

How to

Facilitate Collaboration,

a report from



sweet water

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN WATERSHEDS TRUST, INC.

with input from

**the Sweet Water
Science and Policy
Advisory Committees**

For successful collaborative watershed project implementation to occur, there needs to be leadership and facilitation. Without these components, efforts at collaboration can fall apart due to a lack of direction and focus.

Because duties assigned to a leader and facilitator are distinct, often two separate entities will fill the roles.

Facilitator

- Contributes **process** and **structure** to collaboration
- Is **neutral** or has no stake in results of the collaboration
- Supports collaboration to **achieve the goals of the group** members
- Moves collaborative efforts along **efficiently** and **maintains the focus** of the group

Leader

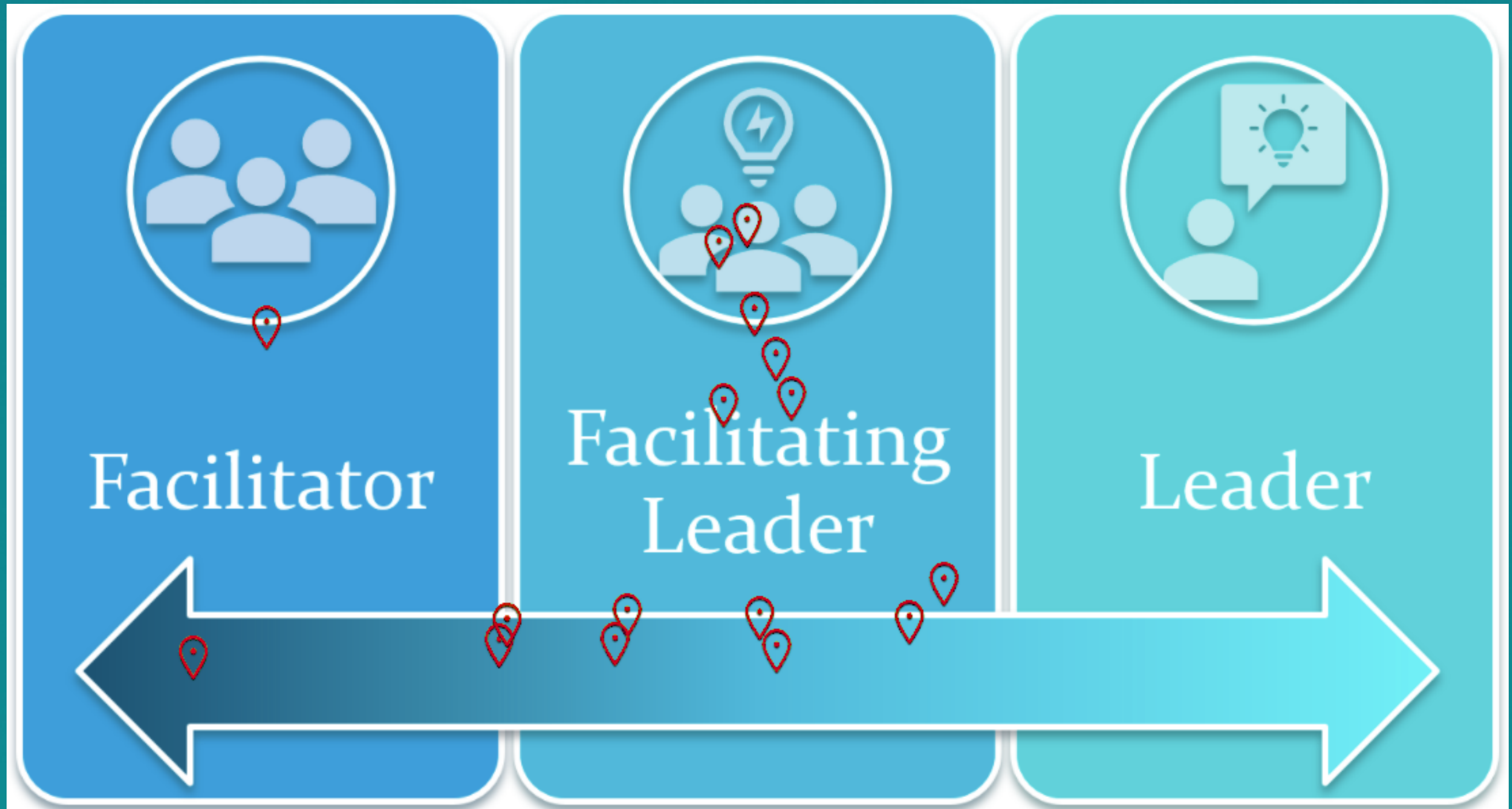
- Contributes direction, **defining the purpose, goals, and objective** of the collaboration
- Is the **content expert** for the desired outcome
- Is **accountable for implementation** of the desired outcome
- **Initial convener** of the collaboration

Sometimes, an entity can straddle these roles, fulfilling some of the duties of each. This type of role is that of a **facilitating leader**.

A facilitating leader has a stake in the outcome of the collaboration, but uses facilitation strategies to ensure that all group priorities are considered and that goals are decided upon via consensus. This role might be the initial convener of the effort and may define the direction, but relies on the group to implement the outcomes.

When asked where Sweet Water's role should fall on a spectrum with the role of facilitator on one end, leader on the other, and facilitating leader in the middle, most stakeholders agreed that Sweet Water should be in the role of facilitating leader (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Sweet Water's Role



Importantly, this means that others must step up to take on some responsibilities that Sweet Water cannot fulfill. That is why Sweet Water is creating this guide- to facilitate collaboration and "train" leaders where we cannot be involved. Stakeholders interested in implementing watershed projects need to be able to assess if and when a collaborative process is needed, who needs to be involved, and what resources need to be secured to ensure success

This assessment begins with five basic questions:

- 1.) Is broad buy-in of stakeholders important to the success of the project?
- 2.) Does a single agency have clear jurisdiction over the area where projects will be prioritized and implemented?
- 3.) Are there resources to implement the findings of collaborative decision making?
- 4.) Are there inter-stakeholder disagreements that are likely to impede the ability of necessary parties to collaborate?
- 5.) Is there sufficient time to be inclusive before implementation is necessary?

This assessment was modeled on an assessment in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office for Coastal Management's **Planning and Facilitating Collaborative Meetings** guide. The answers to the questions in this analysis help to identify if additional analysis, resource development, or targeted consultation should occur before collaboration to prepare for implementation of integrated watershed projects begins (Figure 2).

With multiple landowners and permit holders in nearly all of the Greater Milwaukee watersheds, there is need for broad buy-in to delist impaired waterbodies. The third, fourth, and fifth questions, however, may give pause to stakeholders. On the next pages of this document, categorized resources, barriers, and timelines to consider before moving forward with collaborative efforts are outlined.

Figure 2: Assessing Collaborative Potential

Is broad buy-in of stakeholders important to the success of the project?

Yes

No

Collaborative Process Ineffective at this Stage

Does a single agency have clear jurisdiction over the area where projects will be prioritized and implemented?

No

Yes

Collaborative Process Ineffective at this Stage

Are there resources to implement the findings of collaborative decision making?

Yes

No

Collaborative Process Ineffective at this Stage

Are there inter-stakeholder disagreements that are likely to impede the ability of necessary parties to collaborate?

No

Yes

Collaborative Process Ineffective at this Stage

Is there sufficient time to be inclusive before implementation is necessary?

Yes

No

Collaborative Process Ineffective at this Stage

Collaborative Process Effective at this Stage

What resources are important to secure to facilitate collaborative decision making?

Funding:

- For specific projects
- For developing an adaptive management framework
- That is monitored at different scales to track project progress

Political Buy-In:

- To committing financial resources to watershed projects
- From city councils, county boards, other units of government

Leadership Make-Up:

- Include experts with knowledge from past projects
- Include experienced stakeholders

Supportive Stakeholders:

- With clear roles/responsibilities
- That take ownership of tasks
- That are organized by a clear organizational chart
- That trust local authorities with land use decisions
- That engage in clear and consistent communication
- Demonstrate to uninvolved stakeholders that improvements are being achieved

What are barriers to facilitating collaboration between key stakeholders?

Knowledge:

- Misunderstanding of/Lack of knowledge about
 - water quality needs
 - impact of pollutant source type
 - partners' resources & capabilities
 - overlapping goals between stakeholders/projects
 - credit generation & sharing process/qualifications
- Lack of understanding from crucial stakeholders such as business owners, residents, and elected officials
- Poor communication during project planning

Culture/Ideals:

- Divides
 - rural communities/urban communities
 - communities with historic disputes
 - republican elected officials/democratic elected officials
 - resident priorities/municipal priorities
 - municipal priorities/regulatory requirements
- Differing opinions of appropriate resource allocation amounts, priorities, and locations
- Political boundaries not aligned with watershed boundary

Resources:

- Inability/limited ability to share costs
- Inability/limited ability to invest funds outside of municipal boundaries
- Limited staff time
- Many other things funded by taxes
- Lack of individual leader/champion

What are timelines to consider before collaborating with key stakeholders?

Financial cycles:

- Grant cycles (annual/biannual)
- Annual budgeting cycles:
 - Governmental (Federal, state, local, etc.)
 - Commercial/Private Sector
- Long-term budget cycles:
 - Capital Improvement Plans

Political cycles:

- Elections
- Commission and board meeting schedules

Other considerations:

- Extra time that will be needed for larger and more complex projects
- Long legal time-frames

After the assessment is completed and if a watershed is ready for collaborative efforts at implementing a watershed project, the next step is to begin creating a list of potential entities to be involved with the process. The following page contains potential stakeholders to include, and subsequent pages include exercises to assess which stakeholders are the most important to involve.

Potential stakeholders to include in collaboration:

Government/Quasi-Governmental:

- Federal agencies (esp. when federal funds are involved)
- State government agencies such as WDNR
- County government departments such as LWCDs (Land and Water Conservation Departments)
- County supervisors and executives
- Municipal leaders and administrators
- Parks & Recreation/Public Works directors
- Municipal engineering staff
- Intergovernmental coordinator
- Watershed utility leaders
- MMSD

Businesses:

- Developers
- Chambers of commerce
- Companies that need to meet regulatory requirements
- Corporate sustainability directors
- BIDs/NIDs (Business/Neighborhood Improvement Districts)

Educators/Academics:

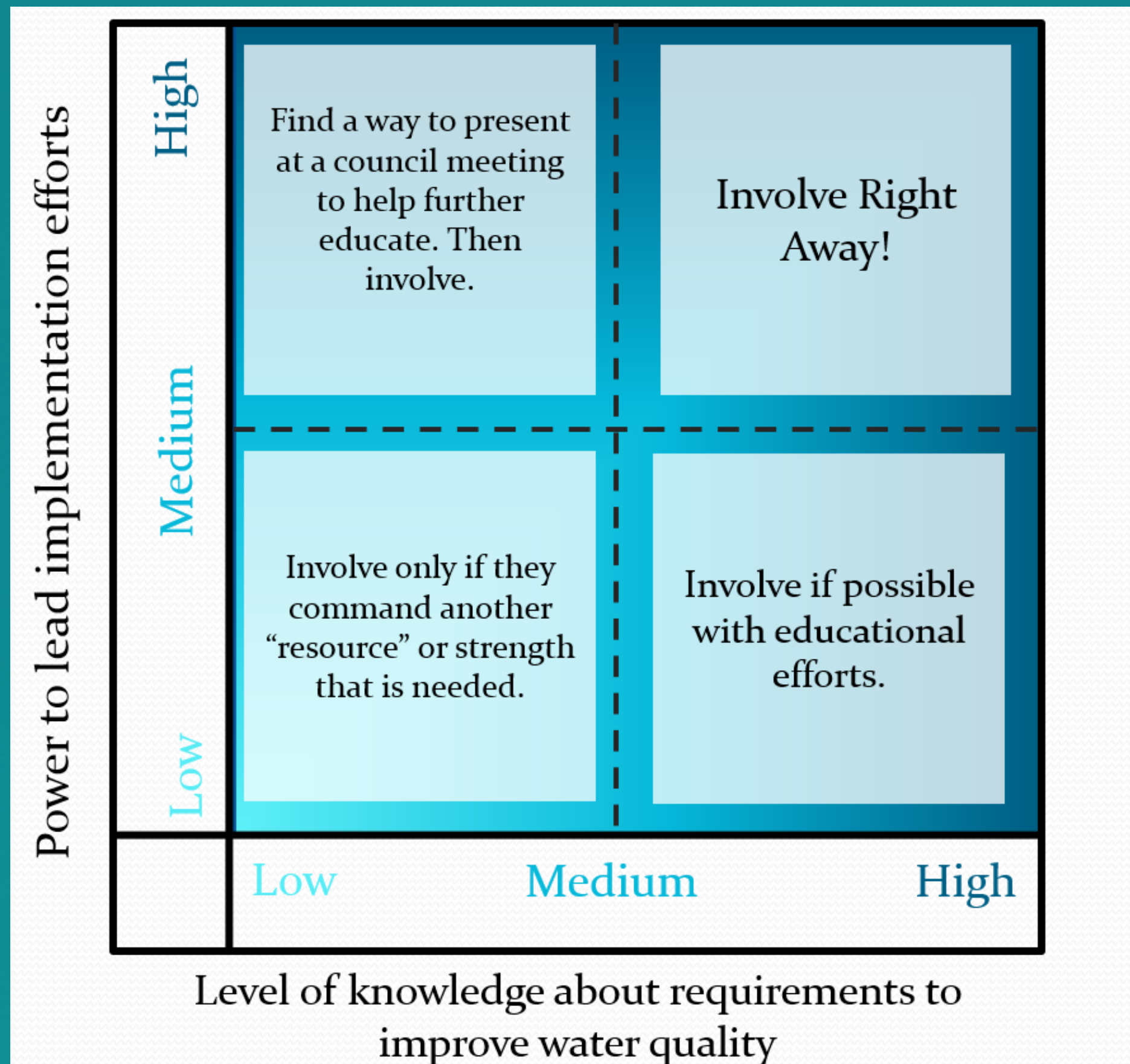
- Teachers/educators
- Natural history experts
- Natural area coordinators
- Monitoring experts
- Biodiversity experts

Other Stakeholders:

- Property owners
- Farmers/farm groups
- Local neighborhood groups
- Local NGOs
- Solicited independent citizens
- Citizen monitors
- Statisticians
- Community development directors

Assessing potential stakeholders using stakeholder mapping:

Figure 3: Stakeholder Mapping Exercise



What are other axes that could be applied to a stakeholder mapping assessment?

- Ability to fundraise/write grants
- Access to resources
- Ability/willingness to problem solve
- Technical expertise
- Recognition as an influential community leader
- Past experience with collaborative relationships/projects
- Local habitat knowledge
- Planning knowledge/expertise
- Knowledge of local economic landscape