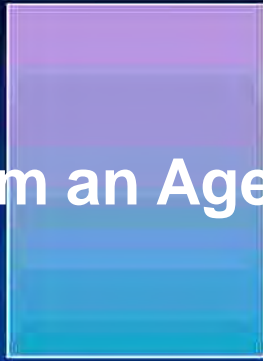


A photograph of a waterfall cascading down a rocky cliff, with the water appearing white and frothy. The background is a deep blue gradient. The text is overlaid on the image in white.

# Oregon's Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Planning to make an impact

**From an Agency**



**To a Division**



**A long and winding road...**

**To an Advisory Board**



**What now?**



# Accomplishments

The SWCC provided a vital connection between the Department and the individual districts and strongly influenced:

- n Distribution formula for district funding
- n Higher profile role for districts in Oregon Plan
- n Successful CREP program implementation
- n Increased district accountability in ODA grant processes
- n Increased technical support through district operations reviews
- n Encouraged local tax measures (11 SWCDs)
- n Funding and support for capacity building opportunities:
  - New Director training
  - Conservation Easement Training
  - Public Contracting Training
  - Human Resource Management Training
  - Statewide district employee training retreat
- n Clarification of legislation re: the role of districts and ODA

# Why now?

- n New commission members
- n Completion of many of the long term projects
- n Interest in leadership development as a statewide capacity building project
- n Program manager recruitment
- n What is the future of the SWCD program and how does the SWCC impact it?

# Nobody was excited about strategic planning.....

- n “It takes months and we don’t have time.”
- n “We don’t need another book on the shelf.”
- n Brainstorming at May meeting
  - n Most important role for commission?
  - n What do districts expect?
  - n What is the best use of my time as a commissioner?

# Maybe we can't do this alone

- n Decision to ask for help
  - n To allow staff to step back and just participate
  - n To reduce the appearance of agency control of the process
  - n To include an invitation to all districts, partners and advisors
- n Ray to the rescue



# What was different about the process we used?

- n Sensing interviews
  - n Gives the facilitator good background
  - n Allows interviewee to comment “in private”
  - n Lets the facilitator introduce the tough issues
  - n Top 3 goals? What if you can only afford one?
  - n 3 most important services?
  - n Organizational improvements?

# What was different about the process we used?

- n The work session
  - n Did NOT open with interview info
  - n The critical piece is asking the right questions
  - n Identify top three goals (from scratch again)
  - n The Goals Grid
    - n What are you trying to achieve?
    - n What are you trying to preserve?
    - n What are you trying to avoid
    - n What are you trying to eliminate
  - n The Criteria for selecting priorities



# Our criteria

- n Does it make districts stronger?
- n Does it have a statewide impact?
- n Can it be tailored to meet the needs of individual districts?
- n Do we have the money and resources to do it?

# Why was it important to work through this process

- n Merged the thinking of commissioners
- n Re-affirmed what they said in the interviews
- n Identified shared values and goals
- n Allowed them to speak with one voice on many issues
- n Gave them a way to evaluate ideas and requests
- n Clarified their values and goals for partners
- n Timing was perfect for input on hiring process

# Where are we today?

- n Participating in hiring process
- n Planning a follow up session to ensure implementation
- n Determined to find a meeting process to re-enforce the planning process
- n More determined than ever to have an impact on behalf of districts
- n More comfortable as statewide leaders

*“The future ain’t what it used to be.”*

*“You gotta be careful if you don’t know  
where you are going, otherwise you  
may not get there.”*

*Yogi Berra*