This presentation will explore what is meant by “collaborative governance,” and discuss the challenges and opportunities it raises. The problems confronting modern society are complex and multi-faceted, and as such, do not lend themselves to simple solutions or linear decision-making. As such, they are beyond the reach of governments alone to address. At a minimum, what is required is the involvement, commitment and ingenuity of multiple stakeholders. Increasingly, this is brought about by networks which bring together key players searching for solutions to public policy issues. However, networks bring about their own set of challenges. Differing viewpoints and personalities, and more fundamentally, conflicting interests, need to be acknowledged and reconciled. Yet without the involvement of the relevant parties, “solutions” that emerge will likely be partial, distorted, and short-lived. We will review what we know, and what we don’t know, about this model of governance.

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