

## 3 Supporting Community Involvement

### Engaging Landowners – Understanding Social Barriers to Environmental Action in a Changing Agricultural Landscape

Jacqui Emerson Laporte - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food And Rural Affairs - Day 1

Messages encouraging environmental action are most effective when delivered in a manner that will convince others to take that action. Typical program design would identify the issue, interested groups or individuals would participate and monetary or technical assistance would be offered. However, it is important to recognize that some people have priorities different from agency-related environmental issues, or they may be motivated by something other than the offer of monetary or technical assistance.

Jacqui Empson Laporte, Environmental Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) used six examples of changing agricultural landscapes to suggest the effectiveness of environmental programs can be affected by characteristics, trends and associated social barriers to environmental action.

#### Changing Agricultural Landscape #1: Research on Land Conservation and Farmers

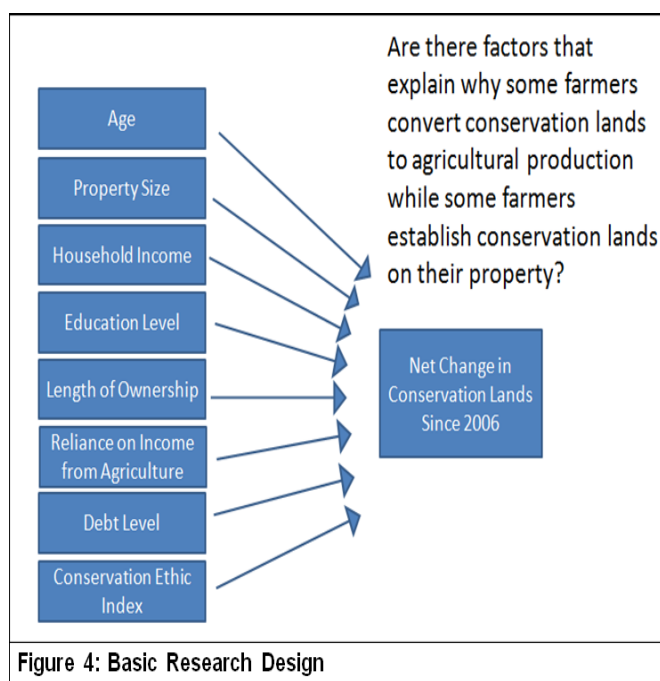
Jeff Brick, a researcher from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority asked the question: "Are there factors that explain why some farmers convert conservation lands to agricultural production while others establish conservation lands on their property?"

The study found that:

- Farmers with larger properties tend to exhibit more conservation oriented behaviour;
- Farmers that have owned their land for a longer period of time tend to be more conservation oriented;
- Older farmers exhibit more conservation behaviour than younger farmers;
- Farmers with higher debt loads tend to be less conservation oriented than farmers with lower debt load; and
- No relationship between reliance on farm income and conservation behaviour or attitude.

#### Changing Agricultural Landscape #2: A Case Study of Large Farm Operators

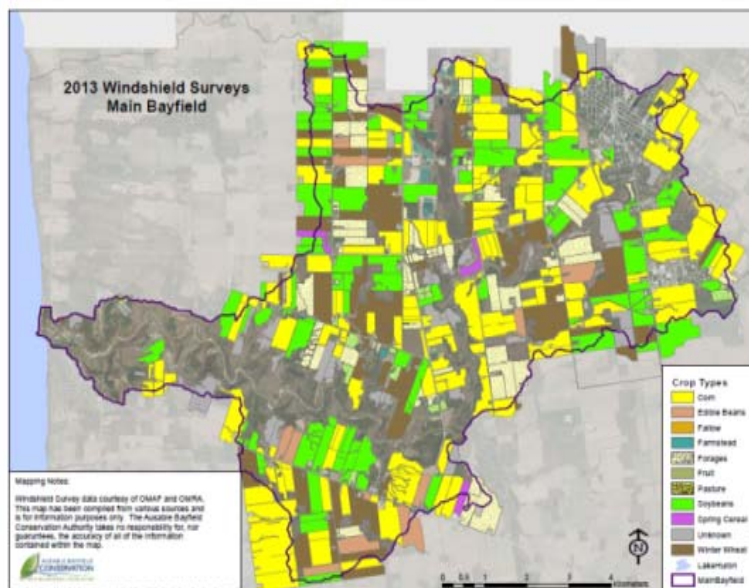
A project involving large farm operators was undertaken in the Lake Huron watershed and the target audience were landowners with greater than 10,000 acres of cropland owned, rented or share cropped and with greater than 500 nutrient units of livestock. They have a significantly different farming operation than others, and are not usually participants in funding programs or workshops.



In order to gain access to speak to these landowners, it was important to identify partners with an existing relationship to ‘open the door’. The approach was an informal ‘chat’ designed to understand more about their business, priorities, level of influence in the community. Business confidentiality was key, and they tend not to take part in demonstration sites or tours.

Four initial conversations were held in February and March of 2014 with some subsequent discussions. The conversations represented farm businesses with:

- 35,000 acres of land (a significant portion of the Lake Huron Southeast Shore watershed);
- 2,000 plus nutrient units worth of livestock;
- A gross revenue of over \$100 million per year;
- Associated businesses including an abattoir, a mill, and trucking.



The results of the discussions included:

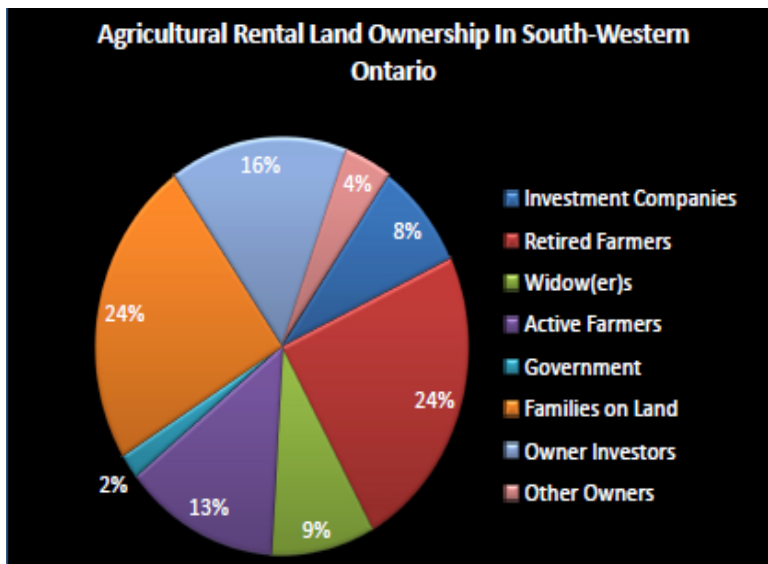
- While large farms may be owned by a corporation, it is often a family that runs that operation;
- Farmers view their operation as a whole whether the land is owned or rented;
- Industry challenges are seen as competitive opportunities and these operators quickly address challenges (such as porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv), humane euthanasia, gestational crates);
- Government is not seen as a reliable, timely or professional resource;
- Large operators need specific advice tailored to their situation and business confidentiality and paid professionals are preferred to government advice or assistance;
- Large operators view government assistance programs as being too slow and as market interference that changes the timing for decision making;
- The next generation’s role in farming is dependent on special skills or aptitude which may focus on livestock, crops, business, IT support, human resources management or public relations.

Support Community Involvement

### Changing Agricultural Landscape #3: Who Owns the Farmland?

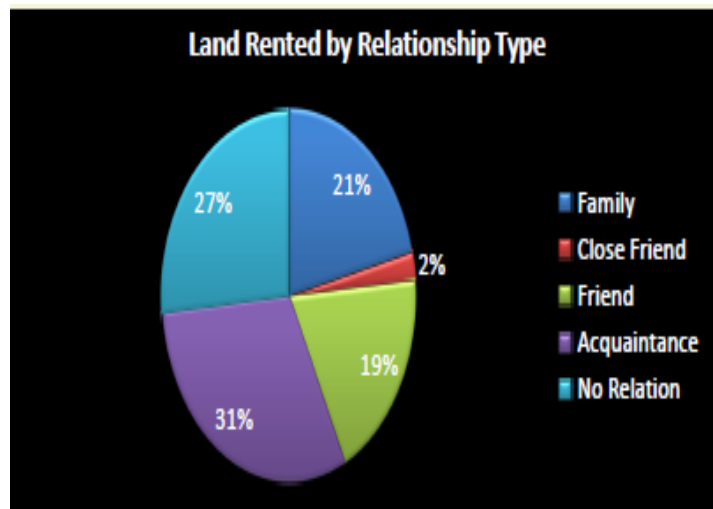
A study at the University of Guelph FARE Institute examined farmland ownership patterns in South-Western Ontario and considered the following questions:

- Why are people renting out their land?
- Who are they renting their land to?
- What influence do the owners have over the cropping practices or BMPs used on the farm?
- What influence does the cropping practices or BMPs have on who rents the land?



A large percentage of land is rented out by retired farmers, families on land or widows or widowers. This reflects the older average age of farmers and the land rental offers the highest dollar retirement income.

Very few land rental agreements contain provisions for environmental measures or protection. The relationship type can have an effect on the ability of the landowner to dictate the farming practices they want for the farm. For instance, rental agreements between family members or friends may result from the trust in the relationship, not necessarily the cropping practices.



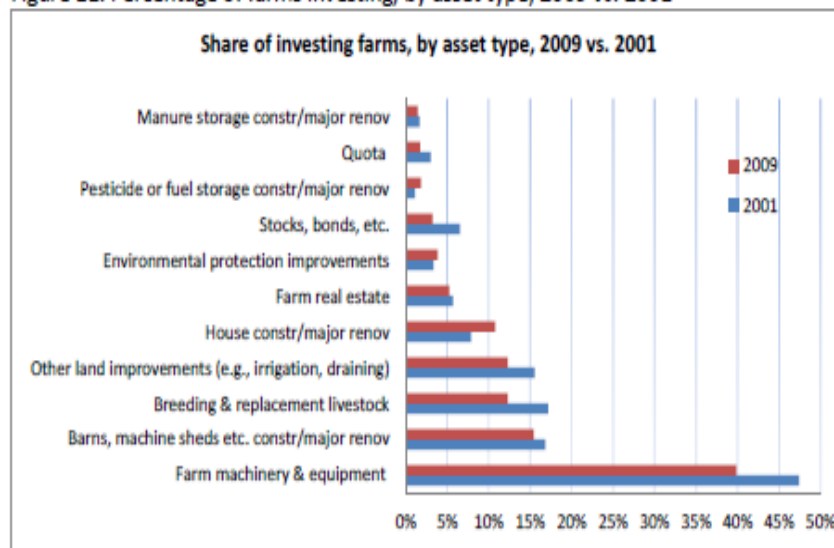
#### Changing Agricultural Landscape #4: Investment and Growth on Canadian Farms

Economic research undertaken at the Richard Ivy School of Business by Nicoletta Uzea and David Sparling on investment in farms in Canada showed that:

- Farmers invest in machinery and equipment
- Environmental investments remain relatively low and unchanging
- Large farms invested more in farm machinery and equipment, farm real estate, and stocks, bonds and other financial assets, which will mean more incentives and resources to invest in the farm
- Small and medium farms invested proportionately more in house construction and environmental protection
- Large farms will likely enjoy increased productivity and competitiveness because of investments in equipment and efficiency
- The productivity and competitiveness of small farms will likely continue to erode

This study highlights that not every farm is motivated to take action for the same reasons. The competition for attention for environmental initiatives is competing with other priorities.

Figure 11. Percentage of farms investing, by asset type, 2009 vs. 2001



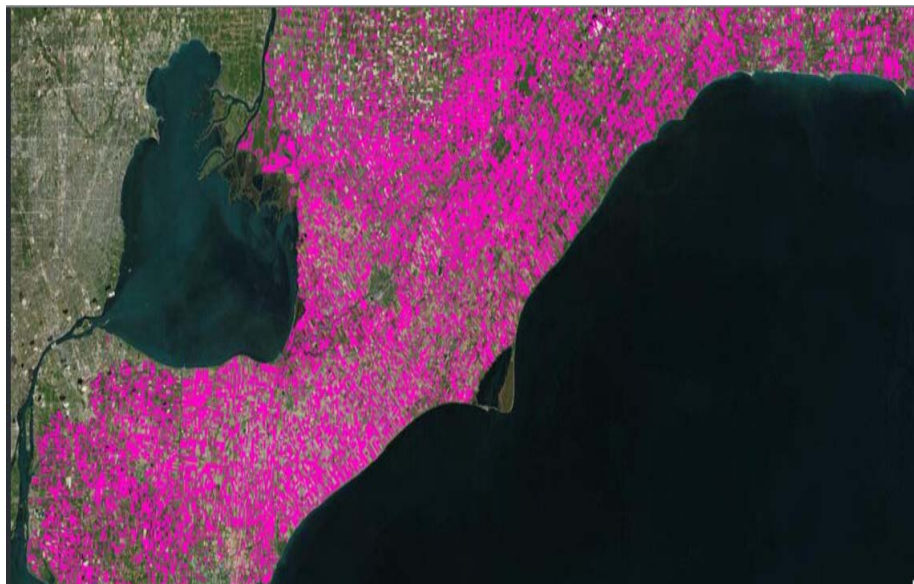
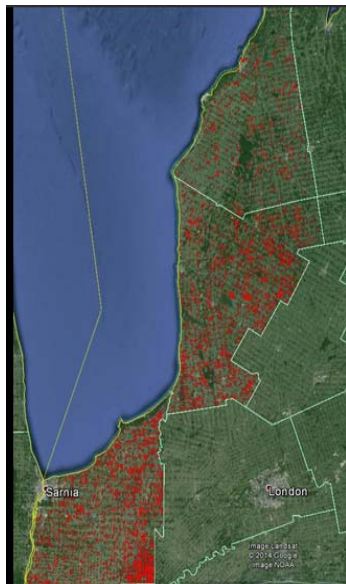
Source: Statistics Canada, Farm Financial Survey 2001 and 2009



### Changing Agricultural Landscape #5: Trend Analysis

Remote sensing and GIS can be used to tell stories about the landscape, which we can use to engage with landowners. The maps show fields with corn or soybeans in the past three years – commodity prices were high, and encouraged this practice.

- From an environmental perspective, corn and soybean fields are often bare throughout November – May, leading to erosion or water quality issues.
- These maps or pictures may help us “sell” BMPs such as cover crops or reduced tillage, by showing people the cumulative effect of cropping practices on a broader issue of water quality.



### Changing Agricultural Landscape #6: Tools and Techniques

- The person shown in the circle in the picture below shows the scale of this project using big berms to manage water and control erosion.
- We can use maps, pictures, research results or aerial views to tell a story. Using the drone, we can show water movement throughout a watershed



### Advice on Overcoming Social Barriers to Environmental Action in a Changing Agricultural Landscape

- Conservation programs should specifically target their audiences
- Socio-economic factors should be considered in program design and messaging
- Understand that key spending areas such as equipment will compete for investment dollars and edge out investment in environmental protection
- Services and programs should be varied to appeal to different priorities
- Marketing and promotion efforts should respond to different conservation ethics
- Innovative program designs that pay for alternative types of projects or services are needed
- Be aware of new technologies or practices that can influence programs either positively or negatively
- Be aware of old technologies or practices that can influence our programs either positively or negatively

## Involving and Engaging Community Members

Discussions from Lake Huron Cafe Discussions - Day 2

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*People become engaged for various reasons and in a variety of ways, so our methods of engagement must be both targeted yet diverse to attract the greatest number of community members.*

### 1. Understand the Audience to be Engaged

- Understand the composition of the community so you can capture attention and interest.
  - What is the target audience and what is their demographic?
  - What are the characteristics and motivations for that audience?
  - What are the priorities of the target audience and the community?
- Determine what levels of knowledge and understanding exist in the community and don't assume that you know why (or why not) a project is interesting or a community group will participate.
- What barriers are there to understanding and taking action?
- What is the impact of culture in a community and how can that be used to develop effective messages and programs?
- Using the audience research, create messages and approaches that will be understood and gain acceptance. For example, human health or environmental interpretation may both present motivation for volunteers to act to create a walking trail.

### 2. Create and Deliver Engaging Messages

- Use a variety of methods of communication to avoid audience fatigue.
- Design messages that are simple and clear and deliver them in graphic and visual ways to promote understanding. Complex language, concepts or terminology can intimidate and stifle action.
- Images resonate with people so use the power of images to tell your story.
- Messages should build a sense of urgency and draw attention.
- Follow up on the message and be ready to respond to the question "What can I do?"

- Brand project signage and over time it will be recognized and understood. Signage can be vandalized so place it in active locations and monitor its condition.
- Email notice of events so your issue remains current.
- Watershed report cards portray information that resonates with land owners because they see how they may be affected.
- Make learning or engagement fun and fulfilling as no one wants to work during their leisure time. It can assist in measuring impact such as using word puzzle with an online answer to measure interest.
- Seek participation in the newsletters of the municipality or other organizations. For example, work with a bank to promote the mortgage benefits of septic monitoring and upgrading.
- Actively engage a member of the media in your program or organization.
- Social media communications can have negative or positive impact and it can be difficult to evaluate how your message is being perceived. Social media communication requires monitoring and attention.
- Consider who will have the most impact with the audience when making presentations (i.e. a taxpayer of influence or a business owner speaking to a municipal council).
- Weed out what is clearly not having the desired results or the cost outweighs the benefit.

### 3. Create Diverse Engagement Opportunities

- Create a range of opportunities to participate to attract the greatest number and diversity of people. This may include passive donations or individual stewardship, governance involvement such as sitting on the Board of Directors or active participation such as planting trees.
- Provide technical advice to a landowner interested in a stewardship project.
- Practice patience since providing a “Picture of the Day” on social media every day for one year raised awareness and build interest and a connection that attracted donors.
- Use personal contact to reach rural and seasonal residents. Go door to door or dock to dock.
- Work with faith groups.
- Community dinners attract First Nation communities to meetings.
- Use technology such as QR tags to deliver information in the field, apps (i.e., Ontario Nature Reptile and Amphibian app, Invasive Species Reporting app) or GIS to map an issue in a community.
- Link observations or actions to a prize.
- Promote visual learning and interest through live streaming of environmental concerns such as eagles nests, beaches, and storm events).
- Webinars can be a cost effective way to deliver information or training. Consult someone who has had success and evaluate whether this will offer an effective tool for communication as technical problems can arise.

### 4. Use Experiential Learning

- Experiential learning is personal and provides an opportunity for community members to get actively involved. It also creates a higher level of understanding. Engaging someone in one type of monitoring may lead them to take action in another area.

- Combine recreational activities with environmental education or technical work such as a canoe day with an interpretative guide and sampling for turbidity, benthic demonstrations or fly fishing events.
- Use activities such as hikes, geo-caching, fish nets, electro-fishing or exploring to explain complex issues and to engage youth and potential volunteers such as teachers, parents and grandparents.
- Provide tours of project sites before and after allow people to see the impact of their involvement (this could include either passive donors or active participants).
- Offer ecotourism and biodiversity tours.
- Provide tools for individuals to evaluate and steward their own property such as downspout disconnections, rain barrels, and rain gauges.
- Take municipal councils and senior municipal staff to demonstration sites or on tours.

#### 5. Engage in Citizen Science

- Using data collected by volunteers often engages community members. However, it is sometimes considered “soft data” because there may not be a mechanism to ensure that it has collected consistently and according to protocol. In order to be effective a clear and concise training plan is needed to ensure all volunteers understand the protocol. Examples of this include Environment Canada’s Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) or the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN) for assessing the health of freshwater ecosystems.
- Manage the expectations of volunteers about the use and meaning of the data because although participation may be short term, results may only be available in the long term. Be prepared to answer the question “What is the value of my participation?”
- Develop a safety plan so that any concerns are identified, understood and mitigated. (ie. Traffic vests, life jackets, boat operation).

#### 6. Use Champions

- Use landowner champions to broadcast the message and engage their peers since this is more personal and trusted. Start by finding someone linked to that community to gain access to landowners.
- Identifying land owners and obtaining permission to enter a property may be difficult. Some of the barriers that must be overcome to find and engage owners include: the Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act constraints, changes in land ownership, position in the community, cultural barriers, and identifying landowners under numbered companies, absentee landlords and rental agreements.
- Use other groups with ‘like minds’ to spread your message or to undertake collaborative or complimentary efforts.

#### 7. Collaborate and Join

- Partnerships can be found in amazing places, if you are open to the opportunity. Go boldly and go where you have never gone before instead of talking to community members that already believe in the issue. Seek out the ones that are unaware or reluctant to get involved or take action.

- Community engagement can be planned and greater awareness built with less effort by partnering with events being held by other organizations. Take a booth at a community fair or event to raise interest in an environmental program (i.e., tree planting) because a wide audience is drawn initially to the fair and may not be aware of the environmental program.
- Attend or speak at events that involve your target audience such as cottage association meetings to talk about a water quality monitoring initiative.
- Participate in a speakers' series or panel with a variety of perspectives.
- Use a visual issue such as phragmites to identify other issues such as species at risk (turtles) in the same wetland.
- Seek testimonials from others.
- Join community organizations such a Chamber of Commerce.

#### 8. Overcome Perceptions

- Be aware of coffee shop talk and misinformation that will defeat the efforts of even the best technical workshop. Identify how that can be mitigated by understanding who the “influencers” are in the community, or the places where information is obtained and trusted. Then work with it rather than against it.
- When community members may have a fear or mistrust of a “government or agency”, seek a not-for-profit organization to partner with or a local champion from that community.
- Acknowledge that past involvement with an agency or department can influence the engagement on a current project and consider how to address it in the design of the program.
- Realize that issues linked to organizations can affect participation, such as regulatory initiatives for Conservation Areas can discourage volunteer stewardship activities. Consider the timing and approach of the program.
- Identify organizational links to issues that may be negatively perceived, even if they are unrelated (i.e., wind turbines) and understand that issue.

#### 9. Resources and Volunteers

- Show patience and persevere. It may take a project or initiative a long time to find the traction to get started due to a shortage of resources.
- Identify barriers, such as lack of human resources, seasonality, time, weather or conflicting events, when developing a program design.
- Identify times when there is a high demand on the time of volunteers, such as PA days, March Break, and planting or harvesting season, and target the engagement or program outside of those time constraints.
- Volunteer or donor fatigue is a reality so understanding motivation and celebrating success is important. The organization should understand the competing demands on volunteers' time. Work at finding a core group that is dedicated and supplement by continually engaging new volunteers.
- Create a ladder of progression to keep volunteers interested. Draw them into the program and then identify different levels and types of involvement.



- Moving volunteers past the easy actions and moving to the next level requires a lot more initiative and dedication. Often volunteers are focussed on one issue. Consider the encouragement or tools that would motivate those people.
- When personalities, skills, or passions don't mesh, use resources where there is a better fit.
- Communication can be frustrated by not maintaining email lists and spam legislation. It is critical to find resources to devote to keeping data bases current.
- Funding for basic requirements such as insurance premiums for volunteers can make moving an engagement project forward more difficult to determine whether you can work through a municipality or another organization.

#### 10. Express Gratitude and Build Relationships

- Ensure that community members know that their involvement had an impact on the issue or project. This retains their interest and validates their motives for participating in the first place.
- Appreciation can be expressed informally, by personal contact, or by formal awards.
- Make sure good food is involved.
- Community hours can be the first motivation for high school students but make sure that their contribution is also recognized.
- Present property plaques or provide maps or photos of a land owner's property.
- Acknowledge partner organizations and reciprocate the assistance provided by them.

## Networking and Collaborating

Discussions from Lake Huron Cafe Discussions - Day 2

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### A Stepped Approach to Networking and Collaborating

The process of developing and maintaining a positive relationship, that starts with a network and leads to collaboration, is a key to success.

The following is a series of steps to consider when attempting to network or collaborate with other groups is identified below and provides a checklist that can lead to developing successful relationships.

- 1 Develop your vision to get to your end goal (exploratory)
- 2 Know your prospective partner (research phase)
- 3 Develop your strategy
- 4 Understand resources and capacities
- 5 Communication
- 6 Partnership launch
- 7 Implementation
- 8 Maintaining and retaining partnerships
- 9 Celebrate!

#### **Step 1 - Vision and Goal Establishment:**

- Define a clear vision and end goal(s) and outcome(s) of your organization's work.
- Research and match your goals and with other organization.

- Make sure that there is a common objective between you and your potential partner(s); however, recognize and accept unrelated objectives.

### **Step 2 - Know Your Prospective Partner (research phase):**

- Develop a list of stakeholders and potential partners.
- Do your homework when selecting a potential partner e.g., know legal issues and be aware of soured relationships with other potential partners, funders, and municipal representatives.
- Determine key contacts, players, and people of influence within other groups.
- Be strategic (cost of your time investment versus the benefits). Determine if you will achieve more working together or alone.
- Match strengths of your people with a specific need or issue (e.g., if the issue is farm related, select a representative with this background and knowledge).
- Accept that no one relationship is the same as the other.
- Consider partnerships with disparate or peripheral goals. You might learn something new and you extend outside your normal reach.

### **Step 3 - Strategy Development:**

- Develop a strategic plan and business plan.
- Be strategic when selecting a partner or establishing collaborative partnerships.
- Identify common interests and synergies amongst prospective partners.
- Identify personal and organizational turf issues.
- Don't rely solely on organizational hierarchy. Instead, find people of most influence and are thought leaders.
- Match interests and needs. If the issue is farm related - Farmers talking to farmers .... Match people with specific need.
- Be open to a wide range of partners (gov't, academia) even if all your goals don't match.
- Examine project-based partnerships around common needs and issues and funding.
- Also establish multiple contacts and working relationships within an organization to avoid losing a contact due to staff turnover. Match people with specific interests and needs e.g., if the issue is farm related, select a farmer within your organization when engaging other farmers.
- Be strategic on who provides information to whom
- Organizational structure should consist of multiple stakeholders (business, farmers, agencies, ENGOs)
- Have a solid strategy that includes budget and funding partners and grant opportunities.

### **Step 4 - Resource and Capacity Identification:**

- Understand your skills, resource capacity and that of your potential partner.
- Know your funding limits. Identifying funding organizations and contributors and securing and funds
- Develop a level of political experience so that you can deal with bureaucracy
- Youth engagement, recruitment and sustainability

### **Step 5 - Communications:**

- Pick up the phone...don't be afraid to make the first call. Put yourself out there and invest in personal relationships.
- Show interest in other group's work.
- Be innovative and use existing technology.
- Maintain good communication between partners over time. Be available and responsive and timely.

- Offer an open ended invitation to groups that don't respond to your initial contact attempt. Accept that the timing just isn't right for the moment.
- Consider the use of social media and newsletters as a means of advertising your group.
- Take advantage of local knowledge and capacity. Local educational groups might be an effective means to help spread your message e.g., local example of Elephant Thoughts working with the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust.
- Find a local municipal contact at a staff level to find an avenue to a councillor and mayor.
- Use creative outreach (e.g., film nights).
- Follow up on successful workshops and gatherings.
- Join larger coalitions to meet other organizations.
- Report needs, issues, and successes to municipal councils.
- Host workshops to showcase your work and invite others to do the same.
- Establish consistent times for events so that the public can anticipate event dates.
- Take accurate minutes and share them widely to maintain transparency.
- Take advantage of community events to share information.
- Listen, listen, listen.

### **Step 6 - Partnership Launch and Formalization:**

- Leadership is key: establish a champion or lead for partnership development
- Establish common ground. Identify differences and agree to disagree.
- Identify priority issue to work on.
- Make a commitment.
- Clarifying expectations immediately.
- Formalize relationships e.g., MOU. Clarify expectations immediately. Recognize personal sensitivities and turf issues and ways to address them.
- Consider sitting in on other meetings or joining a task team to better integrate your groups.

### **Step 7 - Implementation**

- Focus on the solution and not the problem.
- Work on concrete problems and solutions to strengthen relationships.
- Mobilize around an opportunity.
- Provide technical support if possible.
- Establish strategic work plans and agreements, and establish roles and responsibilities.
- Use the history of an organization to your benefit but don't use it as an excuse not to do something (e.g., dismissing an idea because it was tried a decade ago).
- Consider economic valuation of the outcome of actions
- Consider joint fundraising and public outreach (avoid duplication and strengthens a proposal)
- Select projects suitable for joint implementation.
- Joint events (ag suppliers, gov't agencies), lunch events e.g., pasture tours, crop analysis.
- Avoid overloading key players and helpers with too much work.
- Be flexible

### **Step 8 - Maintenance and Retention of Partnerships:**

- Nurture the relationship once established.
- Establish personal contact and follow up answering questions...be available and responsive.
- Give as much as you receive e.g., provide support to other organizations and don't expect them to attend your meetings without your own investment in time.
- Establish multiple contacts within an organization to avoid losing a contact due to staff turnover.
- Celebrate each other's achievements.

- Ensure that you give as much as you take.
- Socialize, have fun and a sense of humour, don't be a heavy all the time.
- Be authentic.
- Keep up to date on other organizations goals and work.
- Show appreciation frequently.
- Be solution focused and don't dwell on the problem.
- Keep up your end of the bargain.
- Be open to discussion.
- Recognize that people have feelings, sensitivities and pride, recognize this in yourself as well.

### Step 9 - Celebrate Partnership and Achievements

- Extend invitation to AGMs.
- Host dinners.
- Host outdoor events to engage partners.
- Celebrate each other's victories.

## Challenges and Overcoming Barriers to Success

*The significant challenge to networking and collaboration is moving beyond existing models and jurisdictions, finding common ground and overcoming mistrust or perceptions.*

### 1. Understanding the benefit

- A barrier to collaboration is often moving beyond the existing model. Be open to new types of engagement and relationship building. Use an organic approach at relationship building and eventually formalize the relationship in a collaborative agreement.
- Organizations are often too busy with workload to see the benefit so build in an evaluation of the benefits of partnership for both parties.
- Relationships with large corporate businesses can assist with funding but can raise ethical issues (e.g., working with developers or a corporation that is not considered green). Evaluate carefully the positive and negative aspects of a relationship and decide whether it will benefit the organization in the long term. Choose a partner carefully since it could have an impact on your reputation and standing in the community.

### 2. Approach

- Maintaining interest and making your work relevant to other groups is an ongoing concern. Consider an endeavor with an unlikely partner. For example, consider groups with a different area of expertise. Also, examine opportunities in working with groups that may have different social, economic, environmental goals. Find a common interest or cause.
- Breaking down jurisdictional boundaries and finding common ground can present a barrier to collaboration. Meet to share information and seek common interests and opportunities. Ad
- Balancing relationships and multiple needs present ongoing concerns. Coordination and communication is a key element in building and continuing a positive relationship Share knowledge and experience. Clearly communicate the capacity of the organization. Determine a lead on the project in a formal manner so misunderstandings will not arise. It may take a variety of approaches to seek the opinions of less vocal individuals or groups so find out how they feel comfortable participating.

### 3. Sufficient Resources

- Finding sufficient funds for collaborative efforts is a challenge. Working with other groups on funding proposals brings more resources and skills to the project, is attractive to funding organizations, and assists you in understanding the goals of each organization and common interests.
- Overcoming technology barriers and cost needed to engage other groups can be a significant barrier particularly in northern areas. Identify a group that could assist in overcoming these barriers and build a relationship.
- Lack of time and energy can be a barrier to both networking and developing collaborative projects. Consider the benefit and cost of the initiative and how it could be integrated with existing programs. It also may be a timing issue so consider deferring the project until the time is right.

### 4. Attitude

- Negativity can prevent or destroy collaborative efforts. Find common ground and politely identify differences. Attempt to common ground and priority issue to work on. It may be necessary to 'agree to disagree'. Also, don't assume that there are negative feelings simply because there is no response.
- Trust issues are difficult to overcome, particularly around issues such as data sharing or where there are misperceptions about an organization's long term goals. Be open and patient. Work on building a relationship if the collaboration will benefit the work of both organizations. Alternatively, work with the groups who are interested in the same goals and with whom there is trust.
- Dealing with your own and other people's defensiveness and turf protection are important barriers to overcome. Identify the benefits of collaboration and areas of concern and slowly build a relationship through working on a priority issue that affects both groups.
- Finding the acceptance of individuals in an organization for innovative collaboration can be difficult, especially if it a staff member making a proposal to someone in control. Identify and communicate the benefits and costs and how it could find success beyond existing programs. Position the proposal as a pilot project and build on the success of a smaller initiative.

## **Advice for Successful Networking and Collaboration**

*Successful networking and collaboration is built upon communication, relationships, common interests and positive energy.*

### 1. Approach

- Create a clear and ongoing understanding of the relationship, identify how each group involved will benefit and formalize the arrangement.
- Use a grass roots and local ground level approach to address local issues.
- Identify what organizational assets that may be of interest to other groups and communicate your capacity and willingness to collaborate.
- Identify the actual capacity of the organizations involved and match the tasks to individual abilities and strengths.
- Undertake joint fundraising and public outreach to gain more resources and a wider reach.
- Foster the involvement of youth and consider developing a curriculum based approach.



- Acknowledge and recognize the contributions of the partner organizations.
  - Host social events or organize work days with a variety of groups to build personal connection.
  - Recognize links between issues (e.g., water quality and fish) as opportunities for both organizations, connect and identify an approach together.
2. Attitude
- Seek enthusiasm, positive attitudes and willingness to collaborate.
  - Immediately correct misunderstandings or address concerns. Don't let issues and resentment simmer as it will damage a relationship.
  - Demonstrate persistence and patience in building positive relationships and working toward a common objective.
  - Have fun and don't take everything too seriously.
3. Trouble shooting
- Ensure on-going communication and sharing ideas with partners to continually build a relationship.
  - Build in contingencies to address potential issues and use a third party facilitator in difficult situations.
  - Transparency and truthfulness will avoid misperceptions.
  - Find an issue or program to collaborate on that is outside each group's mandate, but would be beneficial to all concerned and use that to build a relationship.

## Marketing Your Message

Ideas and suggestions from the Lake Huron Cafe - Day 2

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*In order to successfully communicate your message, reach the target audience and encourage environmental action, a strategic approach must be planned and a compelling message must be sent in a way that will resonate with that audience. Communication and key messages should be integrated into the everyday work and 'culture' of an organization.*

1. Market Strategically:
- Weave marketing into the fabric of the entire project. Communicating key messages should be a part of everything you do rather than a separate exercise.
  - Be clear about organizational goals and develop a compelling story about the organization or project.
  - Consider unusual partnerships or approaches that can help spread the message such as strategic advertising for farmers on a local weather network or an environmental message delivered at a theatre production.
2. Create a Plan
- Create a plan with clear intentions that has realistic goals and objectives.
  - Identify and understand the target audience and the priorities of that audience.
  - Consider the following basic questions:
    - Who is the intended audience, what are their priorities and how can best reach them?
    - What messages will be delivered both intentionally and unintentionally?

- What are the best approaches to deliver those messages?
- Consider a variety of approaches to communicate the message that might include: email, report cards, websites, media, social media, site demonstrations, fact sheets, public forums or presentations.
- Incorporate a method to measure effectiveness of the communication approach and the key messages.

### 3. Use Effective Messages:

- Target your message to the intended audience rather than issuing a broad communication.
- Understand your audience and their priorities, listen to their views, and approach that audience with a message and in a language that will gain acceptance.
- Develop appropriate messages that cater to a specific audience and speak to their values, needs, interests. For example, framing a message in terms of economics, health or recreation has been successful with municipal councils.
- Test an initial message and approach with someone in the intended audience and adjust it to be more compelling
- Ensure that the messages are:
  - Clear, simple, and positive
  - Consistent and persistent
  - Balanced and defensible
- Messages should be in plain language that is immediately understood and avoids jargon.
- Share stories using positive experiences rather than just facts or technical data.
- Connect with shared values when communicating messages.
- Seek training or expertise in communication and media relations.

### 4. Deliver the Message for Impact:

- Any marketing approach should be passionate, from the heart and compelling.
- Find the medium that best fits the message.
- Connect marketing with programming. Integrate key messages in various events, programs and activities.
- Spread the message to individuals 'one on one' and in small groups.
- Engage and build a relationship with the media and prepare information that will make it easy for them to convey the story.
- Have key messages ready in a form that can be quickly conveyed during an interview or incorporated in a news release or fact sheet.
- Explore partnerships to gain broader outreach such as including a message or article in a municipal newsletter.
- Collaborate with another group to deliver joint or similar messages respecting policy changes.
- Use existing informal networks to convey information as word of mouth can be a powerful tool.
- Build awareness through project signage.
- Evaluate marketing success and failures and adapt the approach if necessary.

#### 5. Reach Beyond the Existing Audience

- Be strategic and target those that are undecided rather than those that already support the action being promoted.
- Target audiences that maybe receptive and don't waste time attempting to convert those who clearly have a different opinion.
- Identify champions or organizations to deliver the message through in order to reach a particular audience. For example, use a lake association or associated event to reach seasonal residents.
- Approach the audience with encouragement and without judgement.
- Reframe the issue into a language and an approach that will encourage the audience to listen and accept that there is a concern and action is needed.

#### 6. Maximize Funding and Human Resources

- Make communication and outreach a component any grant proposal.
- Identify the reason for a marketing effort and the expected results as this will assist with a more targeted and cost effective approach.
- Consider the options and carefully identify the marketing approach that will offer the best value both financial and use of volunteers' time.
- Measure results to know what is working so you can adapt in the future and ensure limited resources are used effectively.