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1) In Brunner's opinion what is or are the problem(s) with governance?

Americans have lost faith in government's capacity to solve the most important problems, due to: The inability to act – which Brunner refers to as gridlock, and the inability to adapt, change, innovate, which he calls demoscclerosis. Single-issue politics have also become a factor, with malignant special interest groups putting undue pressure on politicians. These three factors culminate in members of Congress' inability to effectively do their jobs. Government has become representative of the big interest groups, not "the people" it was intended for. Interest groups and lobbies are inherent in a democratic system.

2) What in Brunner's opinion are the current trends with respect to governance? There has been a trend towards a disconnect between Washington and the rest of the country. Along with that is the trend towards isolation, with each associating with others in their party or along interest group lines. Federal bureaucracy and the number of government agencies have increased. Politically mobilized civilians and professional interest groups create conflicting pressures for politicians to manage. It is increasingly difficult to determine what is the true "public interest". These interest groups participate in a wide range of pressure tactics, from mild harassment to political slander.

Overlapping Federal programs result in multiple agencies occasionally being involved with one resource (such as the Bison along the Montana border). This overlap can result in conflicting mandates and discordant goals, as illustrated. The complexity of issues and volume of information is taxing on politicians, requiring them to master large amounts of diverse information.

Frustration with current processes and policies gives rise to community-based initiatives, which Brunner thinks have potential to work for both the greater good and change. Community-based initiatives have the advantages of local knowledge, accountability, and a vested interest in success. Brunner seems to be in favor of these local groups. He invalidates the criticisms of illegality, under representation, and unwarranted redistribution of power.

3) What in Brunner's opinion should our goal be with respect to governance? In terms of natural resources, Brunner is an advocate of using community-based initiatives to improve natural resource policy and governance on the behalf of common interests. In a grander sense, the goal is to adapt the established structures of governance to better serve the population (reducing redundancy, making better policies, etc.).

4) Do these themes resonate with you? If so, how? If not, why? While Brunner's views on community-based initiatives do make sense, there should be balance. Many of these local interest groups are on the fringe of normal society and would be out of control without good laws protecting society from their behavior. I grew up in a rural area where communities banded together to make necessary policy changes, and the County and State governments were receptive. So I think local advocacy works in some cases, but runs the risk of being just another interest group with fanatical ideals.