Life Cycles of Watershed Councils

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Life Cycles We Know!

Characteristics:

• Beginning & Ending
• Distinct Phases
• Different Needs At Each Phase
• Changing Threats Over Time
• No Certainty About Continuing Over Time
Organizations Are Similar!

Cycle $\approx 10$ Years

- Formation
- Expansion
- Stabilization
- Crises & Decline
- Renew or Dissolve

Cycle $\approx 10$ Years
Organizational Behavior Types (Anthony Downs, 1967)

1. **Zealots** seek power so that they can affect their own view of the world. Often their perspectives of what should be done are relatively narrow.

2. **Climbers** are people who are focused on how they can get ahead. When advancement is not forthcoming, these officials may seek to aggrandize their current position to make themselves appear more powerful.

3. **Advocates** are loyal to organizations, policies, and causes and will protect these interests against outsiders who threaten them. They are strong team players.

4. **Conservers** are people who are primarily interested in protecting their security and convenience. They are generally resistant to change if it might affect their current situation.

5. **Statesmen** seek power and authority in furtherance of broad governmental or society or corporate goals; they enjoy being recognized for the influence they wield.
Characteristics:

- Formation:
  - Meets Identified Need
  - Entrepreneurial & Creative
  - Searching For Resources

- Expansion

- Renew or Dissolve

- Crises & Decline

- Stabilization
Characteristics:

Formation

Climbers & Advocates

- Rapid Growth
- Innovation & Expansion
- High Staff Commitment
- Informal Structure

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crises & Decline

Stabilization

Zealots
Characteristics:
- **Formal Rules & Controls**
- **Efficiency & Stability**
- **Planning Emphasized**
- **Performance Measures**

**Formation**

**Conservers**

**Advocates**

**Expansion**

**Climbers**

**Renewal or Dissolution**

**Crisis & Decline**

**Stabilization**
Characteristics:

- Staff Burnout & Turnover
- Entrenched Programs
- Performance Declines
- Loss of Support

Statesmen: Expansion → Statesmen

Conservers: Statesmen → Conservers

Renew or Dissolve

Crisis & Decline

Stabilization

Advocates

Characteristics:

- Adapt Or Die!
- Search For New Programs
- Reflect On Purpose
- Spinoff Organizations

Expansion

Statesmen

Stabilization

Crises & Decline

Renew or Dissolve

Formation

Advocates

Oregon State University Extension Service
Paths Not Always Sequential!

- Formation
- Expansion
- Stabilization
- Crises & Decline
- Renew or Dissolve
Paths Not Always Sequential!

Formation → Expansion → Stabilization → Crises & Decline → Renew or Dissolve
Reflection:

• Where is your organization in this life cycle?

• Do you recognize yourself in one of the organizational behavior types?

• Have you seen yourself, or others, change organizational behaviors? From what to what?

• What particularly resonates with you about this approach? Could you outline your organization’s life cycle?
Stories From The Coos

Cycle ≈ 10 Years
Institution ≈ 50 Years

Renew or Dissolve
Expansion

Formation 1994

2015

Crises & Decline
Stabilization
Stories:

Formation 1994 - 1996

- Experience of spotted owl
- Potential coho listing
- “Statement of Shared Values” (took 2 years)

Renew or Dissolve

Crisis & Decline

Expansion

Stabilization
Stories:

Formation

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crisis & Decline

Stabilization

- 1996 Storm Response
- Jobs-in-Woods; Hire-the-Fishermen Work Crews
- $1.2MM Coastal Wetlands

1997 - 2001
Stories:

Formation

Expansion

Stabilization

Renew or Dissolve

Crises & Decline
Stories:

Formation

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crisis & Decline

Stabilization

- Required to Payback Outstanding Advances
- Unresponsive Accounting
- Conflicts With County

2002 - 2004
Stories:

- **Renewal or Dissolution**
- 2004 - 2006

- **Formation**
- **Expansion**
- **Stabilization**
- **Crises & Decline**

- Organizational Audit
- Strategic Framework Plan
- Changed Bookkeeping
- Board Development
Stories:

Formation

2007 - 2009

• Model Watershed Program
• Higher Order Restoration
• Focus on Science
• Partnerships

Renew or Dissolve

Crises & Decline

Expansion

Stabilization

Oregon State University Extension Service
Stories:

- Complex, High $, Projects
- PCSRF Grant w/ Tribe
- Focused Investment Plan
- Estuary Management Plan

2013 – 2015

Formation

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crises & Decline
Stories:

- Executive Director Leaves
- Elliott S.F. Up For Sale
- FIP Proposal Not Selected
- Strategic Plan Stalls

2015 – 2016

Formation

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crises & Decline

Stabilization
Stories:

- New Executive Director Hire
- Successful Grants Cycle
- Lowland Stream Remeander
- Strategic Plan Restart

Formation

2016 – 2017

Expansion

Renew or Dissolve

Crisis & Decline

Stabilization
Take Home Messages

1. Organizations go through cycles
2. Success is not a linear path
3. Threats & challenges change over time
4. Different strengths are needed to respond to these changes
5. Understanding cycles allows you do develop strategies to anticipate and effectively respond
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