Cross-Watershed Network (XWN) Mini-Workshop

Albuquerque, NM February 11, 2015

Breakout Group: San Juan Watershed Group (SJWG) - Melissa May

Note taker/facilitator: Stacy Beaugh, Cross-Watershed Network Steering Committee

Guiding Themes:

- Finding your Niche
- Watershed planning
- Using Science to fill gaps
- Diversifying funding
- Organizational Infrastructure

Challenges:

- Disconnect between agencies
 - Cross-over of missions not being capitalized upon
 - Flow work not necessarily being connected
 - NRCS isn't being utilized to the fullest potential
- Water quality issues related to river regulation

Opportunities/Existing Solutions:

- How can we better utilize Farm Bill programs?
 - Lots of opportunity to work with farmers on irrigation efficiency, but no projects yet
 - Cost share grants (e.g., EPA 319) are providing alternatives to working through Farm Bill programs
 - Riparian restoration is a vehicle for the end goal of water quality and native fish protection
 - NRCS conservation practices "riparian forest buffer" and "forest stand improvement" are underutilized in New Mexico
 - The primary vehicle for tamarisk and Russian olive treatment is using fire mitigation
 - Traditional conservation practice for woody invasive removal is "invasive species" which isn't enough cost-share to incentivize landowners
 - Conservation districts are an important partner to implement Farm Bill programs there were four funded Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) proposals in NM
- How do we link all of the players in a watershed?
 - Find the niche and motivations of the partners to find balance; make sure you are "looking outside" your own niche to find partnership opportunities
 - Assign liaisons from your group to other groups in the watershed to ensure communication
 - Look for opportunities to get diverse interests engaged
 - Coordinated communication is key

- *How do we make science accessible to the public?*
 - Sometimes is funding dependent
 - This can be a tool to connect partners
 - \circ Effective outreach might require simplification of findings, results or message
 - Try to identify the intended audience in advance of a study ensure clear message on how the information will be used
 - Maps and photos are KEY communication tools for the public
 - Understand the continuum of science

Science continuum

Hard Science	Practitioner-based	Public
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- Look for opportunities to engage both "ends" of the spectrum to get the most people at the table to bring the best diversity of perspectives to the issue you are trying to solve
 - Citizen science the SJWG uses "Farmington Watch" which is a good model for this watershedwiser.org is the database of historic data
 - SJWG has funding to build on this and develop a regional water quality database
 - Look to focused interest groups to assist (e.g., the boating groups); as they can also be a good "public relations" advocate

- How do we diversify funding?

- Take advance of opportunities to align diverse interests to leverage funding
- Get people to spend their money on what you care about
 - If you can connect your mission to a broader community issue then there are more funding options
- o Utilize a focused "funding subcommittee" to engage diverse partners in fundraising
- Consider an umbrella group or annual coordinate with other regional watershed groups to collaborate on funding proposals
- Specific source: NM State allocation of funding through the Forestry Department
- Conservation districts can play a role in offering unique funding structures for example, some have a mil levy
- Engage the conservation corps programs to diversify goals and funding options
 - Recruit young adults
 - Train and work on natural resource projects
 - "fee for service" model to employ the crews
 - Local recruits and vets / provide career training skills on chainsaw, resume building, first aid, etc.
 - There is a corps operating in all US states
 - Key is to engage them in the beginning stages of the partnership so that they are more than just a "contractor"

- Link mission to broader issues such as the endangered fish recovery programs which is a federal program
 - This link can provide access to state money that supports the federal program goals
 - For example, on the Dolores River state funding was funneled to the federal Partners for Fish and Wildlife program to then be used to fund private land projects; this is important because the state funding could be given directly to private landowners, there had to a "private lands" program that provided the oversight/administration and evaluation
- Is there a formula for the type of people (roles) that should be involved in a partnership?
 - One idea was the "Collective Impact" framework
 - This could be a GOOD forum topic on the XWN website

Take Away (reported to the larger group)

- 1. Finding your niche is important
- 2. Take full advantage of resources
- 3. Collaborate and sharing information is an important basis for leveraging funding and ensuring good communication