

Strengthen Your Organization's Networks

ACTIVITY: A 15-minute practice to strengthen your organization's networks

As impact-driven leaders, we are trained to power map to achieve our outcomes. This is typically focused on identifying deciders for the issues we care about and identifying how we can influence them. But there is another set of relationships that's essential for your organizations' success- this is the network of connections that provide the information, resources and relationships that will help you and your organization mitigate risks, endure and sustain and vision forward. For example, TREC has been in informal networks with peer organizations such as Rockwood, Compasspoint, Sustainability Network, River Network etc. This has enabled us to share important information about current trends, upcoming threats and also leverage new opportunities together. On our Board, we recently had a new member join who works for BC Parks, and is able to give us up to date context and history on the general state of public lands in the BC region. These connections are not about influencing a decision-maker, but have supported TREC to have better context for our decision-making, leverage opportunities and anticipate and navigate threats.

Articulating a simple and realistic network building strategy for your organization can be accomplished by 1) intentionally naming the relationships you want to cultivate and 2) deciding how you will build the relationship and at what frequency you'll be in contact.

At your next staff meeting, take 15 minutes to do the following:

Share the following questions ahead of the meeting with staff (feel free to tailor them to your specific organization's needs).

Take 5 minutes to solo journal on the following questions:

- What 1-2 relationships do you want to intentionally cultivate this year:
 - Within your organization?
 - Outside of your organization?
- Why do you want to support this connection?

- What can each of you gain by being connected?
- Will this provide information, thought partnership, potential resources, new opportunities, or collaborations that are greater than what you could accomplish alone?
- What do you want this relationship to look/feel like? [OR What will indicate you've succeeded?]
- How will you cultivate this? (Be specific about the actions you will take and their frequency)

After journaling, break into groups and talk about the **external** relationships you'd like to cultivate.

Return to the whole group and have all staff share their external relationships. This can be done in-person or if you are meeting virtually in the chat. If staff share the same person or organization they'd like to build a relationship with- have them work together or tag-team.

Put time on your calendar to check in on these relationships quarterly. You can even offer a prize or recognition at the end of the year for the most transformational relationship or impactful partnership that was developed.