



Leadership 201 Action Learning Scenario: Rewarding Risk-Taking and Innovation

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Problem Statement

How do we expand innovation across USGS?

High Performing Team:

Tom Duke – Reston, VA

Scott W. Holmes – Reston, VA

Carrie Phillips – Corvallis, OR

Brian Wachter – Reston, VA

Steve Waste – Cook, WA

Kim Miller – Milton, WV (Coach)

Innovation to Advance Mission:

- Promote forward thinking science
- Increase visibility for USGS
- Discover new science / science support efficiencies
- Make us more adaptable and resilient to social and culture change
- Make USGS more responsive and relevant to society

Path Forward

We don't need another billion dollars, we just need to rethink how we use what we have.



Communication

- Highlight innovative developments
- Provide visibility for creativity and risk
- Share what was learned broadly
- Cross pollination among staff
- Create an 'Innovation Spotlight'
 - Lessons learned from failures
 - How agency utilized what was implemented or learned



Expand Thinking

- Recognize innovation in existing work
- Consider a vision statement that includes innovation
- Celebrate creative failures
- Say “What’s the worst that can happen?”
- Create safe haven for ideas
- Diversify work force
- Shoot for the stars

Incentives

- Award-based
 - Advancement
 - Time Off
 - Monetary
 - Yearly Innovation Award
 - Other
- Recognition-based
 - Professional
 - Public



Creativity

- Reinvigorate Idea Lab
 - Increase accessibility and visibility
- Innovation Sessions
 - Brown Bag
 - Webinar
- Establish Innovation Champion group
 - Champion at each center
- Innovation Competition



Creativity

- Outreach
 - Public Idea Lab
 - School / College Outreach

**Facing Tomorrow's Challenges
requires innovation today!**

Effective Tools Used

- 5 Ys & A How
- Stick 'Em Up Brainstorming
- Dictionary
- Brain Writing for Introverts
- Visual Explorer
- Whack Pack

Personal Takeaways

- SWH – Using *Jumping Mouse* type story to understand where people are at.
- BGW – How powerful a diverse team can be. How important it is to let conversations wander when generating ideas/diverging.
- CP – The value of approaching a problem from different directions even if it sounded crazy at the time.

Personal Takeaways

- SW – A simple collaborative exercise like Dictionary can nurture alignment of perspectives that generates a shared solution.
- TD – This has reinforced my belief in the power of teams. I was really impressed by how effective some of the tools we used were.