

**Environmental Advisory Council
Purpose and Anticipated Outcomes of the Meeting
Ralph A. MacMullan Center
June 17, 2010**

The Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) session at the Ralph A. MacMullan (RAM) Center on Higgins Lake on June 17, 2010, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. is designed to move us forward in implementing the EAC's Roadmap. In particular, we are moving toward the development of outcomes in two ways directly tied to the EAC's 2010 charge from Director Humphries and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) transition for this year: identifying the priority subject areas for developing outcomes and recommending a process to do so.

As indicated in the Roadmap, in the long run, outcomes would serve as the foundation for guiding a number of activities in the DNRE including where funding comes from, where funding is allocated, and any number of decisions in day-to-day operations. An excellent private sector example of this was shared by the Ford Motor Company at our last meeting. Also, the DNRE's presentation on biodiversity showed how, to some extent, the DNRE is already grappling with use of outcomes. Those two presentations were designed to prepare us for our working session at the RAM Center.

We will shift from hearing from others about the dimensions of the issues to creating a functional forum for the EAC and senior staff to engage on this topic. We will facilitate this dialogue by making use of small groups to address two key questions:

1. What are the critical areas for the DNRE to initially develop outcome measures? Why are these critical areas?
2. What process should be used to develop the outcomes and who should be involved?

To help prepare us for accomplishing the meeting purpose at the RAM Center, hypothetical but realistic story problems were crafted. At the RAM Center meeting, you will be assigned to a breakout group that focuses on one of these scenarios. Breakout groups will consist of EAC members, senior DNRE managers, and some DNRE staff. Afterward, the entire group will discuss the breakout group reports. The products and learning developed through this meeting will be the basis for future discussions that will ultimately result in our final recommendations to the Director.

The day will be organized as follows:

Introduction of Processes - Jon Allan (10:00 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.)

Part 1 - Discuss Story Problem in Small Groups (10:20 a.m. to Lunch)

Luncheon

Part 2 - Prepare Report for Story Problem (12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.)

Part 3 – Task 2 - Receive Additional Instruction and Discussion (1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.)

Part 4 - Report Out and Discussion (2:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

NOTE: Although you will be assigned to a breakout group that will discuss only one of the following Story Problems, review and prepare for discussing both.

Story Problem 1

The Director of the DNRE has been asked by the Governor to gather her closest advisors to (re)envision Michigan's future landscape and the citizens' use of the environment. The Governor has come to believe that the state needs to organize environmental and resource management around a small number of highly critical focus areas. It has become well-accepted that Michigan needs to leverage its unique natural resource and environmental heritage over the long-term (the next 25 to 50 years) to its strategic social, economic, and ecological benefit. These focus areas will form the framework under which this leveraging will occur.

The Director has asked you and other close advisors to create a small but critically important annotated list of the state's and the Department's priority focus areas. The list should have five to eight focus areas each supported by a compelling reason for why you all have selected the area. The Director would also like to know, if possible, the relationships between the areas you have chosen.

From this list, the Department will organize a process to develop a specific set of agreed upon outcomes and the metrics to be used to evaluate progress toward those outcomes. Therefore, the list of focus areas must be specific enough to guide decision-making for the development of outcomes. These five to eight key focus areas should also collectively help the state's leadership guide resource and environmental decisions and actions in the state well through the century. The goal is for the state to be in a "better position" by the end of the century than is currently the case.

Note: for this portion of the exercise you are not to be constrained in your thinking by budget considerations. Budget and other constraints may be added to the activity at a later time. By way of some examples, the focus areas could be drawn from within the structure of an existing department or departmental programs (such as water quality, groundwater, contaminated sites, minerals, or forest management) within the DNRE, related to the current and future state of ecosystem structure (such as acres of forests, oil and gas extracted, or miles of flowing river) or related to ecological function (such as biodiversity and biodiversity planning, resilience, landscape intactness, gene flow on the landscape, human health, or environmental literacy).

You can also, as a group, have up to three other critical focus areas that represent areas on which you were not able to reach full consensus. You will be given a PowerPoint template to assist you in preparing your report to the full group.

Story Problem 2

The Legislature has commissioned a panel of thoughtful professionals to take a fresh look at what guides the department in framing how it goes about its business. The Legislature has expressed a willingness to rethink the funding model for the agency in its role of facilitating the "use of" and "protection of" the state's natural resources. The Legislature has come to believe that broad state-based funding for the DNRE needs to be tied to measurable progress toward achieving environmental and resource outcomes the public's perception of that progress, the manner in which the department carries out this mission and its effective stewardship of the states dollars in achieving this progress. The Legislature understands that certain trade-offs may need to be made in the development of such outcomes.

The Legislature is expressly interested in learning from this panel of environmental, scientific, business, and policy leaders as to how it would design and ultimately facilitate a process for reaching a general consensus around a set of overarching, measurable outcomes for the state related to the use and protection of natural resources and the environment.

Note: This group is not being asked to decide on what these outcomes are to be, but rather to recommend a process for identifying and developing the outcomes and their accompanying metrics to be used to assess progress towards the goals. That is you and your colleagues are being asked to design a process that would create a set of measureable outcomes. The Legislature's willingness to replace the fee-based funding model of the department with an adequate, broad-based funding model will be tied to progress in meeting the desired outcomes.

During your discussions and design framework, please think in the broadest terms about the possible set of outcomes that could emerge from the process. Remember that the outcomes will ultimately be designed in a way that can guide departmental decision-making, can be objectively measured, and allow program evaluation and improvement.

Please think about, at a minimum, the size and nature of group(s) involved in the process, decision-making structures, decision-making authority, timing, geography, and expertise, in your process design. We would expect that this process will require between 18 and 24 months to complete. You will be given a PowerPoint template to assist you in preparing your report to the full group.