



***The Next Farm Bill***  
***New Opportunities for Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability***  
**Water Salon Series, Part IV**  
**Summary and Synthesis**  
**March 15, 2011**  
**Washington, DC**

**Purpose and Overview**

In partnership with The Northeast-Midwest Institute, The Horinko Group convened the first in its 2011 Water Resources Salon Series to bring together various parties to pursue an interest-based approach to forming a consensus for the 2012 Farm Bill agenda.

Attendees represented federal and regional agencies and private/non-profit organizations committed to greater system-based stewardship outcomes (refer to *Attachments I and II: Final Attendee List and Agenda*). The discussion sought to:

- Identify sources of conflict;
- Catalog interests of parties;
- Frame issues; and,
- Develop preliminary process proposals.

Following the Salon, attendees and additional stakeholders were invited to participate in an on-line survey to provide additional input on specific questions to assist with scoping further steps.

**Context**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has no formal, detailed proposal for a 2012 Farm Bill drafted, but acknowledges that it and Congress must pursue “creative” approaches to revive rural areas in light of the tight Federal budget. This call for creativity comes at a time when concern over non-point sources of nitrogen, phosphorous, and atrazine from traditional farming operations and waste runoff from commercial feedlots is moving into the mainstream discussion. It also comes at a time when many farmers are at a crossroads and need to find new outputs to stay competitive and viable. What could result in persistent gridlock between many of these stakeholder groups, perhaps could make the 2012 Farm Bill the perfect opportunity for new thinking about old challenges. If we are to protect and sustain our farm heritage and our natural heritage, the upcoming Farm Bill presents a timely window that will test our resolve and commitment to doing so thoughtfully and effectively. Problem solving efforts should present the agricultural industry and family farmer with a sustainable path forward that proves workable for landowners, builds system resilience, and is perceived as added value to the American taxpayer.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

*Patrick McGinnis, Water Resources Team Leader, The Horinko Group*

In his welcome, Patrick McGinnis, Water Resources Team Leader for The Horinko Group, emphasized how critical it is for individuals, institutions, and communities to build a broad understanding and appreciation for sustaining renewable resources and natural system services to protect water, energy, and a dependable food supply – the natural capital on which a resilient future is built. The complexity of decisions we face today demands cooperation, collaboration, and innovation, as well as the best science, technology, and common sense that can be applied. Convergence around common objectives and a systems approach to problem formulation are critical to moving forward. The Horinko Group's Water Salon format facilitates problem solving by gathering informed participants in a collegial atmosphere to probe pressing issues in a non-attribution manner toward consensus building on innovative and practical ways to move forward.

## **Keynote Speaker**

*Ann Mills, Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture*

As Keynote Speaker, Ann Mills, Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), stimulated the discussion of opportunities to shape the Farm Bill. She noted that Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack is challenging the Department to think hard about how we see agriculture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This century will be about private land management and working farms, using better science, and measuring ecosystem outcomes (vs. programmatic outputs). The USDA has conducted Listening Sessions around the nation to glean what is working and what needs improvement. Water and agricultural are intimately linked: poor management produces national and global – geopolitical, economic, and food security – challenges. Our nation must protect its ecosystems and wildlife habitat. Conservation has been shown to work, and partnerships with other federal agencies and the private sector have proved to be productive as well.

The USDA has formed a water team with a dozen USDA organizations to work collectively and in an integrated fashion on restoration initiatives (e.g., Great Lakes, Mississippi River Basin, California Bay Delta), on floodplain management, and on revising the Federal Principles and Guidelines for federal water resources investments. Listening Sessions conducted for the *America's Great Outdoors* Initiative reinforced the need to work on an all-land (public and private) landscape level with state and local government agencies, non-government entities, and producers on the ground. We need to involve those who best understand current resource conditions and future resource needs. The sessions also emphasized the important conservation role that private sector can help champion. We now have an opportunity to unleash greater stewardship through a holistic conservation approach, using voluntary incentives, as a way to position USDA and our nation in going into the Farm Bill debate.

Severe budget cuts and other challenges will result in a changed landscape with respect to federal agricultural funding. The baseline for Farm Bill programs will be lower. The future will focus on making significant new investments in agriculture, but using available agricultural dollars more wisely and critically. We do not have a budget yet, and the passage of Continuing Budget Resolutions reflects slashing of budget levels at a billion dollars a week. We can expect cuts to Title I, but the savings will not go into Title II. To win the future with less money, we

need a nation that innovates, that builds and maintains infrastructure, and that reforms government in ways that do better with less.

For conservation and water resources management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, how do we create the opportunity for producers and network partners to be more strategic and focused on outcomes as we rebuild our natural resources? How do we make the case that investments in conservation and long-term investments make sense? We have an example on the Chesapeake Bay where we are working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to encourage states to develop programs that have measurable benefits for nutrient reduction; this involves giving producers more certainty in order to make them more likely to make investments in conservation on the ground. We are looking at how rural development may give greater incentives for the use of green technologies for wastewater management.

How do we invite the private sector into the conservation initiative? We are examining launching markets around water trading in the Chesapeake Bay and using water temperature credits.

How do we attract private capital on the demand side? One way may be to provide loan guarantees for rural development and to use new energy technology to address animal waste. We are making small programmatic tweaks that make big gains, such as increasing our commitment to greater institutional streamlining, (e.g., consolidating and simplifying the dozens of USDA's conservation programs). We are looking at increasing the flexibility in our programs and our rules to address multiple resources (e.g., protect both habitats and water quality in our wetlands conservation efforts). We are seeking to make our programs more adaptable.

To make strides, we must address tough questions, adopt new approaches to communicate and create solutions, step out of our comfort zone, go beyond the box in our thinking, let go of our institutional biases, increase our risk-taking tolerance, and be willing to make some mistakes.

We don't have all of the answers and so this type of venue is valuable to hear what's working, what's not working, and where there is potential for innovations in Farm Bill programs. I can't promise that we'll agree on everything you put out there, but I do want your ideas and encourage the continued dialogue.

### **Issue Introduction and Facilitated Discussion**

*Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst, Northeast-Midwest Institute (Facilitator)*

As facilitator for this Water Salon, Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst at the Northeast-Midwest Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to research on economic vitality, environmental quality, and regional equity for 18 Northeastern and Midwestern states, opened the discussion about pertinent topics for the 2012 Farm Bill. He utilized a process developed by the Center for Dispute Resolution to focus discussion on key topics relevant to development of the next Farm Bill. The process is designed to identify issues and challenges, prioritize near-term issues to address, clarify desired outcomes, discuss barriers to implementation, discuss ways to overcome the barriers, and to focus on areas for immediate engagement.

Given a shrinking Federal budget and the need to act cooperatively to sustain resources, two overarching questions become pertinent: 1) Can we bring disparate groups together to develop an interest-based action toward common goals in a win-win scenario and inform the Farm Bill in a positive manner; and if not, 2) What are the obstacles and how can we move beyond them?

The effort to address these questions began by brainstorming a list of central and critical themes to account for with respect to the upcoming Farm Bill. The Group identified the following topical areas (please refer to Attachment IV for a verbatim presentation of the brainstorming flip charts).

#### I. Main Topics for the Farm Bill (with Implied Strategies)

- ACCOUNTABILITY through MONITORING, MEASUREMENT, and PERFORMANCE-BASED STRATEGIES that advance the science of environmental indicators. Clear goals and regulatory drivers could help achieve agricultural aims. Voluntary programs are useful, but only go so far at the end of the day.
- COLLABORATION that engages all conservation stakeholders (e.g., upstream and downstream communities), to ensure benefits from water practices is realized on a watershed-scale (e.g., reducing water quality problems, flood effects on water supply). Public-private collaboration should play an integral role.
- CONSERVATION practices and farm liability will be critical factors.
- CONSOLIDATION of programs (and perhaps agencies) should be considered.
- ENERGY costs should be considered.
- FUNDING will be essential component, recognizing that the funding of some new items will require taking money away from constituencies and prioritizing environmental needs. This will take congressional change and cultural change.
- PRIVATE INVESTMENT could play a key role.
- NUTRIENTS, laser focus on how to make significant progress on nutrient runoff. Use lessons learned from sediment management control to achieve nutrient reduction and allow farmers to remain on their land.
- PRIORITIZATION of issues to target and address.
- PUSH-PULL DYNAMICS of addressing the push to expand production in the face of the pull to enhance conservation on agricultural-operational lands, and the push to expand conservation given the pull of saving money.
- ROLE OF THE USDA will be essential, particularly the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to integrate public and private land management programs via an incremental and integrative adaptive management approach.
- RURAL DEVELOPMENT in small communities could require basic infrastructure support by way of Title VI. Further integration is necessary (e.g., water and wastewater infrastructure tied to NRCS's water quality efforts).
- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE will be critical to increasing capacity and competency for creative solutions.

- WILDLIFE HABITAT and the relationship between biodiversity and conservation should be considered.

## II. Challenges to Addressing Main Topics (and Solution Ideas)

- SILOS/STOVEPIPES within government agencies and other institutions. Water quality and wildlife are integrated but not treated as such. Too many programs remain disconnected. They might be better integrated were it not for separate programs across agencies, even within agencies. Programs have not been developed based on desired outcomes, although outcomes can be used to consolidate them or simply to improve outputs.
- LACK OF INTEGRATION, agency efforts seem to be piecemeal. We need a way to integrate related efforts across agencies. The Upper and Central Mississippi regions have integrated to a degree via cooperation. The Chesapeake Bay is integrating by legislative fiat. Look at ways to blend urban and agricultural interests in a synergistic vs. antagonistic fashion. Use the next Farm Bill to sanction multiple environmental benefits from any given program and/or practice. We cannot afford to rebuild 52,000 community drinking water systems. We must find incentives for massive consolidation of rural water systems or we will continue spending money and getting the same results. Use data collection as an opportunity to integrate.
- LACK OF DATA/MEASURES/MEASUREMENT, measures/measurement will help achieve program benefits more efficiently to achieve multiple benefits. Ensure that payments reflect the benefits actually received (i.e., regarding biodiversity, water quality, water quantity). Although the President's budget devotes millions of dollars to a variety of protection programs, we lack measurements of their success. There is no baseline for conservation. We actually lack data to support our position.
- LACK OF CONTINUOUS MONITORING. We need a standardized protocol for data collection and monitoring at a system or landscape scale. Link EPA and USGS monitoring and the outcomes of programs.
- WATER QUALITY/WATER QUANTITY DISCONNECT, the two are inextricably linked and need to be considered when addressing agricultural issues.
- LACK OF COMMON DEFINITIONS across agencies. By addressing this, money will be saved and monitoring/evaluation will improve.
- LACK OF COMMON GOALS creates a convergence of effort via goal setting. Build case(s) around common goals to create a convergence of effort across parts and players.
- LACK OF DEFINED OBJECTIVE. What is the focus of what we are trying to do? What is our goal?
- LACK OF A RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK. Risk management is the shadow over the Farm Bill. Risk management can help deal with variability but it's difficult to target and achieve specific targets because of the variability of biological processes.
- UNCERTAINTY faced by farmers from changing regulations and administration.

- COMPLEXITY OF ECOSYSTEMS provides no guarantee of outcomes. We tend to underestimate the complexity of social, economic, and environmental matters.
- DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS from family farmers, big ag-business, and factory farms have varying interests and all must be included in this dialogue.
- TURF fighting makes finding common ground difficult.
- PARTISANSHIP and hardened positions create an unwillingness to negotiate in good faith.
- LACK OF KNOWLEDGE/INFORMATION on the many groups involved and positions represented; we lack knowledge about their aims and tend to think the worst of them if we don't know them or about them.
- JUSTIFICATION to articulate a strong, socially relevant case for this.
- RESISTANCE to targeting and prioritizing.
- POLITICS, political calls for decreasing the role and size of government.
- LAWSUITS pending between stakeholder groups.
- REGULATION. Do we need a regulatory framework to target desired outcomes? Can voluntary conservation programs deliver results?
- TITLE II HAS OVERTAKEN TITLE I.
- FUNDING is ever shrinking.
- LACK OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR FARMERS to make solutions both workable and financially attractive.
- PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT could offset funding shortage.
- LACK OF BALANCE between funding and ecological benefits.
- FRAGMENTATION of service delivery system at local levels.
- INFRASTRUCTURE is outdated and must be addressed.

### III. Overcoming the Challenges

- IDENTIFY SHARED INTERESTS.
- BUILD A STRONG URBAN CONSTITUENCY.
- CELEBRATE SUCCESS by publishing succinct success stories and case studies exemplifying where programs have met quality standards and farmer's needs.

- FOSTER TRUST through smaller groups.
- PRIORITIZE BARRIERS beginning with the simplest barriers to overcome in an incremental fashion.
- UNTENABLE STATUS QUO, traditional voices must recognize that the status quo is untenable.
- REASONABLE ACCOMODATION between federal programs and local watersheds.
- PERFORMANCE-BASED PROGRAMS are necessary to establish a baseline for farmer benefits.
- HONEST ASSESSMENT of programs that can be merged or cut.
- SENIOR ADMINISTRATION spokesmen to signal that this Farm Bill is not your father's Farm Bill. The support of the President and Secretary of Agriculture is key.
- BIPARTISANSHIP acknowledgement and support from House and Senate support, ensuring that the Chairman and ranking member are on board.
- LESSONS LEARNED of effective domestic and international models of conservation and collaboration should be showcased.
- FACE REALITY that full consensus is impossible.
- NUTRIENT REDUCTIONS must be considered.
- USDA POSITION PAPER for the Farm Bill could be developed based on past Listening Sessions.

#### IV. Continuing the Dialogue

- ACUTE PUBLIC AWARENESS about high-energy costs and water rates.
- COMMODITY CRISIS could mobilize groups to partner (e.g., food vs. fuel debate).
- COMMUNICATION AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS can help engage and link individuals and organizations.
- CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP that is proactive and bipartisan may desire to become champions for the Farm Bill.
- EFFORTS OF NGO COMMUNITY to focus on private land conservation.
- ENGAGEMENT OF NEW GROUPS who desire to participate in development of a better system.
- PARTNERING that has been successful in the Chesapeake Bay and Mississippi River Basin can serve as positive examples.

- PERCEIVED THREATS/VULNERABILITY of losing funding or the threat of regulatory action may stimulate engagement. Real and perceived threats may focus attention and force people to think about creative solutions.

#### V. Potential Rewards from Continued Discussion

- BETTER UNDERSTANDING of issues and interests may broaden the base of support for conservation strategies and identify areas of improvement.
- MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS with constituencies could lead to leveraged stakeholder commitments toward conservation.
- COMMON GROUND and shared interests can be identified and built upon.
- IMPROVED WATER QUALITY by way of stronger connections between urban and rural communities to improve water quality through upstream economic incentives.
- NON-MARKET BENEFITS of agricultural production can help to create a new paradigm.
- INCREASED INVESTMENT in rural agriculture (for both water and wastewater).
- COMPLIANCE for the betterment of conservation.
- UNITED PEOPLE AND POLICY for more sustainable approaches to water so that debates about food, fuel, energy, water are not an afterthought.
- GREATER INTERSECTION WITH AG COMMUNITY for greater collaboration and identify workable incentives for voluntary improvement of wildlife habitat.
- MAINTAINING COMMITMENT to initiatives that are showing results in the face of budget cuts.
- FLEXIBILITY AND FOCUS from the agencies designing and administering conservation initiatives.
- COMPENSATION/INCENTIVES for those managing rural landscapes that are relatively intact. Reward landowners for producing multiple societal benefits.

#### VI. Potential Risks/Downsides to Continued Discussion

- COMPETING INTERESTS can cause backstabbing.
- MISSION CREEP causing agencies to lose sight of focus and priorities.
- NOTHING TO LOSE.
- FAILURE to achieve Farm Bill aims.
- INFIGHTING.



- LOSS OR DISINTEGRATION of coalitions and other stakeholder groups.
- PREMATURE policy decision may result from misconstrued discussion.
- LOSS OF CREDIBILITY among allies.
- FAVORING FARMING OVER CONSERVATION.
- DECLINING BUDGET AUTHORITIES may place some stakeholders at risk, perceiving themselves as losers and walking away from the table.
- EXCLUSION from failure to ensure that all relevant parties are included.

#### VII. Was this discussion worth your time?

- RAISE OF HANDS: Consensus was “YES.”

#### VIII. What Did Not Get Discussed

- IDENTIFICATION OF DESIRED OUTCOMES.
- PRIORITIZATION of near-term issues/challenges to be addressed.
- DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING.

#### IV. Main Thing Yet to Do

- FRAME A GOAL STATEMENT.

### **Path Ahead**

Patrick McGinnis wrapped up the Salon by thanking the participants and outlining near-term next steps.

In approximately two months, a summary report will be distributed to the Salon participants, including a complete synopsis and analysis of the Salon input, as well as results from the post-Salon survey and the collective feedback to the same Salon questions from other Farm Bill stakeholders unable to attend the March 15 gathering. The summary report will use the March 15 baseline-scoping meeting and post-Salon survey results to answer the two over-arching questions posed at the beginning of the meeting:

- 1) Is it possible for various agricultural, environmental and other groups to come together in an interest-based manner, form a set of common goals and then develop actionable and measurable objectives to meet those goals, informing the Farm Bill debate within an atmosphere of collaboration and collective progress?
- 2) If it is not possible right now, what factors are making it impossible, so that we can address them in the near-term and eventually move beyond diatribe to dialogue?

## ATTACHMENT I: FINAL ATTENDEE LIST

*Tom Christensen*  
Regional Conservationist & MRBI Director  
NRCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture

*Steven Davis*  
Watershed Staff Specialist, Northeastern Area  
U.S. Forest Service

*Alex Echols*  
Director, Special Programs  
Sand County Foundation

*Dick Engberg*  
Technical Director, Water Policy Dialogue  
American Water Resources Association

*Stephen Frerichs*  
Agricultural Policy Analyst  
The Nature Conservancy

*David Gagner*  
Director of Environmental Programs  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

*Dr. Noel Gollehon*  
Agricultural Economist, Resource Economics,  
Analysis & Policy Division  
NRCS, U.S. Department of Agriculture

*Mark Gorman*  
Policy Analyst  
Northeast-Midwest Institute

*Marcus Griswold*  
Anthony A. Lapham, River Conservation Fellow  
American Rivers

*Ben Grumbles*  
President  
Clean Water America Alliance

*Mitch Hunter*  
Federal Policy Manager, Conservation  
American Farmland Trust

*Bob Johnson*  
President  
Wildlife Habitat Council

*Emily Marthaler*  
Manager, Federal Relations  
Midwestern Governors Association

*Patrick McGinnis*  
Water Resources Team Leader  
The Horinko Group

*G. Tracy Mehan*  
Principal  
The Cadmus Group

*Ann Mills*  
Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources  
and Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

*Brad Redlin*  
Director, Agricultural Programs  
Izaak Walton League

*Natalie Roy*  
Executive Director  
Clean Water Network

*Patricia Sinicropi*  
Director of Legislative Affairs  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies

*Robert Stewart*  
Executive Director  
Rural Community Assistance Partnership

*Dov Weitman*  
Chief, Nonpoint Source Control Branch  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

*Bill Wenzel*  
Policy Manager  
Mississippi River Network

**ATTACHMENT II: AGENDA**

**The Next Farm Bill  
New Opportunities for Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability  
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March 15, 2011  
Washington, DC  
Agenda**

<b>Registration</b>	<b>12:35 – 12:55pm</b>
<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<b>1:00 – 1:15pm</b>
Patrick McGinnis, Water Resources Team Leader, The Horinko Group	
<b>Keynote Speaker</b>	<b>1:15 – 1:35pm</b>
Ann Mills, Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA	
<b>Issue Introduction and Agenda Overview</b>	<b>1:35 – 2:00pm</b>
<u>Moderator</u> Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst, Northeast-Midwest Institute	
<b>Facilitated Discussion, Part I</b>	<b>2:00 – 3:15pm</b>
Identification of Issues/Challenges to 2012 Farm Bill (25 minutes)	
Prioritization of Near-Term Issues/Challenges to be Addressed (20 minutes)	
Identification of Desired Outcomes from Salon Process (15 minutes)	
Discussion of Organizational Interest in Implementing Process (15 minutes)	
<b>Break</b>	<b>3:15 – 3:30pm</b>
<b>Facilitated Discussion, Part II</b>	<b>3:30 – 4:45pm</b>
Identification of Challenges and Catalysts to Successful Negotiation (30 minutes)	
Discussion of How to Overcome Challenges (20 minutes)	
Identification of Organizational Necessity for Involvement (25 minutes)	
<b>Wrap Up and Next Steps</b>	<b>4:45 – 5:00pm</b>
Mark Gorman, Policy Analyst, Northeast-Midwest Institute	

## **ATTACHMENT III: EXECUTIVE BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Moderator**

**Mark Gorman** is a Policy Analyst at the Northeast-Midwest Institute, focusing on Water and Watershed issues. For four years prior to joining the Institute in 2009, Gorman directed the Northwest Office of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC), based in Meadville. While there, Gorman worked with numerous partners from the private sector, government, communities and individuals in the upper Allegheny River and Great Lakes basins to promote sustainable use of built and natural landscapes, particularly by focusing on links between the environment, the economy and quality of life.

Before working for the PEC, Gorman served over 22 years with the Northwest Region of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP). There, he helped to launch PADEP's new Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program statewide and directed that Program in PADEP's Northwest Region. He was co-leader of the pilot PADEP regional watershed team effort (focused on the internationally-renowned French Creek watershed), and later co-chaired PADEP's Lake Erie, French Creek and Oil Creek watershed team.

Mr. Gorman is a trained mediator and facilitator, and served in that capacity for seven years on the PADEP's statewide Alternative Dispute Resolution team. He worked in the water quality program of the Allegheny County Health Department in Pittsburgh for the next two years before joining PADEP. He also served a three-year term as a member of the Northeast SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program) Advisory Council (2006 to 2008), and a two-year term on Pennsylvania's Water Resources Planning Committee for the Lake Erie basis (2007-2008).

Mr. Gorman is an active supporter of many local, statewide and national civic and conservation organizations. He holds a B.S. in Biology from King's College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, an M.S. in Biological Oceanography from the University of South Florida, and an M.S. in Freshwater System's Ecology from Kent State University in Ohio. Except for those brief periods out of state for graduate education, he was a life-long Pennsylvania resident before moving to the Washington, DC area in 2008.

### **Keynote Speaker**

**Ann Mills** is Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ms. Mills has responsibility for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the federal agency with primary responsibility for working with private landowners to conserve, maintain and improve their natural resources. The NRE mission area includes NRCS and the U.S. Forest Service.

Ms. Mills brings to this position 20 years of policy and management experience with government and nonprofit conservation advocacy. Most recently, as a senior executive at American Rivers, she led the implementation of programs to develop sustainable solutions for flood and drought mitigation and water quality improvement across the country including urban and rural watersheds in Northern California's Sierras and Bay Delta; the Columbia, Missouri and Mississippi river basins; the Great Lakes; and the Chesapeake Bay.

Ms. Mills also served as a senior staff person for Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle, chief of staff to California Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy and legislative assistant to then-Congressman

Richard Durbin and Congressman James McClure Clarke. She holds a Masters Degree from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin, and a B.A. in Political Science from Tufts University.

### **Opening Remarks**

**Patrick McGinnis** serves as The Horinko Group's Water Resource Team Leader for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Systems. His experience and interest focuses on a broad range of economic opportunities for livable community design, strategic planning and facilitation, public/private sector interaction and consensus building. Prior to joining The Horinko Group in 2009, Mr. McGinnis worked as a field biologist and public lands administrator with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He has extensive experience specializing in natural resource management, large river ecology, environmental stewardship of federal public lands, wetland regulatory delineation, and private-public partnering. For the past twenty years, he has led an effort to build a sustainable systems presence on an open space footprint of 164,000 acres of public lands and water critically situated at the confluence of the Upper Mississippi and Lower Illinois Rivers.

Mr. McGinnis currently serves on the boards of the St. Louis Confluence Riverkeepers and the Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, the planning committee for the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway, and the marketing committee for the Audubon Center at Riverlands.

## **ATTACHMENT IV: RECORDED BRAINSTORMING NOTES**

### Question 1

If there were to be a facilitated, consensus-building process related to the 2012 Farm Bill, what issues would need to be addressed? What are the interests of you or your group related to these issues?

*NOTE: Initially these two questions were designed to be answered in two separate rounds of brainstorming; however participants largely combined the answers to both questions while responding to the first – noting both the key issue and their organization’s interest regarding that issue.*

### Responses to Question 1

*NOTE: Except for minor clarifications, below responses for each question are verbatim from flip chart recordings; see proceedings for narrative description.*

- Consolidation of both programs and agencies
- Targeting funding to problems not practices
- Address needs of both conservation and farm viability
- Collaboration between public and private sectors
- Adaptive management and an integrated approach
- Programmatic funding options (allowing for) increased state flexibility
- Resources (money)
- Performance based strategies
- Reduction of nutrient runoff
- Watershed-based outcomes
- Wildlife habitat and biodiversity
- Energy cost considerations
- Adequacy of data and monitoring
- Prioritization of issues and targeting
- Tendency to overlook rural communities and ignore rural development
- Need for regulatory drivers
- Conservation of operational lands
- Compliance assurance
- Prioritizing compliance-based targets
- Funding of necessary programs
- “Silo” effect within institutions
- Nutrients need to be addressed in a meaningful way (look to sediment control for information)
- Ensure payments (to landowners) reflect outcomes/benefits
- How to engage private sector to contribute to costs (of conservation)
- Need for greater synergy between urban and agricultural needs
- Promote economics to incentivize farmers to continue farming
- Water quantity: irrigation and ag drainage
- Regulatory (and other) uncertainty
- Integration of interagency efforts
- (Integration) of efforts on a landscape scale
- Convergence of efforts through goal-setting, case-building and messaging
- Promotion (of the concept) of stacking multiple environmental benefits

- Incentivize conservation within a risk-management framework
- (Forging of) Additional linkages between regulatory and monitoring agencies
- Do we continue down existing policies or establish better ways to monitor and evaluate conservation efforts?
- Identify the target audience
- (Address) General lack of consolidation
- (Development of) Standardized monitoring protocol
- Rebuilding (of) water/wastewater infrastructure
- Water security (as a key driver)
- (Farm Bill) Title I has evolved
- Complex biological systems will always yield some degree of uncertainty
- Can voluntary programs deliver results
- Incentives for consolidation of rural water systems
- (Need for) Common tools for data gathering
- Compensating farmers for off-site ecosystem improvements
- Standardized monitoring protocol at watershed level

### Question 2

What would you like to gain from participating in such a process?

### Responses to Question 2

- Improved water quality
- New structures that produce non-market benefits
- Expansion of conservation compliance
- Unite people/policy around sustainable water practices
- Rural-urban connectivity
- Additional opportunity to collaborate with farming community in habitat creation
- Increased protection of rural community and interconnection of urban-rural sectors
- Better understanding/common ground
- Increased investment in infrastructure of rural communities
- Understanding where opportunities for improvement exist
- Basis for specialty conference on agricultural hydrology
- Better conservation outcomes with better support
- Improve water quality through contributions from agriculture (beyond current point source focus)
- Flexibility and focus at the agency level (increased flexibility in initiatives)
- Compliance centered around nutrient control
- Reward landowners for providing multiple societal benefits
- Maintained funding for conservation programs

### Question 3

What are the potential downsides to your organization of participating in such a process?

### Responses to Question 3

- Diversion from mission; loss/dilution of organizational priorities

- Involvement could be misconstrued
- Loss of credibility among existing allies
- Legal limitations; becoming less of a resource for agencies
- Exclusion of all parties could lead to “wasted time”
- Potential (for) failure/in-fighting
- Mission drift
- (lost) Balance of priorities
- Losing focus
- Loss of allies/in-fighting

#### Question 4

What barriers to a successful negotiation exist (including political or other constraints)?

#### Responses to Question 4

- Money
- Resistance to targeting/prioritizing
- Pending lawsuits
- Inability to compromise
- Partisanship
- Calls to decrease government involvement/funding
- Uncoordinated efforts
- Lack of supportive data
- Proper/effective outreach to farmers (lack of)
- (Lack of) Buy-in from stakeholder groups (into process)
- (Lack of) Common understanding of issues
- Resistance from farm interests – why even enter into dialogue
- Inability to define ecological and economic benefits
- Lack of defined objective(s)
- Inability to articulate a socially-relevant case
- Perception of sufficient self-interest
- Underestimating the complexity of the issue
- Lack of understanding of mission, objectives and positions of groups
- Protecting turf and (inability to) find common ground

#### Question 5

What catalysts to a successful negotiation exist (including political or other catalysts)?

#### Responses to Question 5

- Commodity prices help to build shared efforts
- “Food versus food” debate
- Engaging new constituencies
- Finding champions
- Use of new communication and analytical tools
- Threat of regulatory action and court empowerment of EPA/other regulatory agencies/programs



- Aging farming industry demographics; encourage next generation of farmers
- Public interest in food sector
- Acute public awareness
- Mutual intent to leverage funding
- Commodities issue on our side
- Coalition (exists) around certain farm bill items

### Question 6

How might barriers be overcome (including what kinds of ground rules or working protocols)?

### Responses to Question 6

- Expansive dialogue brings innovation
- Identifying champions
- Endangered species regulatory programs
- Creative solutions to encourage farming
- Highlight/replicate success stories
- Thorough/deliberative process to establish trust
- Status quo no longer acceptable
- True accounting to determine efficiencies
- Key senior leadership as advocates for new thinking (Congressional chairs/ranking members)
- Focus on positive impacts on jobs
- Succinct success stories or case studies
- Address barriers incrementally (low hanging fruit first)
- Reasonable combination of federal priorities and local watershed needs
- (Build on) lessons learned from success stories
- Acknowledge that barriers will exist
- Nutrition programs should be represented
- Learn from/look to international examples for lessons
- Need an opinion from Executive (Branch) leadership (White House and USDA)

### Question 7

What is the main thing that you or your group needs to make it worth your while to participate in such a process?

### Responses to Question 7

- Specific framing of the goals (of the process)