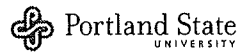


Decision-Making Options and Tools

Presented to the
Oregon Board of Forestry
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Group Decision-Making Options

- **Delegation**
 - an individual decides
- **Voting**
 - a majority decides
 - a supermajority decides
- **Consensus**
 - everyone decides together

Delegation to an individual

• Advantages

- Usually quick
- Clear decision
- May be based on whatever information is available or is needed
- Good for unimportant, non-controversial, or administrative decisions

• Disadvantages

- May not have the support of those needed to implement
- May be based on limited information
- May not be allowed under BOF regulations
- Not good for decisions involving many interests

Voting

• Advantages

- Can be quick decision
- Firm, clear outcome
- May use any process of deliberation desired
- The higher the majority required the higher the level of support for the outcome

• Disadvantages

- Puts people into a mode of competition for votes
- Win/lose outcome
- Alienates the losers
- Develops factions
- Timing of the vote is key and may be manipulated
- Unclear as to the deliberation needed
- May be difficult to implement or be challenged
- Based on power of some

Consensus

- **Advantages**

- Fosters broad level of agreement
- Based on shared power
- Higher level of follow through on commitments
- Less likely to be challenged
- Faster implementation which may require less resources

- **Disadvantages**

- Decision-making takes time and requires interactions
- Requires a good faith commitment to seek consensus and not to thwart decisions
- May require more resources of time, data, process support, during decision-making

Consensus Decision Definition

- The group will reach consensus on an issue when it finally agrees upon a single alternative and each member can honestly say:
 - I believe that other members understand my point of view
 - I believe I understand other members' points of view, and
 - Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was arrived at openly and fairly and it is the best solution for us at this time.

Other Definitions of Consensus

- In a consensus process, participants work together to design a process that maximizes their ability to resolve their differences. Although they may not agree with all aspects of the agreement, consensus is reached if all participants are willing to live with the total package.
- "...A consensus process provides an opportunity for participants to work together as equals to realize acceptable actions or outcomes without imposing the views or authority of one group over another."

Consensus decisions may need to be representative of a consensus that is broader than just those around the table.

Public engagement can be useful to inform and develop broad based consensus decisions

Misconceptions about Consensus

1. Consensus takes too much time
 - Do you need to decide quickly or implement quickly?
2. Solutions will become watered down
 - Consensus uses disagreement to discover innovative approaches
3. Personal agendas will hijack the process
 - Working agreements, ground rules and good faith allow consensus to work.

Misconceptions (continued)

4. Leaders will lose their authority
 - All members are equal members of the decision group, including leaders
5. People are not accountable when decisions have "shared ownership"
 - No member is anonymous or invisible
 - Every member of consensus agrees to support the decision

Guiding Principles of Consensus Processes

- Consensus processes are participant determined and driven - that is their very essence.
- No single approach will work for each situation - because of the issues involved, the respective interests and the surrounding circumstances.
- Interaction among participants is face-to-face with the goal of arriving at mutually acceptable outcomes or decisions.

Guiding Principles

- derived from experience ● fundamental to achieving consensus

- **Principle 1. Purpose Driven**
 - People need a reason to participate in the process
- **Principle 2. Inclusive, Not Exclusive**
 - All parties with a significant interest in the issues should be involved in the consensus process. (All members of the Board.)
- **Principle 3. Voluntary Participation**
 - The parties who are affected or interested participate voluntarily.

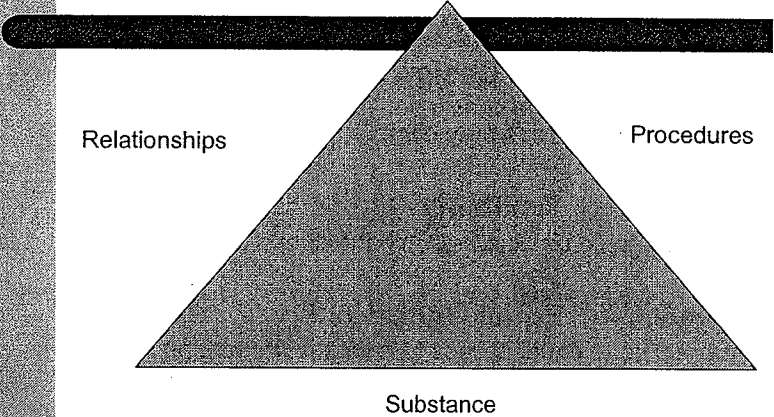
Guiding Principles (continued)

- **Principle 4. Self Design**
 - The parties design the consensus process; it cannot be imposed; expert advice may help.
- **Principle 5. Flexibility**
 - Flexibility should be designed into the consensus process.
- **Principle 6. Equal Opportunity**
 - All parties have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.

Guiding Principles (continued)

- **Principle 7. Respect for Diverse Interests**
 - Acceptance of the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of the parties involved in the consensus process is essential.
- **Principle 8. Accountability**
 - The participants are accountable both to their constituencies and to the process that they have agreed to establish.
- **Principle 9. Time Limits**
 - Realistic deadlines are necessary throughout the process.
- **Principle 10. Implementation**
 - Commitments to implementation and effective monitoring [feedback] are essential parts of any consensus process.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT



Relationships

Procedures

Substance

Addressing Issues and Interests

- **Issues** - topics or parts of the larger problem to be addressed.
 - Frame issues as problem statements or questions.
- **Interests** - needs or concerns relating to an issue.
 - Interests may become criteria for evaluating the possible options for resolution.

Finding Solutions

- A good solution for each issue will need to take into account, or reconcile, all parties' interests.
- Solutions can surface in different forms during the course of consensus processes.
 - Quick solutions to the problem are often offered early as one party's position—a way to meet their perceived interests.
 - When a position is stated, ask why it is important and identify what interests or needs the position satisfies.
- Consensus solutions must satisfy the most important interests of all and resolve all the issues .

Steps in Reaching Consensus

- **Preparation Phase**
 - Develop commitment to consensus protocols or working agreements
 - Specific guidelines and a work plan may be developed for particular issues
- **Education and Information Phase (50%)**
 - Share/present information to develop a common base among all participants
 - Understand each participant's perspective and underlying interests – develop them into criteria for consensus
 - Engage in joint fact finding if needed
 - Focus the issues that need to be resolved to reach the overall goal

Steps (continued)

- **Option Development and Evaluation Phase**

- Jointly develop options that would address the various criteria represented by the interests
- Experts may help develop options – understand what criteria the options meet
- Evaluate the options together in terms of the interests they would satisfy
- Jointly create new options/combinations until the right ones emerge

Steps (continued)

- **Agreement Phase**

- Develop agreement on the “package” - being sure that all understand the implications and have bought into the agreement.
- A single text is often helpful to clarify agreement

- **Implementation Phase**

- Identify follow up steps and develop agreement on who does what by when.
- Provide for monitoring or revisiting the effects of the decision

Other things to consider to aid consensus decision-making

- Use of a neutral consensus facilitator
- Design an agreed on process or steps prior to tackling a tough issue
- Use of a neutral conflict assessment