

Strategic Water Planning: The Oklahoma Approach

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*Presented at the University of Arizona
Tucson, January 19, 2010*

Statutory Mandate

- ◉ Planning required by Oklahoma statute
 - > Revision required every 10 years; 2nd revision now
- ◉ Responsible agency
 - > Oklahoma Water Resources Board (52 years old)
 - > OWRB is 1 of 10 State water agencies
 - Dept of Environmental Quality, Dept of Agriculture, Food & Forestry, Dept of Wildlife Conservation, Dept of Tourism & Recreation, Scenic Rivers Comm, Conservation Comm, Corporation Comm, Dept of Transportation, Dept of Mines
- ◉ Funding
 - > \$6.5 million from gross production tax on oil & gas
- ◉ Schedule
 - > Started in January 2007; plan due by July 1, 2011

Background on Current Revision

- Previous two plans were primarily water resource inventories and goal statements
- Several goals were not met; means were not devised or implemented
- OWRRI approached OWRB in 2006 on a more ambitious approach (means & ends)
- We submitted a proposal that included a robust public participation process over 4.5 years, which was approved that fall

Plan Purpose

- OCWP should be a **strategic plan** aimed at **sustainable management** of the State's **water resources** for the benefit of **all Oklahomans**
 - > **Strategic plan** = guidance for tactical decisions made later
 - > **Sustainable management** = stewardship of water resources over the long term
 - > **Water resources** = supplies, infrastructure, institutions
 - > **All Oklahomans** = sectorally, spatially, temporally

Planning Vision

- ◉ Sustainable Water Supply:

"The development of a strategic water resource management plan that ensures that adequate supplies of sufficiently clean water are available wherever and whenever needed over the next 50 years."

- ◉ Our byline:

*"Water for all Oklahoma.
Water for all Oklahomans."*

Guiding Principles

A Good Plan & The Right Plan

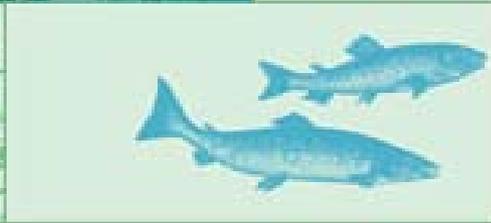
- A “good” plan is:
 - > a plan that works on paper...
...which is a function of good science
 - > Requires competent expertise and data
- The “right” plan is:
 - > a plan that is supported by the public...
...which is a function of good process
 - > Requires “appropriate” public participation

Linking Process to Product

- ◎ A plan must be well-informed
 - > Address the right issues, in the right way, using the right information
- ◎ A plan must be well-supported
 - > Gain public acceptance through voluntary and informed consent
 - > Consent to process improves consent to outcome

Context Matters

- ◉ Planning process that should be used depends on the sociopolitical context of water resource management
- ◉ Most salient feature of context is trust
 - > Trust of the government by the public
 - > Trust of the public by the public, which is related to the degree of controversy that exists over water resource management



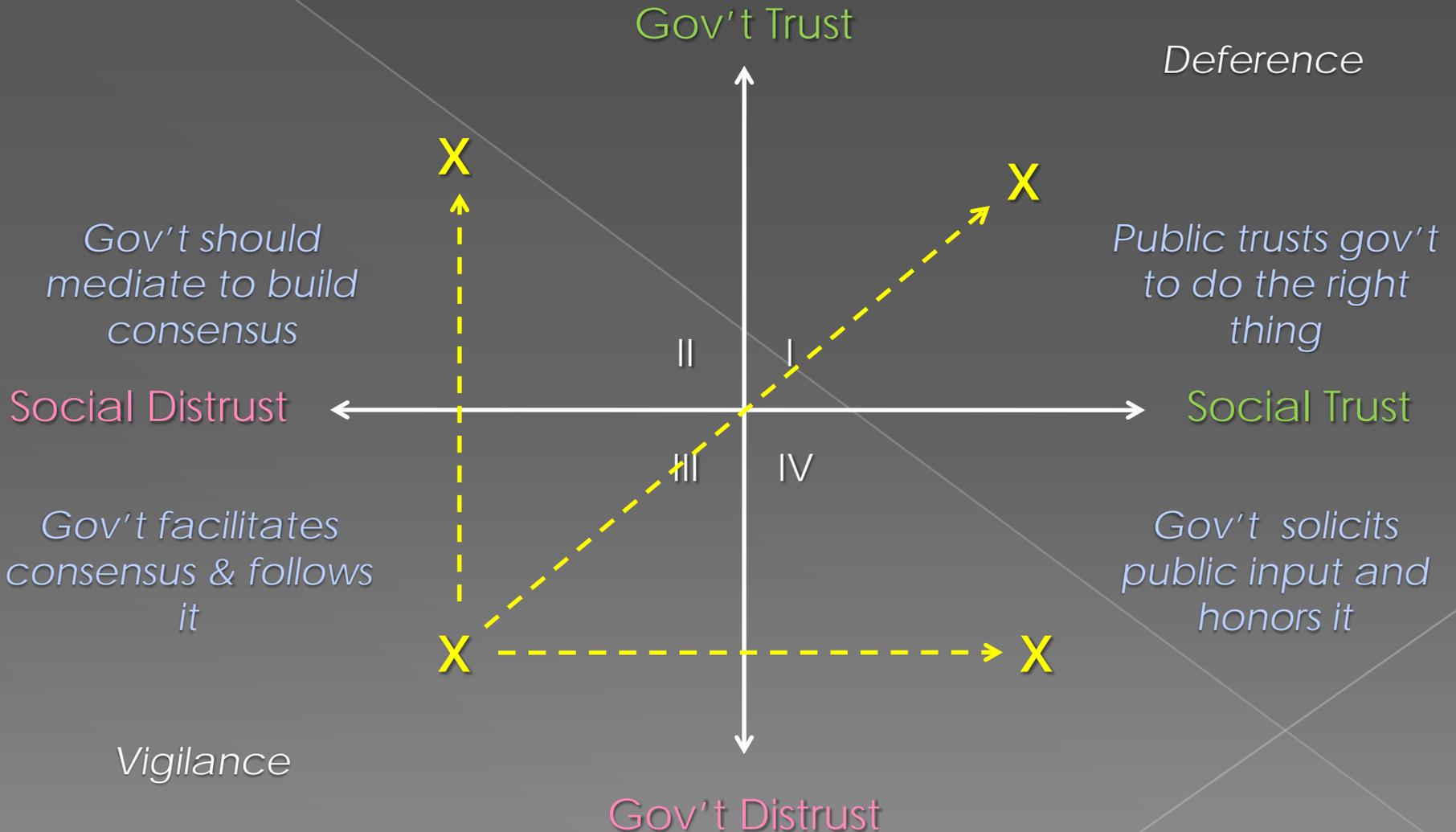
Swimming Upstream

**Collaborative Approaches to
Watershed Management**



edited by Paul A. Sabatier, Will Focht, Mark Lubell,
Zev Trachtenberg, Arnold Vedlitz, and Marty Matlock

Trust Affects Process



The Oklahoma Water Context

- ◉ Government trust = moderate to low
 - > Both generally, and of the Water Board specifically
- ◉ Social trust = low (high controversy)
- ◉ Trust judgments in OK are influenced by:
 - > Anti-government ideology (esp. fed & state)
 - > Parochialism, Traditionalism, Individualism...which makes change difficult, but not impossible

Oklahoma Controversies

- Controversies include:
 - > Water (property) rights
 - > Tribal water rights
 - > Water sales and transfers
 - > Ag uses (esp. irrigation) vs recreational uses
 - > District (esp. rural water) consolidation
 - > Nutrients > salinity > heavy metals

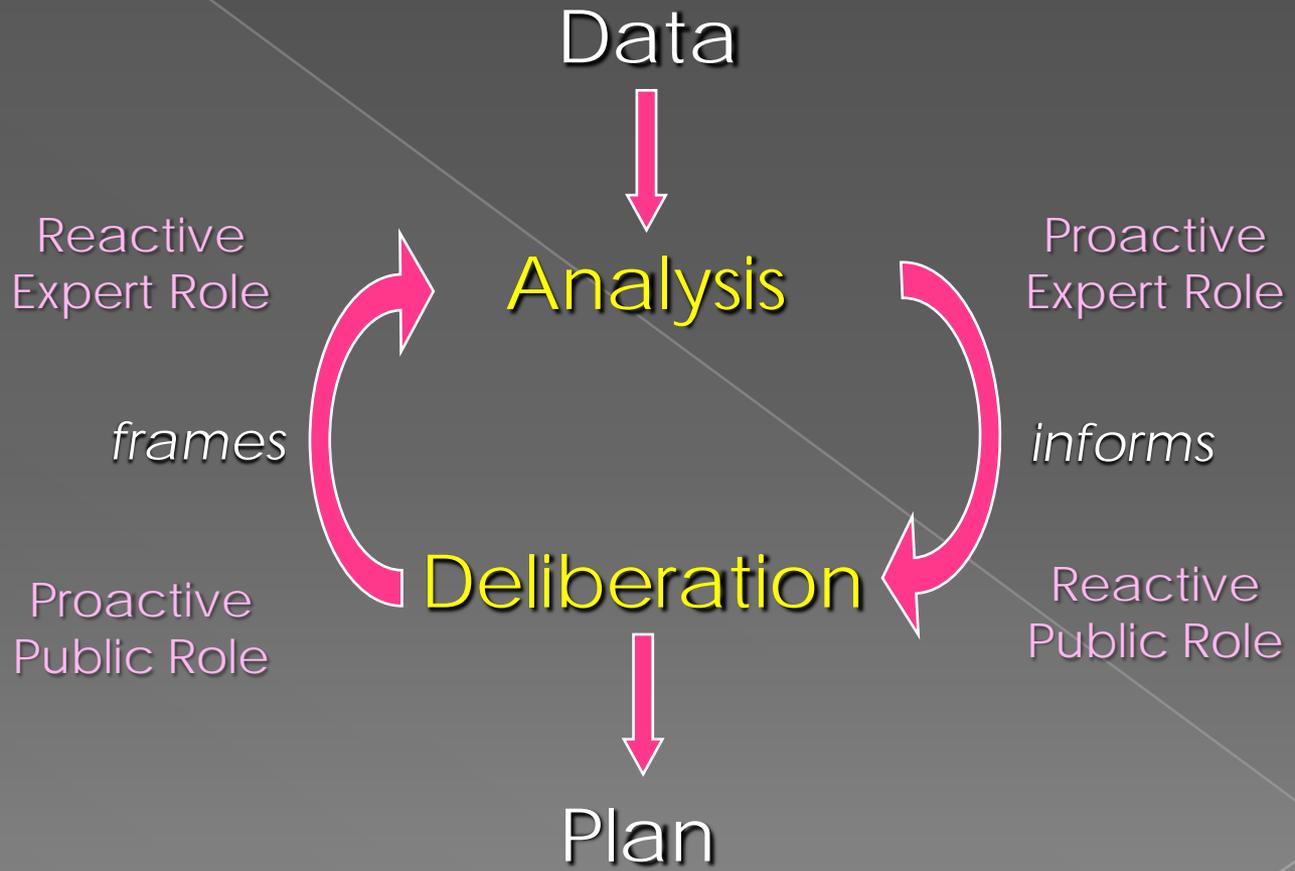
Underlying conflicts concern:

- > Control, who benefits and who pays (and how much), quality of life and traditions, liberty, safety, and reliability

Coupling Good and Right

- ◉ **Challenge:** How to couple competent scientific analysis with appropriate public deliberation in low trust contexts?
- ◉ **Solution:** Coupling should be recursive
 - > Analysis to inform planning
 - “Getting the science right” to get a good plan
 - > Deliberation to frame analysis
 - “Getting the right science” to get the right plan

A&D Framework



Our Approach

Three Planning Legs

- ◉ Applied Research
 - › OWRRI/OWRB funding partnership (\$750K)
- ◉ Data Collection and Technical Analysis
 - › Consultant lead, in cooperation with USACE
 - › Water supply and demand assessment and forecasting
 - › Infrastructure assessment
- ◉ Public Participation and Education
 - › OWRRI lead (\$1 million)

Research Priorities

- ◉ Dedicated to maximizing benefits to plan
- ◉ Examples:
 - > New or coupled flow and transport models
 - > Remote sensing of water use
 - > Vulnerability and risk assessments
 - > Economic analyses of water management alternatives
 - > Database development
- ◉ OWRB matches OWRRI funding 1:1

Research Symposium

- OWRRI sponsored, but now coupled with Governor's Water Conference
 - > 1.5 days of technical presentations
 - > 0.5 day of planning updates
 - > 1.0 day of policy updates
- Held every October in OKC
- Attended by ~600, including all those in our public participation process

WATER for LIFE

28th Annual Governor's Water Conference &
5th Annual OWRRI Water Research Symposium

SAVE THE DATE

October 23-25, 2007

Cox Convention Center
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



Hosted by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board
and Oklahoma Water Resources Research Institute

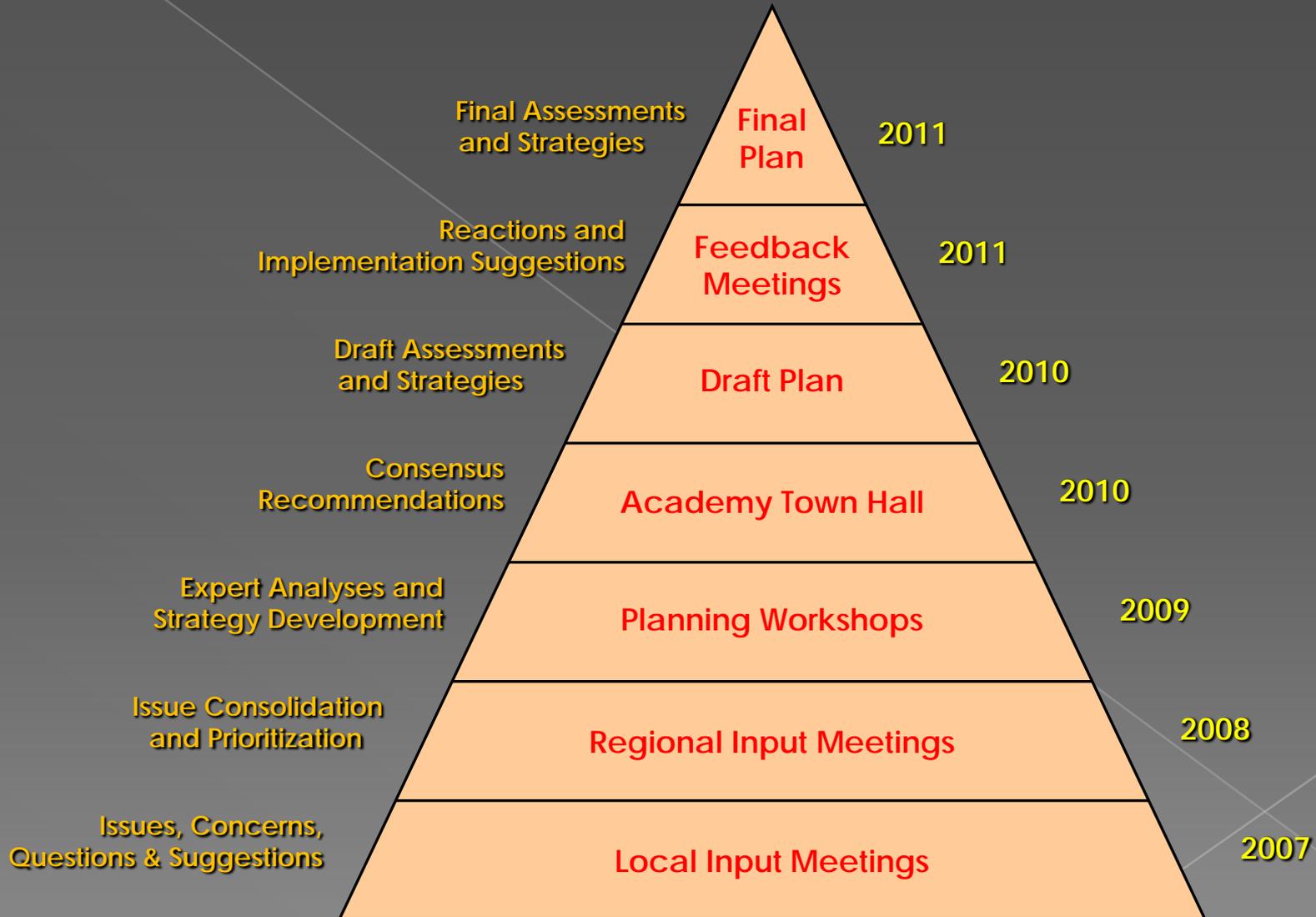


Public Participation Process

○ Why involve the public?

- To provide information about water resources and their management in Oklahoma
- To identify the issues, concerns, questions, and suggestions that are important to the people of Oklahoma
- To engage citizens in deliberations about the contents of the water plan
- To increase public support of water plan provisions

Participation Pyramid



Keys to Success

Keys to Success - Partners

- ◉ Get fully-informed buy-in with policy organizations from the very beginning
- ◉ Foster partnerships with as many user groups as possible, as early as possible, and keep in constant communication
- ◉ Encourage cooperation through partner participation on advisory boards and panels (e.g., planning and research)

Keys to Success - Stakeholders

- ◉ Expand local views outward to entire state (and beyond) thru education & dialogue
- ◉ Encourage long-term vision (50 years) with intermediate reviews/revisions (5-10 years)
- ◉ Advertise all meetings vigorously; take full advantage of existing networks
- ◉ Be proactive with the public: silence does not necessarily mean acceptance

Keys to Success - Experts

- Experts must be willing to listen and respond to stakeholders' questions and analytic requests (framing)
- Experts must be empathetic
- Technical analyses must be accurate, honest, prompt – & most of all – responsive
- Technical reports for public use must be succinct, clear and parsimonious about findings, and forthright – no obfuscation

Keys to Success - Resources

- Allow sufficient time for success: analysis, education, deliberation, and trust-building
- Provide sufficient resources not only for analyses but also for participation (meetings, materials, travel, labor, communications)
- Include resource topics (about planning & plan implementation) in deliberations

Lessons Learned

Opportunities for Success

- **Be holistic:** think big – spatially & temporally
- **Be respectful:** people want to be listened to and taken seriously; so build efficacy
- **Be patient:** planning necessarily takes time and resources
- **Be flexible:** surprises will certainly arise so it is best not to rely too much on predictions of how the public will react
- **Be prepared:** good analyses, network with partners, build trust, robust communication, be familiar with results of public meetings

Obstacles to Success

- ◉ Interest group opposition: **Involve them**
- ◉ Legislature intervention: **Brief leaders**
- ◉ Other-government obstruction:
Assure gov't-to-gov't negotiations not obviated
- ◉ Fear: **Build trust through involvement**
- ◉ Capture: **Maintain independence**
- ◉ Political legitimacy attacks: **Gain support**
- ◉ Technical legitimacy attacks: **Be responsive**

Hope Endures...

- ◉ Though we remain hopeful that all our goals will be realized...
 - > Good plan, right plan, increased trust, and increased efficacy
- ◉ ...much more work remains to be done, especially with government to government negotiations
 - > 39 tribes, neighboring states, federal agencies, intra-state agencies, local governments

Our Partners

- Oklahoma Water Resources Board
- Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
- Oklahoma Assoc of Regional Councils of Government
- Oklahoma Municipal League
- Oklahoma Rural Water Association
- Water Research Advisory Board
- Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts
- Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
- Oklahoma Secretary of Environment
- The many public and private organizations who helped us advertise meetings and encourage participation

Participation Website

● Statistics

- Average = 320 hits/month
- Average visit = 6 minutes, 3 pages
- >1600 subscribers to email list

Water Research Institute

Communication Portal for the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan

OCWP

For more information, visit:
<http://okwaterplan.info>

Or e-mail:
waterplan@okstate.edu

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