

**Partnership PDT
St. Louis Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2004**

Attending:

Chris Gallagher, SPN
Dick Otto, MVP
Mike Hosey, SAW

Cori Brown, NAB
Debra Stokes, HQ
Jeff Boutwell, PM, SWF

Greg Miller, NWK
Phil Brown, LRN
John Breiling, NWP

1. **Partnership Talking Points and Training.** The meeting started with a discussion on the talking points and how to spread the word on partnerships. It was suggested that a session on partnerships could be added to various training programs to include the Operations Manager course. The team agreed to consult with Tom Fleeger, the OM team leader, on incorporating at least a one-hour training session into the OM course.

2. **Partnership Evaluation Tool.** Mike Hosey, SAW, has the lead on this assignment.

3. **Subject Matter Experts (SME).** Debra identified Susan Nee, HQ Office of the Chief Counsel; Janice Howell, HQ RE Counsel; and Donna Asbury, executive director of the Association of Partners for Public Lands to join the team.

Program Farm Out. It was mentioned that HQ has spoken with division representatives on the possibility of farming out certain program functions. Don Dunwoody, NWD, had volunteered to take on the Challenge Partnership Program. The team suggested that the program remain with the PDT until its work was finished as opposed to having a parallel program occur at the same time. A recommendation to George Tabb, Chief NRM, will state as such. Don Dunwoody's participation on the team will also be solicited.

4. **NRM Gateway Page Update.** The Gateway page needs to have meeting minutes, philosophy, and talking points posted. ERDC suggested that the team consider some changes for ease of navigation. The Visitor page should use key words that the public recognizes. Changes to partnership pages should be coordinated with Cori Brown, technical POC, and Debra Stokes, prior to posting.

5. **Clarify use of logos.** HQ will defer on this pending more information during the workshop when HQ Office of Counsel (OC) is available to provide advice. (Note: OC was unable to attend the workshop).

6. **HQ OC Support.** Because OC was unable to attend the workshop, participants were asked to provide their questions/scenarios to the team for coordination with OC. These should be detailed enough so OC is given all the facts and can make an honest assessment and suggest solutions.

One issue of concern is the lack of a local decision making model. The process is slowed down by having to kick it up the ladder. The decision process should be powered down to shorten the

process. A series of flow charts were suggested to show decision points on which way to go, e.g., if you have this, then do that. This idea will be pursued.

7. **Comment Card Questions.** The cards are in review at HQ.

8. **Handshake Seed Money Program.** The entire team will be included in the evaluation process. Once packages arrive, there will be a conference call with team members. Some members will be involved in a first cut by determining if directions were followed. After the first cut is made, a teleconference call will be scheduled with the rest of the team. The seed money must be awarded by June 1st. Evaluation time must be minimized and everything must be documented. All documentation needs to stay with the nominations. Note that this is like mid-year dollars (in other words, it's a late start for work). Next year the team hopes to have a longer window.

9. **Upfront Funding Issues.** Upfront funding is not a problem when the duration of a project is one-year. Issues tend to develop when it takes more than one year. One question to ask is whether we are making challenge partnerships too long? Do we need to break out multiple year projects by doing only one year's financial sheet at a time? Do we use the revolving fund as a working capital fund? The team's OC SME suggests that funding authorization permits such actions but the regulations are behind the times and do not match the authorization.

10. **TEA-21 Funds.** Interest was expressed about the Department of Transportation's TEA-21 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and how the Corps might leverage this opportunity. This is an assistance program of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and benefits recreation by making funds available to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Within this program, there is authorization that allows FHWA to give funds to the Corps directly. There is also wording that allows the states to give this grant money to the Corps upfront and not on a reimbursable basis. However, it gets a bit complicated because the Corps must have prior arrangements with the state to allow this. More investigation of this program is needed and information will be posted on the Gateway when available.

11. **Partnership Demonstration Projects.** The President's FY05 Budget contains language that proposes the Corps set up six demonstration lakes to test innovative ways to facilitate and enhance partnerships. The Partnership PDT will help these demonstration projects with partnering issues. This will be developed further at a later date.