



# E-PARCC

## COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Syracuse University

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

## To Collaborate...or Not?

### SIMULATION

#### Summary

Collaboration can be a smart leadership and management strategy, yet it is not always wise. This simple 7 person simulation is designed to help participants think through whether to collaborate or not, and if yes, with whom. It may be used solo in executive training or embedded in a semester-long course. It is appropriate for courses on collaboration, collaborative problem solving, collaborative governance, public management, conflict resolution and negotiation. It may be distributed early to provide participants a chance to prepare in advance, or it may be passed out on the spot with participants being given 10-15 minutes to think through their strategy. The scenario involves a farm that is for sale. Each of the 7 participants, including public officials, developers, and a non-governmental organization (NGO), has a different interest in the farm. There are variations in motivation and imbalances of power among participants. Common instructions for all participants are provided that explain why the land is for sale, what the owner hopes to get out of selling, and a map to help everyone understand the lay of the land. In addition, there are individual confidential instructions for each of the seven players that add new issues to weigh and some surprising secret facts. The teaching note offers PowerPoint slides that present “The 10 Most Compelling Ideas in Collaboration Today”, and set the stage for the “Collaborate or Not” simulation, then debrief the simulation.

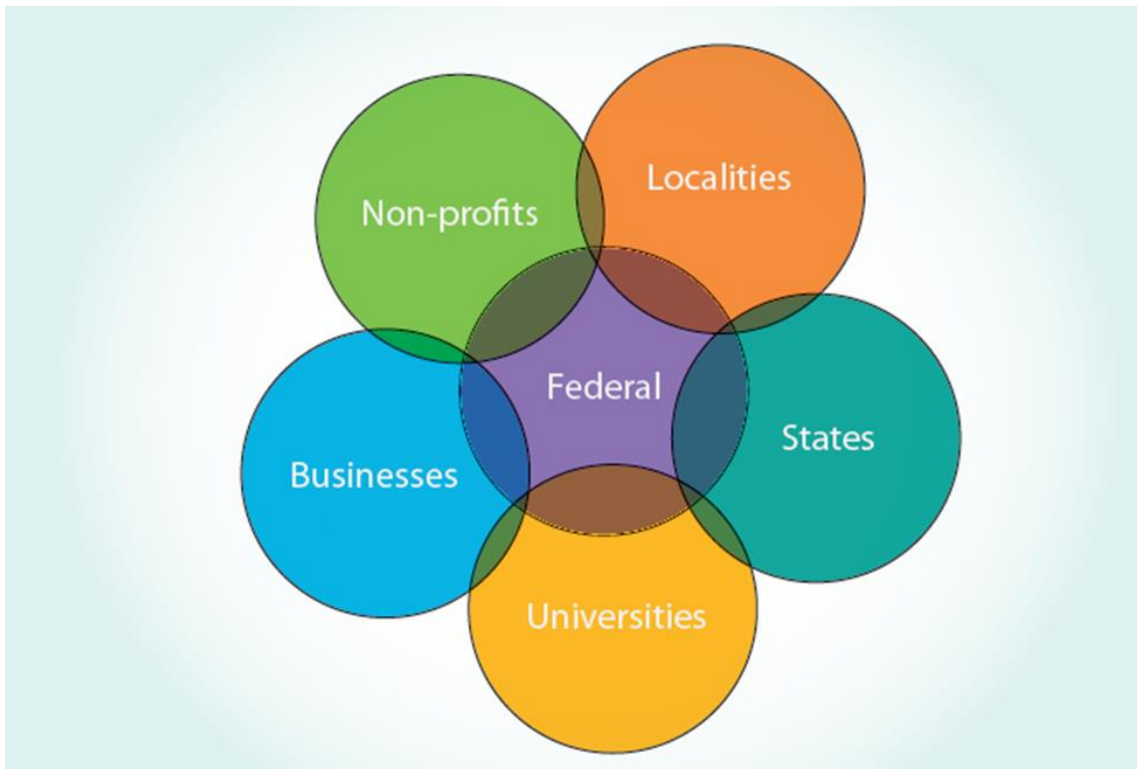
This simulation was an honorable mention place winner in E-PARCC’s 2014-15 “Collaborative Public Management, Collaborative Governance, and Collaborative Problem Solving” teaching case and simulation competition. It was double-blind peer reviewed by a committee of academics and practitioners. It was written by Rosemary O’Leary of the University of Kansas School of Public Affairs. This simulation is intended for classroom discussion and is not intended to suggest either effective or ineffective handling of the situation depicted. It is brought to you by E-PARCC, part of the Syracuse University Maxwell School’s Collaborative Governance Initiative, a subset of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). This material may be copied as many times as needed as long as the authors are given full credit for their work.

This packet contains:

(1) Common instructions for all

(2) Individual, confidential instructions for:

- The Farmer
- The Local Public University
- The Conservationist/NGO
- The Developer
- The State Government – Parks and Recreation
- The Federal Government – Army Corps of Engineers
- The County Administrator



## Common Instructions for All

Instructions: Read the following abbreviated case concerning the sale of a farm, as well as your private background information. Discuss with those in your assigned group. **Think strategically:** Do you collaborate or not? If yes, with whom? If no, why not? What went into your analysis? Be prepared to explain your decision.

Background: A farmer, Rosie O’Grady, is about to retire and wants to sell her farm to pay off her decades-old student loans, set up a trust for the Girls’ Sports Foundation, and endow a faculty chair in non-profit management at the local public university. For convenience sake, she would like to sell the farm to a single purchaser. The farm covers 1,850 acres, including 950 acres of prime crop land, 600 acres of pasture, 100 acres of woods, 100 acres of marsh/wetlands, a 30 acre area containing various farm buildings including a 120 year old farmhouse, and several large garden areas making up the additional 70 acres where Ms. O’Grady had pursued her hobbies of planting butterfly gardens and bird watching. The east side of the farm borders a county road. The west side of the farm borders a river. Across the river is Army Corps of Engineers flood plain property. The state has proposed a state park immediately north of the O’Grady property. (See map.)

The farm lies 10 miles from the county seat of Lawrence (population 80,000). The town recently won a contract with a large international corrugated box manufacturer to construct a new factory on the opposite side of town from the farm. The new factory will result in many new jobs, with as many as 2000 new people expected to move into town. The factory will begin production in 18 months. A developer sees a potential subdivision on the O’Grady property.

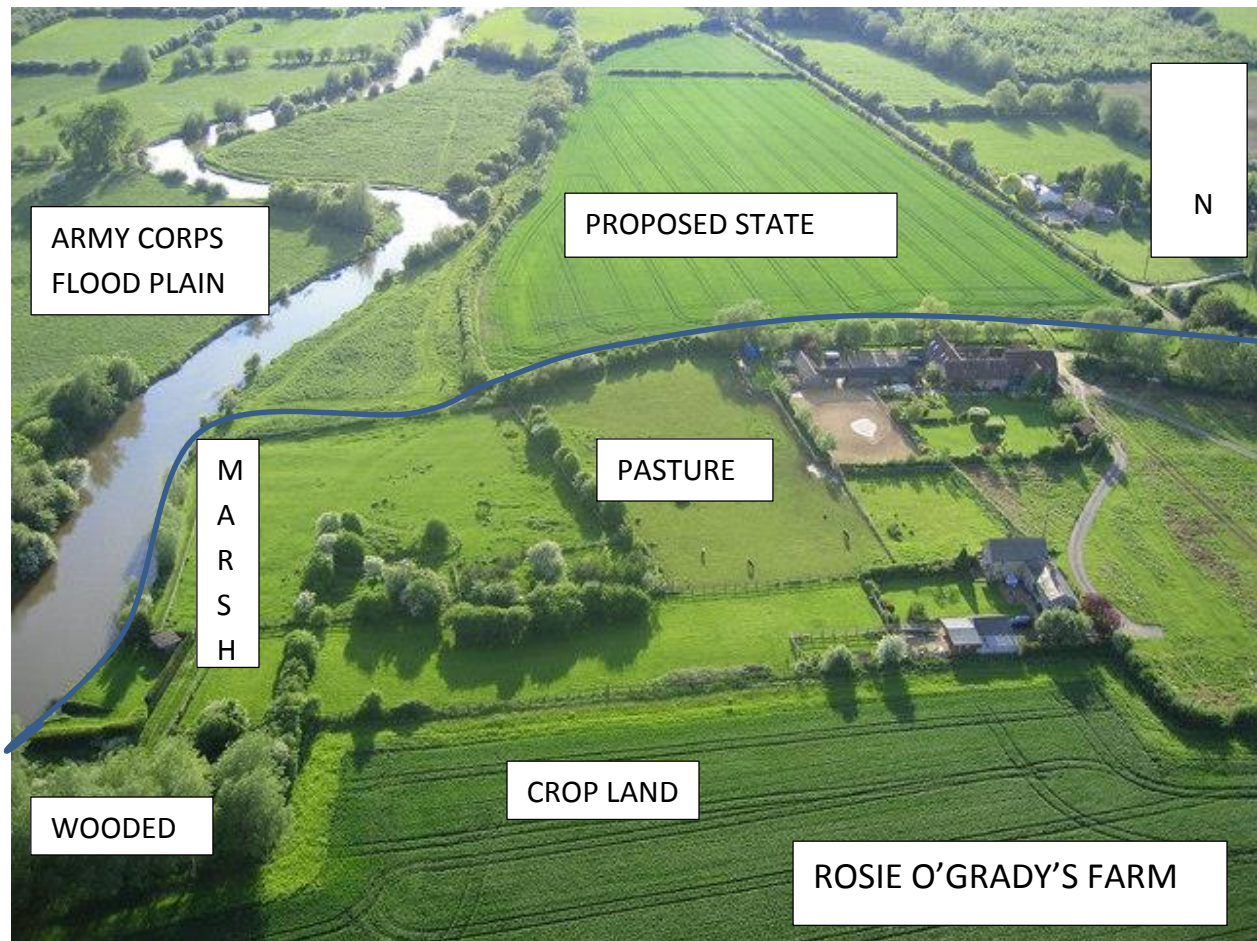
Rosie O’Grady would like to complete the sale as soon as possible. She has already sold all her farm equipment and livestock and only has to dispose of the land and the various buildings including the family home. Her plan is to move into town, although all of her family lives far away. She hopes the local extension service will hire her to teach people how to make butterfly gardens. She also plans to volunteer with the Audubon Society taking people on bird-watching hikes.

You are one of the following potential collaborators in this scenario:

- The Farmer
- The County Administrator
- The Conservationist/NGO
- The Developer
- The Local Public University

- The Federal Government – Army Corps of Engineer
- The State Government – Parks and Recreation

Now read your confidential instructions. Based on your vantage point, do you collaborate or not? Why or why not?



## **Confidential Instructions for the Farmer**

You are the farmer. You have received an offer of \$3,000,000 from an out of town developer for your land. None of your friends in town have heard much about this developer, although the feed store operator has heard that the developer was involved in some big land transactions in another state and has a lot of friends in the state capital.

Although the farm was recently appraised at \$3,750,000 you are hoping to get as close to \$4,500,000 as you can, in order to pay off your decades-old student loans, set up a trust to encourage girls sports, endow a \$1,000,000 faculty chair in non-profit management, and have a comfortable sum for your retirement and travel.

You also have received some tentative inquiries from a local conservation group, the state Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Army Corps of Engineers about buying the farm. Many of these people are from in town, but the leaders of all three groups are out-of-towners. You are somewhat inclined toward conservationist values but aren't really sure if any one of these groups can get quickly organized. You have heard horror stories about how difficult it is to work with federal bureaucrats.

You were having dinner recently with a friend and mentioned how all these different inquiries only make you realize how sad you'll be to finally move away from the farm. But you also know that it is unreasonable to run the farm any longer, and you need the money from the sale to carry out your plans.

Do you collaborate or not? If yes, with whom?

## **Confidential Instructions for the Liaison for the Local University**

You are the liaison representing the local university. You are interested in the O'Grady farm for a track, soccer and softball facility that would meet the needs of the university, the county, and the city.

"This would address longstanding needs that we have been trying to fill for well over a decade and probably should have addressed as many as 20 years ago," said the local university athletic director.

The desired complex would feature a 1,500-seat softball stadium, a 2,500-seat soccer stadium and a track facility with the capacity to seat up to 10,000 fans. Existing facilities are substandard, and the project would ensure that the local university will be in compliance with Title IX, which guarantees gender equity in college sports.

"Even if we weren't under review, even if Title IX weren't involved, the right thing to do is to build facilities for those young women in soccer and softball that are equal to their peers" the director said. "To put it bluntly, we are not equal to our peer institutions in regards to our soccer and softball facilities."

The city of Lawrence has proposed building a recreation complex adjacent to the new facility, on the same farm land. "We have invited the city to join with us to purchase enough land that will enable them to build their recreation center on the farm we hope to purchase if it should so choose," the athletic director said. "First, because they spoke to us about a similar project about a year ago, and two, we believe it will be a more vibrant entity if we're all together and be more of an economic engine for the city."

Do you collaborate or not?

## **Confidential Instructions for the Conservationist/NGO**

You are the representative of conservation NGO. Although most of the members of this group are from the area, you are from out of town and teach ornithology at another university. You are also an avid butterfly gardener.

Your group is interested in buying the O'Grady farm from the current owner. You know that a new plant is opening in town and your group would like to keep development from hopping all over the countryside. Your group is also especially interested in protecting the marshy wetland area on the west side of the farm. It is a unique habitat for this part of the state and also supports three nesting pairs of endangered eagles.

Various state and local fundraisers, as well as a donation from an anonymous philanthropist, have netted your group \$2,000,000 toward purchasing the farm. Strenuous effort has also earned your group a matching grant from a national conservancy group of another \$1,000,000. So you now have a total of \$3,000,000 but are unlikely to be able to raise any more money in the future.

Several members of your group have heard that Rosie O'Grady is upset about having to finally sell off her farm and move to town.

Do you collaborate or not?

## **Confidential Instructions for the Developer**

You are the developer. You work for a firm whose activities are national in scope and involve land acquisition, as well as commercial and residential development. One of the directors of your firm also sits on the board of an international corrugated box manufacturer and has suggested that the development firm explore possible opportunities near the new plant site in Lawrence. A 1,850 acre farm has been discovered that would make an excellent site for housing development suitable for the homes of middle and upper management at the new plant. You have been authorized to deal with the current owner, Rosie O'Grady, and to offer as much as \$6,000,000 for her farm. Any higher price would make the farm an untenable investment for your firm. You have made an opening offer of \$3,000,000 by mail. You suspect that others – the federal government, NGOs, state and local governments, and possibly other developers – are also interested in the O'Grady land, but being an outsider you have little inside information.

Do you collaborate or not?



## **Confidential Instructions for the State Parks and Recreation Representative**

You represent the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The state has proposed a park immediately north of the O'Grady farm, but you would have to use your powers of eminent domain to obtain that land, and it would anger the current land owner. You just heard that the O'Grady land is for sale and you are interested. Your boss, the Director of Parks and Recreation, is tired of those obnoxious feds buying up land in the state and hopes to pre-empt any federal action. Your goal is more hiking trails, a dog park, a nature preserve, and a hands-on "heritage farm" to demonstrate how land was farmed years ago including butterfly gardens. You have been told you by your hunting buddy that the O'Grady land has been appraised at \$3,750,000. It would be a stretch for the state to pay that much money, but not impossible.

Do you collaborate or not?

## **Confidential Instructions for the Army Corps of Engineers**

You represent the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. You currently own 500 acres west of the river next to the O'Grady farm that is for flood protection. You think that it does not make sense to only have flood protection on one side of the river, since both sides flood. But times are tough for the U.S. federal government, and it seems impossible for you to obtain the money from Congress that you would need to buy the entire O'Grady farm. The current presidential administration has issued many edicts encouraging and mandating collaboration which it defines as two or more organizations working together to accomplish what they cannot accomplish alone. You are open to the idea of collaboration in order to solve your public policy problems, but you are not yet sure who your best collaborating partners might be.

Do you collaborate or not?

## **Confidential Instructions to the County Administrator**

You are the county administrator. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, the county is not in a position to offer Rosie O'Grady a penny for her land. You are, however, under immense pressure from many sides to take an active role in the O'Grady negotiations. On the one hand, many in the county hope that O'Grady will donate 200 acres – especially the wetlands and the wooded property - to the county for a preserve, but you have not approached Rosie O'Grady about this possibility yet. On the other hand, many in the county are excited about the tax monies that could be levied from future residents if the land is developed. There is a possibility that you can obtain a tax cut for the developer, cultivate other incentives for the developer, or commit to county upkeep of a park. You do not have final decision-making authority, however. Anything you negotiate in a collaborative meeting would have to be approved by the County Commission and must be in the public interest.

Do you collaborate or not?