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MATters



AN UPDATE FROM THE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM



AGENCIES RETHINKING THE “S” WORD

A key relevancy question many state fish and wildlife agencies are asking is “What kinds of changes are needed and if we’re willing to make them, how do we best proceed?” One change for fish and wildlife agencies to adapt, remain relevant, and manage themselves more effectively today requires us to rethink about the whole idea of strategic planning and process.

A new approach to strategic planning may be more what’s needed, not abandoning it all together. For example, what about departing from the traditional, every few years’ strategic planning process to conceptualize a redesign that supports real-time strategy-making and encourages “creative accidents?”

What exactly is strategic planning and why does it matter? Strategic planning basically tries to answer four questions: Where are we now? How will we get there? Where are we going? Did we make it? In spite of past failures and, for some, even gag reflexes that mere thoughts of strategic planning conjure up, the underlying objectives of planning remain as important today as ever. And it remains even more critical to align all the elements of the agency to achieve long-term results. The question becomes “How can we plan

strategically so that the process is not so long, so tedious, or so meaningless to most of the people in our agency?”

Putting the “S” really into planning would perhaps avoid the plan becoming the end goal. Since a plan alone is simply the wrong focus, we may need to redefine and systemically embrace a model that we can use minute by minute to guide us in decision-making and help us become more responsive, quicker, and with an end focus undeterred by low priority distractions.

A CRITICAL LOOK AT STRATEGIC PLANNING

A traditional holdover from the past has been holding the ubiquitous strategic planning offsite meeting. It features the agency Director and management team evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (the classic SWOT analysis) to set the agency’s future direction and map out specific action plans to achieve the desired results. They then go back and communicate the plans to the rest of the agency with “marching orders” as to what the various functional departments will each carry out. In a more static world, this approach worked, but in our dynamically changing world, one in which our environment is now

(Continued on back page)



2010-2011 NATIONAL CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Management Assistance Team is proud to introduce this years NCLI Fellows.

Damon Abernethy, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Jonathan Ambrose, Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources

Izize Berzins, John G. Shedd Aquarium

Kyle Blasch, U.S. Geological Survey

Doyle Brown, Missouri Dept. of Conservation

Jordan Burroughs, Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources

Jodi Bush, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Thomas Champeau, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Torrey Christophersen, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Janet Cushing, US Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources

Melissa Drake, Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources

Troy Ettel, New Jersey Audubon Society

Craig Fleener, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game

Mark Gaiowski, U.S. Geological Survey

Mark Gamblin, Idaho Fish and Game

Julie Graziano, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

Patrick Gunderson, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Scott Hale, Ohio Division of Wildlife

Mike Hardin, Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Matthew Holland, Pheasants Forever

Brandon Houck, National Wild Turkey Federation

Thomas Hughes, National Wild Turkey Federation

Paul Kazyak, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

Brian Kelly, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mallory Martin, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

Elroy Masters, Bureau of Land Management

Jessica McCawley, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Ben Mohr, Pebble Limited Partnership

Robert Posey, Arizona Game and Fish Dept.

Steve Prokop, National Park Service

Christopher Racey, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

Alexandra Sandoval, New Mexico Game and Fish

Sharon Schafer, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Scott Talbott, Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.

Craig Wiedmeier, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game

Brian Wisner, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission



WE'VE MOVED: The MAT Team is now located at the West Pond Offices formally the Division of Education Outreach at the National Conservation Training Center.

A NEW FACE AT MAT

Colby Smith joined the Management Assistance Team in 2009 as the Print Production and Graphic Specialist. She is responsible for enhancing the understanding and visual communication of instructional and promotional materials created by the MAT team. She earned her B.F.A. concentrating in Graphic Design from James Madison University and considers the MAT team a great foundation for her career as a designer.

Growing up in Winchester, Virginia, Colby excelled in school and enjoyed reading, playing the piano, and spending time with family and friends. Upon entering college she discovered her passion for the arts and developed many unique skills including ceramics, weaving, screenprinting, and bookmaking. She reports having an unusually dorky love of museums, art exhibits, and libraries.

MAT NEW GRANT

At the September Annual AFWA Meeting MAT received approval from the Directors for two years of Multi-state Conservation Grant funding beginning January 2011. MAT's funding includes all of its organization and human resource development products and services for all fifty state fish and wildlife agencies as well as staffing the National Conservation Leadership Institute. MAT's need for conservation grant funds is less because approximately one-third of its funding comes from other sources. To further reduce MAT's need for MSCG funding the new grant has the following changes to MAT's business model:

- **An increase in delivery methods by adding webinars (at no expense to the states for training and other types of "meeting")**
- **MAT will no longer provide effective governance training for commissioners**
- **Students will pay an instructor fee for online courses (to cover contracted facilitators)**
- **States will pay for travel and per diem expenses when MAT comes to their state**
- **Agency or programmatic effectiveness reviews will cost from \$10-30,000 depending on the size and complexity of the project**

WEBINARS ADD TO THE MAT TEAM OFFERINGS

The MAT team is pleased to announce a new, additional delivery platform—webinars! Webinars allow for the flexibility and accessibility of online learning with the added elements of synchronous learning, interactivity, and smaller, digestible ‘chunks’ of content. The Management Assistant Team is committed to offering multiple webinars throughout the year, so check our website regularly for new offerings. Webinar sessions range from a single one hour webinar event to webinar courses which encompasses several webinar events taken sequentially.

It is our hope that this additional delivery model will provide opportunities for those in our state fish and wildlife agencies to take advantage in a greater way the training opportunities provided by MAT. With less of a time commitment required, webinars may meet busy fish and wildlife professionals’ needs in a big way. Let us know if there is a general leadership topic you believe would make a good webinar topic.

We have just launched our first webinar as a course, a live and interactive webinar series in three two-hour modules for Creative and Critical Thinking 2nd Edition—enrollment for both the fall and winter terms filled in less than 5 days! But not to worry, this high-demand offering will be available again in the spring. You can register beginning January 31–March 8, 2011.

All that is needed to participate in these webinar events are a computer, internet connection and a phone. We look forward to meeting you online in the future.



NEWLY DEVELOPED COURSES FOR 2011

ONLINE COURSES: Change?! and Applied Adaptive Leadership and Extraordinary Leadership

WEBINARS: Leadership in the Movies and Storytelling

ONLINE COURSES TAILORED FOR THE CONSERVATION PROFESSIONAL



The Management Assistance Team’s Conservation Learning Campus is one solution to fish and wildlife personnel’s need for training, continuing professional development, and learning resources. The courses were designed specifically for fish and wildlife professionals.

Courses Currently Being Offered:

- Going from Good to Great
- Power
- Visionary Leadership
- The Adaptive Leader
- Secrets of Agency Assessment and Development
- Leader as Supervisor

Online courses run for four to six weeks, depending on the course.

Spring 2011 Term Schedule:

Jan. 31 – March 18, 2011 – Registration
April 4, 2011 – Online Tutorial Begins
April 11, 2011 – Course Begins

Summer 2011 Term Schedule:

May 2 – June 17, 2011 – Registration
July 4, 2011 – Online Tutorial Begins
July 11, 2011 – Course Begins

Visit www.matteam.org for a schedule of upcoming classes, important dates, registration forms, and other important information.

Agencies Rethinking the “S” word...*(continued from front)*

changing at a rate faster than the planning horizon, strategic planning will need to be done differently.

A proposed change might be that the SWOT analysis no longer lead but follow sufficient discussion about who will make what decisions, when and how, that allows individuals to quickly respond to changing situations in a manner consistent with the agency’s strategic imperatives.

Next, the information flow, e.g., is the right information getting to the right people, in the right time and the right way for them to make the right decisions? Without these two elements clearly figured out, the rest of the agency will never be able to execute without continuous involvement from the Director who really needs to be attending to other things.

We might also want to incorporate more of a whole agency infusion approach into the strategic planning process, i.e., instead of only communicating the “what and the how” of the plan, communication moves beyond to infusing the “where and the why” into the agency’s work culture.

Strategic planning is not rocket science and we don’t need to get bogged down in semantics to understand it. But to help us redesign our strategic planning process and increase our agency relevancy and effectiveness we may want to rethink our model, just a bit.

Stay tuned for an upcoming White Paper from the MAT Team on new ways to think about strategic planning for agency transformation.



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HELPING STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE