

Wrap Up

“Can We Get There From Here?”

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Today’s presentation showed how concepts such as Knowledge, Cooperation, Reeducation and Reconceptualization, if implemented in the real world, could help transform attitudes in such a way as to make it possible to believe that we could achieve our goal of a different vision for the future development of the Western Reserve.

The concept of how Knowledge can be used in the real world emerged from several presentations, but is best exemplified by those presented by Joe Cline, Mike Lyon, Amalie Lipstreu and Kirby Date. These presentations showed how both new and existing knowledge can be used to lay the groundwork for achieving a change in attitudes. Joe’s and Mike’s demonstration of how GIS technology can create maps and other data that bring new knowledge to bear on problems shows that such information can refocus policy debates. Amalie’s and Kirby’s presentations showed how existing knowledge – of entrepreneurial farming and conservation development -- can be disseminated so as to raise awareness about options that have proved successful elsewhere.

Rich Cochran and Joe Keiper demonstrated how Cooperation among existing organizations allows for achievements that would have been impossible had each organization continued working in isolation. The models they’ve developed for cooperation in land conservancy and species reintroduction should not be viewed through the narrow lens of these specific accomplishments. Rather, the real lesson to be gained from their work is that by cooperating we can achieve far more than would be possible from each organization’s individual efforts. At the same time, their presentations made clear that the process of achieving cooperation is not easily done and requires commitment and good faith and endurance among all concerned.

We learned about the value of efforts at Reeducation and Reconceptualization from Pat Lowry and Paul Alsenas. Pat, spoke about the Western Reserve Heritage Study

Act on behalf of Congressman Tim Ryan, and Paul described the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's Cuyahoga Valley Initiative. But these two efforts, one at the federal level the other county, show how our sense of the Western Reserve and the Cuyahoga Valley can be changed positively by a process of reeducation regarding "place-making" that allows us to reconceptualize these as special places worthy of preservation and conservation efforts.

What these different efforts and techniques ultimately can achieve is a Transformation of how we view the Western Reserve. A Transformation of our attitude toward the land from seeing it solely as an instrument to achieve whatever economic or utilitarian goals we may have to one where we perceive that the land has value in and of itself. A Transformation from seeing the land as suitable for development that could be placed anywhere to one where we can see a fundamental value in the land conveying to us, and hopefully our descendants, a real sense of place.