

EAC Notes Group Four White

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS DURING DISCUSSION

(These are not grouped by subject but are in rough order of the discussion.)

Process must have diversity, be broad-based.

Process needs to be based on stakeholder values. This will allow greater buy-in of the negotiating process and the results.

Engagement of members is a key to achieving outcomes.

What method of decision should be used? ... More weight to experts? Public hearings? Surveys? Something else?

DNRE struggles with poorly written statutes and rules both state and federal that restrict department options.

Question is how to maximize use of resources while minimizing impacts.

Should there be public forums to find out what's important to people?

Need to focus on greatest areas of concern. Don't forget fed funds create obligations and requirements. Focus state funding on greatest area of concern.

Nudge behavior through incentives i.e. air fees but make sure to keep a stable base platform. As air pollution drops, revenue from fees drop and program resources are impacted.

Federal government is major player. Lock out or set aside fed-funded program which the Legislature can't affect and work on what's left over.

Fed funds outputs, not outcomes. Fed doesn't pay for research and education.

Permits do help drive outcomes. Setting aside federal mandates leaves us with a small piece of the pie.

Fed funds only touch on a part of what can be done. Lack of GF/GP money means much goes undone. Has to be a different way to talk/fund what we should be doing such as research.

Michigan was once a leader in environmental protection whose advice was sought by other states. Now not even sending people to national conferences.

Times are different. We're a barebones state and will be one for many years.

Need to talk about what we can do minus the federal programs.

Wetlands program has goal on no net loss. This means we evaluate by acres, not quality of wetlands.

It's about beans, not quality.

Need to focus on quality, what values are important to protect and restore.

What is the role now played by the Citizens' Advisory Councils? Who? How many? What process?

Legislature doesn't understand what goes into making permit decisions, time involved, information needed, time and money spent on making the decision.

Why was the UP CAC created in the first place?

Deer issues.

Can CAC model move over from natural resources to environmental protection.

CACs need to stay away from DNRE actions. No discussions of permits.

Had there been a CAC in place before Kennecott things might have gone smoother because people would have had more information.

How should the DNRE involve citizens in environmental issues? Example could we use citizens to map high quality wetlands?

Problems with training and access to private property. Environmental protection as a concept ends at my property line. Northville township sewer versus septic issue. Everyone wants clean water but people with working septic don't want to be forced to hook up to costly sewers.

Data shows Northville township septic systems not causing E. Coli problems.

DNRE has large problem citing data to justify requirements of regulations and decisions. In many cases no data, just opinion. That breeds mistrust.

Legislature creates huge problem by writing flawed laws full of vague utopian phrases that can be interpreted in many different ways and then expects DNRE to enforce. When DNRE enforces Legislature then says "that's not what we meant."

Lack of environmental literacy in Legislature and public.

Also lack of economic literacy.

Bringing together differing groups with differing opinions broadens everyone's perspective.

Diversity leads to common goals.

Use CACs to help set outcomes.

Is the resource management useable? Do we need to start there and create something similar but different?

Big driver of CAC was to regain public trust.

Issue of management versus regulation.

Broader issue of resource versus economy.

DNRE seen as job-killer.

Disparity between DNRE duty to protect environment and state interest in promoting economic development.

Not mutually exclusive. Economic development driven in part by environment.

The extent to which use of private property creates spillover effects requires regulation.

CAC valuable but only one part of matrix. Need specific interest groups who want to bring an issue forward but have to avoid domination by larger organizations.

Local chapters of state organizations can be involved in CACs.

Need to move beyond CACs to create a different model with a different name.

Does the department need to build more trust from the regulated side?

Regulated side doesn't trust department. Department doesn't trust regulated side. Need to build more trust.

New process to determine outcomes needs both trust building and interest building to create new alternatives.

Build on common understanding. Get away from doing the bare minimum and look bigger picture and longer term.

Build trust in negotiating process. That creates trust in the outcome even if there are disagreements.

Who should be on group?

Who cares enough to come into the room?

Department must select and appoint members.

Need to avoid usual suspects. Interest groups both business and environmental are not representative of the general public only a small segment of that public but too often thought to be the public.

Must be face to face meetings. All of the players desire certain outcomes. Find commonality.

Department has to have a broader-based set of outcomes to promote a sustainable economy.

Good economy allows more expenditure on environmental protection.

OK How do we get there?

WHAT:

Outcomes need to be bottom up and outside in.

Outcomes need to focus on quality, not bean counting.

Outcomes should balance environmental protection with sustainable economy.

Outcomes need to recognize the “elephant in the room” and the external constraints from that elephant.

Outcomes must establish a circle of trust.

Circle of trust includes trust in the participants, the process and the outcomes.

This will help create broadbased support for the outcomes.

Process must be fully public and transparent.

HOW:

Modify Citizens’ Advisory Council model to create ‘Small People Advisory Groups’ or SPAGs.

SPAGs must be locally based around a geographic area with common characteristics.

SPAGs geographic area cannot be too large for easy travel.

SPAGs must be diverse, balanced, have a wide variety of expertise and occupations.

SPAGs should not be based on traditional state level organized interest groups although individual members can be members of such a group.

SPAGs must be adaptive and allowed to set up their own processes that can vary from SPAG to SPAG.

Example, decisions may be made by majority vote, by consensus or by Ouija boards as the group determines.

This helps create trust in the process and the outcomes.

DNRE staff must be active participants in the SPAGS, not just sit in the peanut gallery.

SPAG meetings must be face to face (no conference calls) regular, and ongoing.

SPAGs must receive feedback from the DNRE.

SPAGS should have a flexible, adaptive agenda part set by the agency, part by local concern.

SPAGs must recognize external constraints from federal requirements.

FOLLOW-UP:

Possibly take one or two members from each SPAG to meet in higher level group to review local information and outcomes.

Larger group means larger perspective. Asthma issues important in Detroit, not so Traverse City. Traverse City concerned about dam removal, Detroit not.