

## Highlights

- We held our February meeting at 1 PM GMT on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- There were 42 contributors in attendance.
- We began the meeting with opening remarks from Larry Susskind, who shared his experience editing *The Consensus Building Handbook*, and gave some advice on providing prescriptive advice in the Handbook. Please see the notes at the end of this document.
- After opening remarks, we shared updates on two online resources.
  - Handbook website: <https://waterdiplomacyhandbook.com/>
    - The website is where you can find the latest version of all documents and resources for the Handbook.
    - If you are new to the project or just feel like you need to get up to speed, please see the <https://waterdiplomacyhandbook.com/getting-started-guide/>
  - Asana
    - We will be using <https://asana.com/> to manage the submission process for individual chapters.
    - Through Asana you and your chapter's co-author will have a shared view of important deadlines, milestones, and what has documents have been submitted and returned.
    - **Registration emails are expected to be sent out the week of February 14<sup>th</sup>.**
      - You can read more about the process of registering for Asana here: <https://waterdiplomacyhandbook.com/registering-for-asana/>
      - You can read more about using Asana here: <https://waterdiplomacyhandbook.com/using-asana/>
- After this presentation, we moved everyone into randomized breakout rooms. There was no agenda other than to meet and network with other contributors. Feedback about breakout rooms was largely positive – with the exception that we had to end the discussions prematurely due to time constraints. We will try to manage time better in the future.
- **What to Expect Next:**
  - Week of February 14<sup>th</sup>: invitation to Asana platform.
  - We are actively working on assigning editors for each chapter, discussing copyright and open access opportunities with the publisher and will share these details with you as soon as they are finalized.

## **Guest Speaker: Larry Susskind**

### *Notes on Larry's Remarks (thanks to Bruno Verdini for preparing these)*

Envision that the responsibility is to provide an effective guide through prescriptive advice.

Be solidly knowledgeable about what is Water Diplomacy:

“Multiple actors engaging in process of making decisions about the use of shared waters. It's not about sharing stories or concerns. It's about making decisions on shared waters. The water and the parties need not be contiguous. There may be prior agreements, rules, restrictions that constrain the use itself: a source of limits and opportunities. The timeline of the engagement can be quite short or long.”

The chapters and case studies that illustrate A GENERAL POINT, are the strongest. Here are some key questions to thoughtfully answer with Prescriptive Advice:

1. Are all key stakeholders present?
2. Who represents them? Were they selected or elected?
3. What is the relative clout of the parties away from the table? How do we address issues of power between the weak and strong: what changes in prescription?
4. Do the parties have access to RELEVANT and RELIABLE information (i.e., in the mind of the stakeholders themselves and in the mind of neutrals)?
5. Are there opportunities to revise and adapt, over time, what was agreed?
6. What is the mechanism of enforcement of the agreement?
7. Do the stakeholders have the institutional capacity to try different paths and learn from these paths? Can they do so before they set in stone their decisions?
8. What kind of linkages occur? Are these positive or negative? There is the UPSIDE, trades on unexpected subjects where value overcomes cost, breaking deadlock. There is the DOWNSIDE, a stakeholder that can hold hostage the larger group, with outlandish demands.
9. Should you negotiate how you negotiate?
10. How is the process facilitated and managed? Who is in charge of managing the process, the flow and content of the conversations?
11. How are the parties taking into account the changes in the natural system (during, before, and after agreements)?

## *Larry's Answers to Questions Raised in the Chat*

To which extent such prescriptions are usable and transferable in any cultural context? Do they have any universal value?

*Context is everything! So, no, I doubt the Handbook will include prescriptions that are useable and transferrable in a universal way to all cultural contexts. But, they might be instructive or inspirational in some other cultural contexts. It will be up to stakeholders and professionals in each context to take what inspiration they can from the prescriptive ideas in the Handbook and figure out whether/how to apply them in their context. The clearer the story presented in the Handbook, and the more specific the analysis of why particular ideas, strategies and methods “worked” in the context presented, the easier it will be for others in other cultural settings to make decisions about what to “transfer” and what to modify (and why). When I talk about prescription, I mean what would we tell ourselves to do in our particular situation and why in the future, based on what we have learned, or even, what do we now know we should have done differently and why.*

You spoke about a process and about a table, but what if (and when) there are several tables i.e., parallel water diplomacy processes in the same context - any tips for such a situation?

*It is quite usual for there to be parallel processes (both formal and informal) underway at the same time in the same context. From my standpoint, the most important thing to do is to make sure that each table is “represented” at the other tables. That is, the participants at each table should select someone to serve on every other relevant table to ensure that ideas and potential decisions are shared in a timely way. Usually, no table is in charge of the others. Rather, ideas move from table to table through overlapping membership or planned consultation.*

Will/should the handbook contain a wide variety of approaches that might even contradict, or is the vision for the handbook to be a cohesive compilation where contradictions in approaches are ironed out or somehow reconciled (probably an impossible task)?

*I believe the Handbook should start with a composite overview chapter that explains what water diplomacy is (and is not) and how and why it is important. It should then offer a framework of questions that anyone involved in designing, managing or trying to change a particular water diplomacy effort should be asking themselves. It should summarize the smallest number of possible answers to each question that the co-authors and contributors can agree on. For instance, I would put “Who is at the table and for whom do they speak?” at the top of the list of questions if it were up to me. I’d then try to get the group to agree on what they think adequate representation requires and why. Can you agree that there needs to be process of stakeholder identification and that all stakeholders ought to have a hand in choosing their own representative? And, that this person needs to be accountable (to the others involved in the process) for remaining in close contact with the people they represent? You need the list of guiding questions and someone needs to draft a first response to them. Then, you should circulate those questions and answers and ask every contributor to say whether they agree or*

*how they would modify the questions and answers. I would keep circulating the evolving draft until everyone is willing to affiliate with it.*

I wonder who you think the audience for this handbook would/should be to take these prescriptions. Curious about your thoughts.

*Anyone, anywhere affected by or involved in collaborative efforts (or what they wish were more collaborative efforts) to decide how shared waters ought to be used/protected.*

If the process is implemented properly, water management will work well. How is this idea different than an economist's argument that if the market mechanism is implemented well, it will take care of all the problems? In reality, neither the market nor the process is implemented well, what is your prescription?

*The market only cares about efficiency and assumes that the impacts of decisions can be discounted to zero in 50 years or less. If you care about inter-generational impacts and issues of fairness or justice, there's no way the market can provide indications of what ought to be done. That's why I don't care much about what economists have to say regarding the management of shared waters. Market mechanisms will not correct past injustices. Market mechanisms will not help any group of stakeholders decide what's fair. Market mechanisms will not take account of possible changes in natural systems that might affect endangered species in time to save them. In every case, we need a process that engages all the relevant stakeholders in a collaborative process of joint fact-finding and consensus building. I have great confidence that such efforts will make good provisional decisions that they can continue to monitor and adjust/adapt.*