

ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE FORESTS AND RANGELANDS

Meeting Summary
September 10, 1998
Washington, D.C.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ann Kennedy, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), welcomed participants to the meeting. She commented that she was glad to see that Secretary Glickman spoke at the initial meeting of the "Chief's Roundtable" on July 14, 1998, and reflected on his recognition of the importance of the "dust bowl days." Ms. Kennedy stated that it reminded her of the federal government's long-term interest in forestry and work with private landowners. She observed that the goal of sustainability also includes concerns about communities and economies. Ms. Kennedy stated that sustainability is a challenge and the key to achieving sustainability is collaboration.

Nancy Hayes, Senior Council, Office of the Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), commented that they hoped this meeting would build on the discussions at the first meeting. She stated that the DOI is committed to working collaboratively and noted that forest ecosystems and communities depend on healthy forests and rangelands. She observed that society no longer accepts turf battles or the concept that jobs and the environment are at odds. Ms. Hayes explained that the DOI has been active in the international arena, including the early events leading up to the development of the Montreal Criteria & Indicators (C&I), and in the G-8 forest actions. Domestically, the DOI is committed to Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) principles and the development of the First Approximation Report (FAR). Ms. Hayes closed by stating that the DOI is prepared to integrate C&I into the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) where appropriate and is committed to inventory and monitoring efforts.

Adela Backiel, Director of Sustainable Development, USDA, began by explaining that she is responsible for integrating sustainability throughout the policies and programs of USDA including SFM, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable rural communities. She commented that key decision making factors in these areas are economy, environment, and equity. Ms. Backiel stated that she was attending the meeting to help form a partnership and to collaborate. She cautioned that sustainable forest management does not happen quickly. Ms. Backiel stated that she hopes the Roundtable will provide a link between international and domestic policy in addition to serving as a focal point for issues of SFM in government, industry, and non-governmental organizations.

Phil Janik, Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), stressed the need for a forum like the Roundtable to discuss changes that are taking place "on the ground" and to progress with SFM. He stated that the USFS was approaching this group with the hope of sharing the leadership and responsibility on SFM. Mr. Janik referenced the letter that prompted

the Roundtable process. He commented that, while the letter implied that it was a governmental issue, he felt it was an effort that would benefit from broader participation. Mr. Janik stated that the Roundtable is providing a service to the nation and to the world, and explained that it was not intended to disrupt efforts already in place. Instead, he described the Roundtable as an effort that would build on other efforts like the National Research Council study on non-federal forests, in a way that would respect the rights of private property owners.

Timothy Mealey, Meridian Institute, concluded the opening remarks by providing the group with some background on the Meridian Institute and his experience with the issue area. Mr. Mealey then described his role as the facilitator and invited participants to introduce themselves and provide a brief description of their expectations for the meeting and the process.

Chris Jauhola (BLM) -- Interested in how to bring rangeland into the process and expand scope of participation. She wants to get beyond the Roundtable as forum ...goal for me is working on collaborative process of doing integration. We need to do a lot of work between Roundtable forums

Jan McAlpine (State Department) – The State Department is very enthusiastic about process. We try not to be out on a plank when negotiating internationally, and usually we are not. Always can do more to strengthen position in negotiations. The Roundtable will be great contributor to us representing US interests. Forum/group could do more in helping implement IPF proposals for action, which include monitoring and assessment proposals, and could be used to help coordinate public and private roles in addressing and institutionalizing C&I. There are intercessional meetings being sponsored by Costa Rica and Canada that will focus on a legally binding convention for SFM for which we will need. She concluded by stating that the draft goal statement in agenda is very much in ballpark from her perspective.

Ellen Conway (State Department) – Concurred with Ms. McAlpine's comments and added that the next meeting of the Montreal Process would be held in Moscow in the coming weeks and it is important to have the Roundtable process underway.

Ralph Otto (CSREES) – Will serve as a conduit for communications to and from the land grant institutions.

Larry Biles (CSREES) -- Wants to work on the "wheels" under SFM, which includes measurements and instruments used to make measurements.

Paul Geissler (USGS) -- A lot has been accomplished regarding implementation and utilization of the Montreal Process C&I, including a preliminary report in 1995, a national workshop in 1996, the First Approximation Report in 1997. The problem is we go in spurts. The challenge is to build on the past and make continual progress through a sustained commitment.

John Dennis (NPS) -- Parks are independent places where we can do inventory and monitoring, interpret cultural and social information, etc. There are a lot of opportunities. The NPS Social Science Research program interested in rural communities and relationship to parks. The NPS

also has a strong Cultural Research Program which is interested in native American history. He indicated that he wants to make biospheres work. He emphasized the need for partnerships among diverse groups.

Bill Mankin (Global Forest Policy Project) – The agenda today is significantly broader in scope than commitment made in July. He needs help in understanding the connection between the 7/14 Roundtable and meeting today and is not sure whether the group should move in one direction or another. He is also still confused about the proposal to include rangeland. If so, then the group needs to consider including all other ecosystems/eco-region types in country (e.g., wetlands, etc.). Finally, he noted that the group needed greater participation by domestic environmental community.

Joe Ferrante (EPA) – Is anxious to determine how are we going to proceed and who does what? Sees the Roundtable being useful to providing input on international processes (e.g., GCC)?

Bill Imbergamo (NASF) – NASF members expectations are high. They want to use C&I's as a tool to proceed on SFM issues. NASF is doing project that will determine how they can best contribute to further utilization of C&I. We need a monitoring system that truly informs a factually-based debate.

Mike Leahy (National Audubon Society) – Interested in improving the type of information already being collected, plus adding other information about connectivity of biological habitats, for instance, which is clearly part of forest management. He indicated that he doesn't have total confidence in the outcome but is willing to wait and see.

Robin Grove (NGA) -- Governors themselves have not been engaged historically in the issue sustainable forest management or C&I. He stated he is here to learn about the opportunity about how Governors can be individually and collectively helpful without being harmful. He briefly described NGA's Center for Best Practices which engages/informs/educates Governors. The Governors meet collectively two times a year, which are opportunities to can help make things happen. He reminded the group that Governors have to balance interests.

Diane Gelburd (NRCS) -- Long-term expectations...incentives for private landowners to participate

Tom Weber (NRCS) -- NRCS is in every county of the U.S. and is responsible for Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) on private lands. We provide technical assistance to private landowners in natural resource issues. He stated he is here get to know the other participants and find new ways to do business that leads to positive ends. He sees the Roundtable as a process that can be used to help set priorities because there are limited resources to accomplish SFM. He stated that including rangelands would be beneficial. He stressed the need for common definitions that would help every agency do their jobs both individually and collectively.

Nick Keller (NACo) and Joint Center for Sustainable Communities – Indicated he wants to the Roundtable to keep focused on the Santiago C&I's. He is here to promote activities to local

government. He wants local government to be part of solutions. He emphasized connections and partnerships. He stressed that the time is right to help integrate a variety of activities and interests. He asked, who isn't here? And he responded that, at some level, Congress needs to be part of this. He expressed frustration when Congress takes away resources to do this work.

Elliott Levine (DOE) – He stated that he is part of DOE's forest products team and the he is here to represent Valerie Robinson and learn.

Terri Bates (NAPFSC) – He stated that he is new to the NAPFSC organization, but not to forestry community. He is here to become more informed about the process and to bring to information to NAPFSC members, and then bring back their perspectives to the group.

David Rain (Census Bureau, Dept. of Commerce) – He indicated he is new to this group. He deals with "people" (i.e., population) statistics. OMB has issued a mandate to expand use metropolitan statistical areas. He noted that there will be a conference in January of statistical and programmatic agencies. He said he's here to learn about the data needs of this group regarding the population demographics.

Bill Banzhaf (SAF) -- Members of SAF are individuals. He suggested that the group should not spend too much time on a goal statement or on the context of C&I's (we've done that). He stressed the need to discuss explicitly what each participant can do to achieve the goal, and they set out to achieve it. He also indicated that he tends to agree with Bill Mankin's concerns about including rangeland but felt the process could benefit from understanding the connections between forestry community and agriculture community. He also felt that there is a need to talk about the connections to other ecosystems but the group may not be able to focus on those per se. He closed by saying that a truly collaborative process is needed, a process with adequate staff support but not staff directed. The question is how to do this? He suggested that a steering group broadly representative of stakeholders might be one way.

Julie Jack (AF&PA) – She indicated that her members are involved in and supportive of C&I's. She stated that the agenda is broader than what was talked about at the 7/14 meeting. She was concerned that the Roundtable process not become too diffuse. For example, communications and outreach is something we are all doing. What role does this group have? At end of the day, she wanted a clear statement of purpose for the Roundtable.

Liz Scholl (Society for Rangeland Management) – She indicated she is here to be sure rangelands can be included in the Roundtable process.

Tom Roberts (Society for Rangeland Management) – He is also here to be sure rangelands can be included in the Roundtable process. He stated that the risk that this may be narrowly focused on forests would mean that it would miss about 1/3 of nation's landbase which is in rangelands. The C&I should be useful for broader ecosystems. If they cannot be transferred, then they are missing the boat.

Katherine McCarter (Ecological Society of America) – She commented that the July meeting focused too much on Federal agencies. She would like to know how membership organizations, such as ESA, can participate?

Tom Snellgrove (USFS) – He explained that he heads up the Forest Service’s Sustainable Develop Issues Team. He hopes to set up mechanism to redeem commitment to develop a report on sustainable forest management by 2003. He suggested the Roundtable can provide sufficient clarity and support to integrate C&I within our respective missions. He is convinced it can be done after attending Australian meeting of IUFRO who are in the process of doing it.

Chris Risbrudt (USFS) – He indicated that he is responsible for three big information collection systems: FIA, FHM, and NFS. He hoped that the Roundtable could take concrete steps to accomplish its stated objectives.

Arch Wells (BIA, via phone) – He indicated he is trying to get his arms around agenda and ascertain how Indian forestry can participate.

Jim Clark (Duke University, via phone) – He indicated he wished to contribute to the underlying scientific basis of the C&I.

[NOTE to READER: Michael Dombeck “opening remarks” are included at this point in the meeting summary even though he joined the group later in the meeting during their discussion on the Roundtable Objectives.]

Michael Dombeck, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service reflected on the development of the group as result of the meeting in July. Mr. Dombeck recognized one of the key challenges will be cultivating support among private landowners and suggested that the group should give careful consideration to the task of building a sense of ownership among the 10 million forest landowners in the U.S. To help to achieve this type of support, he suggested that the group focus on basic concepts rather than technical details. Mr. Dombeck commented that natural resource managers must be conscious of the social and economic aspects of what they do and remain focused on working with local communities to achieve the goal of healthy forests. He observed that local communities must be involved in how forests are managed. Mr. Dombeck indicated that he views the Roundtable as a tremendously important exercise and a real chance to connect forest owners and managers, and rangeland owners and managers.

Following Mr. Dombeck's remarks, the group took the opportunity to ask some general questions. Some of their questions are summarized below:

- What is the authority upon which agencies and organizations seek information and data? Mr. Dombeck noted that there are numerous statutes that authorize the collection of C&I type of data. However, he suggested that it is more important to help people understand the value of the information that is being collected. He observed that participation cannot be mandated but must be voluntary.

- Should the focus of discussion be strictly on C&I or should it be on tasks related to but broader than C&I? Mr. Dombeck indicated that he thought the limits of discussion should be determined by the group and should focus on tangible accomplishments.
- Will Congress support the larger role for the USFS required by this effort? Mr. Dombeck responded that there is support for developing an improved information base including forest inventory and analysis.
- Is it possible to use C&I for strategic documents and planning? Do we agree that there is a national set of C&I? If not, can we use this process to develop a national set of C&I? Mr. Dombeck asked the group what their views were. One participant proposed that the group begin with the list of C&I which was negotiated internationally, and evaluate them in the process. Another participant observed that C&I need to be more clearly defined. He suggested that involving people in the defining and education process will increase ownership while developing a solid base of information.
- What can the 50 Governors do to help? Mr. Dombeck responded that one possibility is to utilize the seven principles that Governors Kitzhauber and Leavitt developed to pull all of this together. Another idea was to foster input from Governors outside the beltway for more credibility because they do not stand to gain economically. It was recognized that the group should take advantage of the fact that Counties provide a powerful form of government.

Discussion on Goals and Objectives

Introduction

After the introductions and opening remarks, the group discussed the goals and objectives of the Roundtable Process. As a starting point for the discussion, the group was asked to consider the goal statement which is presented below and was distributed in an annotated agenda for the meeting:

The (proposed) goal of the Roundtable on Sustainable Forest and Rangeland Management is to serve as a forum to share views and further institutionalize a shared commitment to achieving sustainable forest and rangeland management on public and private lands throughout the United States.

1. *Measuring Progress: Using the Montreal Process Santiago Declaration Criteria & Indicators (C&I) as the foundation:*
 - a) *Establish priorities and a plan for collecting data from (federal, state, and local) governmental and non-governmental sources for all of the C&I;*
 - b) *Establish agreed upon protocols for collecting data;*

- c) *Establish a national inventory platform from which to gather data and report on indicators specific to governmental and non-governmental institutional missions and needs; and*
 - d) *Contribute to the development of a collaborative assessment of sustainable forest and rangeland management in the U.S. to be completed by 2003.*
2. *Institutional Coordination:*
- a) *Proactively coordinate non-governmental and governmental efforts, including both intra- and interagency programs and activities, related to gathering data and reporting on C&I;*
 - a) *Provide input into the U.S. Government's participation in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) and other international efforts related to sustainable forest and rangeland management; and*
 - b) *Create a mechanism for tracking and sharing information and perspectives on upcoming policy initiatives and governmental and non-government programs and activities related to the goal of sustainable forest and rangeland management.*
3. *Education, Communication, and Outreach:*
- a) *INSERT OBJECTIVE RELATED TO EDUCATION; and*
 - b) *Develop strategies for communicating about the activities of the Roundtable Process, and establish mechanisms by which interested parties can participate meaningfully in the process.*

The facilitator stated that the proposed goal statement and objectives reflect a view of the Roundtable process as something that has and will continue to evolve over time. Thus, while the proposed goal statement is fairly broadly worded, the objectives are intended to provide the more detailed action plan. He noted that the language, taken together, attempts to harness and build upon the high level of commitment to C&Is, while not limiting the purpose of the Roundtable to focus only on work related to C&Is. He stated that this approach raises questions about how to best harness the energy and enthusiasm that is evident while avoiding the problem becoming too diffuse. In other words, what is the proper scope and structure that can focus the activities of the group and not cause the process to collapse under its own weight? He suggested that the group needs to recognize and find a way to balance the tensions inherent in an evolutionary view of the process with the need to be focused on tasks that are both doable and meaningful.

He also suggested that the group should put aside, for the time being, the question of whether rangelands should be included in the Roundtable process (see below for a summary of the discussion that did take place).

Finally, he described a possible three-tiered structure for the Roundtable process for the group to consider as it grappled with the question of goals and objectives in order to give people some sense of how the process might be organized. However, he suggested and the group agreed to

hold off on attempting to reach any agreements on structure until the substantive goals and objectives of the Roundtable process were agreed upon. The three tiers that were described by the facilitator included:

- 1) the foundation of the Roundtable process being a set of work groups (and, if necessary, task groups within the work groups) that would be responsible for accomplishing an agreed upon set of objectives that flow from clearly specified goal statement;
- 2) an “intermediate” tier that would meet regularly but periodically and hear reports from and provide feedback to the work groups and determine when new work groups should be established that are consistent with and helpful to accomplishing the overall goal of the Roundtable process; and
- 3) a “higher” level group of people (e.g., CEO/elected/appointed official) who might be asked to participate at critical junctures to solidify commitments, encourage action, or react to specific recommendations for action that emerge from the Roundtable process.

Phil Janik, in his role as host of the meeting, indicated that he felt it was important for the group to come to a sufficient level of understanding on a goals and objectives, rather than trying to develop agreement on specific language. He expressed his desire to get into working groups that could begin to focus on specific issues.

Discussion

In discussing the proposed goal and objectives, several participants expressed the view that the Roundtable Process should stay focused on what these participants felt was the original impetus behind the July 14, 1998 meeting; i.e., to enhance cooperation and multi-stakeholder commitments regarding domestic implementation and utilization of the Montreal Process criteria & indicators (C&I). These participants stated that the achievement of this goal would be challenging and was of sufficient scope to focus the activities of the Roundtable Process because of the benefits that would accrue to all stakeholders from implementation of the C&I.

Other participants felt that the context and circumstances surrounding the initiation of the Roundtable Process, as well as the expressions of good will and a general commitment to sustainable management and conservation of our nation’s forests which was evident at the July 14th meeting, provided all stakeholders with a unique and unprecedented opportunity. These participants expressed the view that the Roundtable Process should be the used to help channel and harness this unique opportunity, building upon the broad agreement on the utility of the Montreal Process C&I as a cornerstone, but not limiting the Roundtable Process to C&I implementation issues.

Several participants suggested that the goal statement should be more closely tied to implementation of C&I as a means of providing information that can improve decision making related to the sustainable forests. It was also suggested that the term management not be used in

either the title of the Roundtable process or in the goal statement because it sometimes takes on a negative meaning for private forest landowners and local government officials.

Participants asked some clarifying questions and made the following comments on the proposed objectives:

1b) - Work across agencies. In addition, while technical work is essential, the question was raised about whether it should be done by a separate subgroup? It was noted that there will be issues around the authority to do the work.

1c) - Clarify the meaning of "indicators specific to missions and needs." A participant felt that a national inventory platform is different from C&I's and should not be combined. It was suggested that the term "platform" be explained in "plain English." As an example, a participant described the platform as "multi-jurisdictional cooperation," and commented that it is not a new platform

1d) - Explain why we are proposing an assessment in 2003 when the Montreal Process does not require one and when the President has committed to attaining SFM by 2000. Clarify why rangelands are included and consider whether other ecosystem connections should be made. It was suggested that it might be necessary to define SFM in the U.S. There is a potential to make a connection with RPA assessments. A participant expressed concern about making a connection to rangeland issues. Another individual commented that "assessing" goes beyond C&I's. It was suggested that an alternative would be contribution to more timely assessments of conditions.

On Measuring Progress - would sub-items (a)-(c) take place simultaneously or in sequential order? Do they combine to form a measurement function? If there is agreement on the deadline of 2003, then add it as a goal.

Clarify the connection with the international processes and deal with C&I's holistically. There is concern about the legal standing of this group's discussions.

Place more emphasis on the technical issues. Develop common nomenclature to ensure that measurement "on the ground" is described consistently.

Continue the relationship between what we do domestically and internationally. There are two key issues: (1) the U.S. is committed to IPF proposals and it is necessary to monitor and assess them; and (2) while C&I's are important, this may not be the right group to do the work to ensure implementation

Clarify how to integrate the work on C&I's with other efforts and coordinate national and international efforts. Describe the information in understandable language that will relate to various constituencies. A primer on this would be helpful.

Is the U.S. commitment to these issues internationally reflected in domestic practices?

This group can achieve the objective on Education, Communication, and Outreach most effectively.

One participant asked the group what will maintain their interest and enthusiasm for this process? One participant explained that he was captivated by the democratic management of forests and by utilizing international perspectives on how forest management is viewed and defined. Another participant stated that the question of how to create the U.S. version of the international C&I will maintain his interest.

Finally, it was suggested that they objectives should be reorganized around: 1) those that are directly related to domestic implementation of the C&I, 2) those that are related to the “international connections” between C&I implementation and other international commitments, and 3) those which address communication and outreach.

Next Steps

The group agreed that the proposed goal and objectives for the Roundtable process should be redrafted to reflect the views expressed at the meeting. The facilitator suggested that the redrafted goal and objectives would be circulated for feedback prior to the next meeting. Based on this, the group agreed to defer the next meeting until late October or early November. Mr. Mealey agreed to place some telephone calls regarding possible additional participants. Finally, it was suggested that any background information that is distributed prior to the next meeting should be distributed with enough time for review.