

USGS Leadership 201  
July 17 – 21, 2017  
Action Learning Scenario #1

- Title of Action Learning Scenario – Becoming a smaller more nimble organization
  - Champion – Mike Tupper
  - Sponsor – Dan Hippe
  - Coach – Kim Miller
  - Team:
    - John Bumgarner – Albuquerque, NM
    - Shana Coulby – Reston, VA
    - Chris Laveau – Grand Forks, ND
    - Vanessa Snider – Reston, VA
    - Ryan Thompson – Huron, SD
    - Amy Vandergast – San Diego, CA
  
- Tools Used:
  - Visual Explorer
  - Polarity Map
  - 6 Thinking Hats
  - Storytelling
  - Dictionary
  - Whack Pack
  - Converging Grids
  - Five Whys and a How
  - Brainstorming
  - Brainwriting
  - PMI Pillow
  
- Addressing the Issue: The USGS is shrinking. We must identify strategies to produce relevant science in a volatile funding environment.
  - We realize USGS is already reorganizing.
  - Tools are being implemented to address immediate reduction in funds.
    - VERA/VSIP
  - We focused on strategies to keep us relevant into the future.
  
- Personal takeaways
  - Vanessa – Hearing different perspectives was great.
  - Shana – Taken aback by number of ideas that could be generated. Enjoyed hearing how others interpreted things.
  - Chris – A greater understanding of myself and my role in a high functioning team. I also appreciated the role of storytelling in communicating ideas.
  - John – There are lot of really smart, talented people in the USGS. This makes it very easy to form teams in short order.

- Ryan – Enjoyed learning about the different tools. An “Aha!” moment was realizing how I go through several of the hat colors while working through developing our problem statement.
- Amy –
- Breakthrough Moments:
  - Visual Explorer
  - Converging Grids – Crazy vs. Impact – Floor Grid
  - Brainstorming – 214 sticky notes
  - Soaking

# Leadership 201

## Action Learning Scenario #1

July 17 – 21, 2017



# Team 1 - Action Learning Scenario

Title: Becoming a smaller more nimble organization

**AKA: The Incredible Shrinking USGS**

Champion: Mike Tupper

Sponsor: Dan Hippe

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Team Members:

- John Bumgarner – Albuquerque, NM
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# Addressing the Issue

- The USGS is shrinking. We must identify strategies to produce relevant science in a volatile funding environment.
  - We realize USGS is already reorganizing.
  - Tools are being implemented to address immediate reduction in funds.
  - We focused on strategies to keep us relevant into the future.



# Metrics

- Identify whether we actually have a problem.
  - Provide a means for demonstrating change.
- Use to communicate that we are an effective agency to funding partners.
- Metrics need to reflect or measure how effective we are, how relevant, and efficient.
- Simple, easily communicated metrics that tell a story.



# Workforce



- Generate a change oriented culture
- Foster an environment where we are able to quickly hire a flexible workforce composed of generalists, broad thinkers.
  - Cross-train existing workforce.
  - Continue to encourage cross boundary collaborations
  - Utilize recent graduate program for quicker hiring



# Outreach



- Try to make sure we are doing best job possible to ensure public sees how important we are so the base doesn't continue to shrink.
- Be of value to the public so funds aren't reduced
- Increase outreach events to schools to inform the next generation of tax payers.
  - Develop a line of products/toys for sharing our science or engaging children.
- Build outreach into project budgets.
- Create a “marketing” division to work with outreach.
  - People hired into positions will be people with degrees in business marketing.
  - Increase presence on social media
  - Better website
  - Share high profile projects to gain audience
  - Apps





- Encourage, reward, and highlight innovation
  - Can drive cost savings; Increase relevancy
- Invest in one “wild” idea per Mission Area/Program/Center.
- Science Nomads
  - Like traveling nurses
- Change “agents” – staff that are specifically tasked with implementing suggestions or innovations. Follow through on “idea labs”



Innovation

# Priorities

- Use an integrative priority tool that is transparent across the bureau/mission areas.
  - Priority “buckets” – For example
    - Priority 1 – Administrative Priorities
    - Priority 2 – Congressional Priorities
    - Priority 3 – Long term projects ....
- Identify core research topics and make sure everyone knows what they are so we can focus.
- Focus and promote core work while also fostering innovation

# Integrated Priority List Example....

U.S. Geological Survey FY 2018 - 2022 Integrated Priority List (IPL) (dollars in thousands)										
Mission Area	Subprogram	Activity/Line Item	Description	Priority Grouping	Package #	FY 18	FY 19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22
Water Resources	Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program	Streamgages	Monitor 8,200 streamgages	1	1 of 2	+35,516	+37,478	+37,576	+40,057	+41,097
Science Support	Science Support	Streamgages	Science support for streamgages	1	2 of 2	+28,535	+26,681	+24,647	+23,169	+23,767
Ecosystems	Status and Trends	Harmful Algal Blooms	Monitoring, assessment, and metagenomics of algal species and toxins contributing to the incidence and severity of harmful algal blooms to improve management practices for farming and land management.	1	1 of 3	+20,000	+20,000	+98,653	+129,831	+117,862
Minerals, and Environmental Health	Toxic Substances Hydrology Program	Harmful Algal Blooms	Continue to develop and apply new methods to forecast, detect, predict extent of, and help understand health implications of toxins produced by harmful algal blooms.	1	2 of 3	+56,589	+50,240	+52,238	+46,245	+46,436
Science Support	Science Support	Harmful Algal Blooms	Science support for harmful algal blooms	1	3 of 3	+6,184	+6,546	---	---	---
Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....	Etc....
<b>90% Working Target</b>						<b>146,824</b>	<b>140,945</b>	<b>213,114</b>	<b>239,302</b>	<b>229,162</b>
Ecosystems	Status and Trends	Harmful Algal Blooms	Monitoring, assessment, and metagenomics of algal species and toxins contributing to the incidence and severity of harmful algal blooms to improve management practices for farming and land management.	4	1 of 3	+20,000	+20,000	+98,653	+129,831	+117,862
Minerals, and Environmental Health	Toxic Substances Hydrology Program	Harmful Algal Blooms	Continue to develop and apply new methods to forecast, detect, predict extent of, and help understand health implications of toxins produced by harmful algal blooms.	4	2 of 3	+56,589	+50,240	+52,238	+46,245	+46,436
Science Support	Science Support	Harmful Algal Blooms	Science support for harmful algal blooms	4	3 of 3	+6,184	+6,546	---	---	---
<b>10% Decrement</b>						<b>+82,773</b>	<b>+76,786</b>	<b>+150,891</b>	<b>+176,076</b>	<b>+164,298</b>
<b>100% Working Target</b>						<b>+229,597</b>	<b>+217,731</b>	<b>+364,005</b>	<b>+415,378</b>	<b>+393,460</b>
<b>Deferred Items</b>										
Water Resources	Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program	Streamgages	Nice to do....	Deferred	1 of 2	+35,516	+37,478	+37,576	+40,057	+41,097
Science Support	Science Support	Streamgages	Nice to do....	Deferred	2 of 2	+28,535	+26,681	+24,647	+23,169	+23,767
<b>Deferred Items Total</b>						<b>64,051</b>	<b>64,159</b>	<b>62,223</b>	<b>63,226</b>	<b>64,864</b>

# Reorganization/Business Model

- We recognize that USGS already has a proposed reorganization in place. How can we improve within that structure?
  - Make all centers like water centers?
    - Predominately reimbursable with matching funds
  - Identify where we overlap with other agencies (tell no one). Consider phasing out these functions (in USGS or in the other agency).



# Personal Takeaways

- Vanessa – Hearing different perspectives was great.
- Shana – Taken aback by number of ideas that could be generated. Enjoyed hearing how others interpreted things.
- Chris – A greater understanding of myself and my role in a high functioning team. I also appreciated the role of storytelling in communicating ideas.
- John – There are lot of really smart, talented people in the USGS. This makes it very easy to form teams in short order.
- Ryan – Enjoyed learning about the different tools. An “Aha!” moment was realizing how I go through several of the hat colors while working through developing our problem statement.
- Amy – Spend 95% of the time figuring out what the problem is, 5% on the solution.

# Tools Used

- Visual Explorer
- Polarity Map
- 6 Thinking Hats
- Storytelling
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# Breakthrough Moments

- Visual Explorer
- Converging Grids – Crazy vs. Impact – Floor Grid



- Brainstorming – 214 sticky notes
- Soaking