

**REVIEW OF USDA FOREST SERVICE
COMMUNITY-BASED WATERSHED
RESTORATION PARTNERSHIPS**

APPENDIX N

Reviews of Watershed Projects

**Bob Doppelt and Craig Shinn, Portland State University
DeWitt John, Bowdoin College
For the United States Forest Service**

**Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
P.O. Box 751
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon, 97207
September 2002**

WHITE RIVER PARTNERSHIP **Completed Spring 2002**

The White River is the longest un-dammed tributary of the Connecticut River. The system is a 454,000-acre watershed that encompasses 21 towns in central Vermont. Only ten percent of the watershed is National Forest land while the remainder is comprised of 84 percent private and 5 percent municipal and state lands. The river is a part of the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, a Special Focus Area of the Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and a major tributary to an American Heritage River: the Connecticut River.

The White River Partnership (WRP) was formed prior to the USFS Large-scale Watershed Restoration Project. This program was developed to be a self-governing, non-profit organization. In 1996, staff from the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) started looking for assistance to complete river and fishery projects to restore the river for Atlantic salmon. The GMNF had been running into obstacles created by forest ownership patterns and boundaries. As a result, the District Ranger and fisheries biologists helped organize public forums in conjunction with members of the George D. Aikens Resource Conservation and Development Council to identify issues and concerns about the watershed and to build a coalition to address them. This resulted in the formation of the WRP in 1996, which is led locally and consists of a community-driven group of citizens, conservation groups and federal and state agencies.

The public forum, consisting of over 150 people, identified several major issues in the watershed ranging from concerns about river instability due to decades-old mining, loss of riparian forests, loss of land due to eroded river banks, and floods. The top seven concerns were, water quality, riparian habitat, stream-bank erosion, public awareness of problems, public access to the river, point source and non-point source pollution, and maintaining a working landscape (agriculture and forest).

Resolving these issues forms the vision and goals for the WRP. Through formation of this community-driven group, the GMNF and partners were able to free-up money to hire a part-time coordinator for the WRP. This coordinator took on the role of organizing the public forums and continued formation of the WRP while the GMNF was able to step back and transform their role to that of technical advisor. Two part-time coordinators were hired before the full-time coordinator was hired.

The call for proposals from the Chief's office for Large-scale Watershed Restoration Programs appealed to the GMNF because they already had a working watershed restoration program that met the goals and vision of the national program. After the proposal was approved by the Chief's office, a full-time coordinator position was funded and an office space was established for the WRP in the GMNF office. At that point, the existing part-time coordinator stepped down and was replaced by a new full-time coordinator. Once funding and a full-time coordinator were established, the WRP took off. The push to complete projects in the watershed through the WRP was also fueled in

part by major floods in 1998. The GMNF drew even further back from a supervisory role and became more of a partner by providing money and technical expertise.

The WRP consists primarily of citizens who are given funding and support from the USFS and are left alone in order to run their own show. The citizens, along with the WRP coordinator, have formed five stream teams. Each stream team has a point person who reports back to the coordinator. The role of these teams is to complete public outreach to identify concerns and problems in the watershed and to prioritize projects identified during this analysis. Each stream team has, or will, conduct physical assessments and stream bank analyses. Once the stream team completes these assessments, they prioritize the projects, and submit their list to the Stream Corridor Advisory Team (SCAT), which prioritizes all of the projects from each team. This refined list goes to the USFS watershed coordinator for implementation. The WRP views this USFS person as being on loan to the WRP to conduct project design and implementation.

Once a stream team has identified a project, they request final authorization from GMNF staff, who reviews the proposals to ensure they are the appropriate treatments. No project has been turned down.

This Approach has Achieved Several Successes Including:

- The national designation gave the WRP the ability to leverage \$214,000 from partners.
- People said the WRP meetings were fun and everyone was open to sharing ideas and information.
- The WRP is led by grass-roots citizens and, as a result, feels empowered to take responsibility for the project, freeing up time for GMNF staff to focus on other projects.
- The partners have agreed upon a common goal that has allowed the partners to work on their own, knowing they are all aiming at the same goals.
- Hiring of the full-time coordinator has brought structure to the WRP and has helped the WRP go to the next level. This success is also attributed to the coordinator being well liked.
- The public's perception of the USFS has changed because of the WRP. The perception now is the USFS is interested in the entire watershed and in hearing the communities' concerns.
- One of the WRP's main goals is to implement outreach and education projects. This has resulted in changing the public's view of the river.

- Public knowledge about the WRP is starting to snowball due to community outreach and getting projects on the ground.
- The WRP provides a forum in which all agencies come together and develop better communications. Without the WRP, most said this would not have happened.
- In sum, the WRP has gained broad support from several groups around the State including the agricultural community, local towns and counties, and federal agencies.

Despite These Successes, the WRP Faces a Number of Obstacles:

- Some people feel unclear about their role and feel left out of the group and decision making process. Several groups do not know how they fit into the process.
- The way funds have been allocated has created some bad feelings between Vermont State Forestry and the WRP.
- Several people said by not having an initial assessment completed of the river, project implementation has slowed because of the lack of technical information.
- The WRP has not yet established a formal programmatic strategy for choosing projects instead the process is opportunistic.
- Following on the previous point, people are concerned approved projects are not ecologically based and that the treatments are just Band Aids.
- The addition of money to the WRP from the large-scale demonstration project allows more projects to be completed, but there is not enough manpower to complete them.
- A barrier to innovation is that the budget process is confining and comes with its own targets for what should be completed.
- There are different views of success between USFS staff and non-USFS staff. Some USFS employees feel the WRP is behind while the non-USFS people see great success.
- The WRP is still struggling with people's traditional views of what should be done in the river. For example, a common thought is gravel mining in the river is beneficial.
- Funding from the large-scale watershed project helped jumpstart the program but, if funding were cut now, the WRP would survive, but seriously flounder.

Our Analysis of the Strengths of the WRP To Date Suggest:

- A key success in the watershed is its civic capacity--the local groups and citizens--that existed prior to the project.
- The lack of a credible strategy and prioritization process could eventually harm the WRP.
- The program lacks a formal governance structure and system between the WRP and partners.
- Without funding from the USFS, progress made by the WRP will take a serious setback.

To Address the Limitations We Recommend:

- The GMNF continue to support the WRP's civic capacity and the local groups involved in it.
- Formalizing and adopting a clear governance structure and system for the WRP and partners. A few suggestions are provided.
- Streamlining the system to cut down operating costs and to promote innovation.
- The WRP develop future funding strategies to help get on the right track.
- To continue to support the full-time coordinator because this person helps the WRP gain momentum, structure, and success.
- The GMNF and citizens develop common output- and outcome-based performance measures so all parties use the same language when developing progress. Currently, the terminology measuring success is different between the USFS and the WRP.

Successes

- **The National Designation Gave the WRP the Ability to Leverage Funds.**

Being designated a national watershed demonstration project has focused the attention of people and increased the WRP's ability to get funds and support. The money has allowed the WRP to think big and attract other groups that have money to contribute.

Approximately \$214,000 in additional funds and in-kind contributions was made to the partnership in FY 2001.

- **The Meetings Are Fun and a Forum for Information Sharing**

Everyone we spoke with that attends the WRP meetings said they are fun and a great place for information sharing. The meetings are productive because their guiding principle is to have fun. No one dominates the meetings, and there is an open atmosphere allowing people to feel comfortable voicing their opinions and ideas.

- **Grass-Roots Citizens Have Taken Responsibility for the WRP, Allowing the GMNF to Focus on Other Projects.**

The WRP was formed prior to its national watershed demonstration designation when the GMNF ran into obstacles working across boundaries. This prompted the GMNF to help create a community-led watershed group. The strategy was to hand the project over to local citizens and have them communicate with the community by speaking the same language. This was seen as a way to gain more support and buy-in for the project. Local citizen members of the WRP have said they are thrilled to do this work and have taken responsibility by forming five stream teams that focus on problems within certain reaches of the White River. Because the community has taken over and started to address their concerns about the river, the GMNF has been able to pull back from a leadership role and play a technical advisory role. This allows the USFS to work across boundaries and accomplish some of their goals without dedicating all of their staff time to the project. Several people thought that had the GMNF taken a more dominant and controlling role, there would be a different feel and a different local reaction to the project. Not stepping into the program with a heavy hand and leaving the WRP alone has not only helped the GMNF focus on other pressing issues, but has also empowered people, giving them a sense of ownership of the river. Most people said it is not a surprise the community has run with the project because Vermont has a long tradition of community involvement.

- **A Common Vision and Goal Has Been Agreed Upon, Which Allows Different Partners to Work Independently**

The community, along with many federal and state government agencies, has been working together to develop a common vision and set of goals for the watershed. One person stated the WRP group reflects the people of New England, and they have set aside what they typically squabble over to look at one goal, or one focus for the watershed. The vision and goals were decided on in a public forum prior to the designation as a national

watershed. This helped everyone get on the same page, allowed people to work independently while keeping the vision and mission as their goals. Getting community members on the same page has allowed the USFS to pull back and play more of a technical advisory role. The GMNF has not become involved in how the WRP coordinator and the stream teams manage the watershed. This has allowed citizens in the WRP to take control of the project without feeling confined or lacking in technical expertise.

- **The Full-Time Coordinator is Well-Liked, Has Brought Structure to the WRP, and has Helped it Blossom.**

Most of the people we spoke with said a major turning point in the success of the WRP was the hiring of a full-time coordinator. A part-time coordinator was hired before the WRP became a national designation, but this person had many other commitments, and could not devote too much time to the WRP. Once the WRP became a national watershed demonstration project, the GMNF felt it important to hire a full-time coordinator who could devote all her time to this project. Once this occurred, the WRP took off and gained structure, formalizing the partnership. Members of the WRP have high respect for the coordinator and recognize that she effectively reaches out to various groups of people, listens well, and provides good information. Everyone we spoke with was astonished by her ability to pull the WRP together and maintain structure with so many different players.

- **The Community's Perception of the USFS Has Improved Because of the WRP**

At first, the USFS was timid about going beyond their federal lands to complete projects, but through the WRP they have gained access to the public and are reaching beyond their boundaries to work on private property. The public is starting to see this change and is asking what the USFS can do for them. These steps are leading to changes in perception, changing mistrust to trust. Because the USFS has made a conscious effort not to control the WRP, they are viewed more as technical advisors. This is helping the USFS gain support from landowners for the project and has generated good public relations.

- **Due to Several Outreach and Educational Projects, the Public's Views of the River Are Changing**

Everyone we spoke with said in order to gain support and to change the public's view of the river, outreach and education must be a top priority. As a result, the WRP has hired an outreach coordinator to plan, organize, and publicize events, and to provide education about the watershed. The strategy is to involve the landowners at all levels of the restoration work, from collecting data on the river to implementing restoration treatments. For example, three locally-led watershed assessments and water quality monitoring programs have been completed, 8,300 feet of riparian buffers have been planted, 5,100 feet of stream channel has been restored, and 6,882 hours of volunteer time has been donated to complete projects and conduct outreach and education within the watershed. These activities have resulted in widespread buy-in to the project from

landowners and a paradigm shift in attitudes about the river. For example, private landowners are starting to understand impacts to the river upstream directly impact conditions downstream. They are looking at the watershed in a more holistic way.

- **Public Knowledge About the WRP Is Starting to Grow**

Landowners are losing land along the river and beginning to realize how important it is to restore stream banks. State and Federal government agencies have observed the WRP successfully reaching out to these people by publishing informational documents and organizing community events. For example, along one segment of the stream, people are starting to see and hear from their neighbors about steps being taken to stop the loss of stream banks due to erosion. People see their neighbors working to restore stream banks and are starting to contact the WRP to ask what can be done on their land.

- **WRP Provided a Forum in Which All Agencies Developed Better Communications**

All of the government agency staff we spoke with said enhanced working relationships, and even friendships, have resulted among the public agencies involved with the WRP. The agencies are also forging relationships with local citizens, which is not an easy task. For the most part, they are succeeding because they are receptive to new ideas and have created a forum to focus on community needs. By banding together to assist the public, the agencies have gained better working relationships and communicate more effectively. Non-USFS people said the GMNF has really shined through this project because staff are patient, listen well, have respect for the balance, and are very good partners with local communities. One local citizen felt the best of the best agency staff were assigned to the WRP.

- **In Sum, the WRP Has Gained Broad Support and People Want the Program to Continue**

Every private and public partner we spoke with voiced strong support for the project and said it should continue. Non-USFS and local citizens have said GMNF staff has gone out of the way to support the project. USFS staff praises the USFS Regional Office for their enthusiasm and willingness to assist in the WRP. Local support is also high because private landowners involved in the WRP have been hosting landowner workshops and have been passing the project goals on to their neighbors and friends in the community. The technical guidance provided by the GMNF helped to get projects on the ground and volunteers have been organized to complete the projects. For example, over 200 volunteers contributed 575 hours to plant 2,000 trees in the watershed, six communities have voted at town meetings to financially support the WRP, and the partnership contains over 120 dues-paying citizens and members from 14 local, state, and federal agencies. People are excited about what has been accomplished and want the project to continue.

Limitations/Obstacles

- **Some People Feel Left Out of the Group and Do Not Know How They Fit In**

A number of people we spoke with, including USFS staff, were concerned that the role of the partners in the watershed has not been defined. This has led to frustrations and lack of support for the project from some groups. Some people said they helped get the WRP up and running and now that the WRP is moving forward, they are not sure what their role is and how they fit in. No one has defined this for them. One person even said it was hard to tell if they were still partners.

- **The Way Funds Have Been Allocated has Created Some Bad Feelings Between the State and the WRP**

Several people in the GMNF and in the Vermont State Department of Forestry expressed concerns over the allocation of funds for the WRP. State Forestry feels they are being left out of the loop because they see money coming through the USFS Private and State Forestry office directly to the WRP. Usually, that type of money goes through his office and must get approval from the State Forester before being spent. In this case, the State Forester found out that USFS State and Private Forestry received a substantial amount of money for the WRP, but he was not asked to review or approve of the funds before allocation to the WRP. This has caused resentment because the State Forester is concerned these funds are coming from his own state programs and being concentrated on one watershed, which he does not support. State Forestry has a contact person at USFS State and Private Forestry, but is reluctant to complain because he does not know him well. This issue has impacted the relationship between State Forestry and the WRP. The USFS State and Private Forestry has a different view of this issue. They believe that the State Forester does not need to approve the money because the money goes to the George D. Aikens RC&D Council and does not need approval from the state.

Stakeholders in the WRP recognized that this was a touchy issue and tried to patch things up by describing the transfer of money and by trying to get State Forestry more involved in decision-making. As a result, they have worked together to create a GIS database and maps of the watershed that benefits both organizations. Most people feel that the hard feelings are behind them, and the State is very involved now and, in fact, has begun a basin plan and is using the WRP as their model. According to several people involved in the WRP, this has helped the State engage in the partnership. However, we still heard resentment and confusion over the transfer of funds from State Forestry, which indicates a continuing need for communication.

- **The Lack of a Watershed Assessment has Slowed Project Implementation**

Most everyone we spoke with said the lack of an environmental assessment was a major initial roadblock to getting projects on the ground. Scientific information was not available to make good, scientific judgments on what projects should be completed. Some of the projects in the watershed commenced without this assessment to keep the

public enthusiasm going. However, this also slowed the process because the GMNF was unsure about what was going on in the watershed. They didn't have a clear view of the priorities. Stakeholders in the WRP realized this problem and are now taking the time and using the money to complete assessments in the watershed. Members of the stream teams are conducting these assessments with the help of environmental consultants and GMNF staff.

- **No Formal Strategy Has Been Developed, and Projects Are Chosen on an Opportunistic Rather Than a Programmatic Basis**

Several people we interviewed expressed concern over how the projects were being chosen and that no strategy is in place to determine how and when projects should be completed. However, GMNF staff said their strategy is to keep building momentum to maintain interest. Also, different funds are available to fund all of the projects. Because they have the money, they feel that if the projects were not funded, they would lose people's interest in the watershed. On the other hand, a few government employees believe this approach lacks strategic focus and that there is a bit of randomness to getting projects on the ground.

Since the completion of this assessment, the WRP has formalized a group called SCAT. This group comprises people from each stream team. This group gathers lists from each stream team and prioritizes the projects to create a master list. While this is an improvement, it appears no formal structure for prioritizing these projects has been created.

- **Because the Approach Is Opportunistic, People Are Concerned the Projects Are Not Ecologically Based**

Some people we interviewed felt the projects completed by the stream teams were Band-Aids on the symptoms and not treatments for the cause. Two assessments have been completed on two reaches of the White River, but some people question the accuracy of results because volunteers completed them. State and federal staff expressed some concern over the proposed treatments because they don't have good baseline data on the streams. Even some citizen members were uncomfortable about implementing the projects without more scientific data. These people said it would be desirable to hire project managers that have more technical skills to direct the work. On the other hand, some people said by having volunteers complete the assessments, they learned a great deal about the stream and gained a sense of ownership in the restoration projects. Budget issues were another reason why volunteers completed assessments. They may not have been completed otherwise.

- **Money from the Demonstration Project Allows More Projects to be Completed, but Manpower Is Lacking**

Although great progress has been made because of additional funding, stakeholders in the WRP are concerned about the future level of demand for their assistance now that the

WRP is gaining so much attention. Staff simply does not have the time or resources to meet the growing demand. Some speculate this will create resentment among the public because they will question why their project was not completed while their neighbor's project was. One USFS employee stated it is difficult to balance internal commitments within the USFS with work for the WRP. There has been little guidance from Supervisors on how to prioritize this new commitment. The growing number of requests for assistance suggests a major opportunity for the USFS to generate goodwill while also helping to resolve important watershed problems. Yet, without the resources and staff to meet the demand, the opportunity may be lost.

Members of the WRP are starting to recognize this potential problem and have recently formed a group called the Stream Corridor Advisory Team (SCAT) that includes a member from each stream team, the WRP coordinator and possibly governmental members of the WRP. This team will prioritize projects in the watershed based on the completed assessment.

- **The Budget Process Is Confining**

Our research found that the funds for the WRP come from several small grants lumped into one large pot. These grants are funneled from the D.C. office, to the State and Private Forestry office in Vermont and then to the George D. Aikens RC&D Council. Staff in the George D. Aikens RC&D Council administers these grants. Because the small grants are attached to different goals and matching requirements, each project must meet the specific requirements of each grant. For example, if a stream team wants funding for education, they must find matching dollars related to education. Staff administering these grants has found this to be a stumbling block because they try to match the goals of the WRP with specific requirements of the grants. This is sometimes very restrictive because some projects cannot be completed in the watershed even if they are deemed a high priority.

- **Lack of Agreed-Upon Indicators Generates Varying Views of the Success of the WRP**

Some USFS staff said they felt the WRP is behind, while non-USFS people said the WRP has made great progress. Non-USFS partners we spoke with are frustrated by this difference of opinion and feel it is because they measure success differently than the USFS. Non-USFS partners think the USFS is more concerned about number of miles of restoration completed, while citizens are more interested in number of volunteers. No one has brought these issues to the table for resolution, which has created frustration between the two groups. There is clearly a difference between measuring outcomes (the results of the projects) versus outputs (the number of projects). Both the WRP and the USFS measure outputs (e.g. number of volunteers, number of stream miles treated). Neither measures outcomes (i.e. the result of the activity). These problems suggest an effective set of indicators to measure success has not been developed which cause people to question what has happened.

- **Changing Perceptions About Acceptable Practices Is Difficult**

In this region, gravel mining used to be an accepted practice and was thought to be beneficial for the river. The WRP struggles with this perception and has been working to educate landowners on why gravel mining, and other such practices, is detrimental to the river. A majority of the community consists of people who have lived in the watershed for many years and are set in their ways. Another traditional practice the WRP is trying to change is that landowners spend a lot of time clearing land to make the river pretty. It has been difficult for the WRP to find ways to change perceptions and promote ecological values in these areas. Almost everyone we spoke with said these are big concerns the WRP must resolve in order to make progress.

- **If Funding Were Cut Now, the WRP Would Falter**

When asked what would happen to the WRP if funding went away, everyone we spoke with said it would be a huge setback, but the WRP would not cease because of its well-established local involvement. Some people fear a cut back in funds might result in cutting the coordinator's position, which would be very detrimental to the program. With no coordinator it would be hard to keep up local support and enthusiasm, and it would be difficult to maintain structure, citizen interest, and volunteer commitment. Every member of the WRP we spoke with said they would continue to support the WRP, but could not sustain their support at the current level. We also heard the State may pick up some funding through their new basin planning program, although funding would be nowhere near what the USFS currently provides. Members of the WRP recognize this threat and have started to seriously examine future funding strategies. For example, the WRP is organizing a membership drive.

Analysis

- **The Civic Capacity That Existed Prior to the Project Is Key to the Success of the WRP**

The WRP was initiated, in large part, due to the GMNF reaching out to private landowners and asking what concerns they had about the watershed. By not dominating the process and instead sharing the power, citizens took over and have made the WRP a community-based effort--like they often do in Vermont. The USFS needs to continue and nurture this process because local citizens and groups are critical to long-term success. It seems unlikely the agency would have been able to achieve the same level of success had civic capacity not been as high.

- **The Lack of a Credible Strategy Could Eventually Harm the WRP**

Several people questioned the GMNF's strategy of approving and funding every project that is proposed. This opportunistic approach to project development makes sense as a means to get people engaged and build momentum. However, the lack of a scientifically-credible restoration strategy and a framework for project prioritization may lead to serious questions about the value of the entire effort. Rapid completion of a comprehensive restoration strategy may prove vital to ensuring long-term project success. Even with formation of the SCAT group, an overall formal strategy is not evident for how projects are prioritized.

- **The WRP Lacks a Formal Governance Structure and Systems**

The existing governance model used by the project appears to be an informal network. There is no clear sense that a team exists among members of the WRP and partners. Yet, there are a number of other governance models that could be used. Some of the other models may help to resolve questions about how project selection decisions are made, funding allocations made and about the role of some members. It does not appear as though a careful analysis has been completed of the type of governance structure and system that would be most appropriate to the needs and goals of all of the partners. It would be beneficial for the partners to spend time developing a governance structure and system that would be most useful to the project.

- **Expectations Have Been Raised And a Cut In Funding Now Would Be a Serious Setback**

Government staff and private citizens are confident that the WRP would continue even if funding were cut because the partnership was formed prior to the national demonstration designation and because of its strong citizen base. However, momentum has waned and expectations have been raised. Therefore, if funds were significantly cut, the WRP would revert back to its original structure and become more focused on education instead of implementing projects, and the GMNF would go back to business as usual. This type of roadblock would generate hard feelings all around the area.

Recommendations

- **Continue to Support the WRP's Civic Capacity**

The high degree of local civic capacity that exists in the White River watershed has been one of the dominant reasons for the success of the project to date. The USFS and other government agencies should continue to support, nurture, and assist these individuals and groups as they hold the key to the long-term success of the project. Special attention should be given to ensuring that local landowners and local and state government leaders continue to feel engaged and empowered.

- **Formalize and Adopt a Clear Governance Structure and System for the WRP**

Because people were confused about their roles in the WRP and because questions were raised about how projects were selected and funds dispersed, now would be a good time to engage the partners in a dialogue aimed at generating understanding and agreement on the type of governance structure and system they want to use. There are many types of governance structures and systems. Each of the different approaches use different rules of engagement, and lead to different ways in which information is gathered and distributed, decisions are made, and power and resources are allocated. It will be important for the partners to choose an approach that is most beneficial to their needs and goals. With an effective governance system in place, it seems more likely the many partners can reach agreement on a common vision, goals, and strategy and better understand their role in the partnership. Based on this assessment, the most appropriate structure and decision-making system can be chosen. Options include these and other governance structures:

Joint Ventures: The USFS combines with other organizations to form a new, distinct organization in order to pursue complementary objectives. When in a joint venture, information, decision-making, power, and resources are equally shared.

Strategic Alliances: Similar to a joint venture, where the USFS joins with others to pursue mutual gain, but a new organization is not created. In this case, the various organizations involved must agree to cooperate with and depend on each other. Clear rules of engagement must be established and agreed to (often in writing).

Informal Networks: Organizations join forces to capitalize on potential efficiencies in the production of specific outcomes. Each participating group is responsible for one area of output and the participating organizations are highly dependent on one another for the ultimate delivery of their products. Each entity makes decisions unilaterally, although in consultation with other partners.

Consortiums: The USFS pools its resources with other organizations to procure access to information or technologies, or achieve goals that are too costly or difficult for one entity to do alone. No separate entity is created for the management of this relationship. Each entity makes decisions unilaterally, although in consultation with other partners.

Each of these structures and systems operate under different rules of engagement. The partners need to spend some time to understand the different structures and systems and choose a model that best fits their needs.

- **Streamline the Budgeting System**

Because the funding issue led some organizations to question their involvement in the partnership, it may make sense for the USFS to develop a system to simplify the budgeting process. Several small grants, each with their targets and requirements, seem inefficient and ineffective to support interdisciplinary watershed level work.

- **Develop Future Funding Strategies**

While the WRP has begun to formulate plans for funding, they have a long way to go. They have developed a membership drive to raise funds, are asking for contributions from local communities, and are fostering relationships with grantors. However much more needs to be accomplished in regards to writing grants, finding matching funds, and engaging corporations and larger businesses in contributing funds or materials.

- **Continue to Employ a Full-Time Coordinator**

Every person we spoke with said the turning point for the WRP came when the current coordinator was hired. Having an individual with top communication and coordination skills that is not afraid of innovation has been key to resolving many of the complicated inter- and intra-organizational roadblocks. To ensure continued progress, it seems prudent to retain a full-time coordinator.

- **Develop a Mix of Output- and Outcome-Based Performance Measures.**

Both the GMNF and the citizens involved with the WRP have their own definition of success. It seems prudent at this time for the WRP to spend time developing a common set of effective output- and outcome-based indicators. A more refined measurement approach, agreed to by all parties and widely communicated, can help ensure long-term buy-in by helping the partners and the public understand the progress being made.