Coordination is a two-way street

By Felice Pace

Siskiyou County Supervisors Armstrong, Cook, Kobseff and Bennett appear to be obsessed with what they call "coordination". Every time this bunch addresses an issue it seems that they complain about some other government destroying Siskiyou County's economy and way of life by failing to "coordinate" with them.

The latest example comes from Supervisor Marcia Armstrong writing in the March 8th issue of the **Scott Valley View**. In this rant Armstrong focuses on the planning rule which the Forest Service is developing to guide a new round of National Forest Plans. She tells us that the draft new regulation "proposes to change the old rule requiring 'coordination' with local government and replace them (sic) with provisions more in the nature of 'collaborative participation' in forest planning." Armstrong then goes on to complain that the Forest Service refuses to come into consistency with Siskiyou County's Land and Resource Management Plan.

These statements indicate that Armstrong is confused about both the new planning rule and the nature of *coordination*.

The proposed new National Forest Planning Rule would require the Forest Service to engage in cross-boundary planning in order to address landscape level issues like wildfire, water quality and climate change. Whether we call that "coordination" or "collaboration" it will surely require that different levels of government, private owners and public interest groups work together. You can find out what the Forest Service has to say about the new "All Lands" planning approach at: http://planningrule.blogs.usda.gov/2010/07/16/all-lands-approach/

Why is Armstrong unhappy with a rule that appears to provide precisely what she and her colleagues have been loudly demanding for years? To find out, let's explore what "coordination" means to most folks and what it means to this group of supervisors.

Here's the most common dictionary definition –

> Coordination: *1. the act or action of coordinating; 2. the harmonious functioning of parts for effective results.*

The definition tells us that coordination requires cooperation – it is a two-way street. It is NOT a process by which other governments accept the Siskiyou County Supervisors' ideas – or their plans – as the ultimate authority on all land and resource decisions. That approach is properly called "control" and – judging from their behavior – control is what Armstrong, Cook, Kobseff and Bennett really want.

A week prior to Armstrong's rant, her side-kick Ric Costalles wrote about the Siskiyou Supervisor's desire to engage in artificial Coho propagation. A large delegation including two supervisors and Farm Bureau representatives travelled to Washington State to learn about an effort which Costalles tells us was only possible because of a collaboration of tribal, state and county officials. Ric quotes one of the Siskiyou Farm Bureau folks as approving of artificially propagating Coho: "Growing things is what we do."

Indeed, the approach of Siskiyou County's agricultural leaders from when the Coho were first listed has been that Coho do not need either water or healthy stream habitats. These folks believe that if we want Coho we should just raise them like corn or alfalfa.

Armstrong and Costales want to "coordinate" with the tribes on Coho recovery. But by that they mean the tribes going along with Supervisor/Farm Bureau ideas on how to provide for Coho and other Salmon. Meanwhile, Armstrong, Cook, Kobseff and Bennett oppose the tribes on every issue of import including regulations for suction dredging and the future of PacifiCorp's Klamath River dams.

There are six federally recognized tribes in the Klamath River Basin. Starting upriver these are – the Klamath Tribes (which includes Klamath, Modoc and Yahooksin people), the Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, the Karuk Tribe, the Hoopa Tribe, the Resighini Rancheria and the Yurok Tribe. There are other tribal groups in the Basin but these other groups are not recognized as governments by the feds or the State of California.

Since white Europeans first came to this continent they have been trying to get the original inhabitants to embrace European ways. That policy has been a failure. Siskiyou County-style "coordination" is unlikely to appeal to peoples who only lately gained some control over their own destiny.

Real coordination - *the harmonious functioning of parts for effective results* - requires the development of relationships characterized by Respect – with give as well as take. Judging from their words and their deeds, Supervisors Armstrong, Cook, Kobseff and Bennett are only interested in taking, that is, in control. They have yet to learn what real coordination means.