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South Dakota Coordinated Resource Management

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**SOUTH DAKOTA COORDINATED
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT***

by

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* Presented by Bill Keiry, Past President, South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, and Bob Gab, Coordinated Resource Management Technical Advisory Committee Member, as part of a CRM symposium at the 1995 National Association of Conservation Districts Conference in New Orleans, 9 February 1995.

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SUMMARY

CRM is young in South Dakota. Operating MOU's were signed in December 1988 to accommodate traditional and emerging issues on private as well as public lands. It wasn't until 1994 that fiscal resources were assembled to provide intensive CRM training. The training is three-tiered: (1) inform high-level administrators and organizational leaders about CRM and solicit their support, (2) present 13 CRM Community Training workshops in 2-day sessions to local community leaders, including landowners and resource personnel, and (3) train a cadre of CRM facilitators in two 3-day sessions, both private and public, broadly dispersed in the state, to manage local CRM efforts. Formal training of facilitators for CRM is a concept fostered in South Dakota that we believe has exceptional merit in any setting where CRM is used. During the last three months, three CRM issues have been started; two others are soon to be; and two more may develop. Numerous CRM informational presentations have been given by CRM advocates in diverse settings such as a legislative reception, resource management agency staff, a service group luncheon, and to a planning and development district staff as the momentum for self-reliance grows. There is little doubt that CRM is beginning to have a beneficial impact on natural resource issues in South Dakota.

South Dakota Coordinated Resource Management

by James R. Johnson and Martin K Beutler

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Presented by Bill Keiry, Past President, South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts, and Bob Gab, Coordinated Resource Management Technical Advisory Committee Member, as part of a CRM symposium at the 1995 National Association of Conservation Districts Conference in New Orleans, 9 February 1995.

BACKGROUND

In South Dakota, CRM was developed as a result of several natural resource conflicts centered around the management of public lands in the western part of the state.

Prairie Dog Management

The greatest conflict which led us to CRM was the development of a prairie dog management plan on 800,000 acres of South Dakota National Grasslands managed by the US Forest Service. The plan, although developed with strong national and local public involvement, seemed to satisfy no one. It became the basis for appeals from livestock and wildlife interests. According to some, it was "Just another example of why you can't trust the Feds to do what they say they will do."

The prairie dog population expanded to 28,000 acres in 1978 and was controlled to 3,500 acres by 1984. Concurrently, in the Conata Basin portion of the Grasslands, livestock stocking was reduced by 40%. This agency-forced reduction was due to low range condition, resulting from excessive prairie dog populations, higher than acceptable stocking rates, and a 2-year drought.

Central to the controversy is the plan component which concentrated most of the prairie dogs in a few large towns. The towns in Conata Basin will total approximately 5,500 acres by 1996, plus additional acreage periodically controlled. This approach was seen as the best way to maximize control efficiency and minimize private lands conflicts. Basin permittees were assured there would be a 20% increase in stocking rates.

Some wildlife interests screamed the acreage of dogs was woefully inadequate for associated species and the distribution across the grasslands was inappropriate. Forest-wide there will be 18,900 "managed" acres of prairie dog towns, but some have sought a minimum of 80,000 acres in an appeal that centered on the definition of "taking" threatened and endangered species by destruction of critical black-footed ferret habitat. The ten local permittees most directly impacted in the Basin are understandably concerned that they will continue to have most of the burden

associated with a disproportionate share of dogs in their back yards. They see deteriorated range condition as a result of large prairie dog towns, not excessive livestock stocking. They are concerned that prairie dogs will not be adequately controlled. Forest Service biologists are uncertain as to whether they can sustain control of out-migration of prairie dogs from a concentrated complex of towns totalling 5,500 acres.

CRM Notion

Deep-seated conflicts like this, and the belief by public lands permittees that they were not being fairly treated, resulted in the introduction of CRM to South Dakota.

The notion of CRM as a rangeland conflict resolution alternative was introduced at an October 1987 Public Lands Council (PLC) meeting in Rapid City. Dr. Dave Bryant, former range Extension specialist and now the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences at South Dakota State University, spoke glowingly of CRM successes in Arizona. This was the first exposure to CRM for most of the ranchers present. That started the ball a-rolling. A few key ranchers believed CRM would be a better approach than the usual head-butting over natural resource conflicts in the state.

At the December 1987 Governor's Ag Conference, the need was identified for a conflict resolution group, with emphasis on public land issues. This need was followed by a request from the Governor's office to SDSU to inquire as to whether the CRM process would fit South Dakota and its needs. South Dakota is unique in that only 9% is federally, tribal, or state administered, whereas CRM originated in western public lands states.

Educational Roundtable

A CRM Educational Roundtable followed in May 1988. Billed by the Lieutenant Governor as:

"...an opportunity to bring together interested leaders to help us answer a basic question and to meet what we think is a major need. That question is: Should a South Dakota CRM Committee be formed to help resolve local resource conflicts on private and federal lands? The Roundtable will also provide an opportunity to see practical examples of CRM from several points of view, including livestock producers, federal/state agencies, and university people who have used CRM successfully."

The presenters at the Roundtable all had CRM experiences:

Sherm Swanson, University of Nevada
Ken Sanders, University of Idaho
Stan Flitner, Public lands rancher from Greybull, Wyoming
Craig Whittekiend, US Forest Service, Lakewood, Colorado
Marv Kaschke, Fish and Wildlife Service, Lakeview, Oregon
Bob Baum, National Association of Conservation Districts, Salem, Oregon
Dave Bryant, South Dakota State University
and
Walter D. Miller, Lieutenant Governor for South Dakota

Sixty-five key representatives attended, including public lands permittees from three national forests and BLM lands, wildlife groups, RC&D council chairs, conservation district supervisors, tribal governments, as well as representatives of state and federal resource management agencies.

A participant questionnaire at the Roundtable convinced a Governor's Select Committee that a properly operated CRM effort should be attempted.

South Dakota Memoranda of Understanding Developed

A subcommittee was formed and began drafting a memo in May 1988 designed to formalize CRM in South Dakota. Some primary charges of the committee were to:

- a. Develop an MOU with the spirit of CRM embodying the concepts of Consultation, Communication, Coordination, and Cooperation.
- b. Where agencies are involved, all funding will come from existing resources; no supplemental funding will be sought from the state or federal government.
- c. Make the MOU broad enough to apply to South Dakota's problems and mixture of land ownership.
- d. Ensure maintenance of private property rights.

After 3 months, a draft MOU emerged, much like Oregon's 3-tier CRM structure. By mid-August 1988, it was still clear, however, that our greatest difficulty was in weaving the allotment management concerns of our public lands permittees into the process so that they have the protection against unilateral agency decisions that they sought. Some lobbied for a memo like New Mexico's, which formalizes PRIA Section 8 for the Public Rangelands Improvement Act for Allotment Management Planning on public lands. Later in August, in what appeared to be a final effort to gain agreement, the MOU Subcommittee prepared a companion MOU specific to Allotment Management Planning.

In September, public lands livestock permittees approved the two MOU's. In November, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management also approved. Ten days later, in December 1988, the MOU's were publicly unveiled in a signing ceremony at the Governor's Ag Conference, formalizing CRM in South Dakota.

South Dakota CRM Organization

South Dakota's CRM is basically 3-tiered but may be altered to fit local circumstances:

Executive Committee

State-wide, with membership from high level administrators from state government, federal government, and resource organizations. It encourages interagency cooperation, assures compliance with statutes and rules, but does not intervene in local decisions.

Technical Advisory Committee

State-wide, organizational representatives responsible for training, education, and implementation of CRM activities, monitors effectiveness.

Steering Committee (Optional)

County, regional, or management unit, composed of local agency; organization and landowner leaders to provide commitment and continuity to unit LLC's.

Local Level Committee (Technical Review Team elsewhere)

Develops plans by consensus, all parties represented, have decision-making authority, monitor plan progress.

LLC Subcommittees (Optional)

Provide technical expertise to LLC, develop detailed plan components, monitor progress.

First Requests for Assistance

Almost immediately after the memos were signed, two requests for assistance were received in January 1989. These were long-standing, heated issues, and in both cases permittees made the requests. In an attempt to expedite these early efforts and demonstrate state government support of CRM, Lt. Governor Miller agreed to facilitate both. Both involved public lands permittees who are members of different grazing districts, the districts being the actual permit holders.

Issues of National Significance

Throughout 1989 and 1990 the CRM Technical Advisory Committee received numerous formal and informal requests for assistance. Most of these were settled without them becoming formally structured CRM issues. In 1990, there were two major issues which CRM agreed to accept. Both involved several special interest groups, were extremely sensitive, had national overtones, and had potential major economic consequences. Again, both were on National Grasslands. Although consensus was not achieved in either issue, committee deliberations provided the Forest Service with guidelines which are being used in the management of both.

Issue One: Ft. Pierre Grasslands Livestock-Grouse. This particular portion of the National Grasslands has a wildlife emphasis, with concerns that grazing management strategies were not

leaving enough cover for desired grouse populations. Permittee concerns were that stock reductions would mean fatal income losses. The CRM committee, although unable to reach total agreement, presented eight key points from which the management agency is developing grazing plans and monitoring guidelines.

Issue Two: Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction. Ferrets are the most endangered of North American mammals. Federal agencies are compelled by law to attempt to get them back in the wild and de-listed. Ferrets feed nearly exclusively on prairie dogs. Local residents fear their right to control dogs would be lost with reintroduction. The reintroduction program which started in the autumn of 1994 is utilizing the five CRM committee guidelines for management to assure protection of private property rights.

CURRENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The pattern that emerged early was for CRM to tackle very complex, large, and controversial issues. From these experiences it was clear that CRM success would be dependent on our ability to provide trained facilitators to oversee local issues. But we did not have a pool of people who knew both facilitation and CRM. It was also apparent that people in the state could not request use of CRM if they did not understand what it is. They feared its use would have negative consequences for them if they got involved. This was true of public lands administrators, natural resource agency staff, and of course private landowners who manage the vast majority of lands in South Dakota. People in the state simply did not know or trust CRM as a process that could help them arrive at good resource decisions without the loss of private or public rights.

As a result, from 1990 through 1993 very few requests were made for CRM. This prompted our Technical Advisory Committee to focus energies on comprehensive state-wide training programs. The next question was how to pay for them.

Grants Prepared

From late 1992 through 1993 five grant proposals were prepared seeking fiscal support for training workshops. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) provided seed money. Finally, early in 1994, the Northwest Area Foundation, St. Paul, Minnesota, awarded a grant. As training gained momentum and additional needs were realized, DENR provided an additional grant to make up the balance needed for training programs. Subsequently, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has provided a grant for facilitation expenses of local issues.

Association Involvement

The South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts is the grants administrator for training and facilitation activity grants, which currently total \$80,700. The Association is a member of the CRM-Technical Advisory Committee, working with representatives from the SD Water Congress; Nebraska National Forest; Black Hills Multiple Resource Users Coalition; South Dakota State University Extension Service; US Fish & Wildlife Service; SD Public Lands Council; SD Stockgrowers; SD Game, Fish & Parks; SD Department of Environment & Natural Resources; SD Department of Agriculture; and SD Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Training Goals

The goal is to put the CRM vehicle for planning and/or conflict resolution in communities so that it is available as the **process of choice** for any natural resource or environmental planning issue. The training efforts also emphasize the value of the CRM process for emerging needs in areas such as rural health care and small community vitality. CRM in South Dakota is pioneering the use of the process on private land issues. A significant and unique feature of South Dakota's approach to CRM is that no other state actively incorporates professionally trained facilitators in the CRM process to assist on particularly difficult local issues.

Executive Seminar

Strong administrative support is crucial to the success of CRM. To help assure support, a one-day (6-hour) seminar was held early during the Community Training workshops. Forty high-level and mid-level administrators participated. Representation was good from the targeted audiences, namely, private resource and conservation organizations, in addition to state and federal government officials. They received an overview of CRM and the training program in the state. The seminar was conducted by the same training team which is conducting the Community Training and Facilitation workshops. The seminar obviously had the desired effect in that (1) many, many of the Community Training and Facilitation Training participants were administratively represented at the Executive Seminar, and (2) necessary funding for training and facilitation expenses is continuing.

Community Training

Thirteen 2-day CRM Community Training events are being held throughout the state. At each site, local conservation districts are co-sponsoring the workshops in conjunction with the Extension Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Community leaders, producers, natural resource managers, and government officials are acquiring the skills and understanding necessary to negotiate agreements on natural resource issues or to simply participate in CRM or promote its virtues and use. In the first 10 sessions, 202 have participated, with numbers increasing as word

spreads about CRM and workshop content. The billing for the workshops advertises that "In two days you will learn how to:

- * Facilitate 'community' planning through cooperation, consultation, communication, and consensus
- * Improve natural resource values for all
- * Identify goals for decision making
- * Work together on tough issues to get decisions that all can support
- * Avoid costly court battles in which someone has to lose
- * Gain community support for decisions and activities that affect you
- * Make decisions that are good for the resource, rather than what is good for a single interest."

Additionally, the need for skilled facilitators is demonstrated as a necessary component in resolving local CRM issues. Participants also are made to realize that CRM has value for addressing issues beyond those that are considered traditional natural resource concerns. As a collaborative process, the principles of CRM can be used in any arena where consensus decisions are important. These may include regional waste management disposal, rural health care, or other concerns relating to economic well-being or community viability.

Facilitation Training

South Dakota experienced the value of facilitation through its Department of Agriculture Farm Debt Mediation program. Some of the mediation principals became involved in CRM administration, local issue CRM facilitation, and ultimately in the current series of training programs. The most successful of the South Dakota CRM issues, as well as its most controversial, was facilitated by one of the CRM trainers.

The use of trained facilitators is a CRM feature unique to South Dakota. Wyoming has started to use the South Dakota model to train CRM facilitators. It is our belief that only through facilitation can heated environmental or community issues be consistently resolved.

The Facilitation Training goal is to develop a pool of competent facilitators, broadly dispersed throughout South Dakota, who can effectively produce consensus decisions that are fully supported by the key stake-holders and meeting participants. The purposes of this goal are to:

- a. Provide training and experience for individuals in order to promote the self confidence of facilitators so they are actively utilized and effective.
- b. Ensure that CRM and other collaborative community processes are implemented effectively.
- c. Encourage movement toward use of collaborative processes in planning and decision making.

- d. Improve the quality and productivity of meetings in South Dakota.
- e. Help communities to be self-reliant.

Specific training agenda items include:

- * The role of a neutral facilitator
- * When a facilitator is needed
- * Why stake-holders are included early
- * How to arrange a meeting room
- * How to properly involve the group
- * Precise agenda development
- * The role of a recorder/co-facilitator
- * Techniques for reaching agreement
- * The value of consensus building
- * Management of difficult situations
- * Management of diverse personalities
- * The need for a group memory
- * About problem/issue development
- * How to seek solutions
- * About facilitation ethics

Thirty-one participated in the first 3-day Facilitation Training. A participant background form was used to select trainees. Geographic balance was sought. Previous training/experience was judged. Priority was given to those who expressed interest in and appeared capable of facilitating CRM issues. Balance was sought among the private and public sectors. Over 20 were turned away. A second Facilitation Training is scheduled for mid-March.

Information Seminars/Implementation Training

Mini-CRM sessions are held in those communities and for those issues where CRM is being considered. These are conducted in specific response for CRM assistance. As a result of our Community Training workshops, several sessions have been requested and conducted.

Information seminars are conducted for people locally to decide whether CRM is appropriate for the issue at hand. These brief presentations include a general overview of CRM, its' cardinal rules, its' values and limitations, where CRM been used in the state, who should be involved, and support available from the state CRM organization. Information seminars are not necessarily prerequisite to implementation training, nor do they replace need for implementation training.

Implementation training may be a progression of one or more information seminars. Implementation training typically takes place during the first meeting of the local Steering Committee or Local Level Committee. Implementation training is essential for every member of a local committee! Without it, members will not understand the CRM rules of conduct or the responsibility and commitment each must make in order to be successful.

CRM ISSUES

Recent Issues

In the last three months, as people have become aware of CRM, several requests for assistance have been received.

Crow Creek Watershed This issue involves high-water damage to crops and buildings as the result of above average precipitation in the northeast part of the state. Water drainage decisions that were made 65 years ago are behind the animosities that have prevented neighbors from talking to one another for 35 years, which interferes with government officials working together. Jurisdiction is complex: over 200 producers, 3 conservation districts, 2 counties, plus state and federally managed wetlands.

LaCreek Wildlife Refuge LaCreek, in the southwest part, is principally a migratory bird refuge. Disagreements over water management and weed control have put adjacent landowners at odds with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the regulations under which they manage. Neighbors have suffered loss of production. The Service has not previously been able to alter their management in an attempt to accommodate the needs of all interests.

Rapid City Urban Deer The second largest city in South Dakota is nestled between the pine-covered Black Hills and rolling grassland prairies. The in-town resident deer population is pegged at 1500 and growing rapidly. Residents who never had a problem five years ago are experiencing severe deer depredation. Car-deer deaths hit 200 in 1994. An increasing number of residents find pleasure in feeding "their" deer, exacerbating the problem biologically and politically.

Pending Issues

Also during these 3 months, other inquiries have been made concerning the possible use of CRM.

Blue Dog Lake Watershed This glacially created basin drains internally long before water reaches the elevation where it can drain externally. Excessive precipitation, complicated with man-made structures including pot-hole drains, has resulted in roads that are under water,

inundated buildings, and unusable farm and pasture ground. The question is, can anything been done for the benefit of all?

Lake County Drainage Problem A road grade and a plugged culvert dividing two neighbors has caught the county and federal water resource agencies in the middle of a dispute.

Multi-county Landfill Mandates for regional waste management and the need to satisfactorily dispose of waste have put players in limbo and in a lawsuit. Many questions must be satisfied, not the least of which is whether the pre-selected site can be used to the satisfaction of local residents. If not there, where, and at what cost?

Belle Fourche River Watershed Restoration With the realization that "all things are connected", as well as the desire to foster good land stewardship, and recognition that regulatory pressures are increasing, six or seven conservation districts in three states are considering the possible use of CRM as a planning vehicle. The idea is to work together to identify watershed improvement or maintenance needs, seek solutions, and implement practices that are complementary to one another and supported by the landowners, communities, jurisdictions, and regulatory agencies.