Gregg Walker and Steven Daniels developed the principles and practices of Collaborative Learning to help natural resource managers understand and resolve sources of conflict in order to create group generated improvement for complex natural resource challenges.

Resilience Dialogues Conflict Assessment Worksheet

Your assessment may reveal sources of conflict that require special attention during the design phase that leads up to a Collaborative Learning event. The following information can be used to guide a planning team discussion or be adapted for an interview with key stakeholders to deepen understanding of the root causes of conflict.

Conflict can arise from a variety of differences of opinion over key concepts, including…

* Facts—what is true, accurate, reality?
* Values—what should be the determinants of a decision? (Criteria, basis, priority)
* Interests—*Who* will get *what* in the distribution of scarce resources, both tangible and intangible?
* Jurisdiction—Who has authority, standing and legitimacy in the situation?
* Personalities—Disagreement over personal styles
* Places/venues—Problems with the choice of setting, place, room layout
* History—Disagreement over the history of the issue, the conflict, the conflict relationship as perceived by the parties in conflict
* Culture—Disagreements that stem from cultural orientations, worldviews and identities. This can include the underappreciated differences in the culture of scientists and managers.

When sources of conflict are identified in the assessment phase and the decision is made that there is still enough collaborative potential to proceed with a Collaborative Learning approach, the time spent assessing the nature of the conflict and incorporating that knowledge into the design of the process increases the chance that the Implementation phase of the process will produce the desired results.

Results of a conflict assessment can be used with the Stakeholder Role Assessment to ensure that representatives from all sides of a conflict are included. Sources of conflict can be made explicit and acknowledged at the start of a Collaborative Learning process, followed by a situation mapping activity designed to elicit the shared values and goals that can support collaboration and orient a group toward actions to improve a situation.

Complete resources for the Resilience Dialogues Project of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System are available from <https://www.wellsreserve.org/project/the-resilience-dialogue>