

A TRAIL COMMUNITY FOR ALL

California Trails & Greenways Conference
April 11-13
2011

GOAL OF SESSION

- Illustrate ways that cooperation can be fostered
- Use term “WE” to emphasize collaboration”; “WE” are “YOU”
- Will be a “Change in Culture” for many



EXERCISE

- Answer the following question:
 - What do you want from a trail experience?
 - Indicate whether hiker, equestrian, cyclist or land manager
- Different paths to same goals?



CHALLENGES

All areas have challenges, which vary from place to place

Bay Area is Hotbed of Controversy

- Long history of conflict
- People have staked out positions
- Often no history of working together



PERCEPTION THAT BAY AREA IS DIFFERENT KIND OF REGION THAN “SUCCESS STORY” PLACES

- Huge concentration of people
- Relatively small



- Basic similarities; principles apply equally in Bay Area

SUCCESSSES INVOLVE TRAIL BUILDING; NOT SO PREVALENT IN BAY AREA

- Agencies sometimes reluctant to build new trails
 - Resource issues
 - Supervision of volunteers requires staff and funding
 - Volunteers may be “cowboys”
 - Impact on environment
 - Sometimes cite labor issues
- Response:
 - Agency’s “duty” to provide volunteer opportunities
 - Need to provide for increasing demand for trails to get people out of doors
 - Trail building is community building

LOSS OF SENSE OF COMMUNITY

- Huge issue, perhaps heart of session
- Loss of commitment to work for common good
- Important and relevant exceptions
 - Large turn-outs for trail projects
 - Volunteers for Outdoor California
 - REI work projects

SOLUTION MAY REQUIRE CHANGE OF CULTURE

- Acknowledge we each need each other

• CASE HISTORIES

- Many examples of successful collaborative efforts
- Examples unique, but all have common elements
- Conclusion of presentation will synthesize common principles and values

SAN LUIS OBISPO

- Popular session at Cambria Conference: “Trail Partnerships – Doing Them a Different Way”
- Key groups:
 - Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers,
 - <http://www.ccmb.org>
 - San Luis Obispo Parks, Open Space and Trails,
 - <http://slopost.org>
- Composed of muscle-powered users and agencies
- Developed strong guiding principles of collaboration
- Addresses reality of multiple participants with multiple and sometime conflicting view points
- Model of collaboration

SONOMA COUNTY

- Annadel
 - “A” Team formed because trails being loved to death
 - Hiker, equestrian, mountain biker and land manager met to create sustainable trail system.
 - Accomplish more by working together for common goals
 - Resulted in well regarded multi use trail system



Sonoma County cont.

- Sonoma County Trails Council
 - <http://www.sonomatrails.org>
 - Works in partnership with others to advocate, plan, build, and maintain a network or sustainable, shared-use public trails for non-motorized recreation
 - Solid collaboration among all muscle powered users
- CA State Parks Mounted patrol
 - 50 in equestrian unit
 - 15 in bicycle unit
 - Keys to success
 - Communication
 - Educations about needs and safety



SHAVER LAKE VOLUNTEERS

- Formed in 1997 by small group that wanted to build trail around Shaver Lake, owned by Southern California Edison
- Expanded operation to mountains around lake
- Dedicated to providing trail opportunities for all non motorized users
- Consult with everyone
- <http://shaverlakevolunteers.org>



ARNOLD RIM TRAIL ASSOCIATION

- Conceived in early 2000's to promote non motorized trail development
- Collaborates with everyone
 - Hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, Chamber of Commerce and businesses
 - Everyone enjoys respect
- Triumph of collaboration, environmental restoration and connectivity <http://arnoldrimtrail.org/>



BIG SANDY BRIDGE

- 15 year, award winning effort to install bridge over San Joaquin River
- Coalition headed by Central California Off-Road Cyclists
 - Included: Back Country Horsemen; Fresno County Sportsman's Club; Sierra Foothill Conservancy; San Joaquin river Intertribal Heritage Educational Corp.; River Tree Volunteers, Sierra Club and Caltrans
- Collaboration involved 68 volunteers from 8 groups, who contributed over 4100 hours
- Model of collaboration



SIERRA BUTTES TRAIL STEWARDSHIP

- Volunteer driven 501(C)3, formed in 2003
- Maintain and enhance trail systems in Plumas and Sierra Counties
- All users, industry and local businesses at table
- Has paid staff and 29,000 hours volunteer labor
- Maintain over 30 trails, created 25 miles new trails
- <http://sierratrails.org>



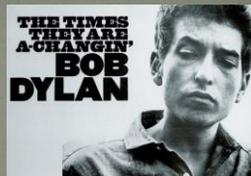
SUMMARY OF HISTORIES

- Groups at different stages of development
- There are a great many more examples
- Share basic principles
 - Collaboration
 - Respect
 - Listening to all points of view

SYNTHESIS OF APPROACHES

HEART OF THE MATTER

- Cultural change required
- Will offer tangible tools
- Cultural change is difficult; needs
 - Patience
 - Change in behavior
 - Change in attitude
- Requires self examination



CELEBRATE SHARED VALUES

- Most often, members of trail family want same thing
 - Outdoor experience
 - In nature
 - Sustainable trails
 - Safe experience
- Conflict not inherent incapability among different trail activities
 - Avoid conflict by finding confluence of goals



EVERYONE AT TABLE

- Essential for sense of community
- Proactively reach out to those not there
- Understand everyone's points of view
 - Accommodate where possible

KNOW AS INDIVIDUALS

- Separate people from positions
- Encourage respect
- Learn about others' use of trails
- Build relationships
- Avoid assumptions

NEVER BADMOUTH OTHERS



- Limited time, money and energy
- Different needs and priorities
- Do not waste resources on conflict, including:
 - Name calling
 - Arguing
 - Staking out turf
 - Complaints to media
- Do not badmouth others
 - At group meetings
 - At meetings with agencies
 - In blogs

BE IN THE TRAIL COMMUNITY

- Join other groups, not your own
- Involve self in issues of other groups
- Include environmental issues
- Acquisition and preservation of open spaces
- Funding and finance of agencies

CREATE COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES

- Local trail committees to collaborate with land managers

SUPPORT LAND MANAGER

- Ascertain problems and issues
 - Work *with* agency
- Never badmouth

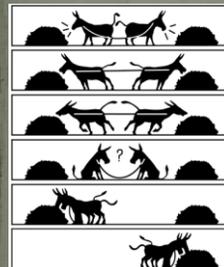
PROJECTS BENEFIT ALL

- If not possible, benefit left out group in another project

ESTABLISH ORDER TO PROCESS

- WHY?
 - Mission of endeavor
- WHAT?
 - Goals or objectives of competing interests
 - Want to ride/hike from point A to point B
 - Want to enjoy nature
 - Want safe experience
 - Want to ride single track
- HOW?
 - Actions in furtherance of "WHAT?" goals
 - After ascertaining goals

COMPROMISE NECESSARY



- No one will get all they want
- Leap of faith required
- Chicken and egg thing: who plays nice first?

TAKE SMALL STEPS

- Success stories often take place in small communities
- Culture of cooperation will work in Bay Area
- Start by identifying small or limited location, community, land manager, or trail system
 - Work to create cooperative trails effort for that specific "community"
- Promotes trust



IDENTIFY CHAMPIONS

- Replace negative actors with positive people
- Create new:
 - Stories
 - Symbols
 - Rituals of action



CELEBRATE SUCCESSES!

- Institutionalize new order
- Identify champions for this cause and rally behind them
- Top leaders are role models by their behavior
 - Participate in joint activities
- Publicly reward collaboration
 - In media
 - At meetings
 - To agencies
 - On blogs



CHANGE IN CULTURE REQUIRED

- Suggest change in:
 - Thought
 - Behavior
 - Action
- Change rules of trail meetings
 - Resulting rules a product of extensive collaboration
 - Simple in final content
- Build trust over time
- Patience will be required

