

ABOUTLISTENING AND ASSOCIATES

P.O. Box 1371

Belen, NM 87002

(541) 610-7084

Exploratory Consensus Building Workshop

Bringing Our Groundwater Use to Sustainable Levels

Basic Learning Manual

January 9, 2020

**Rio Grande Water Conservation District Conference Room
San Luis Valley, CO**



Community Consensus Course

Exploring Conflict and Managing Change

Learning Manual 1

A REPORT SUMMARY

These are summary collective statements that represent the best outcomes of the participants. As such, they represent the collective mission, or vision, of the community and the participants.

This is an example of a report summary that can be prepared for each client. All, or portions, of this segment can be presented as an executive summary. This will focus the managers on the outcomes they seek to create and the potential strategies for fostering those outcomes.

The full report is targeted to those who participated in the session. They will understand the tasks, the questions, the insights, and the process. They will reexperience the feelings and the learning.

Others who did not attend the workshop may not understand or appreciate the total report. They may react negatively to some sections. The report summary is most appropriate for these people, including the public.

It may be emphasized that these are collective statements and not consensus statements. They represent the views of all the participants, but not all participants would agree with all the assertions in the statements. These can be, and many will be, developed into consensus statements. The process for developing collective statements is described in the APPENDIX.

THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF CONFRONTING THE SITUATION

Best possible outcomes by confronting the SLV water situation include a vibrant, thriving economy with Ag as the base; good soil health, lots of potatoes and increase in livestock and crop diversity, enabling us to develop higher value-added products more easily. There would be good economic prosperity for everyone. If the aquifer is restored, a lot of ranchers would not lose their farms. It would cost less to pump water (electrical costs) and increase profitability. All will be able to function.

By confronting the SLV water situation, a lot of ideas follow, which are not exactly outcomes but are solutions to achieving aquifer sustainability. A full aquifer plan will bring water levels back to where they were – reversing downward trend and replenishing aquifer with upward trend, eliminating the need for the State to breathe down the water user's backs; agriculture production will go on for generations to come with no export of water; a baseline is established; groundwater recovers - farmers and farms are not sacrificed to do it; natural resources, all things we love are protected; surface rights become whole. We will have a new problem of managing sub irrigation. The old problem of aquifer sustainability and our focus on it and our need for sub districts goes away. There will be less water meetings and we can go fishing.

Confronting the SLV water situation will allow for the preservation of riparian zone that protects wildlife habitat, which is attractive to hunters, tourists, etc. Our personal and technical community will reduce waste; water consumption; recycle water (use grey water in homes); and integrate crops and livestock. We will maximize efficiency of resources and have environmental goodness.

By confronting the SLV water situation, we gain 100% consensus on next possible steps. We achieve collectively beneficial solution(s) and create abundance from scarcity by reframing our scarcity attitude. We become a model for future problem solving and create new opportunities for industry and crops (change can be good). Solving this problem will allow us to move on to bigger things, i.e. world food production demands; good practices and helping others. We will be enabled to deal with other issues in our families, communities and environment. We will learn mechanisms to deal with new challenges and decision making. We will set an example for others and empower a new generation. We will become flexible and adaptable. We will all become famous consensus coaches.

Life could continue as we know it... but do we want it to continue as it is? Confronting the SLV water situation, will acquire strong, broad buy in to the process. The Valley will become more cohesive, more likely to control exports so that generations of farming continues, and generations can stay on the farm. We will find a successful solution not dependent on the volume of water we use. We state our values and realize them. People feel safe and healthy. Morale is improved, there is less crime. Resiliency is a way of life. We are flexible. Nobody dies – everybody stays. There is a return of gratefulness, hope and connection.

BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS THAT FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

While confronting the SLV water issue, keeping an open mind, listening to avoid misconceptions and thinking outside the box will foster the best possible outcomes. Also, we can embrace change and science and facts (current water levels, temperatures, etc.); choose solutions over fear, recognize resources and talent, and farm and ranch outside our comfort zone to influence policy and a culture that is more for nature.

Accepting diversity and change and understanding that adversity can lead to positive outcomes. It is possible to change – there is a solution. Change is good. Building trust and honesty with self & neighbor - believing I can trust my neighbor; choosing knowledge over ignorance and seeking facts fosters the best possible outcomes.

Belief that sustainability of lands, results in regenerative health of humans and communities; belief in community instead of self-interest (exclusively); taking personal ownership and being accountable to our State partner and ally; being communicative and embracing a We versus Me behavior will foster the best possible outcomes while confronting the SLV water situation.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS THAT FOSTER THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Strategies and actions fostering the best possible outcome while confronting SLV water situation might begin with defining personal values; communicating personal values to create new conversations and gain commitment to solution-based actions.

Other strategies and actions for best possible outcomes include exploring and embracing technologies that support the goal of increasing crop value while lessening and maximizing H2O use; using chemical data; soil moisture sensor data for both ground and surface water; improving soil health; using low H2O crops; reducing average consumption use on the farm via crop rotation and diversity; reducing acreage of cash crops and increasing cover crops.

Additional strategies and actions include searching for best practices; consulting expertise - local or natural producers who are saving water and still producing top quantity and quality; implementing efficiencies such as irrigation and planning; using others livestock to raise cropland and balancing the number of people needed for farm and ranch operations appropriate to lifestyle.

Look at alternative strategies or approaches to meet the SLV water sustainability requirements by engaging all stakeholders including future generations. Determine the metric and strategies and actions needed to meet the situation. Provide more education using radio, print, word of mouth and social media, emphasizing balance and reason regarding urgency. Acquire small local government and legislative help at the state level to support best possible outcomes.

To foster the best possible outcomes of confronting the SLV water situation, everybody will need to be willing to work toward the solution with an open mind, actually considering ideas. There will need to be more producer involvement (90+ involvement) recognizing it is not just the Ag community needing to be engaged - for example irrigation of domestic lawns is one of the most ineffective uses of water. All involved will need to maintain a positive mental outlook and garner good self-esteem and understand that a small reduction of water usage – even 5% is a positive effect.

*** A CONSENSUS-SEEKING PROCESS**

GROUNDING

- * Greeting Circle (Optional/desirable).
- * Worst/Best meeting outcomes.

THE SITUATION

- * What is the situation?
 - * What are the specific issues and concerns?
 - * What are the real issues (or hidden agendas)?

WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- * What are the worst outcomes of the situation?
 - * What are the different groups' worst outcomes?
(Requires that the groups are identified, and role-played.)
 - * What word, emotion, image, best describes this situation?

BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

- * What are the best possible outcomes of the situation?
 - * What are the specific behaviors or actions that would result?
 - * What word, emotion, image best describes this situation?

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS

- * Why aren't the best outcomes possible?
- * What could be done to make the best outcome possible?
- * What are some specific solutions or strategies to make the best outcome happen?
- * Disregarding the above, what are some additional new and creative approaches to resolving the problem?
- * Try lateral thinking approaches.

CONDITIONS

- * What are your conditions for supporting progress toward the best outcomes?

ADVICE TO THE EXECUTIVE

- * What is your advice to the executive?
- * What is the next step?

NOTE: Inset * are second and third order questions, useful if there is time, if the problem requires considerable time for discussion, or listening is not happening. A simplified process would use the items after the first order *.