

The Mid-Trinity Conservation Corridor Initiative:  
A Concept for Sustainability of Landscapes and Communities

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Along the middle portion of the Trinity River watershed, situations offer the potential for large-scale, coordinated benefits to natural and cultural environments. For our conservation work, this setting is best considered as a land/people community. We know that people use the land, and, in so doing, can care for it. Therefore, if we combine our knowledge and our efforts, we can obtain remarkable results. The saying "the result is larger than the sum of the parts" applies here. This is because natural environments prosper when they are tended with the good of the entire countryside in mind. (In wildlife conservation this is termed "landscape-level" management.)

Perhaps we become too accustomed to the *status quo* and tradition. Sometimes small gains sufficiently cheer us. We overlook dreaming in a grander style for the land and us as its stewards. However, when we reflect seriously, we realize that an even more natural face is possible for the land we cherish. The vision of this fulfillment is deepened when we resolve to have a compatibility of dedication among the individuals and communities of our locale. This is not to suggest that we can have utopia; that is foolishness. It is to suppose that our land can become noticeably wilder. It is to think that more of us can work together to have this natural wildness on our land. In so doing, we should remind ourselves that wildlife species know our fencelines only through the quality of habitat contained within our respective boundaries.

Wildlife is more likely to be abundant on any given ownership when these ownerships collectively represent a large area with excellent wildlife habitat everywhere. This reduces risks for animals as they move place to place. When individuals come together with the determination to practice conservation in its most wholesome form, the outcome is a region where biodiversity is abundant. Lifestyles of both rural and urban people are made fuller as more opportunities are created for people to have favorable outdoor experiences. Such dreams can become reality for the Mid-Trinity corridor.

Throughout the nation private landowners and various citizen groups have joined forces to accomplish objectives related to the welfare of the resources of the natural landscape and the people who rely on them. Interestingly, many of these groups unified only after the members became aware of a major threat to their way of life. Success was possible for some of these groups "in the nick of time". Others were disadvantaged by "too little too late", or by adversaries who were better organized. Most of us, however, realize the value of strength in numbers and

rallying around a common cause. More than just a sense of allegiance can result, though. Already those of us who are investigating opportunities for a corridor organization find potential resources for substantial funding through grants, and, a broadened array of expertise from which to obtain refined information needed for land management. If we choose, all of us can participate in this sort of discovery and the creativity it enables.

When wildlife is part of the motive for our land management or ownership, these partnership potentials especially are relevant. Waterfowl offer an example. Several landowners in the Mid-Trinity corridor propose that the region can become the "Stuttgart to East Texas". They envision abundant acreage of wetlands attractive as wintering habitat for migrant ducks and geese that reach this part of Texas. By establishing this large habitat base, wintering flocks of waterfowl can be expected to increase in number. However, landowners must work together to accomplish this goal. This is because scattered wetlands simply are not adequate to attract a large regional population of waterfowl. That is, our individual waterfowl projects may yield satisfactory results in some years, but the response always will be lower than with a large, regional habitat base that will attract and hold birds in our locale. By joining in cooperative determination, landowners can realize benefits not only individually, but also collectively. In other words, the actions of one neighbor aid the actions of other neighbors. Joining forces means joining in the rewards.

The idea is to achieve this by careful planning, dedication to purpose, and focused steering of ecological, social, and economic processes. To accomplish success, we must learn to deal with the whole picture, individually and collectively. This is not unpleasant to do and the rewards are worth the effort—if you are into living well because of the character of the land and the people who care for it. Few among us are not in this group, regardless of where we live. We all can come to appreciate the country, especially when it is of high natural quality.

The region of our attention extends roughly from the outer fringes of the Dallas/Fort Worth suburbia downstream for about 85 miles. Currently, we regard this portion of the Trinity basin to include portions of Ellis, Kaufman, Navarro, Henderson, Freestone, Anderson, Leon, and Houston Counties. While this designation is arbitrary, it is sufficient to justify the "middle Trinity" focus area.

As we added more and more boundaries of conservation lands to a tract map, quickly we recognized a pattern, especially along the floodplain: a conservation corridor of ownerships is forming. Several reasons seem to contribute to this situation:

- 1) Generally, tracts in the Trinity floodplain are large. Big acreages are attractive as recreational lands.
- 2) Non-resident landowners from the D-FW Metroplex find relief in retreat to the wildlands of the corridor.
- 3) Currently land prices are lower because the flood function of the river is thought to reduce value.
- 4) Floodplain tracts may be less impacted (though this is not a rule), thus, wildlife often is more abundant than elsewhere.
- 5) Trinity wildland has an appeal.

For whatever reason, we observe that many landowners along the Mid-Trinity are like-minded regarding wildlife management, conservation, and associated recreational pursuits. They are for a common cause. Though not necessary, by joining forces, landowners devoted to these mutual motives can achieve more as an allied group than by singular endeavors. However, the singular endeavors are required to aggregate into a large landscape condition. For instance, establishment of turkey habitat on a single tract likely is inconsequential; expansion of high quality turkey habitat throughout the corridor will result in a prosperous turkey population. **A corridor alliance makes this possible.**

This arrangement of lands simply might be regarded as circumstantial; we all could go about business without second thought to opportunities. However, through wise reflection, we can come to appreciate the exceptional benefits this emerging alliance of lands can bring. The source of this outcome is in considerations of the land from a landscape perspective. Many professionals in natural resource conservation are realizing that actions on the land must accumulate to a scale of landscape-level before substantial effects result. Deer management plans for wildlife cooperatives are examples. Certain specifications are placed on the kinds of bucks to shoot or the overall structure of the deer population in a locale. Landowners and hunters must work together or these objectives cannot be achieved. This is because deer move about from ownership to ownership. With everyone cooperating, the rules apply regardless of the location of deer with the result that the overall plan remains effective. Similarly, tracts of 3,000 to 5,000 acres of excellent habitat are recommended to maintain a breeding population of about 800 bobwhite quail. A project of this type requires landscape-level thinking and delivery for success. Yet, the building blocks are the individual ownerships managed by conscientious landowners. The Mid-Trinity conservation corridor gives us a chance to understand this landscape-level approach to land use, and, to participate in the benefits.

A brief explanation of the landscape approach to conservation can be helpful.

Landscapes are fairly large. In common terms, landscapes equate to the countryside. Along the Mid-Trinity corridor, several ownerships are encompassed in a view of the landscape. It is what one sees from the hill overlooking Brown's Valley, for example. Therefore, one can realize that the landscape-level approach to conservation brings large units of land together to cause meaningful results throughout the land in the locale.

This idea easily is grasped when one considers that wildlife management areas, national wildlife refuges, or national forests contain thousands, sometimes millions, of acres. The reason for the large size is to secure influence over wildlife or other natural resources in the locale. Private landowners have equal opportunity with perhaps some advantages because of the absence of bureaucratic protocols. In any event, the larger the unit of land the better the conservation results can be. Individual private landowners can realize this benefit by setting common goals and working in harmony to achieve them. This simply is common sense applied through the rigor of a sound process.

Wildlife managers are enthusiastic about management at the landscape-level because efficiency of practices and likelihood for success is increased. Restoration of flocks of eastern wild turkeys or attraction of wintering flocks of ducks offers examples.

The wholeness that is achieved through landscape level management will greatly enhance the success of either of these endeavors. Landowners can come to appreciate this approach to wildlife management because almost all wildlife prospers in a countryside that is rich in natural environments. **Landowners mutually share in these rewards.**

No doubt apprehension can detract from cohesion within the alliance if trust is not high and universal. This is one reason why commitment to a common goal is essential.

Sharing in the rewards from collective endeavors merits serious attention to equitable distribution among partners. In reality, quantitative apportionment among participants seems impossible. Alliances are better served when participants are content that rewards are possible and can be realized. Composure characterizes endeavors where all participants recognize they are working for a common goal, but that some disparity in benefits may result in the short term. In the long run, however, equity is achieved. Jealousy and greed are enemies to this composure. Collaborative measures and techniques of conflict resolution are available as solutions should cooperation begin to deteriorate.

Conservation already characterizes the land use of many tracts along this portion of the Trinity. The attached map shows that many of these tracts are contiguous or nearly so. Currently, the map only depicts a core area. We are aware of a number of other private tracts that are relevant to the corridor. Knowing this existing condition, one can wonder why additional effort is needed. The answer seems to center around three issues:

- 1) **information,**
- 2) **water, and,**
- 3) **weak rural/urban relationships.**

Experiences at meetings, informal discussions, and/or site visits reveal a consistently strong demand for land management information among landowners along the corridor. The bulk of this demand is related to wildlife management and associated natural resources conservation. This demand for information is one reason we believe that organizing an initiative to establish the Mid-Trinity conservation corridor is justified. By this, I mean that a corridor organization can **facilitate information access** more efficiently than by the happenstance situation that often prevails otherwise. As an organized group, members can be more successful in obtaining information and receiving assistance in customizing it to their specific needs. This also creates cohesion in management awareness that results in landscape-level benefits almost as a by-product. In any event, a coalition of landowners can become increasingly adept and prosperous in their natural resources management by forming a unified mechanism for seeking, obtaining, and applying technical information relevant to their respective goals.

The method recommended for guiding decision-making for a corridor initiative centers around a comprehensive goal. Part of this goal addresses things that must be done to allow other parts of the goal to be achieved. Considering that access to needed information may be a limitation to conservation success, we must insure that the goal specifies an adult education plan, and a means to establish an easily accessible repository of relevant information. The education plan may include everything from one-on-one property site visits by technical guidance personnel to on-line courses on selected topics. For example, the goal can bring activation of a team to develop a training curriculum that can inform landowners and land managers on how to better achieve conservation success that fits together to rejuvenate natural resources across the corridor landscape. In a fashion, the team figures out where the most applicable information is to be obtained, and develops an "**inside track**" to make it quickly and effectively useful.

In my experience, access to and explanations of information are keys for neophyte pursuits. This is about continuing education really. Without a plan, progress may be difficult if not impossible. By considering this to be akin to on-the-job training, one can appreciate the value of focused information transfer.

Perhaps the most important reason to have a landowner coalition along the Mid-Trinity corridor is its position in regard to current and future water issues. Clearly, the matters of water supply and water quality hold serious attention in many sectors today. Landowners stand to lose land management capabilities unless equitable treatment is given them as water is parceled to future uses.

Alarming, the regard for the need for water for natural resources conservation is substantially lower in priority than urban/industrial demands. **In spite of Senate Bill 1 and declarations for the environment, planners seemingly continue to disregard rural economies.** More importantly, these factions seem blatantly ignorant of the substantial value of ecosystem services to human well-being. This may be a manifestation of ill-directed water policy. We can find reason to suspect this by considering the meaning of a quote by Allan Savory: *Any policy that concentrates on cure rather than prevention and at the same time exacerbates the cause ultimately contributes to ever-mounting crisis management.* A lot in the activities regarding water matters in Texas today seems to be driven by crisis management rather than seeking meaningful solutions directed to the sources of problems. Good land management is one solution that can

strike at the source of many water problems. Private landowners are key participants in this solution. A challenge to the corridor initiative is to alter and refine water policy such that ecological landscape values are included in outcomes that can be sustained.

Water resources are essential to maintenance or increase of these ecosystem services. Some corridor landowners already are aware that availability of water for conservation is in jeopardy. The struggle to improve this situation portends a future compromise for landowners; certainly, without this struggle, however, no meaningful consideration will be given to the needs or plans of private landowners in rural settings. **Rural landowners must establish and exercise a powerful political advocacy for water.** Otherwise, expectations for the outcomes of ecological use of land will be pipe dreams only. This situation surely will become reality without organized action.

On the other hand, a coalition of landowners may be able to identify additional dimensions of water use that are compatible with the variety of overall, ultimate water needs. Ingenuity, planning, commitment, and science offer promise for solutions. Thus, the hydrologic cycle may have several connotations. However, advocacy will not come calling; **landowners must seek and demand this rightful consideration.**

These days urban populations and rural communities seem to have little appreciation for the needs of each. This weak relationship may be a serious threat to the welfare of corridor land and people. This is because the vast majority of people live in urban areas. This translates into power in votes and finances that are influenced largely by the actions of urban populations. **Lack of communication and direct knowledge causes this urban-based apathy for rural lands and people.** The consequences of urban political influences is reason enough to consider this situation to be a major threat to well-being in the Mid-Trinity corridor. This predicament begs for plans and actions to remedy the lack of awareness and sensitivity for rural entities among urban populations.

An approach is to achieve external advocates for corridor goals. The planning process recommended herein allows the opportunity to incorporate urban support for rural corridor communities and lands. In a recent CSPAN broadcast, Robert McNamara spoke of the need for empathy for adversaries in the conduct of foreign affairs. This lesson applies with equal relevance to relationships between rural and urban societies. Perhaps we should heed this admonition in the corridor work we undertake.

Therefore, if we can agree that water, information needs, and rural/urban relationships offer justifiable reasons for landowner unity in the Mid-Trinity corridor, we then must consider methods for achieving results. A comprehensive mechanism for decision-making is needed. Fortunately, a practical system exists (See Appendix). This method is useful because it deals with all facets in our lives. This is appropriate because, truthfully, all parts of our lives in some way have influence on our regard for our land.

This comprehensive approach solves problems evident in other systems. We recommend this thoroughly well-rounded approach. Its merits are founded on: 1) clearly understanding our purpose for our land, 2) establishing goals that address the quality of our lives, 3) the actions needed for this lifestyle, and, 4) visions of future conditions we are seeking. In the method, planned and implemented operations continually are tested for valid contributions to the goals and are monitored for success or failure. Success is refined; failure is understood such that correction occurs. Social, financial, and ecological principles and values are integrated with a view toward real achievement rather than just a plan of action irrespective of outcomes.

**Financial sustainability and return on investment (if this is a landowner goal) is, for the most part, virtually guaranteed if the landowner integrates a holistic management process into his or her decision-making.**

Understanding that the mission of a landowner coalition centers on human well-being is vital to its success. Goals for well-being apply equally to the land and its stewards. Correctly pursued, actions to achieve this well-being may be exercised for long periods. This allows us an optimistic vision for the future; many term this sustainability. (Sustainability loosely is defined as current use of resources without reducing opportunities for future generations.) In considering this subject, one must realize that quality of life is as important as quality of the environment. In actual practice, these issues integrate into the central pursuit. This means that social, financial, and ecological factors are equally important. This is not a one-sided or skewed approach. Balance is required. With the essential constant process of plan-monitor-control-replan, lack of balance soon can be detected and corrected.

We can be encouraged that the prospect for success is high for a coalition of landowners associated with a conservation initiative along the Mid-Trinity corridor. The challenge is to grasp the vision and strive accordingly for appropriate goals. Lacking the power and influence from the wholeness of such a land-based body, the outcome may be grim. We have no reason to choose this undesirable latter option. Rather than extracting and degrading, we are learning to restore and sustain.

The points below offer some "bottom line, take home" messages. Your reflection on these summarizations about the recommended decision-making method is encouraged.

1. **Focus on how to make sound decisions.** Become skilled in the process. The method recommended above has many safeguards. Reflect on how each decision is best for the individual property or area under consideration.
2. **The method directs problem solving toward natural ecological processes and environments first.** Technology then can follow with tools consistent with this orientation of "nature first". This is directly opposite from the decision-making methods commonly used today. However, the wisdom in this alternative becomes apparent as progress is made toward the goal.
3. **The method contains a powerful and effective safeguard in the requirement to assume that decisions are wrong.** On first impression, this seems to be a paradox. Taken seriously, however, this advice immediately causes you to give careful scrutiny to the unfolding of events resulting from your decision. If some part of your decision is wrong, you quickly will be aware of the failure because of the attention that follows in the correct use of the process. The compressed rule is **plan-monitor-control-replan**. With constant monitoring, you can detect failures and adjust decisions accordingly.
4. **Assume that active interaction with the natural environment is good when sound decisions are made.** For example, controlled rest from grazing may be harmful. Reasons are based in ecological processes and plant biology. When this knowledge is combined with finesse in handling livestock on the land, the outcome is beneficial to many native plant communities. This situation applies equally to other land uses. The point is that dogma cannot be taken at face value. Innovations as well as proven processes must be applied to find solutions to problems obstructing progress toward the goal. Again, the most powerful tool in solving such problems is appropriate decisions applied in such a way that natural systems can perform at their best. This saves you money and benefits the landscape. The goal should be the source of arriving at this outcome.
5. **Devise the goal to move the future resource base and forms of production toward diversification.** A variety of endeavors in your land use and a landscape characterized with high biodiversity establish the most durability in withstanding disruptions. This is not unlike the "diversified portfolio" financial investors recommend. Diversity in native plant and animal communities (biodiversity) has the special capacity for high efficiency in capturing sunlight energy to produce more of their kind. It also is a safeguard against unexpected things like disease or prolonged adverse weather conditions. Biologically rich natural landscapes always fare better in surviving these situations. The production from your land uses will track accordingly.

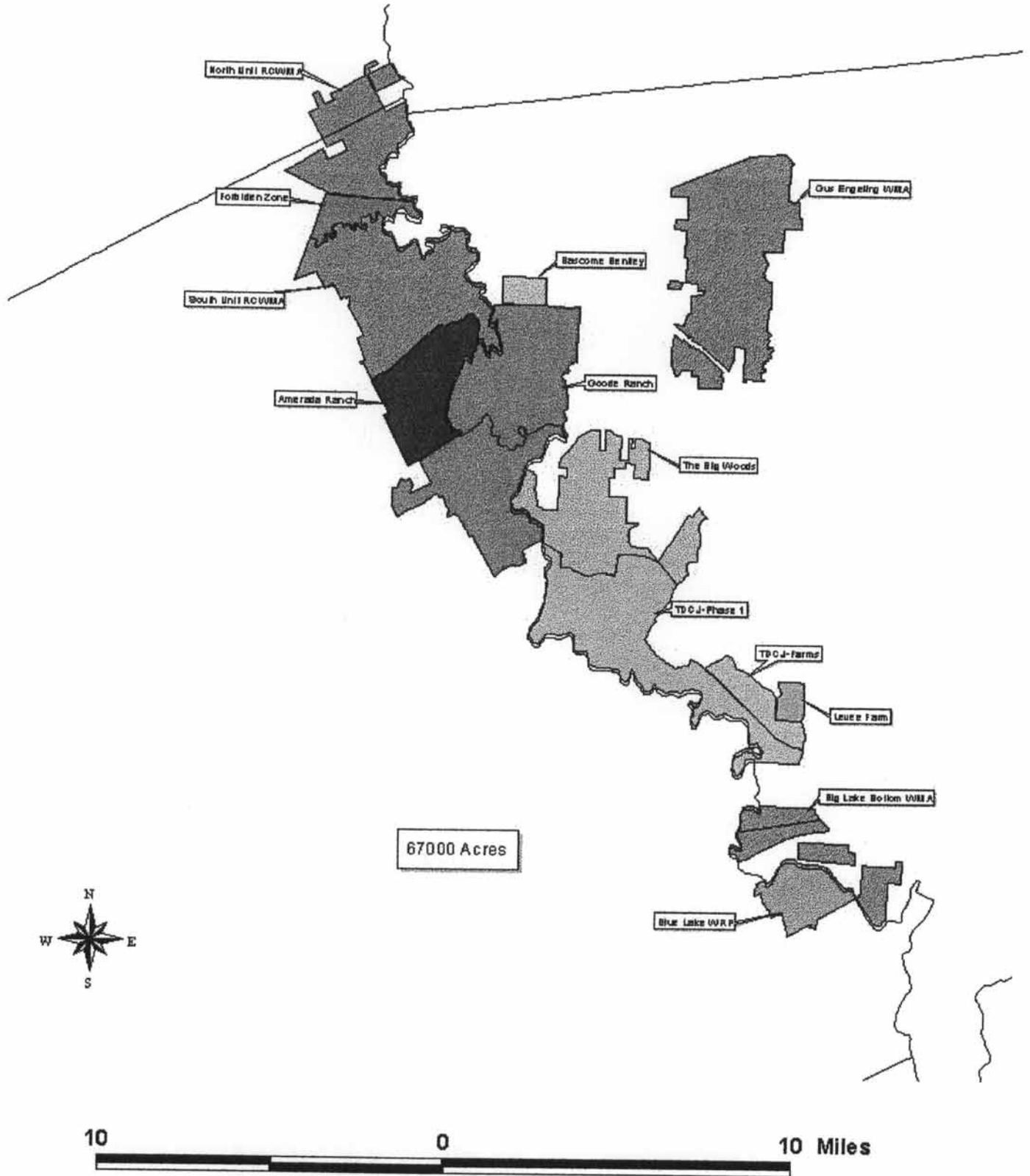
6. **Address both financial sustainability and quality of life in developing your goal and in carrying out the activities necessary to achieve that goal.** When these considerations are coupled with the other points recommended in this section, the outcome will be a thriving natural landscape managed by prosperous people.
7. **Decision-making and problem-solving are based on a set of standard questions to assure that actions are in accord with what you have set out to do.** When the goal is well devised and the seven standard test questions are applied correctly, the method has high fail-safe attributes.

The decision-making method has high performance reliability for achieving goals. You should expect favorable results from it. If substantial progress is not noticeable within a reasonable amount of time in practicing the method, some part of the process is not crafted correctly. Remedial measures include revisiting the goal, giving careful attention to the details needed for each of the three parts. Also, application of the seven test questions for each decision is essential. Finally, remember that assuming that each decision is wrong (whether it is or not) is the fail-safe factor. This causes you to be alert to the details in the course of progress—i.e. to monitor. It is the theme for the process of plan-monitor-control-replan. Constant monitoring is the key to keeping decisions on track toward the goal.

Therefore, the challenge is to understand the outcome of a landowner coalition for natural resource conservation in the Mid-Trinity corridor. Presently, we are accustomed to our normal routine. As such, we are aware of our individual efforts and our struggle to see them through to some sort of accomplishment on our respective lands. None of these endeavors are to be discredited. They are done for the right reasons. However, another alternative beckons for our investigation. Prudence suggests that serious contemplation be given to aspiring to higher levels of achievement—achievements that can come from joining our individual motives in collaboration for outcomes we did not imagine possible at the outset.

This alternative to land management seems to offer real promise. We have reason to believe it is worth a try. The consequences of failure are to continue to live with the predicaments that vex us now. On the other hand, the rewards of success will take us toward achievement of the goal we mutually craft as a conservation alliance. The natural landscape, its stewards, and its attendant communities will be the beneficiaries. This is not an unreasonable or unpleasant expectation. Let us not regret our failure to consider this other option.

# Middle Trinity River Corridor





## APPENDIX

### Outline

#### Planning to Succeed: A Method Recommended for Conservation in the Mid-Trinity Corridor

### DEFINING THE WHOLE

Start with an arbitrary definition of the entity you want to manage.

- Define the whole to be managed. The whole includes:
  - THE DECISION MAKERS
    - Identify the people who will form the comprehensive goal.
    - Be prepared to redefine/re-identify this group if other people are discovered later who should be included.
    - This is most difficult part and the most important part.
  - THE RESOURCE BASE
    - Consider every asset that will contribute to achieving the goal or generating revenue.
    - Include certain people in the resource base—people who may interact with management decisions but who can't alter the decisions.
  - MONEY
    - Identify funds needed to run the entity (the whole).

Focus on the big picture.

- Do not lose sight of the whole.
- Keep lists brief.
- Avoid great detail.
- Seek clarity in the big picture.

Place the right people in the right places.

- Evaluate roles; adjust as roles become clear or omissions are discovered.
- Optimize opportunities for various people to contribute toward success for the goal.
- Realize that some people have special aptitudes, skills, or experiences that make them especially suited and/or motivated to take on certain tasks. Wise decisions allow these people the opportunity to contribute at their optimal performance. Let them do what they do best.

Wholes within wholes

- Manageable wholes may be devised for nesting in larger wholes.
- Likewise, reducing wholes to even smaller, more appropriate wholes is important.
- **Remember:** Make the goal as specific as possible. This will encourage even greater commitment from the people involved.

### DEVELOPING A GOAL

An explicit **statement of purpose** is the source from which ideas for components of the goal are generated. Some may know this foundation as a "mission statement". Others may recognize it as a part of a "vision statement". Simply put, the statement of purpose identifies what you are trying to do. It is brief—usually only two or three sentences. With the statement of purpose clearly and concisely recorded, attention then can be directed to preparation of the goal.

One excellent method for developing a goal for comprehensive application involves three main components. These basic components are:

- **Quality of Life**
- **Forms of Production**
- **Future Resource Base**

Discussions or considerations follow for each of these three parts.

- **QUALITY OF LIFE**
  - Economic Well-being
    - ✓ The alliance must be prosperous. The key is for individuals in the alliance to be prosperous.
    - ✓ Think about *what* is gained, not just gain itself.
  - Relationships
    - ✓ Remember: "We're all in this together."
    - ✓ "...the quality of your relationships will greatly influence your ability to achieve all that you set out to achieve."
  - Challenge and Growth
    - ✓ A challenge for the corridor is: learning to be a team for the landscape—need to strive to benefit the overall landscape not just individual tracts.
    - ✓ Strive to create and maintain enthusiasm and cooperation among alliance members.
    - ✓ Everyone works together for the mutually crafted goal.
  - Purpose and Contribution
    - Threats:
      - **Water Availability**
      - **Access to Information**
      - **Urban vs. Rural Communities**
    - Working together, the team can realize that the whole can be greater than the sum of the parts.
    - "Any group of people working or living together does so for a reason, though often unexpressed. What is it that you are able to achieve collectively that you could not achieve individually?"
- **FORMS OF PRODUCTION**
  - May be actions as well as real things or conditions
  - "What don't we have now, or what aren't we doing now that is preventing us from achieving this?"
  - May include a quantitative prediction for the landscape envisioned; this may be an action for technical projects to produce results from studies by natural resource professionals to support the other members of the group; related to future resource base addressed below
  - Actions and things should apply to meeting or benefiting the stated purpose.
- **FUTURE RESOURCE BASE** (the last step in defining the goal)
  - Think sustainability (using resources we have today without destroying opportunities for ourselves and posterity in the future).
  - Think long term.
  - Think of an ultimate, enriched condition, remembering that it must be dynamic, not stable (A luxuriant landscape of the future must be of such characteristics that droughts are endured, for example.).
  - Four elements are recommended for inclusion in descriptions of future resource bases: 1) people, 2) the land, 3) the community you live in, and 4) the services available in that community.
    - The people
      - ✓ Think "me" not "them".
      - ✓ Describe how you/we must be in our attitude and behavior in order to retain the attitude and behavior essential to the quality of life and forms of production also identified in our goal.

- The land
  - ✓ The stability and productivity of the land affects everyone.
  - ✓ Include a future description of the land as you would like it to be. (Science can help here—not necessary, but can help add quantitative details, especially for future measures in monitoring.)
  - ✓ Current baselines may be useful—Re: Think: *The land is like this now; it can be in this better condition in the future.*
  - ✓ Landowners and land managers should consider:
    - Special need to describe in detail the future function of four ecological processes:
      - **Water cycle**
      - **Mineral cycle**
      - **Energy flow**
      - **Community dynamics** (plants and animals)
    - Envision the future landscape you describe.
- The community you live and work in
  - ✓ Seek to generate positive change toward wholesome teamwork in your community.
  - ✓ Think about how the community must be to support your desired quality of life.
  - ✓ Think about restraining undesirable situations and encouraging situations desirable to your quality of life and forms of production.
- The services available in your community
  - ✓ Think about services that can overcome threats, such as:
    - **Water availability**
    - **Information access**
    - **Urban relationships to rural communities and landowners**
  - ✓ Envision services that are needed to realize your desired quality of life and forms of production.
  - ✓ Think about education and awareness that can stimulate all community members to work together to provide a network of services, each integrating with the endeavors of other community members. That is, secondary services may be necessary to produce the primary services that are desired.

## TESTING DECISIONS AND MONITORING PROGRESS

A compelling aspect of this methodology is the requirement to monitor progress and adjust accordingly. The rule is summarized in the "24-letter word" *plan-monitor-control-replan*. By this process, the methodology essentially is fail-safe as long as these criteria are met.

A rigorous testing process can assure sound decision-making. These testing questions address:

- **Cause and Effect**
  - Does the proposed solution correct the problem at its source?
- **Weak Links**
  - Could social aspects make the action fail?
  - Are biological life cycles addressed appropriately by the proposed action?
  - Does the proposed action have a positive effect on financial matters to forms of production?
- **Marginal Reaction**
  - Among alternatives, what actions provide the best return?
- **Gross Profit Analysis**
  - What actions best support overhead costs?

- **Energy/Money Source and Use**
  - Will the source of the energy or money be consistent with specifications made in the long-term goal?
- **Sustainability**
  - Does the action help achieve the future resource base described in the long-term goal?
- **Society and Culture**
  - Consider your deep feelings. Will the proposed action help the quality of life for you and others?

*All of us have been guilty in the past of contributing to social, economic, and environmental problems by the lifestyles we have adopted and the purchases we have made, and can begin to make changes to rectify this. Those engaged in sunlight-harvesting businesses, such as ranching, farming, fishing, timber or wildlife production, carry a much bigger burden than the rest of us, however, because in making a profit they have the ability to enhance or diminish the biological capital that sustains us all. That ability has now become a responsibility that people who make a living directly from the soil or the seas have no choice but to accept.*

*The bill for decades of treating their businesses as industries independent of nature has come due in the form of lost or lifeless soil and water. To reflect a true profit, a successful business must also enhance the soil and water and the life within them that fuels their production. If soil is destroyed rather than enhanced, water polluted or depleted of life, the profits gained will not be genuine because biological capital is being consumed. However, when you enhance biological capital, you benefit not only land, but also yourself: **biological capital is the one form of capital gain no government can tax, even though it is the most productive.***  
 --Allan Savory

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