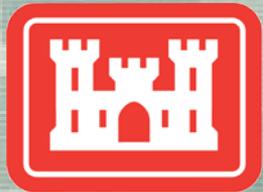
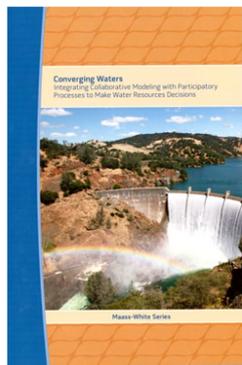
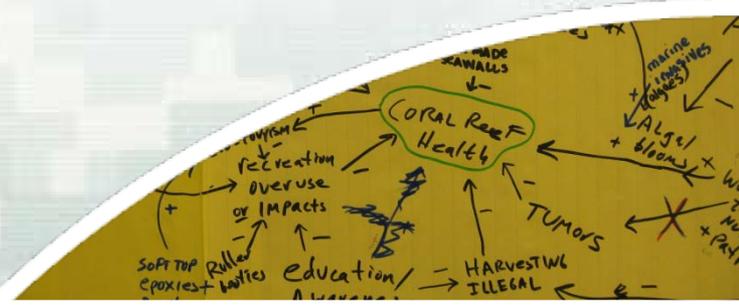


# Engaging Stakeholders in Technical Decisions

Paul F Wagner



US Army Corps of Engineers  
**BUILDING STRONG**

# Overview

- Why Engage Stakeholders?
- Defining Success
- Considerations when Planning for Stakeholder Engagement
- Engagement Tools and Techniques
- Climate change dialogue tips



# Who are “Stakeholders?”

*Those who may be influenced by, or can affect the decision, and other interested parties. These are people that have a STAKE in the outcome of a decision ...*

- Interdisciplinary teams with variety of skills
  - ▶ natural sciences, social sciences, engineering
- Project sponsors, partners and customers
- Stakeholders often include:

Residents	Businesses
Environmental Advocates	Tribal Governments & Interests
Local Government	Related Interest Groups (Recreation, Disadvantaged Communities, etc.)
Agricultural Community	Regulatory Agencies

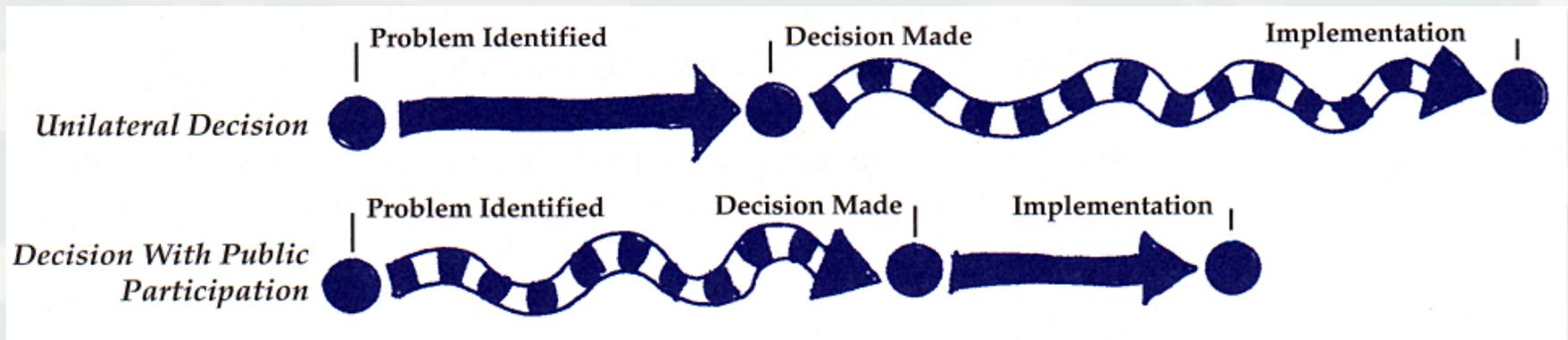


# Why Engage Stakeholders in Technical Decisions?

- Additional Expertise, access to info
- Build trust & put face on “Gov’t”
- Better quality of decisions
  - ▶ *More comprehensive issues, alternatives*
- Decisions are value laden
  - ▶ *Federal, public agency is responsible to citizens*
  - ▶ *Include input by those who are affected or are interested*
- Easier implementation
  - ▶ *Include those who can affect decision*
  - ▶ *Build informed consent*



# Engaging Stakeholders Early Reduces Costly Delays



# TECHNICAL vs. VALUES QUESTIONS

“What is?”	vs.	“What should be?”
What is instream flow if a reservoir is operated this way?		What should minimum instream flows be?

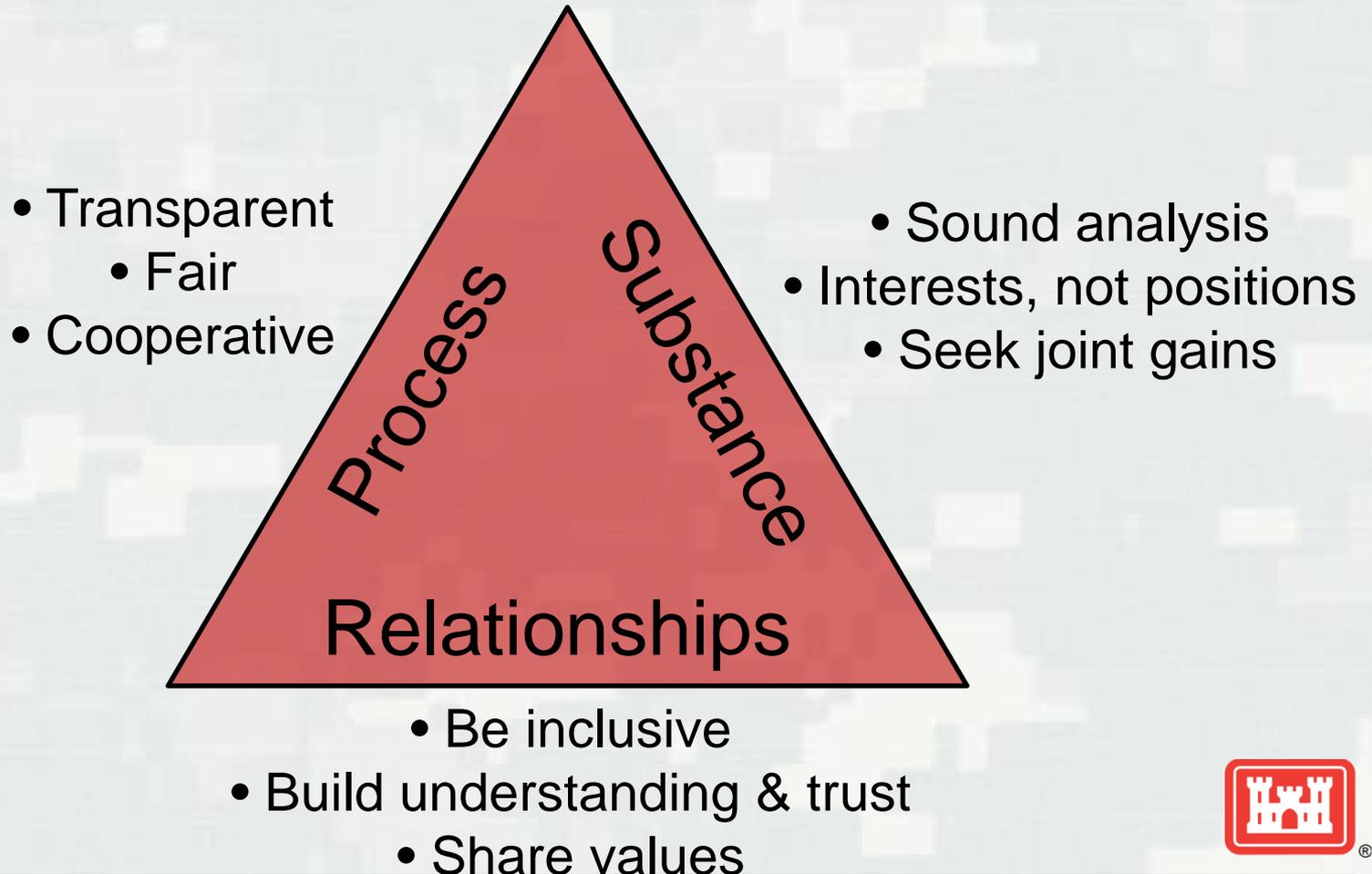
*The most fundamental flaw in contemporary water policy is that many value questions in which ordinary citizens have a great interest are being framed as technical questions.*

- Helen Ingram & Anne Schneider, 1999



# Elements of Success

*From: When the Sparks Fly: Building Consensus When the Science is Contested*  
*by Gail Bingham*



# Planning for Stakeholder Engagement

Identify *issues* and *stakeholders*.

Gauge the *level of controversy*. Determine the *level of participation* required.

What *information should be exchanged* at each step in the planning process?

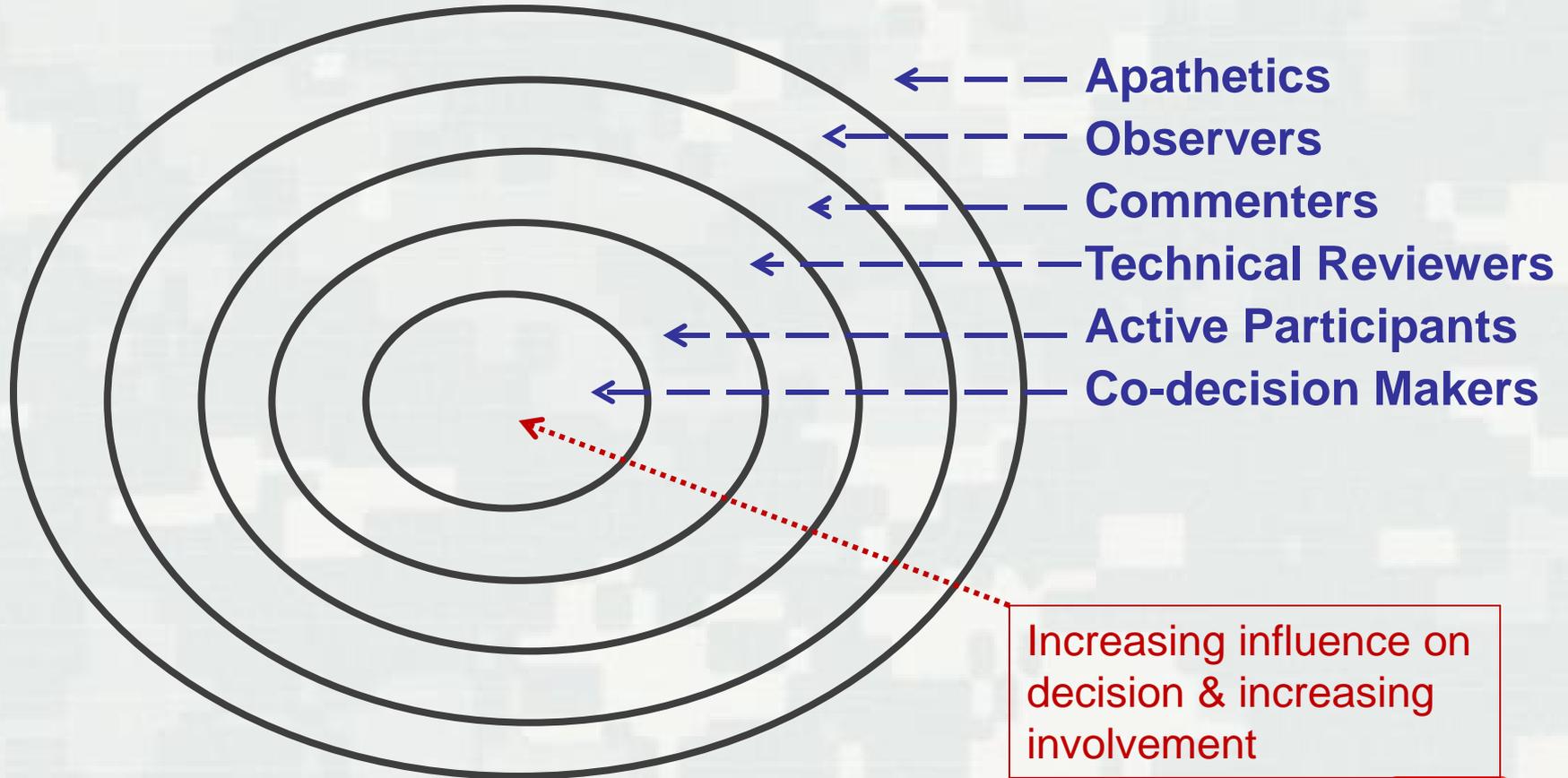
Identify appropriate *involvement techniques* to meet your objectives.

Develop a *plan* and *budget*.



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# Roles Stakeholders Play



# Spectrum of Public Participation

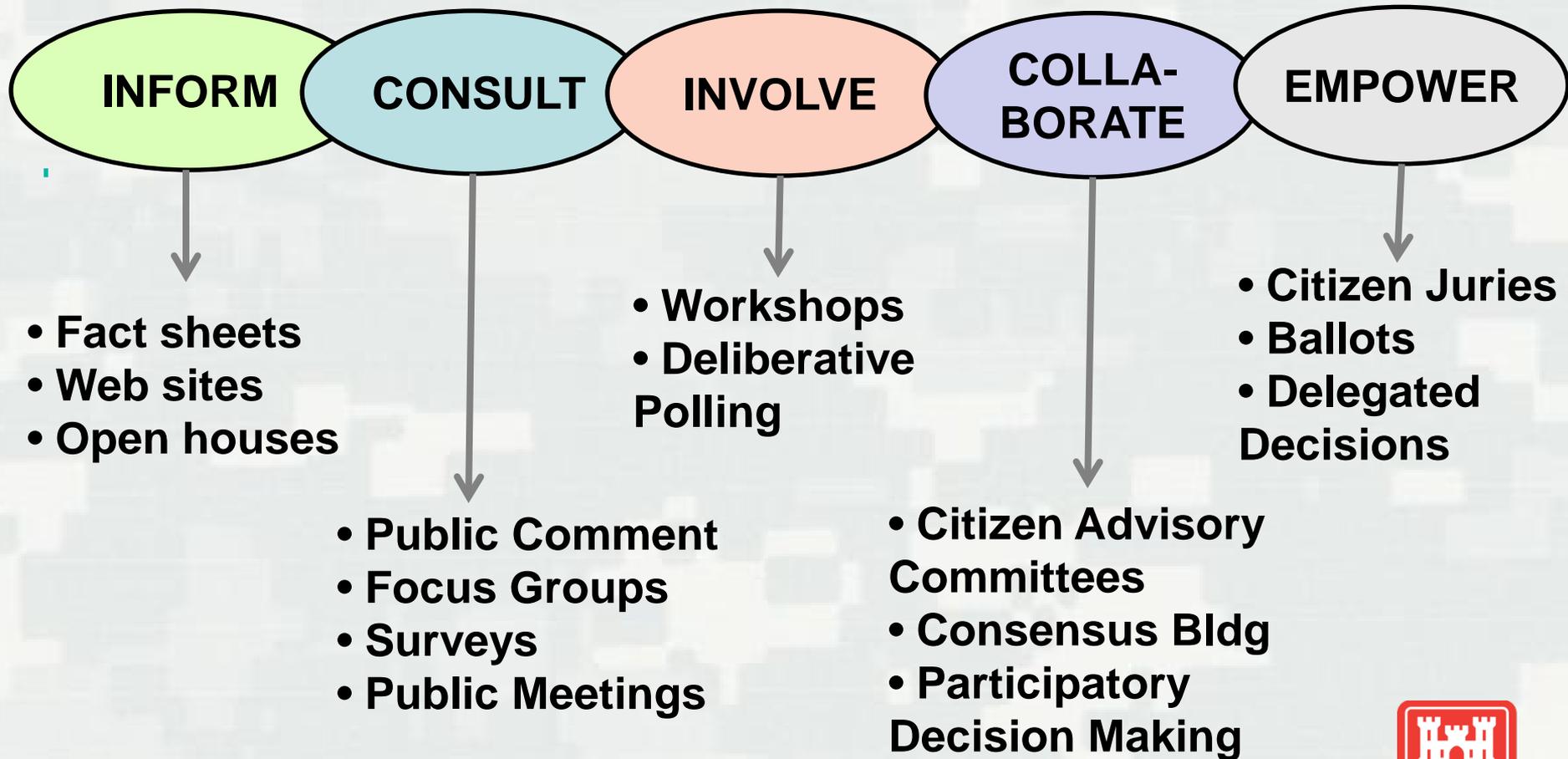


# When Selecting an Involvement Technique, Ask...

- What is the *purpose*?
- What *level of interaction* is best?
- *How many people* are involved?
- What is the *relationship* between the project sponsor and the participants?
- How comfortable is the audience with *unfamiliar meeting types*?



# SPECTRUM OF TECHNIQUES



# EXAMPLE MEETING TYPES

Public Hearings

Town Halls

Open House

Workshops



# Public Hearing

- Formal presentations, typically recorded by a court reporter.
- Audience may make statements.
- May be required as part of NEPA process



# Town Hall / Public Meeting

- Less formal than Hearing
- Presentation, then Q&A



# Strengths of Public Hearings & Town Halls

- Everyone who wants to speak has an opportunity to do so.
- Everyone hears everyone else.
- Good for building a legal record.
- Meets NEPA requirements for public comment.



# Problems with Public Hearings & Town Halls

- Easily “captured” by small but organized activist groups
- No dialogue → no building agreement
- You don’t hear from most people in the audience
- People who come to get information may have to listen to hours of speeches just to get the few pieces of information that they want
- Formality may be viewed as power (typically official opens; court reporter records comments)



# Interactive Meetings

- Get everyone involved and learning
- Get interaction between people with different viewpoints
- Creatively and collaboratively produce a “product,” (*e.g., develop lists of brainstorming items, rank items*)
- Encourage commitment
- Reduce opportunity for “speechifying” and posturing



# Open Houses

- Drop in anytime
- Visit stations
- Permits in-depth personal interaction
- Mostly informing, but can collect comments
- Large numbers okay
- High visibility



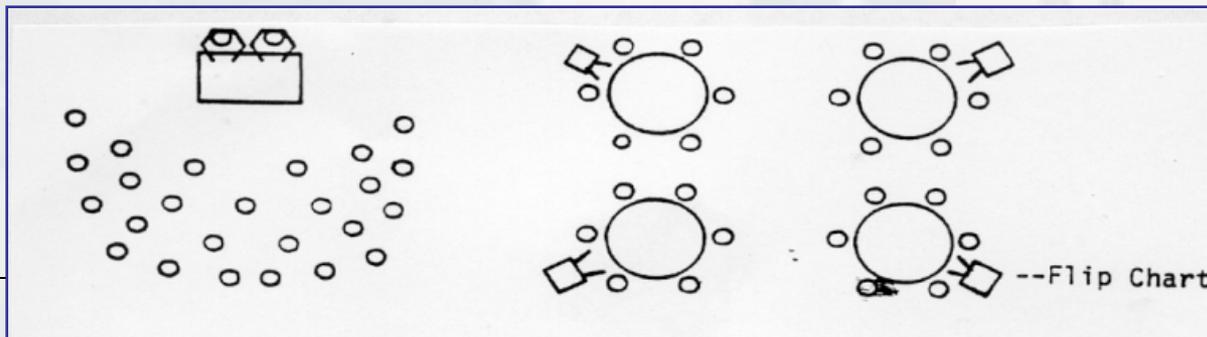
# Workshops

- High level of interaction
- Group generates a product.
- 10-35 people; select representatives
- Breakouts can accom larger groups
- Can repeat (day/eve) or combine formats



# Meeting Planning & “Non-verbal” Communication

- Meeting Location
- Meeting Time
- Meeting Notice and Invitations
- Room Arrangement
- Control of Meeting Agenda May Communicate Control of the Outcome



# Grab Bag of Interactive Techniques

- *Brainstorming & Info Sharing:*
  - ▶ Post-it blizzard
  - ▶ World Café
- *Increase understanding & Analyze:*
  - ▶ Force field analysis
  - ▶ Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- *Ranking:*
  - ▶ Colored dots – “dot democracy” (\*not for voting)



# Stakeholders & Climate Change

If purpose is to discuss management/adaptation options...

- Do not make climate change the primary rationale for conservation
- Keep the conversation focused on impacts and implications on resource mgt;
- Climate skeptics will push for “more science” and say “we can’t decide until we reduce uncertainty” – don’t fall into their trap!



# Resources

- When the Sparks Fly, by Gail Bingham of RESOLVE
- David Metz, Lori Weigel. The Language of Conservation 2013: Updated Recommendations on How to Communicate Effectively to Build Support for Conservation. For Andy Tuck of TNC. April 15, 2013.

