part of a network of citizen activists and knew many government officials and other professional and technical specialists. Shipley and his early allies broadened these networks driven by the belief that only with broad participation could a collaboration find solutions. Long before Jack Shipley decided to hold a founding meeting, he undertook several months of shuttle diplomacy between various interest groups, neighborhood groups, and people in the Applegate and larger Rogue Basin. Shipley's strategy was an organizing campaign—similar to traditional union organizing—not an information campaign. He put forward provisional ideas and sought suggestions. He was not offering a solution but an opportunity for people to participate in figuring out a solution. Driven by an idea of social change that pushed experts out of the center of decisionmaking and created broad participation, Shipley believed that he had to recruit people from a wide variety of perspectives. This choice was motivated not simply by political considerations, but by the core belief that only with this wide variety of perspectives participating could innovative solutions be found.

The founding leaders understood, however implicitly, that their central problem was to move people out of their

traditional boxes as "industry," "enviros," or agency." If people could open up to other perspectives then, leaders hoped, the group could find solutions that no one could develop independently.

In contrast to the Applegate, where a private citizen working largely independent of any organizational affiliation created the partnership, a frustrated Forest Service official stymied by public opposition to traditional management approaches founded the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership. In the early 1990s, Fred Trevey, then Supervisor of the Coconino National Forest, watched litigation and public opinion prevent the Forest Service from implementing familiar forest management. Recognizing that implementing forest management required a new base of public support, Trevey began convening informal meetings with a small circle of local environmental leaders, academics, and city and county government personnel. The group decided to form an institutional partnership to develop a consensus for restoration-based forest management.

This initial group identified organizations that would be viewed as stakeholders in public forest land management. In assessing who should participate, the core group considered institutions that needed to be represented to ensure the support for any strategy that the partnership developed. Stakeholders were brought to the table if they had technical expertise or veto power in other arenas. Founders asked these groups to designate representatives to sit on a board. In contrast to the Applegate Partnership's emphasis on recruiting participants that could be representative of the core views and issues of their constituencies, the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership sought participants to represent their organizations in drafting and endorsing specific proposals.

Common Challenges, Contrasting Responses

The founding process of each of these two groups and institutional character of their settings shaped how the partnerships formed. With differing local contexts, founding dynamics, and perceptions of the central problem (and associated response), these two partnerships developed markedly different organizational forms and habits. To contrast these differences, we identify three major challenges common to both partnerships and contrast their responses to these challenges.

Balancing Participation and Decisionmaking Authority

The relationships of the people who actively participate and nonactivists who have some interest in the work of a partnership are important because everyone cannot be at the table at once. Active participants are only a small fraction of the people who have a stake in the work of a partnership. Yet, active participants make management decisions for the larger society. To succeed a partnership needs social "permission" to do their work. How did the participants represent the larger society and what effect did it have on the form and possibilities of these groups? There are, really, three ways that people "represent" in these sorts of groups. Although they are readily distinguished theoretically, in fact, people practically shift from one mode to the other.

One way that people come to the table is as representatives of particular groups. For example, in the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership, the 17 initial partner organizations each selected a formal representative that had the authority to represent his or her institution in any negotiation or agreement. In this form, the representative tends to be tied to the institutional concerns of his or her agency. These concerns could include fulfilling legal mandates, avoiding political conflict, taking leadership in reform efforts, and defending turf. The personality, skills, and ideology of the representative and the freedom that his or her home agency gives them mediate the extent of the institutionalist mode of participation of particular participants.

The second form is representation of the interests of a constituency. In this case, someone comes to the partnership with constituent interests firmly in mind. For example, a timber industry lobbyist might come to the table to protect and promote the industry's economic interests. Similarly, an environmentalist may come to the table committed to defending the values and interests of other environmentalists. We can imagine, in these instances, that these representatives will tend to act self-interestedly on behalf of their constituents. They may tend to be strategic in their position taking. In addition, they might be inclined to take extreme positions and then bargain on behalf of their constituents. Again, these tendencies will be moderated by the personality of the representative. Divisions or lack of clear opinions or positions within the representative's constituency may also create flexibility and opportunity for independent behavior.

A third form of representation is that of perspective. In this instance, participants are viewed as bringing to the table their knowledge, experience as someone who has particular life experiences and values that lend insights to the conundrums that the group faces. For example, a logger might bring values about the importance of continuing to harvest and knowledge and skills about the opportunities and limits of particular harvest plans, and the views of her peer group. An agency scientist might bring values of species protection and information about ecosystem dynamics in the region under discussion, and an understanding of his agency's organizational limitations.

The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership viewed representation primarily in the first two ways. The Applegate sought to create the third form of representation but the first two forms were important at particular times as well.

At its outset, the founders of the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership believed that the solution to public skepticism over public forest management was to establish a partnership of respected organizations and institutions that constituted a diverse set of positions and views on forest management. If this group of powerful institutions could then reach consensus, public support would follow.

With their focus on influential organizations, institutional representation dominated the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership. By and large, participants represented the agencies and organizations from which they came. Founders assumed that the people at the table represented the key

views of major constituencies and all the important perspectives on forest management.

In contrast to the Grand Canyon group's emphasis on institutional representation, the Applegate Partnership encouraged its participants to represent perspectives rather than institutional positions. In this way, the group believed the key to innovation was bringing people and ideas together in new ways. Participants talked about "leaving positions at the door and bringing only values and interests." This approach was also reflected in the group's culture of negotiation. Rather than supporting a process in which representatives started negotiating from extreme positions and then negotiated towards the middle, the group tried to focus on problem solving and collectively identifying alternatives. However, despite this explicit focus on perspective over positions, all three forms of representation existed in the Applegate, and individuals would shift from one form of representation to another as circumstances and mood dictated.

Group Structure and Participant Authority

The second challenge facing both collaboratives was how to structure the roles of participants. The Grand Canyon group quickly sought to formalize and institutionalize the partnership structure but the Applegate Partnership resisted formalization.

In the institutionally rich environment of northern Arizona, the member organizations of the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership, the majority of whom are public or quasi-public institutions, sought to establish a clear organizational structure and legal body capable of managing the coordination process. The Grand Canyon group created a new not-for-profit organization to assume the responsibility for the forest management projects. It hired a staff person who met weekly with a management team composed of representatives of five of the 15 partners to handle the day-to-day decisionmaking.

The full partnership met monthly to review partnership priorities and progress in the implementation. The group gave informal responsibility for meeting facilitating to the representative of one of the most active partnership groups. The meetings were open to the public and a number of interest group representatives and other agency personnel frequently attended. However, formal decisionmaking authority rested only with the designated partner groups. The group's bylaws stipulated the necessity of consensus among a majority of participating partners. Voice votes were typically used to make decisions on priorities.

In contrast, the Applegate Partnership actively resisted formalizing an implementing body separate from the collaborative for its first 4 years. It sought to avoid the emergence of separate organizational structures. In its first years, governmental and nongovernmental participants accomplished the majority of the Applegate Partnership's work. These groups were responsible for identifying the resources necessary to provide support for the partnership's projects and functions.

Eventually the Applegate Partnership did establish a not-for-profit entity and a watershed council that acted as subsidiaries to the larger partnership. These entities became an important part of the Applegate Valley's capacity to implement a wide range of planning and restoration projects. However, the long period of distributive leadership had created a culture of decentralized decisionmaking and responsibility.

Also reflecting this caution against consolidating leadership, the facilitation of the Applegate's meetings constantly rotated. This informal culture of rotating leadership has helped the group avoid the perception that any particular person has a disproportionate influence on group decisionmaking.

We can see, then, an institution-focused participation and representation led the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership to create an early organization and bureaucratic structure for itself. By contract, the informal, nonorganizational Applegate Partnership and its notion of perspective-based representation led to distributed leadership and project implementation.

Communicating with Nonparticipants

The final challenge that both groups faced was developing systems to communicate with people beyond core partnership activists. Because not everyone can logistically or practically come to the table, one central task of partnerships is to communicate with nonparticipants. The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership followed two distinct strategies for communication. One was with the agencies and close constituents of participants and the second was with the general public. By contrast, the Applegate Partnership used similar communication strategies with close allies and with more distant ones. As distance from the partnership increased the intensity of communication diminished.

The communication among Grand Canyon participants was direct and involved iterative policy development. But even within the Grand Canyon Partnership, participation in communication depended on the level of organizational involvement in the partnership's activities. A management team represented five of the most active partnership organizations. This group met weekly to develop the specific implementation plans. Most of the decisionmaking took place within this core group of active partner organizations. The larger group of partners was involved primarily through the monthly partnership meetings, special meetings, and electronic correspondence.

When the Grand Canyon group sought to communicate with people beyond constituent agencies and organizations, its focus shifted from deliberation and iterative proposal development to information and education. The group used a series of public meetings during its initial phases to solicit public comment on proposed actions. When some of the public opposed the Grand Canyon's proposal to limit certain types of recreation use, the partnership dropped those proposals. Subsequently, the partnership relied almost entirely on press releases, media coverage, and the formal government review processes to announce to the public what they planned to do and why.

In the Applegate, the distinction between "public" and "constituent" was less pronounced because participants were rarely formally representing people but rather were representing perspectives. Clearly, people working for organizations and for interest-based constituencies had responsibilities to communicate proposals back to their organizations to get feedback. But partnership participants knew this

institutional sign-off would not be sufficient to garner broad community support. Because people sitting at the table were often not formal representatives they had no explicit permission to enter into agreements on anyone's behalf. Consequently, participants needed an interactive relationship with a large number of stakeholders beyond the partnership itself.

At meetings, decisions were often preliminary agreements that participants would take to their social networks to test out. Subsequently, at or between meetings, on the phone or in person, participants would bring back reactions of the various people in participants' networks and modify decisions. Of central importance to the Applegate group were informal social networks. Rarely did the Applegate Partnership use the media to get their message out. Instead, participants each turned to their social networks, be these connections with environmentalists, timber workers, people in the Regional Office of the Forest Service, or community residents that one saw at other community meetings or social events. Some connections were professional, others were social. Some ties were based on strong ties of friendship, others were associational ties from repeated meetings on natural resource or community business (Granovetter 1973).

Rarely was the primary task of the Applegate Partnership educational. Because the Applegate group did not represent people formally, much of their communication was about gaining permission from the larger community and relevant organizations to move forward with their ideas. As partnership participants talked to people, they were looking for feedback, suggested modifications, support, and permission to move forward. With their social change agenda, communication was really an "organizing" task, not an information strategy to explain a decision.

Responses to Challenge and Conflict

The socially-based approach of the Applegate Partnership and the institutional, problem-solving approach of the Grand Canyon group affected each group's notions of appropriate representation, internal structural development, and communication. One can most clearly see effects of these differences in their responses to external opposition and conflict. Often partnership groups spend months or years developing a delicate balance of views, positions, and actions. Once under pressure, these agreements can become unstable and stretch the collaboration to its limits.

Going Public, Building Expectations

For both the partnerships, the founding periods were spent largely out of public view. This period involved dozens of meetings in which participants tried to find common ground among diverse interests and agendas. In both groups, this period ended by "going public" with events in which the partnerships described the newly found common ground and celebrated the great potential for common action.

Having raised public expectations, these groups had to demonstrate the efficacy of their claims. Because both groups were working largely on public land issues, this necessitated a federal lands planning process. Because they were federal land projects, the public had to review the plans. In both cases, the initial projects were on Forest Service lands. In each case, local agency officials, both District and Forest level, worked closely with the partners to develop a project and then the environmental assessment. Also common to both cases, developing the proposed action was lengthy, and diverse interests, particularly environmental and industry, conflicted frequently. At various points in both partnerships, negotiations nearly broke off and threatened the continued existence of the partnerships. In the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership, some of these negotiations involved groups that were not formally partners but were capable of obstructing the process if not satisfied. Ultimately, in both efforts, participants made compromises to craft an action all of the major interests would support, usually by reducing the scope and intensity of proposed actions.

Once these concessions were made, most members of each partnership believed that they had appeased the important stakeholders. Both groups recognized that there were outlier groups that had not been satisfied but dismissed their power to obstruct the process because of the agreement among participants and apparent public support.

In both cases, environmental groups that had not actively participated in project formation, and opposed the concept of collaborative management more generally, sought to stop these first projects through the administrative appeals process. In both cases, an environmental organization pursued administrative appeals using the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that led the Regional Offices to require that the respective National Forests (Rogue River National Forest in southern Oregon, Coconino National Forest of northern Arizona) modify the environmental assessments to meet the demands of appellants. In the case of the Grand Canyon project, some environmentalists remained unsatisfied and pursued legal settlement in the courts.

Contrasting Responses

These successful appeals tremendously impacted the morale and internal cohesion of both partnerships. The tenuous and often strained accommodations these unlikely partners had created now began to fray. Internal dissension over strategy began to grow. It is at this point that the real differences between these two partnerships begin to become more apparent.

The Applegate Partnership—As the older of the two partnership groups, more time and history are available to consider the effects of external opposition on the Applegate's orientation. The Applegate's focus on social change and informal structure allowed the group to shift substantive focus temporarily and continue to work on institutional change and citizen involvement. When the Forest Service project stalled, the group shifted its attention to the development of similar management changes with the Bureau of Land Management and private landowners.

For the Applegate, the initial challenges created by the appeal of its premier project were only the beginning of its tribulations. The success of the appeal of the Applegate

Partnership's first project, called Partnership One, substantially shifted the balance of opinion within the environmental community. (It should be noted, however, that Partnership One was not simply challenged from the environmental side. The timber industry also opposed the sale by not bidding for the timber once the Forest Service gained approval to proceed.) The lead environmental organization in the Partnership, Headwaters, eventually bowed to pressure from the rest of the environmental community and withdrew from the Partnership.

Although the Headwater's withdrawal was a public blow for the partnership and emotionally anguishing for many participants, ironically, it did not substantially change the makeup of the partnership. Two of the three the individuals representing Headwaters continued to participate in the partnership. These were people who were both representatives of Headwaters and residents of the local Applegate community. When Headwaters withdrew its formal organizational support, these people continued to participate, now as community residents active in local watershed groups.

As it tried to recover from what many assumed would be a fatal blow—Headwaters's departure—the partnership took yet another major hit. Paradoxically, this time the source of the damage was the timber industry. In an effort to invalidate President Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, representatives of regional and national timber organizations sued the federal government, arguing that the Plan's creation violated the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Passed in the early 1970s, Congress designed FACA to reduce the influence of special interests on federal agency policy making, especially defense contractors on Pentagon planning and decisionmaking. FACA outlined a series of provisions that federal agencies must follow if it participates in any joint decisionmaking processes with nonagency groups.

Afraid that it might jeopardize the huge investments it had made in the development of the Northwest Forest Plan, the Clinton Administration ordered all public agencies to withdraw from partnerships or other collaborative efforts that might violate FACA. Agency officials who had been formal partners in the Applegate process could no longer be Applegate Partnership board members. Despite their pledges to continue to participate as nondecisionmaking members, the basic foundation on which that the partnership had been built was now shattered. In the span of just 6 months, the Applegate Partnership lost two of its organizational constituents.

Facing these difficult events, the Applegate Partnership went through an important internal reevaluation and metamorphosis. Throughout its early period, the Applegate had attempted to balance two sometimes-opposing roles. The Applegate group viewed itself as an effort to make peace between two opposing forces and the federal agencies caught in the crossfire. Much of its early notoriety and influence was derived from the perception that it was a model for resolving otherwise intractable conflict in federal land management. At the same time, the partnership was, from its outset, a solidly community-based, community-driven initiative. It was as likely to have a potluck as a conference. Its weekly meetings were designed to be accessible to community people. Meeting participation was open to all and locals frequently outnumbered their agency and interest group counterparts who were paid to attend.

With its first major project stalled indefinitely and two of is major power brokers formally withdrawn from the leadership of the group, the Applegate reconsidered its focus and constituency. It broadened its focus to include a wider range of community issues. Aware that community support was now essential, the Applegate initiated a major community outreach and assessment process to identify the range of community concerns and ideas. From this and other forms of informal outreach, partnership activists launched a broad set of local initiatives. For example, one subset of participants was interested in private land restoration that would improve wild salmon fisheries.

At the same time, the partnership began working more actively with the BLM to evaluate restoration projects on its land. Over time, with considerable perseverance, the partnership developed ways to work with the federal agencies that did not involve formal joint decisionmaking. Within 6 months, the struggles over its first Forest Service project and the consequences of FACA were largely forgotten as a broader set of activities began to occupy the partnership's attention.

Three years after its founding, the consequences of this shift from interest-based partnership to community-based partnership could be clearly seen in the projects and accomplishments for which the partnership was either directly or indirectly responsible. Beyond shifting of BLM management in one resource area and private land restoration projects, the Applegate Partnership began to publish a bimonthly newspaper distributed to all 10,000 residences in the watershed. It spun off a small-scale economic development group looking at land-oriented small enterprise opportunities. Later, the partnership brokered a deal with one county to have the community develop a management plan and land use regulations related to gravel extraction. Partnership participants helped bring a county park under community management after the county shut it down because of a lack of funding. Repeatedly the Applegate Partnership took on the task of mediating conflict and brokering agreements between community residents and government agencies, be they federal, state, or county. At every turn, partnership activists argued for different processes that included community residents earlier in planning processes, bringing together conflicting parties to find common ground.

As we see, then, when faced with blockages such as the administrative appeal of the Partnership One project and then FACA, Applegate Partnership participants did not give up. Rather, they fell back on their larger goals of social change and ecosystem management in the watershed. These broad goals allowed the group to conceive a wide variety of particular projects to achieve their ends. This broadening was possible because, from the beginning, a substantial proportion of its active participants saw themselves as community residents first and organizational representatives second.

The Grand Canyon Forest Partnership—When faced with opposition the Applegate Partnership broadened its variety of strategies and shifted its attention from stalled to viable projects. In contrast, the Grand Canyon group's narrow problem definition limited its room for maneuver when confronted by effective opposition.

Founded in the summer of 1996, when fires burned over 40,000 acres of northern Arizona forests, the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership's proposals to develop restoration and wildfire reduction programs had enjoyed wide public support. After 2 years of working out its proposal internally, the partnership held a series of public meetings to communicate its proposal to the public. The partnership outlined thinning, prescribed fire, and also a series of recreation management proposals, including the closure of some popular trails and remote roads.

To the surprise of many organizers, the public seemed to broadly support extensive forest thinning and prescribed fire. People could not yet visualize the posttreatment appearance of the restored areas, but were supportive of reducing the potential for wildfires that could threaten human life and property. This bolstered the partnership's perception that the community was behind its efforts to develop a restoration/wildfire hazard reduction strategy.

In contrast, the meeting that focused on recreation use generated substantial concern and some controversy. Rumors began circulating that the Grand Canyon group was attempting to exclude one or another recreation user group. A nascent opposition to the partnership's efforts began to organize, creating unlikely alliances between mountain bike users, ATV enthusiasts, equestrian advocates, and others. It quickly became apparent that recreation issues could become a flash point for opposition to the overall restoration initiative.

In response, the group decided to narrow its focus and exclude the controversial elements of the recreation plan from the proposed action. The group discussed the possibility of developing a restoration task group to convene a collaborative process with recreation interests. After a series of tentative steps in this direction, the effort was dropped and Grand Canyon participants focused on developing and implementing the thinning and fire treatments.

Confident that it now had a broad public mandate to proceed, the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership and the Forest Service drafted the environmental assessment and prepared for formal public review. However, throughout the preparation of the final proposal, the partnership experienced agonizing disagreements with prominent local and regional environmentalists over a variety of provisions. For example, the Forest Service began a series of test plots using a range of treatments. The graphic reality of the actual treatment impacts nearly destroyed the fragile agreements that had been crafted with these environmental groups. Yet despite these setbacks, partnership leaders continued to make concessions and deferrals that maintained the truce and allowed the project to proceed. Having conceded to most of the demands made by these groups, the partnership and the Forest Service were confident its proposed action would withstand any outside challenges.

It was no surprise when an environmental group from outside the area filed an appeal. But the partnership was shocked when the Regional Office of the Forest Service upheld the appeal. A group that most had dismissed as an irrelevant outsider was now a champion trumpeting its victory around the country. A partnership regarded as a national model for transcending the gridlock of federal forest management found itself buried in political mud.

The defeat created a period of internal disorder within the partnership. The timelines that had been established for implementing treatments were now irrelevant. Efforts to develop markets for the restoration byproducts, a step essential to making the restoration treatments economically viable, were destroyed as entrepreneurs canceled plans to invest in new tools and technology. Other financial resources the partnership was pursuing also evaporated as word spread that the partnership was stalled.

These setbacks further aggravated nascent tensions within the partnership over strategy and priorities. One faction advocated for the partnership taking a leading role in regional and national dialogues on the underlying issues of the opponents of cross-interest collaborations. Others favored abandoning the conciliatory approach in favor of aggressive counterattack using legal challenges and high profile efforts to question the credibility of opposing groups.

In response to these challenges, the partnership chose again to narrow its focus. The primary focus of project development shifted to fire hazard reduction projects in proximity to human developments. At the same time, efforts to secure final approval for the partnership's first stalled project began to focus on preparations for a direct legal battle with project opponents. As the local agency officials made the mandated changes to the document that the Forest Service's Regional Office had ordered, leading groups in the partnership began formulating a legal strategy for intervening in the event of a lawsuit.

Conclusion

Faced with complex and difficult natural resource management challenges, institutions and communities are increasingly looking to multistakeholder collaborations as an approach to developing widely supported solutions. These collaborations face many similar challenges: how to integrate diverse interests and issues, how to share decisionmaking authority, and how to organize resources and expertise necessary to develop solutions.

The prevailing perception within these groups about the nature of the problem they face and how it can be most effectively addressed largely shaped the choices these groups made in addressing these common challenges. With two examples, we suggested that the perception of the problem can shape the strategy and conduct of the resulting collaborations.

Given the central importance of this initial perception of the problem, we have gone further to try and explain why two partnership facing relatively similar circumstances developed different perceptions of the problem and strategies for addressing it. We have asserted that the institutional context in which a partnership takes place determines much of this initial orientation. In settings rich with preexisting institutions—Federal agencies, local governments, and nongovernmental organizations—it appears that collaborations are more likely to have a technocratic problem solving orientation. Circumstances without this density of institutions leave more of the influence over the character of the collaboration in the hands of the private citizens who create the impetus for formation.

Given the prior history and experience in social change work—environmental, labor, and peace activism—among

many of its founding organizers, it is perhaps predictable that the Applegate initiative viewed its challenge as less a technical problem and more of a social issue. As a consequence, the strategies it selected and the ways it adapted to changes and challenges are markedly different than those of the Grand Canyon Forest Partnership.

Our intention in this paper is not to make explicit or implicit judgments of the value or effectiveness of one strategy over another. Few collaborative efforts have existed long enough to reasonably evaluate their performance history. In drawing distinctions between these two partnerships our intention has been to underscore the formative influences that shape the evolution and activities of a partnership. In so doing we hope to contribute to the set distinctions that will enable both practitioners and researchers to more clearly understand the similarities and differences between initiatives.

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