

# Cutting the Green Tape

## Focus Committee Meeting Notes

UC Davis Mondavi Center

December 18, 2019

10:00am-12:30pm

### Meeting Goals

1. Share the vision for Cutting the Green Tape.
  2. Gather input to inform the overall design for the initiative.
  3. Establish process and confirm timeline.
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### Opening Remarks

Goal: 1) Introduce “Cutting the Green Tape” 2) Why now is a critical time and opportunity

Secretary Wade Crowfoot (CA Natural Resources Agency) began the meeting by sharing his perspective on the critical need for this initiative and by providing a road map for working together between now and Earth Day 2020. Highlights from the Secretary’s remarks include the following:

- The science is sobering around climate change, and those of us working together in the natural resources fields must up our game. When it comes to getting much needed environmental restoration on the ground, the status quo can no longer be the path of least resistance; we need to get things done better and more quickly. The current way we are operating is like treating a patient in the emergency room; if this was a healthcare policy we would not call this an effective policy. We need to find a better way. “We have the imperative, we have momentum, and we have to do better.”
- The multi-benefit, holistic approach to restoration has found its way into government and is being prioritized. We have projects that are actually working. Lots of good work is being done by organizations in this room. The genesis of this initiative began with a conversation with California Landscape Stewardship Network (CLSN), who has helped get everyone together today thinking in the same room. Today we want to:
  - Identify the barriers and impediments to increasing the pace and scale of restoration.
  - Have out of the box conversations.
  - Think out loud: “If we had a magic wand, what changes would we make to get the work done more quickly and effectively?”
- This is the first of 5 conversations before April 2020. This group today will guide the work of the roundtables coming up, with many others involved along the way.
- Let’s commit by Earth Day to come up with concrete, meaningful improvements to get the good work done! What can the CA Natural Resource Agency do internally to make real progress? What statutory changes, that involve the legislature, should be considered?

Joquin Esquivel (Chair, State Water Resources Control Board) then added his thoughts and perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the state. He emphasized the following points:

- We have incredible leaders in the state, and today we are presented with an exciting, tremendous opportunity. There is a difficult task before us. Ecosystems have vastly changed over the last 100 to 150 years. In CA we have an abundance of wealth, leadership, minds, and resources. Let us focus those resources to learn from the work we have done and the tasks we have before us.
- We need to focus on common decision support tools on local and state levels. Examples:
  - On federal side, we have permitting dashboards that allow agencies to see how they fit in to project lifecycle.
  - The “pay for success” model for funding
  - There are tools such as EcoAtlas and Adaptation Atlas that help make decisions on the landscape scale and monitor success.
- I am looking forward to moving this initiative forward with this group of leaders.

Secretary Karen Ross (CA Department of Food and Agriculture) then welcomed the participants and shared some additional thoughts about the importance of the initiative. In particular, she emphasized:

- The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report includes shocking numbers about the loss of biodiversity. There is an equally alarming report about food security and land use with climate change.
- Our governor wants us to be bold and get things done; there is a sense of urgency. The governor is thinking of the next generation.
- This is all about making government work better, being more efficient and effective. This is a time for smashing silos, and we are doing it.
- Farmers and ranchers are not the enemies; they want recognition for what they are doing to help the environment. They ask, why should it be so hard to do something that is good, that we know is good for the land and species?
- I am really looking forward to today to dive into these conversations.

**Session 1: The California Landscape Stewardship Network:** Kellyx Nelson (California Landscape Stewardship Network, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts, and San Mateo Resource Conservation District)

**Goal: Review how we got here and the path forward**

Following the opening remarks, Kellyx Nelson shared the background information that led to today’s meeting. Her marks focused on the following:

- What is the California Landscape Stewardship Network?
  - The CLSN was formed in 2016 and is focused on advancing landscape-scale restoration.
  - It's a network of networks, covering 40% of CA's geography. It includes agency staff, researchers, scientists, NGOs, public and private landowners, and others all committed to increasing pace and scale of restoration.
  - We foster connections, peer-learning and exchange, and hold statewide convenings. We have a few working groups based on our statewide priorities that focus on things such as funding and policy, and data sharing. The Permitting Efficiencies Working Group of CLSN brought this issue to Wade Crowfoot, which began the conversation we're having today. Wade began to shape the Cutting the Green Tape initiative and engage everyone in this room in the conversation.
- We're grateful to be standing on the shoulders of giants. This is not a new conversation, but there is more work to be done. Many leaders in this group have made progress including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board, and Sustainable Conservation.
- Today we want to bring together the many conversations that have occurred around the state. What are the lessons learned? What could we advance further? This is the conversation for today and next roundtable.

## Session 2: Developing a Shared Vision: Group Exercise

**Goal:** Obtain input from workshop attendees to develop a shared vision for the initiative. (Group discussion at each table, with facilitator)

Individual tables discussed opportunities, constraints, and lessons learned that could inform the key components and design of Cutting the Green Tape.

- Summary of discussion by table:
  - **Table 1. Facilitator Darcie Collins.**
    - Focus on interagency challenges and interpersonal problems, combine processes (education for everyone involved), single application, funding, ultimate goal: land is stewarded.
    - Culture change internally, but recognizing legislation was designed to prevent bad things, political will to shift legislation to enhance and promote ecological outcomes.
    - Getting on same page about process to restore ecosystems or better, faster, stronger.
  - **Table 2. Facilitator Sharon Farrell.**
    - This is about land and people, not just agencies. About people doing regional work for future generations.
    - Culture drives change and these cultural changes need to last more than one generation.
    - How do we reuse or amplify previous efforts that build on the shoulders of others?
    - Lessons learned- not either/or, it's "both/and".
    - Regional collaboration: What are different roles to tie and build upon? The durability of the work rests on collaboration.
    - What is the role of the state? How do we tie in and build on emerging efforts?

- **Table 3. Facilitator Kevin Wright.**
  - Ultimate goal is restoration of ecosystems; land is stewarded in perpetuity, continuing maintenance.
  - Didn't talk much about external stakeholder challenges, but did talk about rivalries and there are always some challenges.
  - Opportunities: where can we combine processes? Educate the public and people engaged in the permitting process; have permittees go through whole permitting process so they can see the challenge points.
  - Funding is an opportunity and a challenge.
  - Staff resources, streamlining everything.
  - All permitting is designed to prevent bad stuff from happening, legislation can be shifted not to avoid risk, but to promote ecological outcomes we want to see. Drive work through the lens of urgency.
  - Conversation started at permitting efficiencies, but the conversation has changed, permitting is one part of it, but it has grown.
- **Table 4. Facilitator Shelana DeSilva.**
  - Big picture perspective to re-imagine how we analyze projects.
  - Think about urgency and analyze existing regulations and policies, and bigger paradigm shift in how we do our work.
  - Existing examples include leveraged funding opportunities, local matching funding for state bonds.
  - There are a lot of leaders in the room who can advance a visionary approach, and this is the time to do it. We have the ingredients for success.
  - How do we provide cover for agencies/project proponents with potential litigation that limits bold actions?
  - Success looks like moving away from project by project, species by species approach.
  - Public access, lands next to agriculture and recreation areas, constituents want to go onto restored lands.
- **Table 5. Facilitator Jay Chamberlin.**
  - These are big picture ideas that have an opportunity now to move forward (example Department of Finance re-thinking about catastrophic wildfires).
  - The paradigm of natural infrastructure could get traction.
  - Climate risks of today, underweighting investments in biodiversity conservation.
  - Is it time to rethink Williamson Act and data management tools to support efforts.
  - One stop shop for permits and access to funding opportunities and grants for private landowners.
  - Understanding that there is little incentive from regulatory agencies to change, but could create different reward structures, thinking about assets analysis instead of impact analysis (shift the mindset).
  - Apprehension from local and state agencies to shift risks to project proponents.
- **Table 6. Facilitator Kellyx Nelson.**
  - Theme is integration. How funding and permitting come together.
  - Breaking down silos so all feel connected.
  - How to have a shared language?
  - How can multi-benefit projects be funded and permitted to meet larger goals?
  - Success looks like species de-listed, waterbodies de-listed, successful projects

change the narrative, set things up so others can take action, state may start things, but ownership will be in the private sector and elsewhere, and the work will continue long after our role is done.

**Session 3: Refining the Roadmap:** Sharon Farrell (California Landscape Stewardship Network and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy)

**Goal:** Review and update the process plan for work through April 2020.

Sharon provided a synthesis of conversations so far and a preview of the work that will unfold in the coming months:

- There are many dimensions to Cutting the Green Tape. Looking at all opportunities, we will focus the roundtables between now and April on where is the greatest urgency and what is the best way to sequence and leverage resources? What do we have the appetite for? What is the priority?
- By Earth Day, we will develop a white paper that spells out actionable efforts that are discrete and deliverable that we can support politically to support each other.
- This will be emblematic of greater change, a symbol of a changed way of doing things, a symbol of a changing world.

**Session 4: Closing Remarks and Next Steps:** Secretary Wade Crowfoot (CA Natural Resources Agency)

Secretary Crowfoot summarized his thoughts and observations with the following remarks:

- It is apparent there is an appetite for big system changes and big cultural changes; that happens over several years. This is the beginning of the hike and we will be joining up with others already hiking.
- We need a vision, administration-wide, not just by CA Natural Resources, something the Governor can talk about on Earth Day.
- We want something time-bound and discrete to demonstrate that we are not wasting time and to demonstrate progress.
- We need to stay engaged at the principal level; helping people in agencies make change. I am asking for all principals to stay engaged in future roundtables.
- We will make future roundtables as inclusive as possible. Who else needs to be here? Other state agencies, funders, federal agencies, philanthropists?
- Lastly, stay focused on efforts that we can achieve. Let's also focus on how to maintain space to not lose sight of the broader conversation and meaning past April to keep this momentum going and focus on culture shift. Propose to repurpose or add a roundtable on the broader purpose after April to keep this work going.

Additions from the audience:

- Regulatory changes go hand in hand with funding so that staff can actualize changes. They are two halves of a whole. Regulatory changes made through legislation would be better received if there was funding put forward to make changes.
- Wade response: It's an "and," not an "or."
  - CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, CA Environmental Protection Agency all need staff to do work. We spend \$17 billion a year

currently on those agencies. How can we do things more efficiently within this existing budget? How does form follow function? How do we ensure the environment gets the resources it needs? Can we do more with what we have? Yes, we need more capacity to do the work, a deeper bench of people is needed too.

For comments not shared today or thoughts afterward contact the following:

- Sharon Farrell - [SFarrell@ParksConservancy.org](mailto:SFarrell@ParksConservancy.org)
- Kellyx Nelson - [kellyx@sanmateoRCD.org](mailto:kellyx@sanmateoRCD.org)
- Kevin Wright - [KWright@marincounty.org](mailto:KWright@marincounty.org)

**Attendees:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Agency</b>
Amanda Martin	CA Natural Resources Agency
Amy Cameron for Bruce Saito	CA Conservation Corp
Armando Quintero	CA Water Commission
Ashley Boren	Sustainable Conservation
Campbell Ingram	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Chuck Bonham	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Darcie Collins	League to Save Lake Tahoe / CA Landscape Stewardship Network
David Guy	Northern CA Water District
Jay Chamberlin	CA State Parks / CA Landscape Stewardship Network
Jay Zeigler	The Nature Conservancy
Jessica Law	Delta Stewardship Council
Jessica Morse	CA Natural Resources Agency
Joanne Marchetta	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Joaquin Esquivel	CA Water Resources Control Board
Julie Alvis for Angela Avery	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Karen Ross	CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Kellyx Nelson	San Mateo Resource Conservation District/ CA Landscape Stewardship Network
Kevin Hunting	CA Natural Resources Agency
Kevin Wright	Marin County Parks / CA Landscape Stewardship Network
Kim Delfino	Defenders of Wildlifer
Kimberly Caringer	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Larry Goldzband	San Francisco Bay Conservation & Preservation Commission
Lisa Brush	The Stewardship Network
Lisa Mangat	California State Parks
Mark Gold	Ocean Protection Council
Mary Scoonover for Michael Mantel	Resources Legacy Fund
Mary Small	CA Coastal Conservancy

Mike Lynes	California Audubon
Paul Buttner	California Rice Commission
Polly Escovedo	CA Natural Resources Agency
Scott Morgan for Kate Gordon	CA Governor's Office of Planning and Research
Sharon Farrell	Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy / CA Landscape Stewardship Network
Shawn Johnson	University of Montana / CA Landscape Stewardship Network
Shelana DeSilva	California Landscape Stewardsdhip Network
Susan Tatayon	Delta Stewardship Council
Wade Crowfoot	CA Natural Resources Agency
Amanda Martin	CA Natural Resources Agency