



UPPER PENINSULA CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCILS CHARTER

NEED

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is “***committed to the conservation, protection, management, and accessible use and enjoyment of the state's environment, natural resources, and related economic interests for current and future generations.***” In order to carry out and fulfill that mission, the Department uses an ecosystem approach integrating biological, social, and economic factors. Sound science is critical in managing our resources, and public support of our programs is crucial to their success.

A natural outgrowth of our ecosystem-based management is to more fully involve citizens in providing input into the Department's decision making processes. Advisory councils can help the Department achieve its goals in the UP by serving two main functions: (1) providing the agency with information, ideas, emerging trends and initiatives in a setting that welcomes diverse interests, and (2) providing a vehicle for the DNRE to inform key citizens with the expectation that they will, in turn, inform the broader public. This exchange of information, ideas and opinions will identify and address potential conflicts, inform various constituencies about management of public resources, and present management choices in a broad context.

PURPOSE

Citizens' Advisory Councils (CAC) in each UP Eco Region will help the Department be more responsive. Citizen advisers can help the Department operate more efficiently and effectively within the constraints of state and federal law, Natural Resources Commission rules, Department policy, and other legally binding documents (court rulings, etc.). The primary role of the CAC is to offer informed advice to the Department to be used in establishing work priorities at the local level and to participate in honest, open, and respectful dialogue.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The CACs will advise the Department on various regional programs and policies, identify areas in which the Department can be more effective, and offer insight and guidance from members' own experiences and constituencies. Citizen advisers will help identify emerging trends and resolve conflicts before they become intractable. Department employees will benefit from having a deeper understanding of public

priorities and expectations, and advisers can function as a trusted “sounding board” for ideas and initiatives. CAC members also serve to encourage Department employees to become more accessible and responsive to the public. Citizens’ Advisory Council members will benefit from understanding Department programs, priorities, administrative processes and limitations in a broader context.

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

Service on the CACs is voluntary. The groups are advisory in nature and do not have authority over any other current advisory group used by the Department.

MEMBERSHIP

CAC candidates will be nominated by interested groups and individuals for consideration by a panel of citizen volunteers from core constituent groups, Department representatives, and Natural Resources Commission representatives. Panel members are not eligible for appointment to the councils. Members will be appointed by the UP Regional Director, with concurrence of the Department Director. The CACs will consist of no more than 20 members who volunteer to serve terms ranging from 2 to 4 years. While there are no formal qualifications to serve on the CAC, members will be sought who have been active in their local communities, are willing to work collaboratively, have a general understanding of resource and environmental issues, and who represent a variety of interest groups and geographic communities.

ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Members are expected to attend meetings and offer their thoughts and ideas, communicate with others in a respectful manner, and share information about the work of the CAC with other individuals and groups as appropriate. Local Department personnel will provide logistical and administrative support of the CAC, gather data and information to present to the councils, and offer technical support in providing scientific background on issues.

COMMUNICATION

Minutes will be taken and distributed to members and interested parties. General council information will be disseminated through regional and statewide media and the Department’s Web site. Feedback on advice and proposals will occur on timelines agreed upon between the groups and the Department.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

A review of the operations and functions of the CACs will be conducted by the councils and the Department every two years. Recommendations for charter changes will be considered by the Department at the end of the review process.