



Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.
Minutes.

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DATE: December 8, 1995

TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources Members, Advisors and Staff

FROM: Ronald D. Harnack, Executive Director

SUBJECT: December 20, 1995 BWSR Meeting

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will meet on Wednesday, December 20, 1995 beginning at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in the BWSR conference room at One West Water Street, St. Paul. The following is some background information regarding the agenda items:

SUMMARY OF BOARD AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **COUNTY WATER PLAN EXTENSIONS:** 44 counties have requested extension of their current local water plan. Extensions requested range from 3 to 24 months, the majority of the requests are for 12 months or less. Each request has been reviewed by the Board Conservationist, according to criteria adopted by the Board in September, and approved. Included in the Board packet is a list of the counties requesting extensions. Orders will be prepared for the Chairs signature on the date of the Board meeting. **DECISION.**

2. **LOCAL WATER PLAN APPROVALS:** Five local water plans will be presented for board action including Aitkin, Itasca, Kandiyohi, Mower and Todd counties. The plans were reviewed by two water plan review committees. Kandiyohi and Mower were reviewed on December 7 by the southern water plan review committee. Aitkin, Itasca, and Todd will be reviewed on December 14 by the northern water plan review committee. At the Board meeting the chairs of these two committees will present their findings and make a recommendation for Board action. **DECISION.**

OLD BUSINESS

1. **COST-SHARE RULE ADOPTION:** The rules were published in the state register on October 23, 1995 with the comment period ending on November 22, 1995. No written comments were received. Two modifications were suggested by the assistant attorney general helping with this effort (Mr. Steve Masten). Please refer to items 8 and 9 in the Findings and Fact, Conclusions and Order Adopting Rules Without a Public Hearing for information about those changes.

The board is asked to approve and adopt the November 29, 1995 Revisor of Statutes draft copy of the permanent rules relating to the state cost-share program and authorizing Ronald Harnack, Executive Director to sign the Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Order Adopting Rules Without a Public Hearing. **DECISION.**

2. **COST-SHARE COMMITTEE POLICY ADOPTION:** The cost-share committee through its work on developing the administrative guidelines that will accompany the cost-share rule have identified three issues which they believe should be reviewed and ratified by the Board. The purpose of this item will be to present the policy issues to the Board along with the committee recommendation for adoption. The committee is meeting on December 13 and a special mailing to members will include recommendations of committee. **DECISION.**

3. **NATURAL RESOURCES BLOCK GRANT - WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT GRANT POLICY REVISITED:** This involves the Board decision of September 27, 1995 concerning the eligibility of counties for natural resources block grant funding. The board decision requires a county to acknowledge their responsibility to implement the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) by January 16, 1996 which is the deadline for application of 1996 block grants. Failure to comply with that date results in forfeiture of the WCA portion of the block grant. Arne Stoen, Pope County Commissioner and Chair of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Wetland Protection Sub-committee, requested (letter attached) the BWSR to reconsider that action. Barbara Cobb's response to that request is included. There are several possible alternatives. Listed are four of these options:

- 1) do nothing and retain the September 27th policy;
- 2) rescind the September 27th policy and do not require any date for implementation of the WCA;
- 3) hold WCA grant allocation dollars in reserve until sixty (60) days after enactment of WCA amendments or 60 days after end of session, whichever occurs first. LGUs would be required to acknowledge implementation of WCA within that timeframe or lose eligibility and fund allocated to other LGUs.

If option 3 is selected, a decision should be made if a pro-rata reduction in funding should be made. This discussion is appropriate because several months of the funding cycle will have lapsed. **DISCUSSION.**

4. **REORGANIZATION REPORT STATUS.**

NEW BUSINESS

1. **MNDOT PERMITTING:** On March 28, 1995 the MnDOT adopted "A Policy of Cooperation" which laid out principles of how MnDOT will coordinate with watershed management organizations including watershed districts on MnDOT projects within their jurisdictions. One result of the new policy is that MnDOT no longer applies for individual permits from watersheds. Many watershed districts have expressed concern over MnDOT no longer applying for permits and have organized and adopted resolutions to

change the current MnDOT position. The purpose of this agenda item is to allow representatives from the watershed districts and MnDOT to explain their positions to the Board and to have a discussion on this matter. BWSR in it's capacity with watersheds may have to take a position on this during legislative session. **DISCUSSION.**

2. PRESENTATION OF BY-LAWS DRAFT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERSONNEL REVIEW DRAFT AND POLICY MANUAL: The administrative committee has been working on draft by-laws for BWSR; a draft performance review process for the Executive Director and compilation of BWSR policies. Chair Cobb will review progress and lead discussion. **DISCUSSION.**

3. 509 PLAN GRANTS POLICY: The 1995 legislature provided additional authorization to BWSR to award grants directly to watershed management organization, including planning grants for the development of second generation plans. This issue has been a topic of discussion for the BWSR Metropolitan Surface Water Management "509" Coordination Committee. The purpose of this agenda item will be to review with the Board the work of this committee and how BWSR staff plan to proceed on this matter. **DISCUSSION.**

If you have any additional items or require additional information, please feel free to give me a call. Travel safely, I look forward to seeing you on the 20th!

RDH:mmm
Enclosures

**BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
ONE WEST WATER STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55107
DECEMBER 20, 1995**

AGENDA

9:30 a.m. **Call Meeting to Order**

Adopt Agenda

Approval of Minutes of October 25, 1995

Reports

- Chair - Barbara Cobb
- Executive Director - Ron Harnack
- Dispute Resolution Committee - Kathleen Roer
- Education & Public Relations Committee - Tim Hvidsten
- Feedlot Advisory Committee - Jim Rossman
- Cost-Share/Soil Conservation Committee - Dwain Otte
- Water Plan Compliance Committee - Barbara Cobb
- Wetlands Committee - Darrell Bruggman
- Administrative Advisory Committee - Barbara Cobb

Consent Agenda

1. County Water Plan Extensions - Doug Thomas
2. Local Water Plan Approvals - Recommendations of Review Committee
Aitkin, Itasca, Todd, Mower, and Kandiyohi

Old Business

1. Cost-Share Rule Adoption - Marybeth Block, DECISION
2. Cost-Share Committee Policy Issues - Dwain Otte, DECISION
3. NRBG - WCA Grant Policy Revisited - Ron Harnack, DISCUSSION
4. Reorganization Report - Barb Cobb

New Business

1. MNDOT Permitting by Watershed Districts - Doug Thomas, Ray Bohn,
Lawrence Foote, DISCUSSION
2. Presentation of By-Laws Draft, Executive Director Personnel Review
Draft and Policy Manual - Barb Cobb, DISCUSSION
3. 509 Plan Grants Policy - Jim Haertel, DISCUSSION
4. AMC Wetland Protection Sub-Committee Meeting - Ron Harnack,
DECISION ON ATTENDANCE

Noon Lunch

Advisory Comments

- Paul Burns, Department of Agriculture
- Kim Benson-Johnson, Department of Health
- Jim Anderson, Minnesota Extension Service
- Wayne Edgerton, Department of Natural Resources
- Bill Hunt, NRCS
- Jim Schafer, MASWCD
- Ray Bohn, MAWD
- Rick Reimer, MACDE
- Franklin Denn, MAT

Board Issues

1. Next BWSR Meeting, January 24, 1996

2:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

Board Meeting Agenda Items

Consent Agenda, the following counties are requesting extensions on their water plans. Based on the Board's previous actions these requests for proposals if approved by the BC are to handled as a consent agenda calendar item. All of the counties indicated are being approved by the Board Conservationist.

Bill Best

Clearwater - 6 months
Hubbard - 12 months
Mahnommen - 24 months
Norman - 12 months
Red Lake - 12 months

Kieth Grow

Mille Lacs - 3 months
Kanabec - 6 months
Sherburne - 3 months
Wright - 24 months

Brian Dwight

Marshall - 12 months
Lake of the Woods - 3 months
Pennington - 24 month
Kittson - 6 month
Beltrami - 6 month

Mark Nelson

Carlton - 12 months

Dave Sill

Big Stone
Chippewa
Lincoln
Yellow Medicine
Swift
Lac Qui Parle

Pete Waller

Douglas - 12 months
Stevens - 12 months
Traverse - 12 months
Pope - 2 months
Grant

Tabor Hoeck

Cottonwood
Murray
Pipestone
Nobles
Rock
Lyon
Redwood

Chris Hughes

Faribault - 12 month
Le Sueur - 12 month
Watonwan - 12 month

Tom Fischer

Nicollet - 12 month

Dave Peterson

Steele - 18 months
Freeborn -

Mary Kells
Fillmore - 3 months
Goodhue -
Houston - 3 months
Olmsted - 12 months
Wabasha - 3 months

Water Plan Approvals

Northern Water Plan Review Committee - Recommendation for Aitkin, Itasca, and Todd Counties

Southern Water Plan Review Committee - Recommendation for Mower and Kandiyohi Counties

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
One West Water Street
Suite 200
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

KANDIYOHI COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER PLAN (FOR BOARD ACTION)

Kandiyohi County has a Comprehensive Local Water Plan (Plan) which was approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on December 18, 1991. Kandiyohi County submitted a Plan Update to the BWSR on September 19, 1995, at which time the final, ninety day state agency review process began.

On October 25, 1995, a written overview of the Kandiyohi County Plan Update was presented to the BWSR Board for their information and review.

On December 7, 1995, the BWSR Board Water Plan Review Committee will meet in St. Paul with BWSR staff and representatives from Kandiyohi County to review and discuss the Plan Update.

Attached is a copy of the Executive Summary section of the Kandiyohi County Plan Update which describes what activities were accomplished in the past four years and what the strategies will be for the upcoming five years.

In addition to the water planning requirements established under Minnesota Statutes 110B (now 103B), counties updating their Plan are also required to include: objectives for wellhead protection, sensitive groundwater areas and stormwater management; high priority wetland preservation areas designation; a watershed priorities assessment; an executive summary.

BWSR staff has reviewed the Kandiyohi County Plan Update and find that all relevant requirements of law and rule have been fulfilled and is in conformance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes 1990, 103B and Minnesota Rules Chapter 9300.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
One West Water Street
Suite 200
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

MOWER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE
LOCAL WATER PLAN UPDATE - 1995

(FOR BOARD ACTION)

The Mower County Comprehensive Local Water Plan (Plan) was adopted by Mower County on April 10, 1990 and approved by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) on February 28, 1990. Mower County submitted a Plan Update (Plan Update), required in the Plan, to the BWSR on September 20, 1995, at which time the final ninety day state review process began. The final review period ends December 19, 1995.

A written overview of the Plan Update was prepared by BWSR staff on November 21, 1995 for information and review.

On December 7, 1995 the BWSR Water Plan Review Committee will meet with BWSR staff and representatives of Mower County to review and discuss the Plan Update.

In addition to the water planning requirements established under the Local Water Planning statute MS 103B, counties updating their Plan must also include objectives for wellhead protection, sensitive groundwater areas, stormwater management, high priority wetland areas and watershed assessment.

The Mower County Local Water Plan Update includes the new requirements. It also incorporates new information in the assessments section of the Plan and organizes the implementation section into three issues areas concentrating on goals and objectives identified during the public input process. The issues areas are **Surface Water, Groundwater and Pollution Management**. Objectives include management of floodplains, wetlands, and solid waste; development of programs for surface and groundwater monitoring and protection, and; development of a geologic atlas and GIS system. Major activities to accomplish these goals include education programs, regulations, incentives and technical assistance.

BWSR staff has reviewed the Mower County Comprehensive Local Water Plan Update - 1995 and find that relevant requirements of law and rule have been satisfied under MS 103B and MCAR 9300.

LOCAL WATER PLAN UPDATES
AITKIN, ITASCA & TODD COUNTIES
DECEMBER 1995
FOR BOARD ACTION

Final state review for the Aitkin, Itasca and Todd County Local Water Plan Updates began in October 1995. The final review period for the three plans ends in January 1996. Final review comments from the DNR, MPCA, Dept. of Health, Agriculture and MN Geological Survey are expected to be completed by December 8, 1995. The BWSR Local Water Plan Review Committee is scheduled to meet in Brainerd on December 14, 1995 to review the three updates. Representatives of the three counties will be attending.

At this point, BWSR staff is not aware of any inconsistencies with state rule or law in the three updates. The three updates include objectives for stormwater management, wellhead protection and sensitive groundwater areas, and identification of high-priority wetlands. The plans also identify the resource management roles of the affected local departments or agencies.

The Plan Review Committee will make a recommendation on each of the updates to the full board at its December 20, 1995 meeting.

INTRODUCTION

Todd County passed a resolution on 19 September 1989 to enter into the CLWP process under chapter 103B.311 and 103B.315. The original Todd County Comprehensive Local Water Plan was completed in 1991, and began to be implemented that year.

This Comprehensive Local Water Plan Update has been completed in compliance with the Chapter 103B.311 and 103B.315 requirements to update the plans at least every five years, or by 1995, depending on when the original plans were approved and implementation began.

This update process began during the Fall of 1994, and was completed during the spring of 1995.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this Comprehensive Local Water Plan for Todd County is:

- 1. To identify existing and potential problems or opportunities for protection, management, and development of water resources and related land resources in the county**
- 2. To develop and implement a plan of action to promote sound hydrologic management of water and related land resources in the county,**
- 3. To work toward effective environmental protection and management in the county, and**

- 4. To meet the requirements set forth in the 103B.311 and 103B.315 Legislation for Todd County**

The essential constituent during formulation of this plan was the development of a strong local planning process that would continue through plan implementation. The basis for this planning process was the assembling of relevant information on the county's resources. Local government officials and the general public used this information to develop an understanding of the amount, characteristics, and distribution, of the county's water resources.

County officials used this understanding of existing conditions to decide what water resources were necessary and desirable for future growth and development in the county. Finally, county officials developed a course of action to achieve and maintain the quality of life desired in the county.

Todd County recognizes that the county, whether growing, remaining stable, or declining in population, must develop a long term local mechanism for managing their water resources. If not, the county will eventually lose the opportunity to make intelligent, local choices that anticipate or prevent water resource problems before costs escalate and options are limited.

Todd County also recognizes that a well developed comprehensive water plan can integrate local initiatives with existing state and federal water related programs and funding sources. This integration will allow more efficient management of all these programs for protection of water resources and the general environment.

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Local Water Plan for Todd County focuses on water and related land resources. The county has assembled and studied available information relating to the physical environment, surface and groundwater resources, and related land use.

Surface water and ground water quality and quantity and related land uses that affect water resources are analyzed, and relationships between these resources and their current or potential usage are defined.

Problems are analyzed within the context of watershed units and groundwater systems where appropriate, but the plan applies to the entire area within the county.

This plan is based on principles of sound hydrologic management and recognizes interrelationships between surface water and ground water as well as the potential cumulative effects of land use on both water quality and quantity.

This plan is also based on key economic and environmental principles, and is consistent with other plans that exist at the County, Watershed, Soil and Water Conservation District, or ground water system level.

The original plan was in effect through 1995, and this Update will be in effect through 2000. In each subsequent 5th year, the county will examine the plan and update it for the next planning period.

This plan update is intended to be used in conjunction with the original plan, which contains all the data upon which the assessments are based. The original plan, the update, and all additional data gathered since

the original plan was implemented are located in the Soil and Water Conservation District Office in Long Prairie.

PLANNING PROCESS

COUNTY TASK FORCE

The County Task Force (CTF) was the key component in the development of the original Todd County Comprehensive Local Water Plan. The task force was established to ensure that the planning process maintained a local focus, and to provide a local knowledge base on county resources, problems and procedures. The Task Force has been maintained through out the implementation of the original plan, and was instrumental in the development of this plan update.

The Todd County Task Force met monthly to establish the issues, goals, objectives, action plans, and implementation strategies to be addressed in this update.

Todd County Task Force

The Todd County Task Force involved in the plan update was composed of 15 members:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Jim Sorlie	Chairman
Osakis	SWCD
Jim Framstad	CLWP
Long Prairie	Coordinator
Randy Lavoie	
Clarissa	Member at Large
LeRoy Williams	
Long Prairie	County Extension
Julie Krause	
Staples	Public Health

Scotty Greenwaldt	
Bertha	County Commission
Richard Whalen	
Long Prairie	Townships
Carolynne Bisel	
Eagle Bend	Cities
Ron Johnson	
Osakis	Resorts/lake Assns
Norm Krause	
Staples	Irrigator
Todd Holman	
Long Prairie	Planning and Zoning
Roy Diver	
Long Prairie	NRCS
Tim Crocker	
Little Falls	DNR Waters
Brian Notzelman	
Long Prairie	Todd Co. Highway Dept.
Len Anderson	
Long Prairie	Member at large

Technical and writing support was provided by Dr. James Van Alstine, Professor of Geology at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Public participation was ensured during the preparation of this plan update, by conducting a public information meeting at the beginning of the process, by having members-at-large from throughout the county on the task force, and by conducting a public hearing at the end of the process.

Input from the Board of Soil and Water Resources, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was provided by agency staff that regularly attended the monthly task force meetings.

The plan update process emphasized coordination with other local units of government within and outside the county. Local plans and controls were requested from all LGU's

at the beginning of the update process. No additional information, other than that gathered during the preparation of the original plan was received.

WATERSHED CONTEXT

Todd County drainage is within two major watershed units: the Crow Wing and the Mississippi-Sauk. Within these major units, the county contains portions of six different major watersheds (Mississippi Brainerd, Mississippi Sartell, Crow Wing, Redeye, Long Prairie, and Sauk River) and 91 minor watersheds. (Figure 5-2.15 in the original plan).

The Long Prairie River is the major river in the county (Saari 1989). It flows east to Long Prairie and north-northeast into the Crow Wing River. The Wing and Partridge Rivers and their tributaries drain the remaining one eighth of the county into the Crow Wing River. The eastern and southeastern parts of the county are drained by the Swan River which flows into Morrison County at Swanville. The Sauk River drains the southwestern portion of the county from Lake Osakis to Sauk Lake and eventually drains into the Mississippi River (Figure 5-15 in the original plan).

The Todd County Water Planning Task Force understands the need to view water quality issues within the context of the watershed, and understands that the water quality desired in lakes will ultimately be determined by land use within their watershed. Although specific erosion or nutrient loading problems were not restricted to, or identified within specific watersheds, issues identified in the plan update process were placed within a watershed context where ever possible. The Long Prairie and Crow Wing watersheds continue to be priority watersheds.

NEW DATA AND ACTIVITIES

The water plan update process did not require the reevaluation of the 55 data items considered in the original water plan. All new data gathered since the original plan was completed are on file in the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District Office, the lead agency for water plan implementation. New data items or initiatives that were important in establishing new goals, objectives and actions for the next five years include the following:

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Ground Water Monitoring and Assessment Report (GWMAP) for 13 wells in four major aquifers in Todd County (Precambrian Undifferentiated Aquifer, two Quaternary buried sand and gravel aquifers, and the Quaternary Water Table Aquifer.
- U.S. Geological Survey Reconnaissance Survey of 17 wells in Todd County.
- Diagnostic Study of water quality of Big Birch Lake
- Maintaining the water well index on Epp1-7GIS
- Three lake septic system surveys.
- Establishment of Public Service Announcements on the local radio station featuring environmental themes.
- Road Salt Storage Survey
- Distribution of educational information on BMP's
- Very successful cost share abandoned well sealing program.
- Monitoring of lake sechi disk readings
- BMP Booklets for lake shore owners
- Formation of lake associations
- Paint the Town Program to raise awareness of storm water runoff problems
- Establishment of low cost grants to address feed lots in a cost effective and timely manner in the Sauk River Watershed District.
- Establishment of a manure and soil testing program and completion of a feedlot inventory.
- Numerous educational programs presented to schools and service organizations.
- The empty pesticide container program.
- Increased enrollment in the CLMP program.
- The Long Prairie River Project.

NEW INITIATIVES

The water plan update process required that the Todd County Water Plan Task Force address four new initiatives in the 5th year plan update. These initiatives included:

- Well head protection strategies
- Geologically sensitive areas
- Priority wetland areas
- Stormwater runoff

These initiatives are addressed in the following assessments, and in goals, objectives, and high priority actions listed in this update.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO STATE PROGRAMS

Todd County made several recommendations for changes in state programs in the original water plan. These recommendations have been reviewed, and still stand. They are included as section 8.0 in the original plan. In addition, Todd County makes the following recommendations to state programs:

- The Wetland Conservation Act must be changed to allow the local units of government more flexibility.
- State agencies should deregulate to allow more flexibility to local boards. An example of this in the MPCA Feedlot rules, and how Todd County has instituted the Low Cost Option concept for more timely and meaningful expenditures of funds.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PLAN AMENDMENT

The processes outlined for resolving conflicts arising from plan implementation, and or amending the plan following state approval, are outlined in sections 9.0 and 10.0 in the original plan. The processes remain unchanged, and will remain in effect for the duration of this five year plan update.

AITKIN COUNTY WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN
1995 UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
10/2/95

Aitkin County's Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan was adopted in July of 1990. It has served as a guide and reference for planning and zoning ordinances, Board of Adjustment decisions and Soil & Water Conservation District policies. In 1994 the Water Planning Task Force was asked to consider a five-year update in addition to its implementation activities. The water plan update is the result of this task force's efforts and relies on our experiences (both good and bad) of implementing water planning as well as current input from citizens and agencies.

Since we established the Water Planning Task Force in 1987, it has remained very active and the primary reason for our water planning successes. Through the years, several of the members have changed but the focus of working together to accomplish common goals has remained constant. Our task force believes that the end result of all this planning is actual improvements in land use management on the ground. This plan is not intended to be impressively packaged or filled with enticing but impossible goals, it is intended to be used as a guide for land and water use decisions.

The water plan update begins with data information that includes land use, climate, geology, hydrologic information, soils, wetlands, and other pertinent information. The task force has updated its assessment of these data items and added new information as needed. Two major discussions added are changes to the way wetlands are dealt with including the administration of the Wetland Conservation Act. Secondly, we have dealt with issues in a watershed context. Maps, charts and narratives are used to compare and contrast nine separate "sub-watersheds" that are completely or partially contained within Aitkin County. Our experience with the Big Sandy, Upper Mississippi, and Snake River Watersheds have shown that watershed context planning and implementation is an efficient and common sense approach to resource management. Other changes discussed include the computerization of information including the Soil Survey into a Geographic Information System called ArcView.

Finally to the real meat of our plan. What we will do in the next five years! We have been successful implementing projects and programs in the past five years, and we intend to continue and expand that "apply solutions" focus. Two examples of implementing the plan are: enforcement of the county Shoreland Management Ordinance through on the ground site reviews and permits. More than 600 sites have been inspected by SWCD personnel, most with the landowners present. Though time consuming, these reviews are well worth it by ensuring compliance to law and less impact to our lakeshore areas and water quality. Secondly we have initiated a program called Green Shores (later known as: Shoreland Impact Reduction) that is an incentive to landowners to restrict access of livestock to surface waters. We have installed nearly two miles of fence in cooperation

with several landowners. This program has an obvious and immediate impact on water quality.

We continue to enjoy excellent working relationships with all natural resource agencies and decision making boards such as: Mississippi Headwaters Board, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, Snake River Joint Powers Board, Board of Water & Soil Resources, Soil & Water Conservation District Board and others.

We look forward to the next five years with hope based on our past experience and the anticipation of continued success.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Hughes". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Steve Hughes
Water Plan Coordinator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Itasca County is a large county, and contains an abundance of surface water. There are over 950 lakes within its boundaries, covering almost 9 per cent (170,000 acres) of the total area of the county. Wetlands are present on over 550,000 acres, about one-third of the land surface. Approximately 95 % of the presettlement wetlands still remain.

Many of the water quality concerns in the county relate to lake and watershed use. Development, industry, agriculture and lake use issues are the primary factors which can affect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetics here. Surface water quality management, mainly lake management, has become increasingly important to the people who live and recreate in Itasca County.

The population of the county has fluctuated during the past 15 years. The decrease in mining activity in the 1980's was a primary reason for a decline in population from 43,069 to 40,863 (census statistics). Increases in population since 1990 have brought population levels back to approximately the level of 1980. Municipalities in the Cohasset-Grand Rapids-LaPrairie corridor have seen the most development, along with lakeshore development. Shoreland values on some of the county's more desirable lakes have increased dramatically in the last five years.

Lakes not only provide high quality recreation but they are also an economic stronghold for the county. According to Hank Todd, Minnesota Office of Tourism, a large amount of money is generated in Minnesota from water related recreation. Using state-wide estimates for surface water acres, in Itasca County approximately 134 million dollars may be generated annually from lake recreation consumer purchases. As many as 3,000 jobs are water-dependent. Of the total 36.4 million tax dollars generated in Itasca County in 1994, \$6.1 million are obtained from lakeshore homeowners.

Since 1990, detailed one-year water quality assessments have been initiated on over 40 of Itasca County's lakes and three of the major rivers. The data, summarized in the table on the previous page, show a high percentage of oligotrophic and mesotrophic lakes (26% and 55%, respectively). The remainder are eutrophic (19%). This information has provided an important base for lake management decisions, such as development, land use and fisheries projects affecting watershed activities and decisions in the county. Collection of surface water data will continue to be a priority area of focus for the county water plan.

To assist local units of government, land owners and other interested groups to make land and water use decisions regarding these potential impacts, it is important to provide them with the best possible information. Computer models are being used in conjunction with water quality and lake/watershed information to make predictions and answer questions regarding the impact to surface waters from land and water use changes. This work will continue, and may be expanded to include the many hundreds of small to medium-sized lakes in the county.

The Itasca County surface water program will continue to build on its current knowledge to continue to expand its lake management program to achieve the best possible understanding of its surface waters to effectively manage them for the future.

Groundwater-related projects have concentrated on the Mesabi Iron Range Corridor in the first phase of the county water plan. While that area will remain an important focus because of mine pit-related issues and relatively high population density, there will also be more efforts placed on understanding our groundwater resources county-wide.

Background

Five years ago, Itasca County entered a new phase of water resource management - **local water planning**. Along with other counties in the state, many new projects were initiated at the county level to protect this valuable resource. Private, county, state, federal and school group funding and expertise have worked together on a wide variety of projects. Public involvement from all sectors of the county, from individuals to government has been very strong from the beginning of the water plan.

Since 1990, Itasca County has received three state water planning challenge grants, one grant from the Legislative Committee on Minnesota Resources, and several other smaller grants and contributions, totalling over \$150,000. Base level funding (a 55/45 state/local match) has contributed a similar amount. In-kind contributions from volunteers and other natural resource agencies easily exceeds the total of all monetary contributions.

The original water plan contained 61 Action Steps, organized under five categories of water resources. A summary of the progress made in each of the categories is contained in Section I of this document, and a complete listing is contained in Appendix A. A partial list of projects made possible through the water plan or greatly facilitated by it include:

- * Development of a county-wide **water quality monitoring program** for lakes
- * Hiring of a **limnologist** to conduct detailed lake and watershed water quality assessments
- * **Lake assessment studies** on 44 of the county's lakes since 1990
- * **Computer modeling** of lake water quality, based on watershed and land use factors
- * Volunteer, school-based **River Watch** monitoring on the Mississippi and Big Fork rivers, initiated and coordinated by the Mississippi Headwaters Board
- * The Round Lake (near Squaw Lake) multi-agency **watershed study** has been underway for 3 years; The Splithand Lakes watershed study began in 1995; two others are planned to start in 1996-7 (Dixon and Jessie Lake watersheds)
- * "**Itasca County Currents**" newsletter, started in 1991, expanded to become "**Arrowhead Currents**" in 1993, covering a 6-county area, with 3,000 copies per printing
- * Radio programming and production of "**Water Facts**" in 1991
- * Initiation of **Shoreland Volunteers** pilot project in 1994, with Aitkin County to help educate shoreland owners to carry out lake protection, water quality monitoring and other volunteer efforts
- * Production of **Protecting Minnesota Waters: Best Management Practice fact sheets** in 1993 by the multi-county Arrowhead Water Quality Team; production of two videos based on the BMP fact sheets in 1995
- * Growth in the number of lake associations from 15 to 31, and formation of the **Itasca County Coalition of Lake Associations**
- * Digitization of the **Itasca County Soil Survey** and utilization in watershed studies; use of ARC-INFO and EPPL7 computer mapping and analysis programs to develop wetland and other land use information for watershed projects
- * Initiation of well location and hydrologic and geologic mapping projects on the western end of the **Mesabi Iron Range**
- * Installation of **12 lakeshore erosion control projects** using rock, shrubs and other restorative techniques
- * Re-establishment of groundwater level monitoring, through a cooperative agreement with the **DNR OBWELL** program

CERTIFICATE OF THE BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

RESOLUTION ADOPTING RULES

I, Barbara Cobb, do hereby certify that I am a member and the Chair of the Board of Water and Soil Resources, a board duly authorized under the laws of the State of Minnesota, and that the following is true, complete, and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Board of Water and Soil Resources, duly and properly called and held on the 20 day of December 1995, that a quorum was present, and that a majority of those present voted for the resolution which had not been rescinded or modified.

“RESOLVED, that the permanent rules relating to the State Cost-Share Program in the form set out in Revisor of Statutes draft, file number AR2613, dated 11/29/95, identified as Minnesota Rules, parts 8400.0050 to 8400.1800, are approved and adopted, pursuant to authority vested in the Board of Water and Soil Resources by Minnesota Statutes, section 103B.101, subdivision 7.

Ronald D. Harnack, Executive Director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources, is authorized to sign the Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Order Adopting Rules and further is authorized to modify the rules if necessary to obtain the approval of the rules by the attorney general, and to perform the necessary acts to provide that the rules shall have the force and effect of law.”

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 20th day of December, 1995.

Barbara Cobb, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Attest by one other Board Member

Signature of Attesting Board Member

Printed Name of Attesting Board Member

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

**In the Matter of the Proposed Adoption
of Amendments to the Rules Governing
the State Cost-Share Program**

**FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS, AND
ORDER ADOPTING
RULES WITHOUT A
PUBLIC HEARING**

FINDINGS

1. Notice of Solicitation of Outside Information or Opinions Regarding Revision of the State Cost-Share Program was published in the *State Register* on July 10, 1995.

2. Notice of the Board's intent to adopt amendments to the above-entitled rules was published in the *State Register* on October 23, 1995, and was sent by United States mail to all persons on the list maintained by the Board pursuant to *Minnesota Statutes*, sections 14.14, subdivision 1a, and 14.22, on October 10, 1995.

3. The Statement Of Need And Reasonableness was prepared before the Notice Of Intent To Adopt Rules Without A Public Hearing was mailed to all persons on the rulemaking mailing list and published in the *State Register* and was available to the public.

4. All of the notice and procedural requirements in *Minnesota Statutes*, chapter 14, and other applicable law have been complied with.

5. All persons were given the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed amendments to the rules for 30 days after the Notice Of Intent To Adopt Rules Without A Public Hearing was published and mailed. The 30-day comment period expired on November 22, 1995.

6. The Board received no written comments and submissions on the rules. The Board received no requests for notice of submission to the Attorney General. No individuals requested a public hearing.

7. The "Consolidated Farm Service Agency" definition (8400.0100, subpart 13a) was modified to "Farm Service Agency" to reflect the change to the agency's name. References to that agency within rule were also changed (8400.0900, subpart 2). These changes were not substantial.

8. Language pertaining to grants to conservation districts (8400.0600, subpart 4) was added to clarify that not more than 20 percent of the total funds granted to districts may be allocated for technical and administrative services. This maximum ceiling is set forth in *Minnesota Statutes* 103C.501, subdivision 4 and was erroneously omitted from this section of the rule. This change was not substantial as it is already required by statutes.

9. Language clarifying the number of days an appellant has to appeal a conservation district board's decision was added to 8400.1800. Omission of a deadline for the land occupier to appeal a district board's decision to the state was an oversight. This change was not substantial because sixty days to appeal the case is an adequate and reasonable time frame.

10. These changes are not substantial because they:

- (a) do not affect classes of persons who could not reasonably have been expected to comment on the proposed rule as originally noticed;
- (b) do not introduce significant new subject matter that a reasonable person, on the basis of the proposed rule as originally noticed, would not have anticipated would occur during the rulemaking proceeding; and
- (c) do not make a major substantive change that was not raised by the proposed rule as originally noticed in such a way as to invite reaction.

11. The Statement Of Need And Reasonableness, together with these findings, establish and justify the rational basis for the need for and reasonableness of the rules as modified.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Board duly acquired and has jurisdiction over this proceeding.
2. The Board published and served timely and adequate notice of intent to adopt the amendments to the rules without a public hearing.
3. All relevant legal and procedural requirements of statute and rule have been complied with.
4. The modifications to the proposed amendments to the rules are supported by the record and do not result in substantial changes.
5. The amended rules as modified are needed and reasonable.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the rules identified as the Rules of the Board of Water and Soil Resources Governing The State Cost-Share Program, in the form set out in the *State Register* on October 23, 1995, with the modifications set forth above, are adopted this 20th day of December, 1995, pursuant to authority vested in the Board by *Minnesota Statutes*, section 103B.101, subdivision 7.

Date

Ronald Harnack
Executive Director



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December 4, 1995

Ms. Barbara Cobb, Chair
Board of Water & Soil Resources
One West Water Street
St. Paul, MN 55107

Dear Ms. Cobb:

RE: BWSR AGENDA ITEM FOR BOARD MEETING DECEMBER 20, 1995.

In February of 1995, the BWSR staff and cost-share committee began the process of rewriting the state cost-share rules and developing guidelines. In October, the rule was published in the state register. The comment period is now closed.

The guidelines, which are basically board policies, are in their third draft. Many of these policies, through the staff and cost-share committee, were determined internal and incorporated into the guidelines. Other policies are in need of adoption by the board.

In order to keep the cost-share revision process on schedule, the cost-share committee will be meeting with staff members on December 13, 1995. Our intention is to address the policies in need of board approval and make our recommendations as a cost-share committee to the board at the December 20 meeting.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 507-645-4370.

Sincerely,

Dwain Otte
Dwain Otte, Chair
Cost-Share Committee

An equal opportunity employer

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Higgins

To: Cost-Share retooling team

From: Keith Grow

Re: Cost-Share meeting and agenda items.

Agenda Items

**Meeting December 6, 1995 - 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Stearns SWCD Conference Room**

*** Note to the chairs:**

Please make sure the workteam has your committee or subcommittee material in need of review prior to the 12-6-95 meeting.

* Guidelines - VIA Marybeth - please review the material before the 6th. We will not have time to go through the guidelines line-by-line. Flag areas of concern or that you feel need discussion. Bill and Marybeth will get'r done.

Policies

Jeff, Wayne, and I have discussed policy issues on 3 different occasions and, hopefully, the major ones have been brought forward. If we have missed any, please let us know and or bring them to the meeting on the 6th.

*** Cost-Share guidelines are "Board Policy"**

The mission of the policy team is to address those policies which either need further discussion by the BWSR or have been determined internal and will be incorporated into the guidelines by the staff.

Policies will be brought to the BWSR C/S Committee on December 13th. The results will be in recommendation to the full board at the December 20 meeting. Be prepared to discuss the following policies at our December 6th meeting.

*** AMOUNT OF DOLLARS WITHHELD BY BWSR FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS**

The rule specifies a minimum of 80% of the dollars must be used for high priority projects; a minimum of 70% of the dollars need to be distributed to the SWCD; and only 20% maximum Dollars can be used for T/A or low priority projects.

With that in mind, the policy team has laid out the following possibilities:

- A. 100% from leg.to BWSR
70% from BWSR to SWCD for (High Priority Practices)
20% for T/A and or low priority practices
10% withheld by BWSR for high priority special projects
- B. 100% from leg. to BWSR
64% from BWSR to SWCD for (high priority practices)
16% T/A and or low priority practices
20% withheld by BWSR for high priority special projects
- C. 100% from leg.to BWSR
100% from BWSR to SWCD (80% high priority practices)
20 T/A and or low priority practices
0% withheld by BWSR for high priority special projects
- D. 100% from Leg. to BWSR
68% from BWSR to SWCD (high priority practices)
17% T/A and or low priority practices
15% withheld by BWSR by for high priority special projects

* Item B is very close to the present breakdown. Recommendations from the policy team is split between B&D.

* COOPERATOR AGREEMENT

Not currently required, but with existing and future landrights movement underway would this be a be a good communication mechanism between the district and the landowner? This one page form is non-threatening to the landowner and takes very little time to complete. It also may factor into our reporting team efforts somewhere down the road.

Policy team recommendation: require cooperator agreements.

* ROLLOVER FUNDS

Due to recent development, the following options need to be discussed.

- A. Discontinue the rollover fund. Take any remaining rollover funds and combine them with special project dollars.
- B. If an area participates in the area concept and through its plan indicates it will retain all rollover funds, it will NOT be eligible for funds returned to the state. Non-participating District would complete for rollover as in the past (Statewide competition).
- C. If an area participates in the area concept and through its

plan indicates it will retain all rollover funds, it will NOT be eligible for funds returned to the State. Rollover funds returned to the State can be applied for by non-participating Districts. If these funds are not all used by the Non-participating Districts, the remainder of funds will be combined with the special project funds.

D. Counties participating in area concept must indicate in their plan whether or not they will retain their rollover within the area or return it to the state. If they choose to retain their rollover funds, they would only be eligible for rollover funds returned to the state if counties not participating in the area concept did not request all the rollover funds available. (Areas participating in the area concept would be in a second priority status for rollover returned to the state.)

E. Rollover Funds are competitive statewide regardless if an area participates in the area concept or not.

* Currently, a policy exists which does not allow T/A out of special project, SLR, or rollover. Apparently, this letter came out of Greg and Chuck Niska's shop. (Yes, Jeff had a copy.) This as you can see will need some discussion as it relates to the items above.

*Policy team recommends item D

* POOLING OF FUNDS - Internal policy

Wayne Z. has rewritten Section B.3 Pooling cost-share allocations with other conservation district.

The policy team determined:

* The grantee has fiscal responsibility .

* An agreement needs to exist between districts basically to keep line of communication open and layout the why, how much, when, and any other details needed. This needs to be agreed to anyway, why not write it down?

* This also provides a tracking mechanism for B.C. during the audit process.

* SWCD COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

This policy has been addressed by Marybeth and Doug. Currently moved to operational handbook.

* AUDIT PROCEDURE - Internal policy Including administrative violation.

This will be written by Brian D. and Dave P. (Brian and Dave will probably be requesting any checklists, outlines, etc. you used or developed to complete their mission).

REGULAR STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM ALLOCATION EXAMPLES

Annual Legislative Appropriation

\$1,620,000

For FY 96 the BWSR allocated 81% of this appropriation or \$1,314,489. This left a reserve of \$305,511 for competitive special projects** grants (actually \$365,032 with *roll-over funds).

The revised Cost-Share Rule states that the Board must allocate at least 70% of the appropriation. The Board will be requested to determine the appropriate amount to allocate for FY 97.

The following table shows examples of selected allocation percentages, the resulting amount allocated and the amount remaining to be reserved for special projects or programs:

<u>% Allocated</u>	<u>Amount Allocated</u>	<u>Amount Remaining</u>
100	\$1,620,000	\$ 0
95	1,539,000	81,000
90	1,458,000	162,000
85	1,377,000	243,000
80	1,296,000	324,000

*Under the new rule in FY 97, however, SWCD grant agreements will change from one to two years in length. SWCDs will then have two years to re-encumber slippage funds before they need to be returned to BWSR. This change should nearly eliminate the slippage at the SWCD level which in the past has resulted in grant funds which had to be returned to the BWSR for reallocation as Special Projects or Roll-Over.

HISTORICAL SLR/SPECIAL PROJECT REQUESTS AND FUNDING

<u>FY</u>	<u>Requests</u>	<u>Funding</u>
96	\$ 812,590	\$365,032
95	561,246	368,060
94	1,106,089	373,599
93	874,884	340,984
92	683,822	362,549
Ave.	\$ 807,726	\$362,044

**Historically known as the SLR/Special Project Grant Program

DT
FYI - RCH**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Engineering Services Division****Technical Memorandum No. 95-07-ES-02****March 28, 1995**

TO: Distribution 57, 612, 618, and 650

FROM: John E. Sandahl *JS*
Director/Assistant Chief Engineer
Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Promoting Constructive Relations with Local Water Planning Organizations

Mn/DOT has formalized a policy to promote cooperation with the Local Water Planning Organizations on a consistent statewide basis. Mn/DOT often has opportunities to work with the Local Water Planning Organizations (i.e. - Watershed District [WD's] and Watershed Management Organizations [WMO's]) to further common goals of environmental preservation. Therefore, in the interest of promoting constructive relations with these organizations without infringing on the plan review rights of the municipalities and Mn/DOT's charge, Mn/DOT has adopted the following policy of cooperation.

A Policy of Cooperation

Mn/DOT will:

- Keep the Local Water Planning Organizations informed of Mn/DOT projects being planned for areas within their boundaries early in the project development process by providing preliminary layouts and inviting them to participate in the public review process. This will give the Local Water Planning Organizations an opportunity to comment on the proposed plans and participate in Mn/DOT projects to improve the drainage infrastructure within their boundaries.
- Cooperate with the Local Water Planning Organizations to include drainage facilities in Mn/DOT plans at their request. Cost splits will be negotiated with these organizations on a case-by-case basis with the Mn/DOT standard cost split procedures as a guide.
- Send a copy of the final plans to the Local Water Planning Organizations for their information and records.

-More-

March 17, 1995

Promoting Constructive Relations with Local Water Planning Organizations

Page Two

Minnesota law created Local Water Planning Organizations to oversee water-related issues at a local level. The charge of the Local Water Planning Organizations is to plan for and regulate development within their respective watersheds so that adverse environmental effects such as increased runoff, erosion, and degradation of water quality attributable to local development are controlled. Mn/DOT will support these organizations as they carry out their charge.

In conclusion, Mn/DOT has a policy of cooperation which fosters resolution of the drainage requirements for each project through negotiation with the Local Water Planning Organizations. The policy supports the Local Water Planning Organizations while allowing Mn/DOT to focus on providing transportation services as intended by the legislature. Since the Local Water Planning Organizations are part of the Mn/DOT project planning process, Mn/DOT will no longer apply for permits from these organizations.

This technical memorandum will expire on February 21, 2000 unless superseded prior to that date.

DENNIS LARSON
HYDRAULICS
OAKDALE

-End-

WILD RICE WATERSHED DISTRICT

11 East 5th Avenue Phone 218-784-4085
ADA, MINNESOTA 56510

Doug

RECEIVED
OCT 13 1995

Date: October 11, 1995

To: Roger Moe, Minnesota State Senate Majority Leader
Bernard L. Lieder, Minnesota House of Representatives
John E. Sandahl, Director Assistant Chief Engineer, Mn/DOT
Vernon Johnson, President Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
Ray Bohn, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts

From: Jerry Bennett, Administrator, Wild Rice Watershed District 

Subject: Mn/DOT Permit Policy, Technical Memorandum No. 95-07-ES-02

This memorandum concerns the new MnDOT permit policy, whereby MnDOT will no longer be obtaining permits from Local Water Management Organizations (i.e. Watershed Districts [WD's] and Watershed Management Organizations [WMO's]). In respect to this new policy the following comments concern a letter received from Monte Berend, Hydraulics Engineer, Mn/DOT, dated September 25, 1995. (Copy Enclosed.)

1. The new policy and early involvement with the watershed district was more for road construction projects rather than culvert installations that are done under Mn/DOT right-of-way encroachment permits you referenced.

As noted in previous correspondence, the Wild Rice Watershed District provides local water management of virtually all drainage activities that effect the complex drainage network and ditch systems in the watershed. To be consistent with other state and federal agencies that work with the WRWD, MnDOT should obtain the necessary permits required for culverts installed during a road construction project, as well as culverts installed by what is referred to as Mn/DOT's Right-of-Way Encroachment Permits.

2. One of the locations (11 miles west of Mahnomen on T.H. No. 200) was done with a watershed permit. Another location (9.5 miles west of Mahnomen on T.H. No 200), a culvert was installed in a private field entrance after the road ditch was cleaned with the watershed's blessing.

The culvert installed 11 miles west of Mahnomen on T.H. No 200 does not have a watershed permit. The WRWD has never been contacted concerning the installation of a culvert at this location. We asked Mn/DOT to produce the watershed permit referenced in Mr. Berend's, September 25, 1995, letter. In a discussion with Chuck Magnusson, Mn/DOT, Crookston office, he has stated that Mn/DOT has no such permit.

In regard to the culvert installed 9.5 miles west of Mahanomen on T.H. No. 200, the watershed district never gave its "blessing" to clean a road ditch. The WRWD issues permits through an established permit program.

3. Chuck indicated to me that he would like to visit with you concerning the handling of the Mn/DOT encroachment permits and how they pertain to the watershed district. Please contact him at (218) 281-6069.

In conversations with Mr. Magnusson concerning the issue of Mn/DOT right-of-way encroachment permits, the following was concluded:

A. The Mn/DOT's Crookston District has assured the Wild Rice Watershed District that a watershed permit will be obtained for all future project activity involving the installation of drainage structures within their jurisdiction.

B. Concerning the four culvert installations that were referred to in the WRWD's September 22, 1995, letter, the Crookston District has agreed to file "after the fact permit applications," at which time the WRWD will conduct a formal review of these projects.

The WRWD appreciates Mr. Magnusson for his cooperation in this matter.

4. The early involvement mentioned in Technical Memorandum No. 95-07-ES-02 will generally be concerning major construction type projects that are included in Mn/DOT's District Improvement Program. This contact with the watershed districts will usually be done by the preliminary design section and could be as early as project scoping (determining what type(s) of improvement the project will cover).

It is the position of the Wild Rice Watershed District that whether the construction activity involves drainage structures installed under Mn/DOT's right-of-way encroachment permits or for major construction, these projects require local review to ensure management of the resource consistent with Local Water Management Plans. There also remains an issue of maintaining consistency and documentation, which can best be accomplished by the permit application process. The WRWD recommends that Mn/DOT reconsider this new policy by retracting Technical Memorandum No. 95-07-ES-02.

lmj

Enclosure

cc: Monte Berend

Chuck Magnusson

Ron Harnack

Elroy Hanson



Minnesota Department of Transportation
District 2
401 Paul Bunyan Dr. S.E., P.O. Box 490
Bemidji, Minnesota 56601

September 25, 1995

(218)755-3800

Jerry Bennett, Administrator
Wild Rice Watershed District
11 East Fifth Avenue
Ada, MN 56570

RE: Mn/DOT Watershed District Permit Policy

Dear Jerry:

Your letter of September 22 indicated your concern of the Mn/DOT policy of not applying for watershed district permits. The new policy and the early involvement with the watershed district was more for road construction projects rather than the culvert installations that are done under the Mn/DOT Right of Way Encroachment Permits which you referenced.

Chuck Magnusson, Mn/DOT Crookston Office, indicated the value of his association with your office. One of the locations (11 miles west of Mahanomen on T.H. 200) was done with a watershed district permit. Another location (9.5 miles west of Mahanomen on T.H. 200) a culvert was installed in a private field entrance after the road ditch was cleaned with the watershed's blessing.

Chuck indicated to me that he would like to visit with you concerning his handling of the Mn/DOT encroachment permits and how they pertain to the watershed district. Please contact him at (218) 281-6069.

The early involvement mentioned in Technical Memorandum No. 95-07-ES-02 will generally be concerning major construction type projects that are included in Mn/DOT's District Improvement Program. This contact with the watershed districts will usually be done by the preliminary design section and could be as early as project scoping (determining what type(s) of improvement the project will cover).

We value our relationships with all of the watershed districts and hope not only to continue our working relationships but also to improve them.

Sincerely,

Monte Berend
Hydraulics Engineer

cc: Chuck Magnusson

BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ EVALUATOR: _____
BOARD MEMBER

APPRAISAL PERIOD: FROM _____ TO _____.

Listed below are ten performance responsibilities of the position Executive Director for the Board of Water & Soil Resources. After each responsibility, performance indicators are listed. Rate each performance by circling the appropriate response and/or you may use the comment area below each responsibility to evaluate the director. Please feel free to use one or, preferably, both ways to evaluate.

Evaluation code: Use the number that best describes the extent of achievement.

- 1. Indicates unacceptable performance
- 2. Indicates improvement needed
- 3. Indicates meets expectations
- 4. Indicates very good performance
- 5. Indicates outstanding performance
- UA Unable to answer

1. Has comprehension of and provides leadership and direction for the promotion and application of BWSR programs.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

2. Coordinates appropriate staff activities and education for the development and promotion of BWSR programs and delegates responsibility as appropriate to empower staff within their function.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

3. Maintains a good communication level with the Board and acts as a conduit for the flow of timely information, ideas, convictions, needs and desires that increases the Board's knowledge of the issues within their scope and thus their decision making capabilities.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

4. Is able to work well within and understands the parameters and roles of both the staff and board within the policy decision-making Board concept.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

5. Coordinates the effective education of the Board by researching and providing information, background, potential arguments and numeral solutions and/or options to specific issues.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

6. Communicates postively and effectively with other state agencies, local government/special districts entities, the Governor's office and the media regarding Board policy, programs and partnership efforts - and does so as a part of the "whole" not as a solitary authority.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

7. Assures that the Board or appropriate members of the Board have knowledge of and/or are included in various meetings that would enhance their education and decision making capabilities.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

8. Maintains a good working morale and promotes a postive and open atmosphere in which real dialogue may occur.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

9. Acts as the chief liason between the Board and the staff and thereby encourages and promotes collaboration and teamwork which utilizes the unique strengths of individual board members. Is readily available to Board members and chair.

5 4 3 2 1 UA

10. Is "visionary" and ????



November 27, 1995

OLD BUSINESS #3

Mr. Arne Stoen
Pope County Commissioner
Courthouse
Glenwood, Minnesota 56334

Dear Commissioner Stoen:

RE: Request for the BWSR to reconsider the NRBG deadline

Dear Commissioner Stoen:

Your request to reconsider the deadline date for the Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) applications will be brought before the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) at their December 20th meeting as there is no meeting scheduled for November. Please be advised, however, that I will recommend to board members that they do not reconsider their resolution (No. 95-57) regarding the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) portion of the NRBG. The date of January 16 coincides with the historic deadline of mid-January for counties to submit their applications for state block grant funds to implement programs such as water planning and the Wetland Conservation Act. The BWSR cannot in good faith distribute state funds for a program that the local government is not implementing. However, I must emphasize that only the WCA portion of the NRBG is affected by your non-implementation status. Counties such as Pope are fully eligible for the water planning, feedlot and shoreland portions of the block grant if a completed grant application is submitted to us by January 16, 1996. Also, you may be eligible for the challenge grant portion of the NRBG program which is conducted annually in May. Your county, and the others who are currently not implementing the WCA, will become automatically eligible for the WCA portion of the NRBG if you acknowledge your responsibility to implement the WCA before January 16, 1996.

In consideration of the over 400 local units of government, including cities, townships, watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts and most counties who are making a good faith effort to implement the WCA and work within our system of government to seek the needed changes, it would be inappropriate for this board to reconsider their past decision. If a county is inclined to adopt a resolution to support the need for changes to the state law, a better message---in my opinion---would be to express a desire for specific changes, based on county experiences, during the 1996 legislative session without rescinding your responsibilities to implement the law. This would impose less fiscal hardship on local programs that rely on WCA funding, allow landowners in your county to undertake projects requiring local government actions, and send a message to policy makers about the need for changes.

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· Please advise Ron Harnack if you wish to be on the December 20th Board meeting agenda.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Cobb
Chair, Board of Water and Soil Resources

c: County Board Commissioners -(Chair)
SWCD Offices
Ron Harnack, BWSR Executive Director
BWSR Staff
BWSR Board Members
Wetland Heritage Advisory Committee
Ron Nargang, DNR Deputy Commissioner
Colleen Landkamer, President, Association of Minnesota Counties
Jim Mulder, Association of Minnesota Counties
Dave Weirens, Association of Minnesota Counties
Ray Bohn, MN Association of Watershed Districts
D'Wayne DeZiel, MN Association of Soil and Water Districts
Joel Jamnik, League of Minnesota Cities
David Fricke, Minnesota Association of Townships
Matt Seltzer, Attorney Generals Office
Tonya Kozicky, Governor Carlson's Office

s:amcsb.let

11-06-1995 11:00AM FROM BARB OR SANDY COBB 612 436 2190

TO: DONN HANSEN, BWSR

Fax 297-5615

FROM Barb Cobb, BWSR

FAX 436-2190

11/6/95

2 pages



November 3, 1995

Barbara A. Cobb, Chair
Board of Water and Soil Resources
P.O. Box 302
Lakeland, MN 55403
Dear Chair Cobb:

On September 27, 1995 the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) decided to require local governments to acknowledge adoption of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) rules by January 16, 1995 to be eligible for Natural Resource Block Grants (NRBG). The Association of Minnesota Counties Wetland Protection Sub-Committee discussed this issue at a meeting on October 26, 1995, and requests BWSR to reconsider this action.

While the deadline for applying for NRBG funds in 1995 was also in January, the change this year coincides with the beginning of the 1996 Legislative Session, and will also deny funds for counties which have rescinded. It must be stated that the counties which have rescinded have done so in protest of a law which does not work for their counties, but they fully expect to adopt the WCA after the Legislature appropriately reforms the WCA in 1996.

The AMC Wetland Protection Sub-Committee requests BWSR reconsider setting the application deadline for the end of March, which would allow the Legislature adequate time to resolve many of the issues which are facing the WCA. Alternatively, BWSR could establish a second application deadline to be set for shortly after the end of the Legislative Session. This action would also serve as a measure of good faith on the part of BWSR by showing respect for the strong feelings of many of the counties in Minnesota.

A response to the questions raised in this letter would be appreciated by December 1. Please feel free to contact myself at 612-239-2757, or David Weirns of AMC at 612-224-3344. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Arne Stoen
Commissioner, Pope County
Chair, AMC Wetland Protection Sub-Committee

Page 2
Chair Cobb
November 3, 1995

cc: Colleen Landkamer, President, AMC
Senator LeRoy Stumpf
Senator Roger Moe
Senator Dean Johnson
Senator Charlie Berg
Senator Joe Bertram
Senator Dan Stevens
Senator Steve Dille
Senator Bob Lessard
Senator Skip Finn
Representative Irv Anderson
Representative Phil Carruthers
Representative Steve Sviggum
Representative Jim Tunheim
Representative Tim Finseth
Representative Willard Munger
Representative Steve Wenzel
Representative Jim Girard
Representative Bill Haas
Representative Tom Bakk
Representative Betty McCollum
Members, Board of Water and Soil Resources
Ron Harnack, Executive Director, BWSR
Dan Larson

Koochiching County

Administration 283-6252
Assessor 283-6220
Attorney 283-6230
Auditor 283-6202
Clerk of Court 283-6261



**Courthouse, 715 4th St.
International Falls, Minnesota 56649**

Ron
Community Services 283-8405
Extension Service 283-6282
Highway Engineer 283-6284
Land Commissioner 283-6296
Nurses Office 283-6244
Recorder 283-6290
Solid Waste 283-6257
Sheriff 283-4416
Treasurer 283-6210
Veterans Service 283-6250
County FAX 283-6262

November 29, 1995

Barbara Cobb, Chair
MN Board of Soil and Water Resources
One West Water Street
Suite #200
St. Paul, MN 55107

RE: October 27, 1995 - Memorandum

Dear Ms. Cobb:

The Koochiching County Board of Commissioners has reviewed your October 27th memorandum regarding the Wetland Conservation Act and the Board of Soil and Water Resources interpretation of local government obligations, including a review of Resolution #95-70.

The Koochiching County Board of Commissioners has the following response, "NUTS".

Very sincerely yours,

Larry Chezick, Chair
Koochiching County Board of Commissioners

hja

CORRESPONDENCE FOR YOUR INFORMATION

NOT FOR THE BWSR MEETING ON DECEMBER 20

CONTENTS OF THIS PACKET INCLUDE:

- 1) BOARD MEMBER UPDATE, DECEMBER 1995
- 2) SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION INFORMATION
- 3) ISSUES MEETINGS SUMMARIES
- 4) MEMO TO AGENCIES REGARDING REVIEW AND COMMENT ON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL WATER PLANS
- 5) "SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT FOR STATE 1996-97 BUDGET"
- 6) NEWS RELEASE FROM MINNESOTA PLANNING, "FEDERAL MANDATES COST MINNESOTA MILLIONS"
- 7) UPDATED STAFF LISTING
- 8) OVERVIEW OF SWIFT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN
- 9) OVERVIEW OF LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN
- 10) OVERVIEW OF CHIPPEWA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN
- 11) OVERVIEW OF BIG STONE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLAN
- 12) MEMO TO SWCDS, FROM GREG LARSON REGARDING STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM AREA ALLOCATION POLICY
- 13) MEMO TO SWCDS, FROM GREG LARSON REGARDING SWCD GENERAL SERVICES FUNDING FROM COUNTIES
- 14) LETTER TO MARVIN LUNDIN FROM COMMISSIONER ROD SANDO REGARDING WETLANDS



Board Member Update

December 1995

The mission of the Board of Water and Soil Resources is to manage water and soil resources and to help all citizens be stewards of our irreplaceable natural resources.

Engineering and Technical Services Section

Area II

- * The RW-22 reservoir project is still inching along in the environmental review process. Lyon County's Record of Decision, based on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), indicated that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not necessary. The county has applied for a DNR Protected Waters Permit and is working with the DNR to try to identify an outlet design that minimizes bounce in the Shelburne Wildlife Management Area for ten-year and smaller floods. HDR Engineering has developed a draft mitigation plan that was submitted with responses to DNR and PCA comments on the EAW, and Area II has completed a draft watershed management plan. The future of this project remains unclear, but it appears that serious discussions are occurring.
- * In late October, members of the Area II joint powers board requested that the BWSR cost-share the salary of an engineer using program funds. This request has been preliminarily approved, subject to an anticipated amendment to the technical services agreement between the Area II board

and the BWSR.

- * Darrell Apelgrain, BWSR engineer, is focusing on completion of a Road Retention Guidelines document and will be participating in a small watershed floodwater demonstration project/study in the Redwood River basin above Marshall. Road Retention Guidelines were identified by the 1993 Flood Hazard Mitigation Team as a way to promote this type of small floodwater detention project in the Minnesota River basin, and potentially elsewhere in the state. The Redwood River project was started by the World Wildlife Fund and The Wetland Initiative this past summer as an outgrowth of 1993 post-flood discussions and reports. Part of Darrell's time will be dedicated to this project, which also includes the World Wildlife Fund, The Wetland Initiative, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area, the DNR, and possibly others. The project will focus on the integration of wetland restoration, road retention projects and other possible flood hazard mitigation measures. Although some of us question the collective ability of participants to agree on how to balance flood control and wildlife habitat enhancement objectives of wetland restoration, we are optimistic that some level of consensus can be reached.

Lakeshore Engineering

- * A total of 16 potential shoreline stabilization projects will be submitted this month by the Lake, Cook and So. St. Louis SWCDs for state Cost-Share Program rollover funding (seven by Lake, seven by Cook and two by So. St. Louis). Gene Clark, lakeshore engineer, helped these SWCDs conduct feasibility studies and prepared preliminary designs and cost estimates for potential funding. Wayne Seidel, part-time technician for Lake and Cook SWCDs, has worked with his boards to do some prioritization of these and other potential projects. We expect the competition for cost-share rollover funding to be fierce, and further prioritization necessary. Gene will be available to help the Grants Team with those efforts.
- * Gene has assisted the Lake and Cook SWCDs with 11 additional project investigations, many of which are expected to result in Streambank, Lakeshore and Roadside (SLR) cost-share applications in the spring of 1996.
- * The North Shore Management Board (NSMB) and Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) submitted an application for a loan from the State Revolving Fund Ag Best Management Practices loan fund in November. The focus is on rural individual sewage treatment systems (ISTS), which are a substantial nonpoint source pollution issue along the North Shore and its tributaries. The NSMB missed the PCA Clean Water Partnership SRF loan program application period this past fall, but intends to submit an application next year for loan funds to direct toward shoreline stabilization and other nonpoint practices. An associated

question they are dealing with is whether or not existing management plans and studies will satisfy the Phase I diagnostic study requirement of the PCA program. BWSR staff have been very supportive of these efforts to secure an additional funding source for the work of the North Shore SWCDs.

- * Mark Nelson, board conservationist, and Gene Clark traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan, in early December to participate in a meeting of the Erosion and Sedimentation Task Force of the Great Lakes Commission (GLC). They had some good discussions with task force members and presented some slides and talked about what the SWCDs and BWSR are doing along the North Shore. The GLC expects to have about \$250,000 of grant funds available in 1996, with a \$15,000 cost-share limit (50 percent). Grant applications will be due in February 1996.

Several other efforts that Gene and other BWSR staff have been involved in recently include:

- * Gene helped the Minnesota Sea Grant complete plans for a Great Lakes Hazards workshop to be held in Duluth in early February. Participation will be primarily by invitation. The purpose is to share information about what different agencies and organizations are doing in regard to water level, erosion and severe weather hazards, and to help develop priorities for research, education and implementation.
- * Preparations continue for six shoreline best management practices (BMP) workshops to be held next spring and summer. This project was funded by a GLC grant. Barb Liukkonen, water resources education coordinator, has provided some great assistance to Gene and others involved in the workshop

planning and associated development of a shoreline BMP manual.

Conservation Easements

- * Program staff recently interviewed a half dozen applicants for our engineering aide intermediate position, which provides computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) assistance for wetland restoration projects, legal exhibit A preparation and related work. We had to seek Department of Employee Relations (DOER) approval to make an appropriate offer to our top candidate. Although DOER was very slow in responding (in spite of many calls), we were able to make an official offer last Friday, which was then accepted on Monday, December 18. Jim Luniewski, who comes to us from the city of Minneapolis, will begin January 10.
- * Due to the vacancy in our engineering aide position, we temporarily went back to manual preparation of legal exhibit A documents several weeks ago (we had been preparing them via CADD since earlier this year). Steve Miller, Polly Remick and Tim Fredbo have been working diligently at preparing legals and exhibit A documents to address the backlog resulting from the vacancy, and Al Kean has been providing review. We expect to have made substantial progress in working through the backlog by the end of the month. If our top candidate accepts our offer for the engineering aide position, all of our available program staff positions will finally be filled.
- * The first Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)/Permanent Wetlands Preserve (PWP) sign-up during which BWSR has prepared all legals and exhibit A documents under the retooled

procedures has been challenging due to several staffing changes and shake-out of some retooled procedures. We have clarified methods to improve legal descriptions and exhibit A documents, including easement area dimension needs from landowners and SWCDs, and have reduced the circles of communication. We have also worked through many older troublesome easement acquisitions and are developing new methods to track and report easement acquisition progress. Program staff remain committed to continued improvement of easement acquisition time frames and customer service.

- * December 15 was the deadline for SWCDs to submit completed applications and local prioritization for the 1995-01 RIM/PWP sign-up to BWSR board conservationists. BCs will make funding recommendations in line with their allocations by January 12, 1996, considering local and statewide priorities. Recall that we have approximately \$3.4 million available for perpetual easements this year, including \$2.7 million from state bonding and \$750,000 from North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants. The annual program plan again calls for a minimum of 50 percent of the state funds to be allocated to the Minnesota River Basin. Approximately \$350,000 of the NAWCA grant funds are for wetland restoration in the Minnesota River basin and \$400,000 for easement acquisition in the Heron Lake watershed. Tom Wenzel, design engineer, and Jeff Hedtke, wetland restoration technician, conducted a number of site investigations and surveys for potential 95-01 wetland restorations in late October and November.

Technical Training and Coordination

- * Justin Jeffery, training and design engineer, and Al Kean, chief engineer, orchestrated a three-day training session in mid-November for the SRF engineers and technicians, all of whom attended. Char Sokatch, metro region secretary, provided much logistical and clerical assistance for this session. We tried to clarify partnership technical roles, as well as provide technical training. Representatives from the NRCS, the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees, DNR, PCA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Corps of Engineers assisted with the training. The Geodimeter total station surveying systems also arrived at the training session. The regional sales and technical representative for Geodimeter provided about eight hours of training in the use of the systems, including some hands-on use in the parking lot. Many of the SRF Joint Powers Area (JPA) staff have reportedly used the equipment to date.
- * Al, Justin and John Brach, NRCS state conservation engineer, presented a summary of Technical Advisory Committee and related technical coordination work during 1995 at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Convention December 10, 11, and 12. They highlighted efforts to develop a partnership technical approval authority system and a coordinated technical training system. The technical approval authority system should be finalized by February; the partnership technical training initiative is just getting rolling.
- * John and Al have agreed to invite the SRF engineers to the semi-annual

NRCS Area Engineers meeting in early February. We believe this will be a very useful opportunity to further develop coordination between the SRF JPA engineers and NRCS area engineers, and to share current technical information.

Northern Region

- * Board conservationists (BCs) are busy with water planning updates. Yes, that was water planning updates--not wetlands! It has been a refreshing change of pace for field staff to work on a program that most local government units (LGUs) still see in a positive light. Board members have been gearing up for the ad hoc committee process that we'll use this time around to review water plan updates. Our first ad hoc committee was December 14 in Brainerd with BWSR Members Darrell Bruggman, Ginny Imholte, Barb Uppgaard and Ted Lovdahl meeting to review Itasca, Todd, and Aitkin water plans under the expert guidance of Board Conservationist Dan Steward. At present, it looks like 12 water plans will come before the Board between January and June of 96.
- * Wetlands and the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) are still issues. BCs Keith Grow, Mark Nelson, Dale Krystosek, Dan Steward, and Bill Best all had Technical Evaluation Panels for WCA in November. Keith points out that the newest twist is that restoration orders are being disregarded. He says he is being called back to look at sites that should have been restored but still aren't. Keith had good support from DNR Conservation Officer Dave Kramer on one such case in Mille Lacs County. They worked together with the SWCD to resolve a restoration order

that had been overdue. Dan worked with Crow Wing SWCD to resolve a sticky WCA issue involving two feuding landowners, a non-standard lakeshore lot, and a lawsuit over local zoning ordinances. Dan and the SWCD worked out a WCA solution, but I can't say what happened on the rest of the issues.

- * In other WCA news, the Bemidji and Brainerd field staff met with Corps of Engineer staff to review wetland issues of common interest. It was a productive meeting and worth doing a couple times a year to keep us from getting cross-wired on any cases.
- * BWSR hosted a successful Management Level II training session in Brainerd on November 1 and 2. About sixty-five SWCD, county and watershed district folks attended this session focusing on leadership and budgets. The session was organized by the BWSR training team with Ron Shelito, northern supervisor, and Sara Johnson, accounting coordinator, taking the lead.
- * It may be old news by now, but Barb Liukkonen recently participated in a staff exchange with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Arizona DEQ is the state nonpoint agency and had issued an invitation last year for other states to participate in a staff exchange. They paid the bill. Barb reports that she found that we in Minnesota are doing some pretty great things. "For me," she states, "the visit was a good reminder of how we value local management, education, and public participation." Arizona uses statutory authority for many programs and doesn't seem to rely as much on a local delivery system. Barb took some slides; if the board is interested in a slide show sometime, I'm sure it can be arranged.

- * Jim Lemmerman, forester, taught a Forestry BMP class at Vermillion Community College. Jim also participated in the Minnesota Rural Partners meeting, which focused on forestry issues in the Minnesota River Basin. Jim says a lot of time was spent discussing how the DNR could establish hybrid poplar plantations along the Minnesota River. Not much was said about reestablishing native vegetation, which Jim thinks is also a viable option. However, Jim points out that the landowners will need some kind of economic benefit to really make any revegetation program fly.

Southern Region

- * Comprehensive county local water planning update activities continue to require much of the board conservationists' time. Activities include the informal review of plans; attendance at public hearings; formal review and comment; preparation of the findings of fact, conclusions, and order for the plans; and attendance at the BWSR water planning committee meeting at which final recommendations are prepared for the full BWSR.
- * Sign-ups for the RIM/PWP Programs have also meant an increase in activity. BCs must review and prioritize the applications and then make funding recommendations to BWSR St. Paul by mid-January 1996.
- * Counties are slowly beginning their Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) applications. These are due to BWSR by mid-January 1996.
- * These three work items (water plans, RIM/PWP easement applications, and

NRBG applications) will continue to require a lot of BC time. November 1995 through January 1996 will be a very busy period for BCs.

- * BC David Sill attended a Senate IR Task Force meeting on rural initiatives lead by Senators Arlene Lesewski and Mark Ourada recently in Marshall. This was one of several Republican rural initiative meetings held around the state. In addition to rural health care, housing, transportation, and property taxes, the wetlands/property rights issue was addressed. As with most of these meetings, the wetland issues raised were almost entirely non-Wetland Conservation Act issues: Swampbuster, DNR, or Army Corps of Engineers issues.
- * Marshall BC Tabor Hoek participated in a riparian land management tour sponsored by DNR Division of Forestry. Highlighted were BWSR's efforts through RIM to retire riparian floodplain land and how natural succession occurs once land is taken out of crop production. The DNR is looking at opportunities such as paper production or energy production through alternative crops on riparian floodplains. BWSR will need to give some thought on our policy for harvest of riparian woodlands that are developing on our RIM easements.
- * Tabor also reports that after much work by SRF Joint Powers #9 (hosted by Murray SWCD) they have finally made arrangements to bring an engineer on board in late January.
- * The \$400,000 NAWCA grant to secure additional RIM easements in the Heron Lake watershed is making progress. Several good projects have been submitted and will be screened for funding over the next month. With

increased emphasis on agricultural drainage, RIM continues to be a popular option for downstream landowners farming at the mercy of their upstream neighbors.

- * SWCD Accounting Coordinator Sara Johnson recently completed seven area training sessions around the state for SWCD board treasurers, district managers, and new bookkeepers. The turnout of board treasurers wasn't the greatest, but the interest in the topics discussed has increased. Now Sara is getting invitations to attend board meetings and area meetings to make presentations on fiscal responsibility.
- * Sara also worked with Ron Shelito to organize the Management Level II training held in Brainerd in early November.

Metro Region

- * David Johnson joined the metro region staff as the board conservationist for the western metro. David started officially on December 13, but made his way through the snow and ice to the MASWCD Annual Convention to start making himself known. David came to us after serving as a Hydro 1 with the DNR, Division of Waters. His most recent assignment was working with LGUs in the development of water emergency and conservation plans through the Division of Water's Appropriation Permit Program. His DNR career included time as the acting area hydrologist in Duluth. David was the primary author of a legislatively mandated report on state assumption of the Section 404 Program as a spinoff of the WCA, so he has a good basis for dealing with WCA issues. David has a BS in Biology from Gustavus Adolphus and an MS in Environmental Biology

from the U of M. Please be sure to stop by and welcome David to the BWSR team.

- * The WCA appeal in the matter of Citizens Concerned for Mahtomedi v. Valley Branch Watershed District was settled informally with several stipulations.
- * The Metro Water Planning (509) next-generation plan priority schedule was approved by the Board in October. The Planning Committee met on December 6 and agreed that an interagency Memo of Understanding should be redrafted to give the group authority to handle problems on a case-by-case basis.
- * Metro staff attended a number of technical training workshops and conventions, including: Minnesota Erosion Control Association (MECA) bioengineering workshop, Hennepin Conservation District bioengineering workshop, MECA erosion control application workshop, the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD) meeting, the MASWCD Convention, and the AMC Convention.
- * Barbara Ohman and Matt Moore, metro BCs, attended Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) meetings for Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the City of Eden Prairie during the absence of a western BC, and helped get David up to speed by attending TEPs with him during his first couple weeks.
- * With additional staff now on board, Barbara was able to begin attending board meetings of the SWCDs in her area. Barbara also provided a wetland presentation for the Stillwater Rotary, which received excellent feedback and resulted in a request for a presentation before the Washington County Board. This presentation was made jointly with

the Washington SWCD and encouraged the County Board to approve a resolution supporting the BWSR-proposed changes to WCA. Barbara also provided BWSR input on a panel discussion for Pat Brezonik's Water Resources Policy class at the U of M. Other panel members were Gary Oberts from Met Council, John Helland from the Legislature's staff, and a staff member from the Dept. of Health.

- * Matt and Eric Evenson, Twin Cities water quality initiative specialist, met with the Credit River Watershed Management Organization (WMO) to begin the process of writing a model WMO plan. Eric will begin working on the inventories for the plan document. Matt and Doug (Doc) Snyder, metro intern, will be getting started on the maps that will be used in the plan.
- * Doc has completed the first draft of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Wetland Assessment Method comprehensive planning document. The first draft was presented to the inter-agency wetland group and the 509 group. The method was designed to assess a variety of wetland functions and the relative value within the LGU or watershed. Data layers currently being used for the model are land use, land cover, detailed soils, the National Wetlands Inventory, and roads. Copies have been sent out for review and comment.

EQB



November 30, 1995

TO: Environmental Quality Board Members

RE: Summary of Environmental Reorganization Information

This is a draft of the summary of the wide range of information submitted to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) from individuals and organizations as part of the public outreach for input regarding reorganization of environmental protection and natural resource management. Comments were received during eight regional public meetings, and as a result of direct mail solicitation.

The format of many of the comments came as a response to suggested questions which relate to the goals and outcomes expressed in the legislation which requires the EQB as the governor's designee to work in consultation with a legislative task force to report on environmental reform. Many other comments were also offered on specific topics of the responders choice.

The report is organized in three sections and six appendices. For convenience, the first section is a synopsis and general characterization of the broad range of comments as the directly relate to the goals and outcomes. These comments are synthesized from the meeting process, in the form of key points which were raised during small groups discussions. There is also a discussion of major themes suggested from all comments.

The second section is composed primarily of comments offered in direct response to the guidance questions. Again, these were distilled to the representative range of comments, where some comments were offered more than once or similar comments were made.

A third, very brief, section are those additional comments submitted on the general comment forms associated with the meeting process.

A substantial portion of direct, untouched comment is to be found in the various appendices. This draft does not include the large body of letters of comment from interested organizations and individuals, however, which will appear in the final document. Also not included are printed reports, articles, and references attached to some comments; they are either available directly to the EQB member agencies or may be requested from EQB.



DRAFT - NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION OR DISTRIBUTION

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION**

November 1995

Environmental Quality Board

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to summarize the available information gathered in response to a mandate of state statute Chapter 248, Article 12 relative to reorganization of environmental protection and management of natural resources. This article lays out an outline/blueprint of certain goals to be achieved and outcomes expected in developing guidance for the state legislature to consider when approaching the elements of reforming the policies and implementation for delivery of services and enforcement of environmental regulation in the future in Minnesota.

The information in this document represents the opinions, advice, data, and characterizations offered from a variety of sources through a public input process. The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) held a series of eight public regional meetings in the fall of 1995 to provide a forum for this input. Approximately 500 citizens of Minnesota attended, and gave their information in small group sessions or other specific comments in writing. Attendance to these meetings was solicited by direct mailing of materials to about 2500 individuals and organizations identified by EQB member organizations as having an interest in providing this kind of input and/or a stake in outcomes of environmental reorganization. Also, a statewide press release was distributed to all to various media; broadcast, daily and weekly local and regional press.

Subsequent to the regional public meetings an additional mailing of approximately another 2500 pieces was sent to ensure that potentially interested parties who may not have had an opportunity to attend were given the chance to respond.

The information developed from this public strategy was taken in part from the responses to a series of questions relative to local and statewide issues directly relating to the goals and outcomes of the legislated mandate. The questions were part of a moderated small group discussion process held during the public meetings.

The use of this document is to serve as a comprehensive summary of the range of comments and information offered during this public input process. It is for consideration by the Environmental Quality Board in assisting to develop the aforementioned plan in consultation with the legislative designee. The information contained herein is, therefore, diverse and does not represent any expression of opinion, policy, or position of the EQB itself.

In faithfully recording the range of comments offered on the subjects under consideration it will be apparent that in some cases opinions, positions, or suggested alternatives are partially or wholly contradictory, or otherwise incompatible with other suggestions offered. It must be remembered that this is the nature of public comment. It was not the intent of these meetings to build consensus or express a majority position to be dissented from by minority position(s). Rather, the objective was to reflect a range of honestly held perspectives regardless of source. The task of evaluating the viability, appropriateness, and impact of all these different comments is inherent to the EQB board process. This document represents the raw data which are available to inform that process.

Background

Two particular products of this mandate are reports to the legislature making recommendations concerning changes which would achieve the goals and outcomes so named. One report is supposed to focus on the overall issues of reorganization per se, according to these goals and outcomes, and is due to be submitted

to the legislature by December 15, 1996. A second report has the very specific focus of examining special purpose districts, such as soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, lake improvement districts, lake conservation districts, and water management organizations, with an eye toward recommending steps to eliminate overlapping jurisdictions, duplicative responsibilities, and duplicative funding. This report will also examine the role of boards, commissions, councils, and task forces in this same context. This specifically includes analyzing the role of the Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA) and the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and other regulatory and advisory bodies relating to protection of farmland and management of natural resources. This report is due December 15, 1995.

Methodology mandated for making these Reports

Minnesota statute Chapter 248, Article 12 requires that the governor designate a commissioner or commissioners to develop a plan to reorganize state services relating to the protection of the environment and management of natural resources. The governor chose the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) as this designee; representing as it does the nine departments or state offices which have functions, responsibilities, and interests in these areas. The legislature is similarly charged with designating a task force to accomplish this report of recommendations. The legislative coordinating commission has chosen eight senators and eight representatives to serve as this task force. This law also specifies that the legislative designee and governor's designee shall consult each other in developing such a plan.

These designees may also appoint stakeholder advisory councils to facilitate public input or state employee input relative to these reports.

Organization of this Document

I. Comments organized by Goal or Outcome

The most straightforward strategy for displaying all types of comments, regardless of source, is to organize them under each goal or outcome referenced in the legislation. In so doing, each relevant point or comment is offered only once, without reference to its being offered multiple times by different parties, or with slight variation. It is hoped, therefore, that the reader will find sufficiently representative comments under each heading without the necessity of enduring endless repetition. It should also be understood that in some cases like comments, or the same comment, are offered in different contexts. This does represent repetition of a kind, but may be regarded as demonstrating a connection between multiple elements or issues.

The source of these comments are the extracted summary notes of the moderators of the small discussion groups, the individual responses of participants submitted as answers to the guidance questions, individual general comments, and/or other materials submitted as responses to the public invitation to comment.

II. Comments organized by Statewide Questions and Local Questions

These questions were used as the basis for a moderated, guided, small group discussion process within the regional public meetings which were held during September, 1995. These questions were also offered as materials in the follow-up direct mailing. Comments offered in this context also were meant to relate specifically to the goals and outcomes to be addressed. In some cases these comments dealt with matters on a conceptual level that transcended the individual goals and outcomes; or addressed particular issues in a narrow, specific context which did not necessarily relate directly to the implementation of an overall reorganization strategy.

III. General Comments

A short section follows which includes the general comments received on response forms provided at the public meetings, or mailed or faxed to the EQB.

Appendices

Appendix A Questions Used for Moderated Small Group Discussions

Appendix B Minutes for Environmental Reorganization Meetings

Appendix C Minutes of Small Group Discussions

Appendix D Letters of Comment

Appendix E Metropolitan Council Comments

Appendix F Summary of Meetings; per BWSR

***Key Points** - The key points listed for each goal or outcome below are those reported from each small group during the public meeting process. Small groups were asked to identify from one to several "key points" developed out of their discussion and report it/them back to the large group when it was reconvened. This list is taken from the overall group record maintained by a recording secretary from the EQB present at each meeting. These points do not represent the totality of information discussed, shared or communicated during the meetings, but rather are those things chosen for sharing with the whole group. As such, they represent what was found to be of interest in each randomly assigned group.

***Discussion:** The discussion section under each of the following goals and outcomes includes characterizations of comments made during small group discussion, comments submitted directly to EQB and/or summarization of concepts identified as relevant to each issue.

I. COMMENTS ORGANIZED BY GOAL OR OUTCOME

Goals of Reorganization

1. Sustainable development throughout all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy.

No key points offered from small group discussion were identified as specifically dealing with the concept of sustainable development. However, one of the statewide questions dealt directly with this concept, and many answers were given in writing as a result. Not all answers were responsive; however, a representative sampling are given below. The full range of responses is to be found in Section II, Comments Organized by Question

Keeping quality of life as the focus, and using biologically/scientifically based parameters to determine whether the particular segment of the region can handle more development. For example, deciding whether more area can be paved in a community by measuring the water quality of the area. Setting limits based on what our natural resources can handle and sticking to them, reducing some "development" if necessary in favor of redevelopment and revitalization. Public transportation is a very important issue in this regard, as is expansion of the MUSA line. Start by identifying resource we want to preserve, protect, and enhance.

Excellent question to answer! Set standards for local carrying capacities at the state level with local input and utilize local

agencies to help implement these standards for livable communities. The standards should deal with measures of clean air and water, and amount of impervious surface vs green space, and wooded areas acreage vs developed area acreage, etc.

Protect our natural resources at all costs. Manage them as "state treasure". Recent study at Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that states with strong state environmental/natural resource protection agencies and laws actually have healthier economies and business climates than states which relegate duties to small politically driven and ineffective units of government. There is absolutely no negative correlation (according to MIT) between environmental protection and stifling economy. This is important stuff!

Answers to Question #2 of the statewide questions relate directly to this goal.

2. Improved delivery of services.

Key Points:

- Collocation of environmental programs and state agencies not deal with all, but one
- Have clear expectations
- Improve delivery.
- Look at successes of current system
- Enforce laws
- Focus on performance
- Customer service should include local permitting.
- More personalized, hours, and accessibility

Discussion:

Most of the comments made concerning improved delivery of service tended to focus on issues of decentralization of some elements of service delivery. Many times it was suggested that regional offices of

state agencies would/should be the main mode of delivery, and result in greater citizen access to needed services and information.

A collateral strategy for this seemed to be the idea of co-location: having various offices and agencies, including local and regional units of government, physically located in one office complex or physically near one another. In some cases it was suggested that a viable strategy would be for memoranda of understanding to be set up between agencies so that field personnel would/could function as surrogates for another agency. Extending agency hours through toll free number access or cooperative office arrangements was suggested.

Another suggestion for improved efficiency was to establish a "universal" toll free number to serve as an access point for all matters concerning the environment or management of natural resources. This access point would serve a clearinghouse function to guide the consumer to any and all necessary contacts with the various agencies in completing action for a given situation, such as permitting of new construction or land use, water appropriation, etc.

A further refinement which was suggested for establishing statewide access is to employ computer technology to make official forms and information accessible through the Internet or on a dial-up basis. This would also possibly include access to databases and submission of applications via computer.

Answers to Question #5 of the questions of local interest and Question #5 of the statewide questions, among others, relate to this goal.

3. A preventative, precautionary approach to environmental degradation.

Key Points:

- should be long term planning (ex: 25 years from now)
- Enforcement made at the state level
- Need state direction

Discussion:

Comments given suggested that there is a continuing need for state agency guidance in establishing policies which would be consistent and take into account the greater concerns of protecting the environment on a comprehensive basis. While there was an expressed preference for local control of enforcement and permitting, at the same time there was a recognition of the need for policy development on a scale which goes beyond the concerns or desires of local administration.

Answers to Question #2 and Question #3 of the statewide questions, among others provided input for this goal.

4. Citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes.

Key Points:

- Rule making should be at local level
- Restructure how laws are passed so people understand process
- Human process should not be ignored
- Property landowners should not be ignored
- Citizen participation is needed; should be heard; should be happening more
- More hands on

- Citizen involvement needed
- Effective communication between state and local government, community decisions
- Citizen participation-educate landowners, citizen task force

Discussion:

Comments on this area tended to focus on a belief that "local people know the local scene the best". This fostered suggestions that some issues should be settled by local referendum or decided by local boards of duly elected members. This goal also received suggestions that citizen task forces would serve as a valuable guidance mechanism for establishing effective implementation of policies, so that local variation (where appropriate) could be possible.

There was also interest in enhancing the public hearing process wherever it could be used as a mechanism for local input on decision-making.

Answers to Question #3 of the questions of local interest reflect the responses to this issue.

5. Progressively less air, land, and water pollution.

Key Points:

- Enforce laws
- State should develop policy

Discussion:

This goal did not particularly inspire comments directed at specific strategies or concerns, but rather gave voice to the more general notion that the laws, rules, and regulations currently in force should be implemented in an optimal fashion. The opinion expressed many times was that effective enforcement was key to environmental protection. This also resulted in comments which indicated the essential need for policy development to still occur at the state level to ensure that local interests did not result in overall degradation of the environment. Very little was suggested in terms of remediation, reclamation, or preservation with regard to specific instances or strategies; although the concept of progressively less pollution was accepted as being necessary and appropriate.

Answers to Question #6 of the state questions and Question #2 of the local questions were seen to have some relevance to this general concept.

Outcomes of Reorganization

1. Consolidation, where appropriate, of many of the state's diverse environmental and natural resource programs.

Key Points:

- Statewide environmental reorganization should have more local control
- Reduce environmental bureaucracy
- Districts are not getting enough money, so work together
- Consolidation is not the answer
- Consolidate under TOPICS, not agency wise. One stop shop
- Super agency=lose local input
- Consolidation is not the answer, there needs to be fine tuning and defining

- Do not need to consolidate, need to cooperate
- Statewide standards need to be set
- Cooperation and coordination NOT consolidation. Develop an understanding
- Consolidating is the remedy for the wrong problem

Discussion:

Comments were made both for and against consolidation of state agencies/state agency functions. Many times there was also a mixing of use of terms when discussing consolidation, decentralization, and co-location. In almost all cases there was favorable opinion expressed for co-location of the various offices, on a local basis. There was also favorable sentiment concerning decentralization of service delivery from statewide agencies. There was some fear that regional offices would be few(er) and farther between if consolidation is implemented to a wide degree. Most opinions reflected a sense that regional offices would mean a longer distance between the consumer and needed services.

Many comments stressed what was seen as the importance of local access/control over matters. Thus there was a favorable attitude toward consolidation if it included the concept of delegation of authority to the local level. On the other hand, if consolidation meant an overall reduction of local presence by state agency functions, this was viewed negatively. Frequently the comments included a characterization that, "We don't need to see all services being directed by/coming from some central office in Saint Paul".

A key concept offered in comments on this topic was that services delivered by state agencies should come from regional or local delivery points. Again, the fear that consolidation would mean a "retreat to Saint Paul" meant that many times people spoke against consolidation on the basis that they believed this would constitute a drawing-in of service delivery. Generally speaking, when the concept of consolidating functions under one super-agency was discussed, the generally expressed view was that this would not help anything.

The general belief seemed to be that if that were implemented it would tend to leave a substantial bureaucratic hierarchy in place while effectively reducing a field presence at the local level.

Answers to Questions #1 and #5 of the statewide questions addressed this issue.

2. Better coordination of programs and activities relating to environmental and natural resource matters.

Key Points:

- agencies should be accountable with funded by permit
- coordination, cooperation, collaboration NOT consolidation
- mandate agency coordination
- Why here: Multi manage not heart of the issue. Keep at local level
- Statewide environmental reorganization should have more local control
- Simplify regulation-local/state
- Within the agencies, need to simplify
- Local level knows best
- Keep BWSR in place, do not combine with another agency
- Should be a clear establishment of who does what
- State planning should be local
- Local plans=locally done
- Local control
- Local implementation and management

- There is a need for assistance with the enforcement
- Local government does it best-cost effective, accessible, implement
- More cooperation, better coordination between levels of government

Discussion:

Many comments on this topic included substantive suggestions for putting enforcement of environmental matters on a rational basis. This includes setting standards and requirements to be uniform from agency to agency where regulation is accomplished through more than one avenue.

It was also suggested that permitting should have "an order of precedence", wherein if more than one type of permit may be required from more than one agency the permitting process with the highest precedence would satisfy all other subordinate requirements.

It was also suggested that local agencies, enforcing local requirements, were capable in many instances of performing the necessary pre-investigations, or reviews on behalf of state level requirements; and thus could effectively serve as surrogate agents of the state. It was also suggested that a certification program to ensure appropriately high standards being met would reduce bureaucracy and improve service by reducing "turn-around" time when authority was delegated to the local level this way.

Answers to Question #1 from the statewide questions and Question #4 of the local interest questions provided input for this outcome.

3. Improved citizen access to pertinent, understandable information.

Key Points:

- Make information more user friendly
- Have education pertaining to agency functions. who is responsible for interagency cooperation- this is poor at the state level
- Customer service should be # 1 within state agencies
- Property landowners should not be ignored
- State should set standards, simplify, educate at local level
- Education solves problems
- Citizens clearing house-certain contacts
- Educate citizens
- State enforcer, educator, technical assistance.
- Improve communication
- Public education; need to develop environmental curriculum in schools-reinforce
- States role needs to be redefined to include: education, tech assistance
- There should be training for local/state/public
- Educate one another

Discussion:

Most comments related to this area focused on the need for better general environmental education for the public and development of all-grade school curricula. Additional comments related to the concept that effective enforcement of environmental laws is highly dependent on an accurate public knowledge and perception of what is being required. The feeling was that many times environmental violation arose out of ignorance of the law or misperception of what requirements are.

Again, many comments expressed the notion that computer accessible information systems would be an

important enhancement of citizen access to advisory, educational, and legal resources.

Responses to Question #5 of the statewide questions helped to provide input on this important issue.

4. Establishment of an expeditious review process for agency actions.

Key Points:

- Lessen the amount of information that goes out
- Customer service time should be 30 day limit
- A person requesting information or an application should not need several applications
- Concern with permitting process
- Central theme: deliver service quicker, assist state agencies, delegate permits
- Customer service should include local permitting.

Discussion:

Many comments on this topic included suggestions for a specific time limit for the issuing of various permits. It was suggested that delegating the authority to examine and issue permits to either a regional office of a state agency or a local office of a cooperating agency would expedite the permitting process. It was observed that for certain kinds of permits the evaluation being made currently at the local level was seldom overturned at the state level. Therefore it would seem to make some sense that a local unit of government could serve as a certified agent of the state agency or agencies holding the permitting authority.

The concept that there be a deadline-certain date for the issuance of permits was also raised. Comments suggested that if a permit was not either issued or denied by the deadline that the permit would be automatically awarded.

Question #4 of the statewide questions elicited answers relevant to this issue.

5. Establishment of a policy planning framework for sustainable development.

Discussion:

No key points were offered from the small groups at the public meetings which raised issues identified as sustainable development per se. Many comments focused on the need for state level planning and standard setting to ensure uniformity and equity.

Many individual comments were offered in response to the guidance question (#2 on the statewide portion of the questions) which did relate to items inherent to the concept of sustainable development. Please refer to answers to question #2 on the statewide questions. The most frequently stated notion seemed to be the basic idea that it is necessary to formulate policy at the state level in order to ensure that local interests are not put forward at the expense of environmental degradation. Another approach which was offered would be to use sustainable development criteria as conditions for evaluating local planning and/or local implementation of programs. It was suggested that allocation of funds or delegation of authority be dependent upon finding that the local compliance with sustainable development criteria be found to be adequate.

Answers to Question #2 of the statewide questions are relevant here.

6. Integrated licensing and permitting through a single access point.

Key Points:

- One stop permits. Walk through by agencies. Time line on comments = 45 days
- Co-location of environmental programs and state agencies not deal with all, but one
- A person requesting information or an application should not need several applications
- One stop, not consolidation
- Concern with permitting process
- More understandable and one stop shopping
- Central theme: deliver service quicker, assist state agencies, delegate permits
- Customer service should include local permitting.

Discussion:

Comments offered on this topic gave suggestions at all levels for reform of the permit issuing process. First of all, the concept of co-location (having multiple agencies available at a single access point) is the main feature desired. Many comments were made concerning "running across town" to comply with the variety of requirements from different agencies regulating different aspects of a situation requiring one or more permits. Co-location seemed to be the first line of reform.

Another concept expressed, which also relates to making the permit process more expeditious, was with regard to making a single permit serve multiple purposes, or having a more universal permit form which would satisfy the variety of requirements covering a given situation. Along with this is the concept that one agency serve as the "lead agency" and in essence shepherd a permit (or permits) through the entire process as it is impacted by different agencies.

Answers to Question #4 provided information for this concept.

7. Identification and review of specifications and programs that should be eliminated or accomplished by different means.

Key Points:

- Evaluate what laws really need to be in effect
- Want improvement, especially with the Watershed District
- One shoe does not fit ALL
- Reduce number of state regulations
- There should be no waste at local level
- Overlapping is greater at State level. EX: ground water issue
- Consolidate under TOPICS, not agency wise. One stop shop
- DNR - not admin law judge
- Roles of agencies: communicate, resources should be shared, cooperation not competition
- Fund mandates-state quit passing without funding
- Education, research, enforces, coordination units, but do NOT consolidate
- Funding mechanism creates problems: too specific, fighting, to too many people

Discussion:

Among the ideas offered there were few that named programs or activities specifically for outright elimination or to be accomplished by significantly different means. The general suggestions made tended to focus on the themes expressed in other areas of this document as well, i.e. that while policy needs to be set at the state level, delegation of authority to more localized units of government would, in some cases lessen redundancy

Other ideas offered focused on advances in technology to streamline implementation or administration of programs, educational, or enforcement activities. The use of a centralized toll free telephone number for agency/multiple agency contact; regional offices and/or co-location of agencies to improve local access; computerization of information or functions, such as use of a geographical information system (GIS) across agencies; and access to forms and information by computer either through public terminals or through a network were all suggested.

Responses to Question #3 of the statewide questions and Questions #1 and #6 of the local questions were used as input for this outcome.

8. Decentralization of the service-delivery system for the benefit of citizens of the state as consumers of services.

Key Points:

- Deliver service to people, NOT other way around
- Local level knows best what they need
- What is good for one county may not be for the other
- Local govt. can do a better job with planning, zoning, and inspection, and permits
- Local government control
- Decentralize
- Decentralization. Regions power for decision-making
- State people should be out in the various regions
- State services should be better: regional implemented, staff more, contacts more efficient, location better(out in the regions).
- Delegate authority
- State government staff should be in the field
- Local role needs to be expanded
- Local level handles what is happening in their area best
- Decentralization. Decisions to regional level
- Decentralize-more of it(staff)

Discussion:

A key concept in suggestions concerning decentralization was that regional offices should be delegated the authority to make decisions and issue permits, etc. at the regional level without a subsequent round of endorsement or approval being made at the state level. The opinion was expressed that field personnel at the regional and local levels are, in many instances, as fully qualified by training and experience to make evaluations and decisions as their counterparts in the state level offices. Furthermore, it was felt that many times the field-based staff has a greater insight into local conditions which result in better informed decisions being made.

The concept of delegation of authority also extended to the local level, with a belief that county or other district level units of government were adequate to the task of representing environmental enforcement. When discussing consolidation, decentralization, and regionally-based management of natural resources, it was an often-expressed opinion that services needed to be delivered on a basis which was no greater than county-wide. In nearly all instances as preference was made for local access to environmental programs and enforcement be within the county, or delivered within a distance no greater than the equivalent distance to county programs.

Answers provided to Question #5 of the statewide questions and Question #6 of the local questions were used

for input on this issue.

9. Management based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics.

Key Points:

- Ecosystem management not create new institutional process
- What is an ecoregion?
- Room for county based organizations/ecoregions
- Ecoregions-undecided

Discussion:

In general, the term "ecoregion" or "eco-region" has been used to conveniently denote a management area based on geographical natural resource characteristics. Comments concerning management based on ecoregions was seldom positive. Generally it was felt that ecoregional management inferred that service delivery would also be on a regional basis which would extend beyond the county level. It is important to make the distinction that service delivery points need not necessarily be dictated by the size of management region.

Most comments reflected a desire for service delivery to remain at the county level or smaller.

A definite preference was expressed for any ecoregions to coincide with county boundaries at all costs. It was felt that a county split by multiple ecoregions would result in confusion and unsatisfactory delivery of services.

Question #2 of the questions of local interest related directly to this issue.

10. Development of a "polluter pays" principle through a balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives.

Key Points:

- Enforce laws

Discussion:

Various comments were made regarding mechanisms which could/should be employed to develop a true "polluter pays" principle. It was pointed out that sometimes good faith efforts result in citation and/or fines (through taking the very acts of due diligence which then put the consumer at risk). Reform of enforcement was looked at as being desirable, to better distinguish willful acts of noncompliance from those resulting from actually making the attempt to comply and somehow coming up short.

The concept that environmental laws need to be enforced fairly, consistently, and at all times was considered essential to successfully implementing "polluter pays" strategies.

It was also suggested that an active strategy could be the use of tax reductions for good environmental stewardship.

The answers given to Question #6 of the statewide questions reflect the comments offered for this outcome.

11. The flexibility to enable state and local governments to coordinate and cooperate as well as identify and address existing and emerging environmental issues of state, national, and international import.

Key Points:

- Work with townships, local, and county levels more
- Mandate agency coordination
- Delegate more authority
- Statewide environmental reorganization should have more local control
- Regulations need flexibility
- Local knowledge should not be replaced
- Local level should implement
- Relationship between state/local needs to have a better delivery system
- Local level knows best
- Empower, do not second guess
- DNR should not be solely responsible for permits
- Checks and balances should equal
- More delegation to local groups, but still use the state
- Super agency=lose local input
- Loss of flexibility=super agency
- There should be a liaison between state and local government
- State should support services <have the money
- State planning and provide help down
- Local should carry out the mandates <no money
- Share resources
- There is no single model that works
- What works one place may not work in another
- Implement at local level

Discussion:

A key concept in discussing flexibility, particularly with regard to delivery of services and enforcement, which came up many times, was the idea to have programmatic goals or pollution standards be outcome based. Usually the frame of reference for standards also included reform to make compliance standards simpler, by defining the desired outcome without as much prescription or proscription regarding how the ends should be obtained as there presently is under current laws/rules.

A very identifiable mood of opinion expressed the perspective that the proper functions for state level agencies included areawide or statewide policy setting, provision of technical assistance, development of large scale planning, development and dissemination of environmental educational curricula, and distribution of funding. Local strengths were perceived to be in establishing trust or rapport with individual consumers, having a measure of accountability (in the case of elected officials), and providing a timeliness or immediacy of problem resolution by virtue of being readily accessible. With regard to emerging issues, the primary view expressed was that it was, again, a state level function to engage in research, pilot projects, and policy development. It was even suggested that a larger, mandated role could be played by the state's institutions of higher learning; the state university system and other technical institutions.

Answers to Question #3 of the statewide questions and Questions #4 and #6 of the local questions were used as part of the information for this outcome.

II COMMENTS ORGANIZED BY STATEWIDE QUESTIONS AND LOCAL QUESTIONS

Statewide Questions

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs?
What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Minnesota is such a diverse state, with distinctly different needs from region to region, I would suggest that these questions be addressed not statewide, but by resource managers, conservationists, or other stakeholder groups within ecoregions or drainage basins, preferably not by economic development or DNR administrative regions. Coordination occurs within partnerships.

Consolidating state government is not the answer. It would just create a larger wedge between the public and government. Bring more of the state regional office into the local environment. The state thinks that this would erode the state regulatory program when in fact it would increase the public relations tremendously. Many may say that it is not the sole purpose to make everyone happy. This is true, obviously, but the citizens want local control.

Fine tune what is already in place. Checks and balances are healthy. "Universal" permit used by all state agencies. Local citizen stops at their local SWCD with the universal permit and the SWCD routes the permit to the appropriate regional and/or state agencies for action - prompt action

I have reservations about consolidation and would think that the environmental program belong at the Health Department.

Eliminate separation of programs because Ag. involved. For instance, pesticide collection and household hazardous waste should be managed by counties through MPCA. Stop splintering programs. I believe BWSR is unnecessary as a separate agency. Its functions are planning by MPCA/DNR.

Put agencies in one building in each regional area. Have more regional offices so smaller areas are served. Maybe one in each major watershed? (Health, PCA, DNR, BWSR) DNR offices might have to have different boundaries because of the location of their resources.

Consolidation has already taken place to a certain degree (e.g. MPCA/OEA). Better written and verbal communications between BWSR and DNR would help to coordinate efforts (both are conservation organizations)

Have them all in the same agency - but first an inventory would need to be taken of what department or section does what. Similar to the new department of Children Families, and Learning.

Why not use the Environmental Quality Board? As it exists, the commissioner level works; also bring it down to the deputies and managers - Frequent meetings - lots of cross visits to agency sites.

DNR - appropriation permits for ground water be combined with MDH well program. DNR regulate surface water source only.

Consolidate programs that deal with natural resources and environmental issues into one department - i.e. MPCA and DNR. Consolidate programs that deal with issues that affect health of people, i.e. water, sewage,

and solid waste into one department - i.e. MPCA and MDH and DNR.

Cooperate, yet eliminate positions. Stop spending. If a new position is created (Secretary of the Environment) something should be eliminated.

Structure departments so that they are working together instead of against each other as is often being done now.

Stay where they are but do a better job on real problems.

Consolidation of DNR, MPCA, EQB would not improve a thing. OWM consolidation into MPCA has not aided the delivery of OWM-type programs.

They must not be put together, as the DNR is too big now.

List tasks and responsibilities and bring them together in logical associations.

More people in regional or local (offices).

Possibly two different types of groups at the state level; regulatory and service oriented groups. No single environmental agency; would be too controlled by special interest groups. Each agency has separate mandate. Improved leadership from the EQB.

See that funding for all programs now in place is secure so the various agencies and programs are not constantly under threat; and thus, are in competition with one another.

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy? Please consider how the following impact the environment and the economy: management of resources for commercial use, "livable communities", preservation of natural features, recreational uses, urban and rural needs, and prevention and reduction of pollution.

Consistency bureaucracy. Strong leadership. Matching land use with conditions---. Preparations - can't get green space back in natural state. Early involvement in development projects. Communication.

Without environmental control and oversight, few areas will maintain a high livability level.

Have environmental laws and rules which protect the real environment vs rules which generate paper and bureaucracy.

Ecologist Peter Raven says that sustainability and biodiversity are "flip sides of the same coin". We have to have healthy, functioning, productive ecosystems to sustain life - and profit. Healthy ecosystems require fertile soils and clean water - and "habitat buffers" - diverse native communities forming and interconnecting matrix across the landscape - sustain the natural productivity of our farmland and quality of life for all Minnesota residents. The most important issue is the fact that most people either do not understand these economic realities and live accordingly, or they ignore them for political gain. In either case, we must build awareness and support quickly.

This question was written for the metro region. It makes no sense.

Give people a break if they preserve natural features (no property tax). Assess a fee for destruction of natural features or for use of the state's waters to carry pollution, including sediments. Most important is to maintain natural areas (woodland, prairies, wetlands) in cores, buffers, and corridors so the ecosystem can function properly.

The economic benefits of pollution prevention and preservation of natural resources needs to be heavily promoted. The environmental dangers and economic liabilities associated with improper waste management need to be stressed.

Prevention must always be first and we must help and expand our wetlands.

Doing everything the smart way - using tax codes and incentives to ensure that decisions make sense for the larger community. What are the long term consequences? Science of natural resources and habitat protection should always be paramount. Why don't we use our scholars from all of our higher educational institutions? Some are better known out of this state.

Industrial development and land use in areas affecting recreational and/or residential land use.

Least restrictive regulation and yet protect the resources we have.

Give responsibility to landowners. Remember, most Americans are proud of their country and want to prevent pollution. State sets guidelines for local to follow so we all work together. If local more restrictive, it must be OK'D by the state.

The state of Minnesota has different natural features and manmade features in different areas which can best be served by people who live in these areas instead of one policy that is statewide.

Farmers need less intervention.

Economic and social needs must be met. Only then can we afford and have the will for environmental initiatives.

Please consider how the following impact the environment and economy: management of resources for commercial use, "livable communities", preservation of natural features, recreational uses, urban and rural needs, and prevention and reduction of pollution.

Proper management of our natural resources; water quality and rural sewer systems. A consensus as to what sustainable agriculture is. Strong--- meets social and economic needs.

Excellent question to answer! Set standards for local carrying capacities at the state level with local input and utilize local agencies to help implement these standards for livable communities. The standards should deal with measures of clean air and water, and amount of impervious surface vs green space, and wooded areas acreage vs developed area acreage, etc.

Develop a strong ecosystem management approach with partnership of state and local governments. Needs a cost/benefit analysis approach; need a system to develop a balance-trade off methods.

Dump the idea that the state agencies can make responsible and intelligent decisions regarding all local issues and get back to the local control. States should be for guidelines only.

Having local control and letting local units of government work with the citizens decide which issues are important to address.

Protect our natural resources at all costs. Manage them as "state treasure". Recent study at Massachusetts Institute of Technology showed that states with strong state environmental/natural resource protection agencies and laws actually have healthier economies and business climates than states which relegate duties to small politically driven and ineffective units of government. There is absolutely no negative correlation (according to MIT) between environmental protection and stifling economy. This is important stuff!

Local control following guidelines established by the state agencies is the way to go. State government does not always know what is best for each area and region and county. Let the local government units make this determination.

The issues are many and vary in complexity, but the key to the question lies in the "broad picture". and this is best seen through the eyes at the local level, where state "turf protection" is not an issue.

Start looking at long term goals (next 25 years) rather than next five years. This will help us to be proactive vs reactive. Aren't we ahead of most states in the country? Start looking at successes and failures within the past 20-25 years.

Sustainability must be defined by the allowable impacts of development on the watersheds.

Having all sections work to reach the best use of resources for everyone's needs. Equal -- use, overuse, over harvesting, overpopulation, and pollution need to be addressed. Education of people as to wise use is most

important.

All agencies should be accountable to local people. Delegate regulation to someone with accountability on a local level. Flexibility within local areas is a must - not mandated statewide from St. Paul. Economic development is dependent upon "drainage" so that dependable production is assured. No industry will local for value-adding products without assurance of dependable supply.

Break state into regions (geographic). Each region should have local control. Allow drainage Ag. maintenance.

One shoe doesn't fit all. Sustainable human progress must not be forgotten.

Seriously consider rural sewer districts. Design such facilities, locate necessary lands, seek federal grants. Set deadline goals.

1. Put local governments in charge because of the diversity in the state. 2. Flexibility to make local decisions on issues. 3. Enough local authority to make decisions.

Balance environmental regulations with economic impacts; especially in border and outstate areas where it is more sensitive. Keep things sensible and affordable.

From a human health standpoint, the single most important issue concerning disease causing organisms is upgrading failing sewage treatment systems in rural and unserved communities. Reducing chemical contamination of water and chemical and particulate contamination of air also must be accomplished; followed by protection of groundwater and surface water from contamination whatever the source. After addressing these, then commercial, recreational and needs can be looked at, because in order to develop an acceptable quality of life our resources must be given top priority, not overused on economic basis.

Prevention and reduction of pollution is the same as preservation of natural resources. Recreational uses should be permitted to result in some encroachment of the natural features. Urban needs take precedence over rural needs because more citizens are affected. Prevention of pollution is essential! to "reduce" pollution is a cop-out.

A balance should be achieved through negotiations of all interested parties. This could be patterned after forestry GEIS process.

Legislature has to realize one solution cannot be applied to the entire state. WCA There is no one solution to the problems of Nobles County.

Lack of flexibility in state water and land resource policy to fit specific regions of the state - not every policy has benefit or is effective in every region. Recognize that urban land use is not the same as rural.

Development control. Land use planning based on scientific reasoning. We have to recognize that certain things can't be at certain places; broad-based, local decisions.

The farmers have bought and paid for this land, and they shouldn't need someone telling them what they can do with it.

Who pays for it? If there is a benefit to society, society should pay for it.

Ecoregions or political regions should be set up and each region should be able to set goals/objectives and make decisions for that region on the regional level. Decisions should not be made for the regions by a department head based in St. Paul.

We are at a point where planning for environmental "wise use" is necessary to preserve the resources. If our resources are degraded in developing areas, eventually the community, recreation and environment will no longer be sustainable. Future use will be greatly impaired. Local planning and action are needed, guided by state/regional guidelines to ensure uniformity where possible.

Re: pollution and other issues of prevention, make these services and regulations more "user friendly". MPCA, for example, is not very responsive or timely in dealing with smaller parties, even though these parties are fully cooperative and proactive in solving problems. Perhaps here and in other areas where permits and enforcement are involved, have an ombudsman source. I note that here is quite a chain of authority before decisions are made at the MPCA. Can agencies be more horizontal, with full decision authority made more direct?

Cost-benefit decision making. Will the resources be there with each action? Getting more/better return on expenditures.

Livable communities is important. So many people are leaving the cities that there is too much bedroom development in rural areas.

Keeping quality of life as the focus, and using biologically/scientifically based parameters to determine whether the particular segment of the region can handle more development. For example, deciding whether more area can be paved in a community by measuring the water quality of the area. Setting limits based on what our natural resources can handle and sticking to them, reducing some "development" if necessary in favor of redevelopment and revitalization. Public transportation is a very important issue in this regard, as is expansion of the MUSA line. Start by identifying resource we want to preserve, protect, and enhance.

Baseline and ongoing trend analysis to measure effectiveness of legislation and regulation.

Identify resource capabilities of each unit being considered - we can't sustain if we don't first define what that means. Secondly, we need to examine sustainable vs wasteful; for example, water supply - does Minnesota really have an infinite supply of water? No, we must do better in conservation programs.

A delicate balance must be maintained in all of these; the current arrangement of various state agencies having oversight of various environmental activities acts as a beneficial system of checks and balances, to everyone's benefit.

The most important issue - maintaining farmer profitability, not sustainability. Nothing grows in rural communities or livelihoods without profitability at the farm.

agriculture was here first. Too much emphasis on rights of urban sprawl.

Use GIS and GPS technology to build a database so that environmentally sensitive issues can be accurately assessed and, hopefully, a more pragmatic response to the issue can be crafted.

1. Need to severely reduce soil erosion in disturbed areas. We need to change farming and forestry dramatically. 2. Need to develop a system of farming that is powered by solar power. fossil fuel farming has

to go. 3. Need to develop solar powered transportation/housing/manufacturing for urban and nonurban areas.

You have overlooked the fifth amendment (property rights). Privately owned property is better cared for than publicly owned property.

Can't have zero tolerance - need trade-offs; strong economics= good sustainable development.

There needs to be more awareness of rural needs - lawmakers seem out of touch and often rules and regulations are designed to protect against urban encroachment - too severe for most of greater Minnesota. Recreation should be a secondary where farming is concerned.

Agricultural land use - we need incentives for farmers to want to increase habitat. We need to find ways to cut pesticide use. We need to broaden our support base, not just the outdoor types. The environment is everyone's problem. Since we are all users, broaden the fee structure to include all residents. Start holding all people responsible for their use.

Institute broad water, air, and groundwater monitoring to see where we are at. Current monitoring is pretty minimal. costs can be minimized by use of computers and local legwork. Define causes and effects of practices in comparison to broad goals for each major resource. You then slice up the pie as to local defined goals for quality/quantity/reservation. If local degradation occurs exceeding regional and state goals - then the area loses block grant/state restoration and assistance dollars. If local degradation negatively impacts downstream and down-gradient uses - create new laws to help these folks.

Stopping urban sprawl and road building are essential to creating sustainable economies. Extraction industries are not sustainable. All resources (water,air,land,wildlife) must be in better shape 200 years from now; anything else is deficit spending.

Need to consolidate divisions within DNR. Bring people together within the same building and work on common projects. Cut costs of maintaining many facilities and offices.

1. Changing the mindset of consumers through education at the earliest possible level. 2. Focus on team/collaborative efforts, such as curbside recycling programs - provide a hands-on way for everyone to be actively involved, and keep the issues in front of them. 3. Energy costs, particularly gas for autos, should be doubled. We are incredibly wasteful. All of the funds could be plowed back into energy conservation projects, allowing for a long term, (i.e. sustainable) underpinning of the economy.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local government or agencies?

State government should provide overall performance related standards or guidelines and allow locals to develop programs to achieve the standards.

State and Federal policy set a direction and goal which will be implemented by the private sector and local units of government. Give freedom and incentive to reach goal. Track progress.

Local government best serves the public as the direct provider of services. The public is best served by people who can better understand a client's particular situation and are trained to expedite the service.

State governments should set guidelines; local entities should be the decision makers as they are the most knowledgeable as to the problems and needs in their own areas.

The State government needs to develop broad general guidelines on which the local units use to set the local laws and rules.

State - support to local government, conflict resolution between LGU's, large capital projects, inventories, performance standards, policy development, direction.

Local - regulation, technical assistance, reporting, resource management and monitoring.

State Agency - regulation, enforcement, management of state lands (parks, forests, water, wildlife, fish), licensing.

Local Agencies - Education Assistance to citizens, pollution prevention, identification of problems with local issues/concerns, zoning, management of lands for local interest (city/county parks).

Have the state set up guidelines and some funding administration and keep the decision making at the local level where these people understand what is best for them and the surrounding environment.

State agencies should develop general guidelines and the local agencies can refine and focus these at the local level, developing rules and regulations at the local level.

Permitting - local overseen by state. Need to stop state micro management of LGU's. More local flexibility. Enforcement (state). Government both local/state needs to become more user friendly. On-stop shopping.

Statewide - fundraising - fair distribution of funds to greater Minnesota. Local - deciding priorities.

Local can handle most functions better because of the wide diversity of our state. stable funds.

Local governments are best at site specific functions and state government at broader issues and large resource issues such as large watersheds such as the Mississippi.

Anything that deals with private landowners should be done at the local level. They know the particular situation better than anyone. This in my opinion should be done by the SWCD's. They have worked over 50 years in each county to protect environmental concerns, are the most reasonable people to work with.

State - taxation and creating problems. Local - everything else.

Local government - service delivery and integration.

As much as possible should be done on the local level and when more expertise is needed, then go up to the next level of government.

Processes and procedures at state. Implementation of processes and procedures known to work at local level.

State - technical support, finance, supervision, enforcement, policies. Local - Permit decisions, citizen participation.

State should analyze needs, oversee program rules and appropriate dollars, enforcement. Local government/agencies should implement and administer programs, be the delivery system.

Funding = State, Implementation = Local, General guidelines = State.

State has a responsibility to have equity among counties regarding wetlands, etc. - however the state needs to recognize the individual needs of watersheds.

State should handle school funding, welfare, licenses for all state wide needs, roads the state should maintain even more as most are used by all citizens, law enforcement should be handled on a larger scale. Local: zoning, development emphasis, the local government would be able to overrule some of the regulations that do not make common sense for a particular area, such as roads, water, sewer, parks, lots of times it could be done cheaper by just doing it.

Land use planning, especially surrounding natural resources, housing, transportation issues, etc. have to be done at state level. Otherwise the NIMBYs will paralyze the system.

State sets standards and statutes but does not fund the local work on them.

Statewide or some subregion - environmental issues which span many local jurisdictions and are appropriately managed at higher level (watershed management or river basin) basics to protect drinking water services. Local agencies - issues which are encompassed by political authority.

Wildlife and perhaps on site enforcement is best addressed by state government. All other environmental issues should be "local" due to differing geographic conditions, economy and population as well as urban, rural and recreation potential.

Funding and policy that is flexible for different regions and counties. Provide technical assistance to local government when needed. Local government should provide the services.

To keep as much at the local level as possible. Minnesota has too many different kinds of areas that one mega agency cannot govern it from the office, especially the WCA. One office makes it too hard for a person to get results.

Hardly anything is best fulfilled by statewide government.

More local government control. State does not always know the best way. Metro people do not understand rural area and vice versa.

Regional guidance can be provided by state government. Local government should make decisions of priorities to be addressed locally.

Push responsibilities to the lowest level of government possible using common sense. Generate funds, make funding decisions at local level. More regulatory efforts should be at the higher or state level, and voluntary efforts should be done at the local level.

Local entities should handle everything. The only matters handled by the county should be those the towns/cities can't handle effectively. The only matters state agencies should be even allowed to touch are those which the counties cannot effectively handle.

Statewide government should oversee and coordinate efforts made by local government. They should set the goals to achieve, i.e., clean water and let local governments determine how these goals will be met.

Funding and direction by state. Implementation by local.

The state should be responsible for policies and law; local for any programs affecting the area that they are in.

We need regional offices, not state. Each has different ideas and concerns.

Establish policy on the state level, and then implement locally. Implementation should be through local elected county and municipal officials working with water management districts.

State government should provide guidelines for uniformity (where feasible/possible). Regional office staff should be trained and empowered to interpret guidelines for local units of government. Local governments and agencies should provide input and planning suitable for sustainable development, based on state and/or regional guidelines.

Incentive programs should be administered at the local level; oversight by the state should focus on outcomes rather than process.

State agencies should oversee wildlife conservation, and planning; local should be concerned with nonpoint pollution control, and wetland conservation and planning.

The state should be setting standards for carrying capacity/sustainability, and look systematically at each ecoregion or watershed. This is needed for fairness and consistency.

My perception is that the consumer continues to expect government agencies to provide the same or increase services, whether they are maintained at the current level or continue to be reorganized, downsized, understaffed, underbudgeted (and generally not provided with the support necessary to do everything they are expected to do). I've been watching this downsizing for 20 years and all it does is burn out good people who leave to find work for better pay and less stress.

No local control; each township would have separate rules.

Watershed issues should remain at the state level. Other examples are pollution connected to highways or other issues that are not confined to certain ecological or jurisdictional regions; they probably need state management. (Can you really separate management of resources and management of environmental

protection?) Local closeness is important to those served. Keep the state level from nit-picking on details that can be better worked out to resolve local variations in needs and issues. The state can require results without getting so detailed on how (it is accomplished).

Local governments in rural areas do a poor job of addressing environmental concerns, especially in agricultural areas. The fox is in the hen house.

Statewide performance goals and standards, protection of downstream folks. Statewide technical assistance, guidance and grant dollars have proven very effective in the Clean Water Partnership; use this as an example of how to do it right.

First of all, do you really want to achieve "sustainable development" (?) - "change" has taken place since animals and humans first inhabited the earth. There will be continuing "change". Things will not remain the same. With adequate cooperation and understanding, which must or should be led by government levels, the several items can and will continue to improve; impact positively on the environment and economy.

Local governments should control almost nothing unless they can prove they have sustainable plans for development. No state funds for roads, agriculture, etc. unless sustainability is proved.

The basic format so long established is the proper framework; local zoning - statewide preservation and pollution regulation. What is sorely lacking is comprehensive and readily accessible expertise at the disposal of county and municipal governments.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Provide ability to state agencies to grant general permits to local government based on approved plans. At the state level, try to integrate regulation as much as possible. Provide a state level arbitration mechanism when different state regulations conflict on a specific project or permit.

Let the state set up uniform testing procedures and handle the licensing of well drillers, septic system installers, contractors, etc. Issue permits at the local level.

The state needs to develop guidelines. (Also same comments as above)

The state is too removed to regulate effectively; most issues are local in nature.

Consolidate into a single agency. Then, if decentralized and in more of our communities, the state agencies' offices would be able to provide "one stop shopping". With new computer access points, licensing/permits should get easier with time, also; to the point where we may be able to fill out forms at ATM type stand-alone terminals.

Licensing may be best suited to the state. Using a uniform system of testing...(same comment as above)

Local power to make decisions. Clearer and simpler standards at the local level. Get rid of regulatory overkill. Do not lose sight of the original goal of the legislation. Education of community and agencies - local.

Comprehensive, coordinated permit process; ability to use a lead agency for permitting, coordinating with the others.

Confusion for the local citizen comes from needing a state or fed. Permit, not local.

Clearly define agency areas of responsibility.

Cut the number of state agencies that deal with regulation and cut out regulation. All permits must be approved within 30 days or citizen or local govt. can consider the permit approved.

Permitting is a local issue; licensing a state issue. Confusion of landowners with state/federal permitting; coordinate with construction season; 30 days for high priority, 90 days for low priority.

In any environmental management decision, common sense has to be the approach. Landowners must still be able to exist and to generate revenue to pay their taxes. There should be shorter time limits 15-30 days.

MPCA, DNR, Agriculture should all be under one roof. Too many complex regulations. Not

only do regulations need to be simplified, but the good ones need to be enforced. Permits need to check for compliance, not just be issued.

Co-locating local units of government that specialize in specific programs dealing with water resources, agriculture, and the environment.

Adequate funding should be appropriated to enforce laws that are passed. Simplification could be achieved if you eliminated overlapping jurisdictions, or coordinate better.

Current regional programs should be examined for overlap. It seems that every time there is a problem a new agency is created. Many of these problems could be solved, using a simplified, speedier delivery system in one of the agencies that already exists.

One stop shopping; forget the 9 signatures to do one thing. The law should be defined well enough so that only one decision needs to be made.

One form; simple. All the information that any agency needs. List to everyone in each agency that needs the info. Time lines should be limited to one month or less.

State agency permit delegation to entity having control over land use or zoning.

No multiple divisions within agencies that deal with the same programs; all in one division.

Minnesota has a lot of variety; you can't "blanket" the state with one regulation (in most cases) that is effective.

Get the Feds and the state to agree. Block grant approach by the feds may be beneficial; allowing the state to carry out federal management programs.

Some states have done a really good job of single source permit servicing - coordinating several agencies, some state, some regional, some local. Applicant fills out a single form with all of the pertinent information for all of the agencies.

The Wetland Conservation Act has a lot of burdensome kinks that need to be worked out.

Regional offices handling the paperwork for all district or local offices.

The regulated community knows who to contact for service, and which agency to contact. I believe the various agencies regulating the environment offer a reasonable and needed system of checks and balances. Services would suffer rather than improve under a mega-agency.

A central 800 number with a menu selection of licensing and permitting would go a long way toward coordinating state services. It would be automatic and reliable. Add sunset provisions to

every mandate so that the program is reviewed every so often.

Keep whole-state agriculture rules and licensing the same. Have local help to keep local governments informed.

Any similar permits should be combined into a single permit. Have a local point of contact for all appropriate agencies; each should be allowed to review and any one of them have the ability to deny the permit.

The 91 SWCDs should be the single access point. It would be cost-effective one stop shopping; customer friendly, already established and known to the public.

Align state and federal regulations. Eliminate overlap of state agencies.

Use a lead agency to communicate with all other agencies. Use general permits for non-controversial issues.

Simplify game and fish limits and seasons. The idea should be to simplify the regulations but manage the resources in a sustainable manner.

Computerization with electronic filing; clear, succinct directions and examples for unusual situations. This can be done faster, cheaper and more effectively than now. Have technical ombudsman available for assistance.

Employee administrative and regulatory staff must be better informed and more committed to work with and understand the cross relationships, the needs and criteria of the total population. Decentralization of services can occur, however, administrators and regulators must be better trained and understand the total picture and not just their own niche in the agency.

Regulations multiply in direct relation to the lack of statutory specificity.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Decentralization could help, but only if each regional office has all of the information needed relative to state regulatory programs. In my experience the program administration is heavily dependent on individual personalities. This must change to make the program implementation more predictable; and so regional staff can give out information that won't be overturned by other agency personnel.

Give customers enough definition, and let them know what is available and what to expect.

The state should be responsible for disseminating information to the local level. Local government units will, in turn, be responsible for distributing information to the local populace and for implementation.

Delegate to the local governmental units (LGUs), but remove the "fox in the hen house" atmosphere by having regulatory bodies non-taxing. LGUs are not necessarily municipalities, but any local agency.

Consolidate into a single agency. Force managers to work together with no conflicting missions or confusing messages nor overlap to the public. Streamline centralized staffing by moving services out into the state, into offices located in every county, interconnected by computer network.

The state need only be concerned with assembling the information and seeing to it that local organizations receive it. Local units can then be responsible for getting this information to the public in the most effective and economical manner possible.

Laws are enacted before there is proper training and education. Rules to operate must follow the law. Evaluate whether you need multiple agencies managing the same resource, i.e. wetlands.

Decentralization should be logical; consider county boundaries, soil and water districts, etc. Let local subdivisions decide how to implement programs.

Education: extension programs have always been the education tool in farming. Now they are putting more of their time into other areas and leaving agriculture behind.

Consolidate. To get an answer on wetlands you must go to the MPCA, DNR, Corps of Engineers, MEQB [sic], the county you live in, the soil and water conservation district, and the city you live in. You get a different answer from each or you need to have a consultant make a report (at a big expense) to try and get anything done.

The issue is not decentralization, but efficiency. Agencies are hopelessly inefficient as compared to private industry. Many facilities would benefit from being privatized. (E.g. agencies and municipalities are dumping huge resources into Geographical Information Systems GIS and each is reinventing the wheel) There should be one or two master systems, off which the rest can hang.

Prioritize specific goals; have a clearly defined framework for agency staff. Give authority with responsibility.

Co-location of agencies in one building (is important). There should be clarity in rules; no lawyers

involved in writing interpretation guidance documents. Staff by ecoregion and empower each area office.

Separate regulatory agencies from technical assistance agencies, research and educational service.

Quit duplicating work done at the local level. Avoid detailed specific solutions; rather, adopt outcome based regulations and allow discretion and flexibility to the locally elected officials to accomplish the task.

We should have access to computer databases, to have all the info at the fingertips of anyone who accesses the Internet; and at several logical local agency offices.

Maintain regional office around the state and permit more decision making authority in those district offices. Most of the frontline field work is accomplished at the district level. But when budgets and staff are cut the district offices are hit the hardest, which means the level of service to citizens will suffer. You either have the budget and manpower to effectively monitor environmental degradation and implement controls or you abandon it altogether and we will all shortly be living in a toxic waste dump.

Require (any new system) to track consumer satisfaction.

I think they do a good job now. Any citizen who needs information can find it. I support state efforts at public education and think they do quite well. The state will always be subjected to criticism by those too lazy to pursue the info (they need).

I'm not sure where this fits, but can there be less problems if arbitration is available to resolve disputes and conflicts? Can a project or policy development team concept be developed incorporating managers from different agencies? Different teams for different projects.

Who says services should be decentralized? One of the problems is that people don't know where to go for information. The state needs one office per portion of the state where the public can get the information they need.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

An essential element to a "polluter pays" or "violation pays" program is making absolutely sure that the public has all the necessary information to know what the regulations are and what the consequences will be.

Life-cycle analysis of systems. Grants for effective and innovative actions to meet state and local goals. Incentives directly to property owners. Education! Education! set priorities; define cause and effect.

When the lottery came into being, the funds were to be used for the development and maintenance of our precious resources and wildlife. As I understand it, less than 3% of those monies actually go into this fund. Aren't we all being deceived? Put the money where it was intended and distribute locally for implementation.

State use current staff to enforce the rules on the books now that are not being enforced. The local agencies implement. The environmental trust fund should fund along with permit fees at the local level.

The polluter will always pass on the cost to the customer. That doesn't mean we should prevent and conserve. Hold off permits until compliance is assured. Bonds don't seem effective. Denial of certificates of occupancy are.

We should not allow certain industries to pollute more just because they can afford it. State agencies should work with industry as much as possible, but should enforce limitations without hesitation. As a state, we should welcome any industry willing to locate in Minnesota while maintaining our precious environment and natural resource integrity by complying with regulations. Maybe some kind of tax break/incentive should be given.

First, let us make it clear that farmers and agriculture are not solely responsible for all the pollution woes of today. The citizen who dumps waste oil down the city sewer is not held responsible for his part in the pollution problem. Why not use the money from the state lottery where it was intended, as part of the environmental trust fund?

Financial incentives; provide technical alternatives.

MPCA - All decisions are coming from the top down; no local decisions. Too much regulation; overkill.

Public input on regulations. Regulations should apply for the areas they are meant for; not always the entire state.

One factor would be who pays for necessary research to find out who is polluting; especially a problem with nonpoint pollution problems.

Use the OSHA concept of reduced fines for employing best practices. The goal is the opportunity for voluntary compliance.

Potentially large polluters should have a financial backing for clean-up before operations start. Bonding for industrial/agricultural.

Make financial incentives top priority. Incorporated cities received grant assistance to pay for up to 90% of upgrading municipal septic treatment. People in rural and unincorporated areas helped pay for these with tax

dollars. Now these rural people are asked to upgrade without a penny to help them. Provide financial assistance at a level so that all systems can be upgraded within 10 years. Regulatory control should be saved for blatant violations of intentional resource degradation.

Polluters should pay; but then we all have to accept the costs. Pollution is caused by conveniences of lifestyle. Maybe we should reward people for prevention rather than rewarding polluters with cost-sharing and low cost loans.

Economic incentives for those in compliance; polluters pay - or close businesses if they won't comply with reasonable requirements.

Let this be done by the counties with ordinances. At public hearings, counties must listen to the public voice - to have an acceptable and effective program, since (commissioners) are elected officials.

Reduction/consideration for inheriting previous owner's polluter responsibilities. Consider profit made and severity of pollution when considering penalties and responsibilities, as well as financial incentives.

Track landowners; costs paid up front. Tax incentives, planning approval examines the case of exceeding environmental standards by developers or those given direct incentives.

Cost benefit is a good concept but ultimately the public benefit is the most important goal to strive for. Never should public benefit be secondary to someone else's profit.

There is a lot of public apathy until a crisis develops. Take a look at public attendance and comment when a rule is proposed and opened for public hearing. But if it occurs in our own backyard we tend to get vocal and involved immediately. State agencies are in the best position to fairly, effectively, and consistently enforce environmental regulations statewide. Effective consistent enforcement at the local level is frequently at the whim of political local government.

I have no problem with a polluter who makes a financial gain, to pay for an amount of pollution created. That should be a part of doing business. If that causes the individual to go out of business, so be it. When viewed with the costs of pollution that product is too expensive.

Greater civil lawsuit potential to close polluters, or restoration of degraded environments, as in feedlots, sediments from fields, and metals, etc. Greater use of Conservation Officer for tagging problem areas (otherwise who is watching?). The minor and day-to-day problems need education and enforcement.

People need to see that the current status is a resource and understand that degradation is a use of the resource and has a value. The MPCA needs to be more forthright about its role as a facilitator rather than holding a pretense of being a protector of resources like the DNR.

This terrifies me. Federal funding is going down. Pollution is going down. The result is that vast penalties are being paid over minor issues. There appears to be no recognition that industry is attempting to clean up its own act, and no recognition that all of these regulations may one day be redundant. As it is, the system continues to mushroom in size and complexity.

Local Questions

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Environmental management is too disjointed. EX: Water planning activities involve as many as 6 local agencies all generally given same priorities/responsibilities but only those under the Board of Commissioners do the work. Soil and water districts are funded by county, state, and again grants given to counties. No longer should there be separate agencies; would increase efficiency, lower costs. Extension service of minimal value to local governments.

More environmental control to county levels of government.

I do not see overlap of duties or funding. Some counties have an overly strong planning and zoning department sometimes do overlap responsibilities i.e. zoning and wetland protection go hand in hand sometimes. Shore land ordinances overlap state wetland restrictions on illegal fill, etc. I strongly believe that wetland protection be at the SWCD office and not at planning and zoning. To combine them would be to eliminate the trust and face to face that is the SWCD's best attribute. The state has much more overlap than local. I.e. why does the DNR waters division respond to a landowner who has filed a permit that they need to file a permit? When a landowner files a joint notification form why can't the state train the SWCDs to ascertain that a particular project will require a DNR waters permit and explain to the landowner how to fill out the form. This would eliminate a lot of mail time and unnecessary work.

Develop holistic interdisciplinary long term plans of action; encourage all levels of all organizations to "think ecologically" and recognize interdependence among government utilities. The problems will sort themselves out if all jurisdictions are called on to use a common frame of reference.

In our area there is little or no overlapping governmental jurisdictions. (Except for wetlands) Consolidation to one agency for the most part would be good.

A single 800 number for environmental questions in specific areas of the state would be helpful.

Eliminate county government in the Metro area. Use a strong, elected Metropolitan Council and municipalities.

State agency regional offices.

Our county has three departments that deal with environmental issues. They could be combined into one. All funding should then come from one state agency, i.e. MDH.

Only one agency should be in existence; for water, conservation, rivers, water district, etc. with one set of rules. Includes MPCA, DNR, SWCD, etc. - put into one title; all regulations come from state/local and each group responsible to same.

They will be handled a lot better without the state mandating things that don't fit in certain areas.

Do a better job of what you are doing. Overlapping is sometimes necessary to avoid corruption.

We don't need one large government.

Determine what is needed at the ground level. Determine what disciplines are needed to help the ground level accomplish goals. Devise a support column that is capable of helping accomplish the goals. Devise a funding system that supports the need of the cadre.

Conclusion: Basically, working good the way things are now. Some overlapping is good.

It is important to maintain separate identities at the local level. If consolidation is a necessary event, local governments can consolidate their offices and possibly eliminate overhead costs. Water planning process has worked well. Consolidating county And township roads. Better define jurisdictional boundaries: Define roles.

Consider licensing/zoning by purpose with emphasis on the most common issues generated by the public; e.g. housing construction/well/zoning/rural sewage management.

COMMENTS

Participants at the regional public meetings were invited to submit comments as well as their responses to the questions used for the small group discussions. Comments were also solicited from anyone wishing to respond by mail or facsimile. The following comments are those received to date, in this format. They tend to be more general comments, not categorized elsewhere. These do not include the responses to questions, or extended comments which were written in letter format. Those letters are to be found in Appendix X.

Although we need to protect our resources - mandates from state and bureaucrats are getting harder and harder for people to take. Local citizens' needs and rights are being taken away and most of the current rules and regulations really don't protect resources but build more powerful agencies.

I attended the meeting at St. Cloud. Many of the complaints I heard with the current system were concerned with conflicting state agencies. Too many jurisdictions, duplications, etc. Some wanted a single agency to deal with all environmental permits and problems. I would like to recommend that there be a single agency at the local level for environmental matters. This agency would deal directly with all local businesses and farms on environmental matters and would obtain for them whatever permits are required from the state agencies having jurisdiction and would work to reconcile any conflicts between agencies. There might also be an ombudsman at the state level to deal with any conflicts that the local environmental agent would be unable to resolve.

1. All state agencies should be decentralized and government by local (county) elected boards.
2. Have federal agencies and other agencies (EPA, MPCA) handle their own programs including enforcement.
3. Utilize SWCDs to a greater degree.
4. Let local government handle their resources with general state guidance.

I attended the September 14th meeting and in written comments mentioned the Phalen Watershed project. That project has brought together state and local governments, businesses, and other entities to work on common natural resource interests. Some of the activities are mentioned in the attached which has a phone number for the coordinator, Sherri Buss.

I don't see any need for consolidation of state agencies, but some reorganization may be worth exploring. I definitely don't think elimination or consolidation of special purpose districts will help perceived problems. The existing special purpose local governments exist for specific purposes and have unique authorities. They should be allowed to be used by the public as needed to deal with local issues and problems.

I attended the meeting at Rochester. We are a rural area and have different problems from those of the metro area; but being a minority seems to be putting too much pressure on us on things that just aren't good for this area. It is as if I told the metro area what to do when I'm not qualified to do so. I'm not familiar with their problems. That is why I believe local control is best.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

An eco-region as defined by state government is too large a unit. It is not meaningful to local residents. Watershed or subwatershed level is better within the framework of data and info provided on an eco-region level by the state.

Eco-regions, watersheds, and aquifers are good ways to manage resources. Need to (bridge) the gap in existing political boundaries and create effective joint powers, etc.

There is a value to planning on a larger eco-region basis, but services should be delivered on a smaller political lined based system, such as we have now, i.e. counties. My experience is that our local soil and water district provides assistance on a fairly small watershed basis, incorporating local conditions while also recognizing needs of the larger "eco-region". Unfortunately most of the public does not recognize watershed boundary eco-regions. While the state and regions can and should plan on this basis, services should be provided on the more conventional established basis by local managers.

Local government is the best method to deliver services and education. If a region extends beyond county boundaries, and therefore a SWCDs jurisdiction. Joint powers agreements have been a very effective means of dealing with these issues. Only those on the local level have a true grasp of the issues confronting a given area.

The counties need to be making the decisions on natural resource treatment within the county. When it is necessary to deal with issues joint powers agreements are an excellent, effective way to deal with managing resources.

Resource managed by watersheds in eco-regions as a major subgroup but financial administration at county level.

This is unrealistic. We have county jurisdictions to consider. Not to say that the state agency should not formulate its own plans on large ecoregion specific lines, but they may be hard to define. Again, in answer to the second question, Minnesota's environment and natural resources must be handled by a single state agency as free from politics (but not accountability) as possible. Too often I have seen county governments allow the resource to suffer because of political pressure.

Dealing with ecoregions is not the best notion. To date, counties have dealt with local issues and very successfully so. Joint powers agreements have been formed when an area that extend beyond the county boundaries is involved and these have also been a good answer to the problems of an area encompassing several counties. Again, local employees have the best grasp of the issues affecting their own individual areas.

The ecoregion theory still smells like the CORE movement to do away with all locally effective forms of government with state level appointed dictatorship.

Both. However, when ecosystems cross county lines many local governments become involved. It seems more practical to deal county by county.

Sustainable human progress must be brought back into the picture.

Water resources managed on watershed level; more formalized representation by different units of government, with thought of economic boundaries.

Rules need to be made for each according to its need. We can't have rules and regulations that don't fit the ecoregions or have statewide rules.

Ecoregion is a term designed to confuse; I have doubts that this is worthwhile.

Only if that is a materially and demonstratively more efficient and effective way to get the job done.

It should be managed locally; yet it seems a regional system is needed for enough voices to be heard.

Resolve and settle whether water and related land use management should be based on hydrologic units as opposed to county and city boundaries. Require cities and units with land use zoning power to work with and follow watershed plan.

What would have to be addressed? Size of the management area - citizens may be confused.

This system would be too complex and unworkable. Each local area already knows what type of ecosystem it is in and can tailor its programs to the needs of the local area. The area would probably be too large and headquarters too far away from the landowner to be readily accessible to implement programs.

In certain instances an ecosystem project can work well if the goal is a common one throughout an area.

Not allowing housing to keep encroaching on good ag land. Protect wooded plots from being developed for housing.

Any state function should be decentralized to regional offices.

Both local government and a decentralized state system would best manage an ecoregion based system. Ecoregion evaluation would be valuable in assessing resource management. Local input and priorities, both from public officials and the general public, would be the most important issues to incorporate into resource management, within state and federal guidelines.

One stop shopping; cost-benefit decision making; paying for outcomes, not processes or services. Inter-relatedness requires systems thinking and behavior. Long range thinking, as results are not just short term.

Both; for water, use watersheds. I'm not sure how to organize for things like forests. Most important water issue in my area is nonpoint pollution, erosion, and sediment control.

Yes, and regulations defining and assuring sustainability should be developed on an ecoregion basis> These regulations may need to usurp old ones.

What is the sustainability of the resource on a regional basis?

A consolidated area DNR office must exist in each appropriate portion of an ecoregion. This office should have one environmental supervisor who has working below him fisheries specialists, wildlife specialists, trails/waterways specialists, etc. this would help insure co-management of our resources and make things a heck of a lot easier for the public. To manage watersheds successfully we all have to be working together.

Decentralized state system; SWCDs should address ag. issues - wetlands, conservation practices, etc. Make no mistake about it; the majority of farmers hate the DNR. This is not an exaggeration. Conservation will suffer if these programs are merged into the DNR.

The Corps of Engineers has handled local watersheds from any projects with their environmental impact studies.

Local government may actually threaten and destroy that ecosystem. All townships are attempting to broaden their tax bases. That means development. Most development doesn't care much about ecosystems. But there are ecosystems which may also broaden a local government system. The increase in ducks helped a lot of rural towns.

Ecoregions are based on geologic, land types, natural vegetation, etc. and usually bear little resemblance to political boundaries. Goals of resource management efforts have been effectively employing ecoregion efforts. This could be used by state, regional efforts, to oversee county management efforts and smaller scale political efforts. County performance of goals of management are the critical focus for future changes.

The bottom line is, what can be achieved in a given ecoregion? For example, in the corn belt it would take billions to change any significant amount of land from its current use to a natural state. This is not realistic. What we can actually achieve in this ecoregion is purely limited to financial backing which does not exist at the level that would allow any measurable change.

Local governments have local funding and must keep their sources of funding in mind when applying policies. Decentralized state government, with assistance of local, can better serve ecoregions

Management of resources should see commercial use as secondary to preservation and recreation. What holdings don't have in the character of recreation value should be left to the private sector to manage; not managed for the private sector by the state. Pollution control needs to be far more foresighted and policy based, other than so painfully restricted. The lack of strong legislative policy with precise standards leaves the issue of awkward and cumbersome regulation.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Good question - turnouts by voters at elections shows this is a problem. How to fix? I don't know, but leadership must continue to try.

Open meetings and forums

Public informational meetings, surveys, and forums.

Take it to city hall where people have a chance to become familiar with the players.\

Minnesota needs its state natural resource/environment agency to be directed, insofar as policy and issues, by a citizen commission, with members elected by the public or appointed by the governor with staggered terms. Wise politicians understand the need to keep our environment and resources insulated from election year promises or threats.

Water planning public information meetings. SWCD board meetings.

There is a big difference between participation and actual hands on input.

Having government agencies overseen/run by boards of elected officials whose meetings are open to the public and having local issues brought up for local voting.

Mechanism to get the word out, i.e. newspaper, radio, etc. Keep the representation local with accountability for their decisions.

Local boards are now in place; citizen advisory groups.

Phone numbers for each agency on the property tax bill, so folks know where the money goes. Don't fragment; provide a lead agency for contact point on all issues - comprehensive permit.

Adequate notices in papers; tell environmental groups, Audubon, Sierra Club, etc.

Have representatives of various local governments involved; SWCDs, townships, commissions, etc.

Citizen boards for all state agencies to make the decisions. (Should be made at the local level) Boards should have more authority.

The open meeting process does this. Any citizen who is really interested and willing to put in the time to show up and make her views known can influence the outcome. It is up to the individual agencies to do a good job of publicizing what they are dealing with.

This issue is overused. Elected officials have and regularly are before voters and the public.

Take advantage of existing citizen participation processes, i.e. county boards, townships, city councils, SWCDs, etc. Accessibility, knowledgeable staffing of facilities, adequate feedback.

Elected board members; public hearings; adequate feedback from agencies or boards to the public. Higher level boards should make use of recommendations from lower level boards.

Make agency as local as possible. Citizens can be more involved when they understand the community involvement. Citizens League is, for example, a model to get citizen input because participants are not there to serve self interest, and they become well informed during the research process. But don't make decisions based on opinion polls.

Explain costs and benefits and allow input/questions from all. Do not allow interested employees to be the only ones in focus groups (randomly selected) and citizen teams for decision-making.

News articles, videos, or cable access; open houses.

Extensive public education regarding issues of concern.

Open public meetings at times when the public can attend have always been the best means to elicit response. Follow-up mail or call helps those who are reluctant to speak.

For major decisions random polls of statistical significance need to be tried. We are not getting good enough public input at the present time. We should be using phone polls, mail, etc. Does the public want a reduced fish limit? We have data on license buyers; why not poll them?

Rural forums or hearings held in each county.

Meetings with local government should include its residents, the stakeholders, counties, and state agencies to develop overall plans that provide benefits over a broad spectrum.

Regional and basin based steering committees. Have statewide and regional technical representatives to advise steering committees.

The concept of notification needs to be expanded to provide better notice of a proposal and some useful back ground and discussion of impact; be it rules, ordinances or an application.

Land use planning, especially surrounding natural resources, air, housing, transportation, issues, etc. have to be done at the state level. Otherwise the NIMBYs will paralyze the system.

4. What steps could be taken to improve governmental cooperation between state and local agencies?
How well do they cooperate now?

State agencies need a change in mode of cooperation - the need to reorient programs to "assist" local government, not "restrict" local activities. Agencies are micro managing - need to be more facilitating. Need more of a partnership between state and local; state financial assistance with mandates.

Local agencies need a clear understanding of state goals, objectives, and programs. State agencies need to develop close, working partnerships with local officials and staff.

When it is clear who the decision maker is for a particular program and communication can be maintained cooperation is not a problem.

At this point our local SWCDs and county boards have an excellent relationship with state agencies. Possibly the state could have more faith that the local entities can be trusted to properly implement programs.

In our county cooperation is not a problem. The state agencies work with and respect the abilities of the local agencies such as SWCD.

On a local level, from first-hand knowledge and experience, locally assigned and stationed personnel from the state agency (DNR) already work well with and understand community concerns. They have to - they live here. Personnel from the capital, though, seem to ignore at best or outright denigrate at worst, local community concerns. This again illustrates that, though we need a single state natural resource/environment agency for uniformity/efficiency, it should be as decentralized as possible, with its employees living in all 87 counties.

local water planning in our county has opened up communication between local and state agencies and strengthened local-state partnership. In addition, in developing local water plans the county has communicated with state agencies to ensure state support and avoid duplication.

The problem lies with individuals within agencies.

Most agencies cooperate and help us quite a lot.

They appear not to cooperate very well now. Removal of politics from the process is a must to bring about true uniformity in all regulations.

Agency specialists to work with local agencies.

DNR needs a different structure to make decisions.

Comprehensive list for permitting but have "lead agency" for people to work with.

Bring meetings out to greater Minnesota and keep regions small.

Deadlines to state agencies in permitting process.

Programs cannot be rigid and statewide, must meet local needs.

No state mandates without funding; let local or regional people have authority to make decisions instead of having to go to the state.

More citizen involvement. More than one state certified contractor to construct septic systems. local and regional staff cooperate better than local and central state staff.

State has never clearly defined the need for SCS in urban areas so agencies whose rule has ended continue to seek new jobs already being accomplished by watershed districts.

State service is too slow; turf building, job protection.

possibly have grant funds tailored to local needs. Sometimes state programs have too many complex regulations to go through. SWCDs or other local government may know better what local needs are.

Chart out structure, or chart out responsibilities. Well defined duties and objectives for each agency at its level. Presently BWSR, MASWCD and the local SWCDs cooperate very well. The new 11 JPBs to address Ag best management practices bring in new opportunities for regional cooperation.

State agencies should have designated liaison to local government and local agencies. State and local cooperate quite well however state wants to dictate to local level, and very slow. What are our goals? Too many regulations of the state passing on mandates to the local without funding.

Let the suggestions, regulations, etc., flow up; should not be handed down. They usually don't apply, are radical or simply asinine. Generally cooperation is poor right now. State government feels they are "untouchable" and don't have to listen to local governments.

BWSR works well with local government. DNR and MPCA do not work well because they do not include local government in their decision making process. State agencies need to include local input when setting policies.

Local agencies are usually able to get assistance from state agencies upon request. State agency response to clients could improve with employees' knowledge of other programs.

Have the state determine which programs would best be delivered through a local agency.

Cooperation is superficial. Delegate or place decision-making where the effect is best. Set goals at state level, implement locally, and require outcomes, not just activities. Require cost-benefit information be required to support policy, etc.

improve communication. Stop threatening to change things; it creates competition and reduces cooperation between agencies. Altering what isn't broken makes it hard for the citizenry and confuses them.

Perhaps regionalization of functions could improve outside of metro area.

If adequately staffed, state staff could hold at least monthly meetings with local agencies to share exchange information concerning ideas and collaborate on solutions acceptable to all concerned parties.

Set up an environmental advisory board in each county that contains representatives from appropriate agencies that meets regularly to discuss issues and permits.

Why not consider bringing DNR, MPCA, Health, Agriculture, and University of Minnesota to the table as voting members of BWSR, not just advisory.

Each local government should start to advertize what it has to offer in the form of customer service. Very poor marketing at the local level. In Norway they have brochures of regions, districts, and towns; what they have to offer.

State expertise could be assigned and reportable to the local level.

Combine local agencies, delineate tasks, and give citizens the right to sue when resources are not managed in a sustainable fashion.

Locals are satisfied when they "get something", e.g. money or acknowledgment for what they have done. Based on avenues of communication opened by local water planning in the late 1980s and today, we seem to have open channels each way.

Information will only come with the provision of available expertise at the local level.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer services?

1. Coordinate permit procedures. 2. Develop a well-informed local information clearinghouse. 3. Develop and train state agency staff to be more understanding and considerate to local issue and needs.

Clarify processes for clientele; be honest that a request may take a while to service. Make it clear who is the decision maker and what they need to know and how decision is made (factors).

Don't mix regulation with education and tech. assistance.

1. Consolidation of State Natural Resource/Environment Agencies into single, de-centralized agency. 2. Give counties and cities necessary grants or funding to do environmental assistance education to communities and businesses for waste management and best management practices. 3. Set up citizen commission to oversee State Environment/Natural Resource Agency. Commission should face large-scale issues and controversies as well as plan out the department's overall direction with input from citizen hearings and input meetings.

Empower local units of government with vital issues that affect their counties and have faith that they will be carried out properly. State government doesn't always know what is best for us.

There is a need to be more accountable to the public for services which we or they are providing. Less paperwork - Quicker processing of permits - less time to review projects. Work together better, less turf protection. Get back to the main goal!

Streamline permitting when more than one agency has jurisdiction.

Stable funding for SWCD's, have a single agency control over wetlands.

Accountability is lacking on most levels. Make all agency personnel aware of who is "paying" their paycheck.

One stop government. One regulatory agency. Information to public.

30 days to approve all permit requests. Reduce the number of agencies regulating. Put more responsibilities on local units of government.

1. State agencies could better utilize the SWCD local delivery system. 2. Since most SWCDs are not part of county government, it should be wise to specifically spell out a working relationship between state and SWCD to avoid local politics to re-invest what SWCD's already are provisioned by law to do. 3. Not enough funds to SWCD's to meet demands of public.

Property rights and the 5th amendments considered reduce state regulation.

1. Improve relationships: how can local/state better serve the taxpayer; how can we help lower costs of business increase need of service. 2. Treat the taxpayer, landowner as a person - not an "it".

One contact point, equip state/local agencies with good lists, numbers, flowcharts, so know who to refer people to or who controls that part, a checklist. Education/information.

Referral system between agencies - house each others literature and applications.

Have all environmental offices in same building.

Better communication between local and state government. Develop programs completely before releasing, rather than constantly changing the rules. Provide one stop shopping - all agencies at a single local location - each specializing in their area of expertise. State regulatory agencies utilize local law enforcement. State environmental-resource management- utilize local SWCDs for delivery at local level.

Need to have better information and education of what the requirements are. Decentralize state employees to regional offices (higher percentage in the field).

Use the established local entities, Delegate! Pay for what needs to be done. Put a lot of effort into education in elementary, middle and high schools.

Simpler system.

One stop permitting - The landowner starts with the city or unit having land use zoning, delegate to that unit authority to implement state agency policy.

Send out more information to the people.

1. 1 stop shopping with a map. 2. better communication.

Improved PR. User-friendly access to the agencies(one location). Emphasis on communication between agencies and levels.

1. Let the controls be handed over to the locals (county) with minimal state guidance. 2. Decentralize DNR (or get rid of it) and work on PR - (basically remember who's paying your wages). 3. Follow the laws and regulations you enforce on others.

1. Reduce confusion. 2. Don't "talk down" to people - listen to what they have to say.

1. Training about other agency programs. (Include an individual employee training plan and agency training plan as a requirement). 2. Compatible computer systems, if possible, to the extent possible. 3. Additional personnel, where needed, improves customer service but also increases taxation.

Public interest and private interest need to be reconciled. Decision making streamlined in time certain period.

Greater use of delegation and oversight, such as in Wetland Cons. Act or GP17 permits. More information-sharing between local entities so people learn of good ideas.

Education on who to call first (local) and complete info from there. "Assisting" rather than "regulatory" - e.g. have knowledgeable customer service agents. Longer hours of availability and greater knowledge of every step necessary to get where the customer wants to get.

1. Single permit coordinated at state/local level. 2. Information line at each state agency (1-800-line). 3. Local presence of state agency not realistic but good regional office would help.

1. Cease delegating programs to local levels of government. 2. Put general fund money back into the equation to fund environmental health programs -this health prevention/protection on a "strictly fee supports

everything" attitude must be reversed. The best public fund dollars spent is on prevention but current mentality appears to be only those programs which are fee for service will survive. 3. Get local government out of programs that can be and should be administered by existing state agencies.

1. Have consolidated Area DNR offices that are managed by an Environmental Supervisor. The # of discipline specific specialists below this position would depend on the resource. For example, an area with a lot of fishing lakes would have more fisheries specialists than one with a few. Same goes for wildlife. 2. Involve the public more in Decision making by using items such as polls. 3. Make a unit of; local government responsible for coordinating overlapping programs such as permits.

1. Make 91 SWCD your one stop shopping, local people and local decisions. 2. Keep County Comprehensive Water Plan in place. 3. State should look at improving the amount of time it takes to process permits, applications, easements, etc. Speeding up the process would greatly improve customer services.

1. More staff locally. 2. Less regulation and more voluntary with incentives. 3. Ave all wrinkles of a new program ironed out before it is introduced.

1. One stop shopping. Lead agency approach. 2. Information sharing, kiosks, accessibility. 3. More SPAs and MOUs - both formal and informal, set up process for simplification.

Each local government should start to advertise what it has to offer in the form of customer service. Very; poor marketing at the local level. In Norway they have tourist brochures that are of regions, districts, and towns - what each has to offer.

a. Courtesy. We Americans are used to "things" working very well, cost-effective and the customer being right. While this is not always possible with natural resource management, courtesy and respect for the people paying the bills is mandatory. b. "Can do" attitude. Permitter needs to see government as cooperators and helpers to achieve and outcome on time. Encourage development of technical assistance and ombudsman at all levels. c. Acknowledgment of time lines is critical. Build incentives - cash incentives to develop cost-effective management techniques and prioritize in some cases.

Provide complete and accurate information on all topics that are up for consideration. Cost - taxes: who pays for who? Are or will good information explanations be given. Remember that they are elected by the residents and property owners.

Have the same codes throughout Minnesota. Should get together and have the same laws in all counties of Minnesota when it comes to wells and septic system.

It all depends on the customer. Faster, easier, cheaper permits to destroy wetlands, farm in a non-sustainable manner, harvest trees or game so as to harm other wildlife should never be fast, easy or cheap.

1. Consolidate state environmental programs. 2. Develop clear, non-conflicting rules. 3. Put enough people in the regional offices to meet the expectations of the public.

Consolidate. To get an answer on wet lands you must go to PCA, DNR, Corps of Engineers, MEQB, the county you live in, the local soil and water conservation, and the city you live in, and you get a different answer from each or you need to have a consultant make a report (at a big expense) to try and get anything done.

Decentralize big-time government office buildings all over the place, there should be 25-30 outstate and another 6-10 in the 7 county area. 2. Classify duties rather than combine and compress, put regulations and "customer satisfaction" with the PCA, put enforcement with the DNR - clear roles will simplify things. 3. Aggressively educate the public - in schools, civic organizations.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Watershed districts - provide a local agency focused on the needs of the watershed area for flood control and water quality. Not pressured by conflicting budgetary needs for fire and police or social programs, Have taxing authority to implement needed programs. Soil and water districts - provide a county based technical assistance service for all local governments; nonregulatory, nontaxing.

Size of agency is relative to demand for service. Services with little demand must combine to form larger geographic service areas.

Local entities do not overlap! The state is rampant with this problem, but t local units generally have separate issues and responsibilities.

Co-locate; one stop shopping. Non regulatory technical assistance.

Wetlands law illustrates how 450 small local governments, all with their own peculiarities, can confuse the public. Counties and larger cities are more bloated, bureaucratic and politically driven than most of the state government.

Local governments rarely, if at all, provide duplicated services. This happens to be a state and federal problem with all agencies trying to get their "piece of the pie" and hasn't necessarily extended to the local level where we try to keep bureaucracy as limited as possible.

Land use and planning deal with zoning.

SWCDs are a locally elected representative form of government; knowing our people and what they are trying to do. We have a local handle on the potential problems and preventing larger problems. personal contact and trust with our people.

Most provide the same services unless (they are) very small counties.

In watershed management appointment would be better because elected doesn't work with a subject like waters. It's too controversial. Water management quality/quantity on a watershed basis.

SWCDs provide many natural resource research and protection programs. Citizens respond well to a nonthreatening local entity and allows better one to one contexts. No other local entity has this delivery system; County departments are mostly bogged down in regulatory programs. On the other hand, many SWCDs are changing roles by accepting delegation of authority to administer WCA, MPCA feedlot permits, etc.

local delivery is more effective because of public relations. DNR does not. Water district is the only agency to provide water quality.

Integrated licensing and permitting at a single access point.

They could be provided through a smaller number of agencies in a less effective manner. Complimentary programs often make the difference. Team work; reducing the team from 5 to 3 will probably cost you the

game. We cannot afford to lose the natural resource game; our children are counting on us for their future quality of life.

SWCDs work at erosion control; none other.

The county should be allowed to get involved in only those matters that the city or town can't handle. And the state should be precluded from building a bureaucracy to do anything the counties can do.

County: law enforcement, public health, welfare, recycling programs. SWCD: farm management, terrace funding, waterways, windbreaks. Watershed: farm tile permits, lakeshore and wetland supervision.

A SWCD is the most efficient landowner assistance agency I have seen. A SWCD office has the ability to find out what a landowner needs. If they cannot take care of the problem, we can facilitate cooperation between state - local and federal to solve.

First, how many units are involved? Are they all needed? Is their original purpose still valid? Too much tinkering with resource laws without looking at confusion which results.

Local agencies have a delivery system in place to get projects done. State agencies are too far removed from local citizens and can be intimidating to people working with them.

Primary focus is on direct contact with the customer. A very nonthreatening approach of local officials meeting with local citizenry. Feedback is easier at the local level.

SWCDs have a federal memorandum of understanding with USDA's natural resource conservation service. SWCDs use the agreement to help bring in federal dollars and programs into this county. SWCDs have a one to one working relationship with the land users. They know how the state and federal programs can complement one another, i.e. RIM vs CRP, e.g. when one is more appropriate.

Size of scale may dictate the level of organizational offerings. Local government could do it all through joint powers. Systems across political boundaries are difficult due to artificial barriers.

Watershed district - hydrologic modeling, water quality modeling, various specialized engineering services.

They almost all provide some unique service and some overlapping services. One instance where there is duplication is with the cities rubber-stamping some watershed district permits and charging a fee without doing anything to assure the technical need for the permit or assist the customer. They use it (the permit requirement) solely for revenue. But, if it is not broken, don't fix it.

The DNR could work more cooperatively with SWCDs - be more available for technical assistance.

Build new and efficient training and certification systems for resource managers from state/private means. Help with new computerization (GIS, etc.) Local government staff usually do these jobs because they care - help them.

Access to development which is not sustainable is what local government has always done. Local government must not yield to the fast, easy buck.

Local services are locale specific. Houston and Fillmore Counties, for instance, do not have the revenue base

of Olmsted, Rice or Washington. Consequently, if everyone is to share equally in the services provided, state government has to be involved.

It is not going to help to limit the number of agencies; the idea is to get cooperation between governments. Cooperation will come with comfort and control if the local authorities understand their authority and truly have good technical advice at their disposal. Then the fighting will end.

Appendix A

Questions Used For Moderated Small Group Discussions

The following questionnaires were used as the basis for guiding small group discussion during the regional public meetings held throughout Minnesota in September, 1995. Answers were given during the course of discussion, which are summarized in Appendix C, Minutes of Small Group Discussions.

Answers to these questions which were submitted anonymously as written responses at the regional meetings, or otherwise mailed, faxed or delivered to the Environmental Quality Board in response to a mass mailing subsequent to the meetings are listed in Section II of this report. These answers are mostly quoted verbatim, with some minor editing for clarity. Many times similar or identical comments were offered; not surprising considering that the respondents may have attended the same meeting or meetings and/or small groups as other respondents. Not every occurrence of every response is listed; where the point was sufficiently made in one comment of substance, other comments which merely echoed the same ideas or information without any additional detail or difference were not included.

This form of the questionnaire is included for the convenience of the reader, to put into context the various answers or comments found throughout this document.

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION
REGIONAL MEETINGS
TWIN CITIES
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

Please answer the following questions of statewide interest by addressing the factors which you personally consider to be most important:

1. **What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?**

2. **What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy? Please consider how the following impact the environment and economy: management of resources for commercial use, "livable communities", preservation of natural features, recreational uses, urban and rural needs, and prevention and reduction of pollution.**

3. **What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?**

Statewide Questions

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

**ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION
REGIONAL MEETINGS
TWIN CITIES
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995**

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Please answer the following questions of local interest by addressing the factors which you personally consider to be most important:

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Questions of Local Interest

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

APPENDIX B

MINUTES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS

These minutes represent the particular points of discussion raised during small group discussions which each group chose to report to the rest of the participants at each regional meeting. As part of each meeting, each group was asked to identify a few of the ideas that they considered to be the most important results of their discussion.

These minutes are the key points offered by each small group as recorded by the meeting secretary.

MINUTES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 5, 1995
ST. CLOUD

Group 1

Local question #1: What steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local gov jurisdictions?

- identify local rules within counties to avoid duplication
- convey what responsibility government has answers who goes to who for questions

State question # 5: What specifically can state agencies do to improve delivery of service?

- should be long term planning (ex: 25 years from now)
- restructure how laws are passed so people understand process
- make information more user friendly
- lessen the amount of information that goes out
- evaluate what laws really need to be in effect

Group 2

Key points:

- have education pertaining to agency functions. who is responsible for interagency cooperation- this is poor at the state level
- work with townships, local, and county levels more
- agencies should be accountable with funded by permit
- customer service should be # 1 within state agencies
- more accountability

Group 3

Key points:

- co-location of environmental programs and state agencies; not deal with all, but one
- rule making should be at local level
- deliver service to people, NOT other way around

Group 4

Key Points

- coordination, cooperation, collaboration NOT consolidation
- mandate agency coordination

SEPTEMBER 7, 1995
BEMIDJI

Group 1

Key Points:

- Why here: Mutli-manage not heart of the issue. Keep at local level
- Want improvement, especially with the Watershed District

Group 2

Key Points:

- Local level knows best what they need
- One stop permits. Walk-through by agencies. Time line on comments = 45 days
- Delegate more authority
- What is good for one county may not be for the other.

Group 3

Key Points:

- Statewide environmental reorganization should have more local control
- Reduce environmental beaucracy
- Local gov't can do a better job with planning, zoning, and inspection, and permits
- Improve accountability

Group 4

Key Points:

- One shoe does not fit ALL
- Regulations need flexibility
- Human process should not be ignored
- Property landowners should not be ignored

- Customer service time should be 30 day limit
- A person requesting information or an application should not need several applications
- Reduce number of state regulation

Group 5

Key Points:

- Local government control
- Ecosystem management not create new institutional process
- Short comings in being accountable and enforcing the law
- Checks and balances should equal
- Agencies should be responsible for certain material
- Districts are not getting enough money, so work together
- Simplify regulation-local/state
- Have clear expectations
- One stop, not consolidation
- Decentralize

September 7, 1995

Fergus Falls

Group 1

Local Questions:

- Local knowledge should not be replaced

State Questions:

- Decentralization. Regions power for decision-making

Group 2

Key points:

- Consolidation is not the answer. Bigger the better
- Within the agencies, need to simplify
- State should set standards, simplify, educate at local level
- Local level should implement
- State people should be out in the various regions

Group 3

Key Points:

- If it is not broken, do not fix it
- Education solves problems
- What is an ecoregion?
- Citizen participation should be happening more
- Relationship between state/local needs to have a better delivery system
- Local level knows best

Group 4

Key Points:

- Decentralization
- Citizens clearing house-certain contacts
- Room for county based organizations/ecoregions
- Citizen participation is needed
- Do not take local authority away
- Empower, do not second guess
- Concern with permitting process

September 11, 1995

Marshall

Group 1

Key Points:

- DNR should not be solely responsible for permits
- Checks and balances should equal
- Keep BWSR in place, do not combine with another agency
- There should be no waste at local level

Group 2

Key Points

- Overlapping is greater at State level. EX: ground water issue
- Should be a clear establishment of who does what
- Educate citizens
- Consolidation is not the answer
- State services should be better: regional implemented, staff more, contacts more efficient,

- location better(out in the regions).
- State planning should be local
- Local plans=locally done

Group 3

Key Points:

- Consolidate under TOPICS, not agency wise. One stop shop
- State is enforcer, educator, technical assistance.
- DNR not admin law judge
- Improve delivery.

Group 4

Key Points:

- Citizen participation should be heard
- More delegation to local groups, but still use the state
- Delegate authority
- Super agency=loose local input
- Loss of flexibility=super agency

September 12, 1995

New Ulm

Group 1

Key Points:

- Local control
- There should be a liaison between state and local government
- State should support services<have the money
- Local should carry out the mandates<no money
- Improve communication
- Do not need to consolidate, need to cooperate

Group 2

Key Points:

- Look at successes of current system
- Roles of agencies: communicate, resources should be shared, cooperation not compete

- Local implementation and management
- State planning and provide help down
- More understandable and one stop shopping

Group 3

Key Points:

- Consolidation is not the answer, there needs to be fine tuning and defining
- State government staff should be in the field
- Fund mandates-state quit passing with out funding
- Decentralization
- Education, research, enforces, coordination units, but do NOT consolidate

Group 4

Key Points:

- Decentralization
- More hands on
- Citizen involvement needed
- Enforcement made at the state level
- Funding mechanism creates problems: too specific, fighting, to too many people

St. Paul

September 14, 1995

Group 1

Key Points:

- **Central theme:** deliver service quicker, assist state agencies, delegate permits
- Public education
- Share resources
- Enforce laws
- If not broken, do not fix it
- Statewide standards need to be set

Group 2

Key Points:

- States role needs to be redefined to include: education, tech assistance
- Local role needs to be expanded
- Cooperation and coordination NOT consolidation. Develop an understanding

Group 3

Key Points:

- Focus on performance
- There is no single model that works
- What works one place may not work in another
- State should develop policy
- There should be training for local/state/public
- There is a need for assistance with the enforcement
- Local level handles what is happening in their area best
- Educate one another
- Accountability

Group 4

Key Points:

- May not need to fix it
- Local government does it best-cost effective, accessible, implement

Group 5

Key Points:

- Customer service should include local permitting.
- Effective communication between state and local government, community decisions
- Consolidating is the remedy for the wrong problem
- What is the problem fixing?
- Need state direction

Duluth
September 18, 1995

Group 1

Key Points:

- Decentralization. Decisions to regional level
- More cooperation between levels of government
- Better coordination between levels
- Citizen participation-educate landowners, citizen task force
- Counties relived responsible unit
- One stop shop
- More personalized, hours, and accessibility

Group 2

Key Points:

- Level of accountability
- Local control
- Ecoregions-undecided
- Implement at local level
- Decentralize-more of it(staff)

Group 3

Key Points:

- Access and availability
- Strengthen local level
- Consistency needs to be strengthened

Appendix C

Minutes of Small Group Discussions

During each of the small group discussions which took place during the regional public meetings held throughout Minnesota in September, 1995, minutes were kept of the discussions. Usually these discussions focused on the guidance questions in the questionnaires distributed to the participants. (Refer to Appendix A for this questionnaire.) Discussion was not limited to the content of the questions per se, but rather the questions were meant to stimulate discussion. Not every group covered every question; in some cases discussion flowed around concepts or issues separate and apart from the focal questions.

These notes represent the raw minutes submitted from the small groups. In many cases they may come from notes taken by the group facilitator, or recorded by a volunteer secretary from the group. In some cases these "minutes" were developed from the visual aids, or "flipcharts" used by the facilitator to graphically present the points under discussion as they were raised.

As such they are primarily recorded in outline form or as presentation of main points only; in some cases as "stream of consciousness" or following the flow of discussion, rather than systematically enumerating the range of responses to concepts in a predetermined order.

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION
REGIONAL MEETING
BEMIDJI
SEPTEMBER 6, 1995
GROUP 3/BILL BEST

GENERAL

The group consisted of approximately 20-25 landowners [MLRA], watershed district staff/ managers, SWCD staff/supervisors, county staff/board, and MPCA.

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. The group stated that there needed to be a reduction in "environmental bureaucracy" related to regulation and permits. They said that the public had the most difficulty with access to DNR Waters and C.O.E. Some participants stated that SWCD's are and could do more local administration of environmental regulations/programs. Local governments are already reviewing permit applications. Authority needs to be delegated to the local level.

The group was asked whether or not the state environmental agencies should be consolidated. They responded by saying that this would lead to less accountability. Everyone agreed that better communication and coordination would be a suitable alternative to consolidation. There were no perceived strengths or benefit from consolidation. There would be less understanding of local resource needs/issues with consolidation. Consolidation would result in the lose of checks and balances. The problem won't get fixed by consolidation. There is a problem with the need for multiple review of permit applications by state agencies. A few persons suggested that the agencies need to set agency goals/objectives because they have different roles/responsibilities which are not always comparable.

2. Natural resource management/protection should be done at the local level by geographic region [watershed or river basin]. Need to give local government the opportunity to set regional conditions. Need to allow for "grassroots" input that will be a tool; not token or pawns.
3. Some participants felt that landuse management is being done better by local government than by the state. Suggested that local government should exercise natural resource management on public lands [not the state]. Let local government manage public lands. Some thought state had role in "painting" the picture of natural resource management statewide through information exchange. Others disagreed and suggested that several state associations [AMC, MAWD, MASWCD] already provide a forum for information exchange.

4. See #1. Many felt that permitting should be done at the local level [not both]. A county implementing the C.O.E. GP-17 program stated that they felt this was an important step toward better citizen There is confusion by landowners regarding state/federal permitting. Decisions need to be made locally. Discussed a reasonable amount of time for agency review of permit applications. Suggested that permit application review should be coordinated in regard to construction season. The group put forth the following: Allow 30 days for the review of applications considered "high" priority ", 60 days for medium, and 90 days for low priority applications. Stated that the total permitting process should not take more than 30 days.
5. See #4. Suggested that co-location of the state environmental agencies would be a positive step. There is a need to better clarification of rules [not in lawyer language] through clearly written guidance/interpretation. Make staffing by eco-region through local agents that are empowered with the authority to make decisions.
6. Don't pay polluters to pollute. Require that they operate within the laws without financial incentives.

SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICTS

1. WD/SWCD/LID have different roles and responsibilities. Felt that these are being coordinated through local water planning. Group stated that there wasn't a duplication of effort. Different amount of expertise. Facilitate meetings with state. Possible conflict between watershed district/county related to drainage authority. Not a problem with law/rule but with things not specific in drainage law; i.e., legal ditch petitions are not done consistently.
2. Group felt eco-region should be kept on smaller areas; i.e., watersheds or river basins. See #2 [statewide].
3. Group listed the following as possible citizen access to special purpose districts: Local Boards [both elected/appointed]; Watershed District Advisory Committees; LWP Advisory Committees; Public Meetings/Hearings; Referendums [suggested the addition of these on regional basis not statewide]
4. Need to listen honestly. Take the politics out; laws/rules don't apply uniformly to everyone. Make state agencies follow the same procedures that local government must follow.
5. Need to improve relationships so that local/state government can better serve the taxpayer. Need to find ways to reduce the cost of business in light of the increased demand for service.

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION
REGIONAL MEETING
FERGUS FALLS
SEPTEMBER 7, 1995
GROUP 1/RON SHELITO
RECORDER/BILL BEST

GENERAL

The group consisted of approximately 10-15 watershed district staff/managers, SWCD staff/supervisors, county staff/board, and MDNR.

SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICTS

1. Didn't see problem with overlapping/duplicative jurisdiction; each was created for a specific purpose; reduced or eliminated through LWP, JPA's, etc.; better coordination through LWP's and other projects/programs; see problem with state permitting.
More involvement has resulted in better solutions.
LGU's have specific areas of expertise.
Landowners need technical/financial advice and assistance.
Need clearinghouse at local level.
Management of natural resources at eco, hydrologic, political boundaries.
 2. Identified need to better educate LGU's on eco-regions.
SWCD's/County's work together when needed to address resources issues.
There are common issues [priorities] even with differences in diversity.
Need to address the "larger picture" on a watershed/river basin basis.
Political boundaries can cause friction related to the ability to focus on the solution of the problems.
There is too much influence by the Twin Cities.
Would result in less customer service [because of large size].
Water planning priorities are being matched up with other counties.
 3. Strong point of Local Government Boards [both elected/appointed]; Watershed District Advisory Committees; LWP Advisory Committees; Public Meetings/Hearings; need elected not appointed representatives.
Provides for participation not just input.
Need more public relations so citizens know that input needed.
- #'s 4,5 - Not discussed by the group.
6. SWCD's: Responsible for soil/water; educational/technical assistance to put conservation on the land; non-regulatory; l.o.'s more receptive to planning assistance when not regulatory; locally elected board; know l.o.

needs/concerns; quick response to prevent resources problems.

Watershed Districts: formed to solve specific problems that county couldn't address [political]; when there is a need for majority rule; have taxing authority; can plan on watershed and not political boundaries; can do projects without direct assistance.

County: Could do what WD's do through JPA's/other; have P&Z authority; can delegate responsibility.

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS - Group started with #6 and worked backwards.

#'s 1,2,3. - Not discussed by the group.

4. Need for checklists/S.O.P.'s for different project types; standardized forms.
Need for local field office that can provide "one-stop-shopping".
Make grassroots effort to educate @ local level; state regulations.
Rules should follow intent of legislature.
Provide funding for better standards and technical information.
5. Need more staff in local offices; give authority to field staff to make decisions related to permitting, design, etc.; regional system with authority.
Make information accessible through the "information highway".
Rotate state field office staff through LGU offices 1 day/week.
Manage staff on resource not population.
6. Don't have adequate resources; need more technical assistance at local level; more \$'s for technical assistance to pay for inspections.
Need more staff @ field level; decentralization/\$'s.
Get technical/financial assistance to those that need help immediately; spread out more evenly between polluters/non-polluters.
Incentive conflict with health and social needs.
More low cost loans.

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION
REGIONAL MEETINGS
MARSHALL
SEPTEMBER 11, 1195

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Question #1:

It is critical to establish --- "who is doing what"

The mission and roles of various local government units must clearly be defined. It was pointed out that every county is different.

It was noted that County Comprehensive Local Water Planning has helped define roles and create better working relationships and partnerships with various local governments.

One person commented that this was very true in Nobles County - and that they were in the process of developing one County Plan which would encompass the comprehensive local water plan, the soil and water conservation district comprehensive plan and a watershed district overall plan. They were very excited about the possibilities for this type of planning to address local government roles and responsibilities.

It was felt that state government (environmental agencies) needed to define their roles / responsibilities better.

Question #2:

There was very little discussion regarding delivery of services by eco-region. It was clearly noted however that the state was clearly different north to south and east to west, and that this needed to be considered when programs, resources etc. are managed.

People were most comfortable with the county as the most recognized local unit of government, citizens recognize these historical / political boundaries.

One person commented that watershed districts work well in regard to managing resources. The majority of this small group however felt that doing watershed planning within existing county boundaries was most preferable, with the recognition that adjoining counties then need to work and plan closely together.

Question #3:

Variety of public information and education is constantly available to citizens. People are as interested as they want to be. It was noted that no one can force people to participate.

Question #4:

Communication is the key, Communication is essential!

There needs to be more local / state sharing.

There needs to be more power for decisions of state agencies at the regional level.

There needs to be better local / state communications at the local level (i.e. county). Someone thought that some type of a consolidated advisory committee composed of local and state agency staff from the field need to consistently meet at the local level (i.e. county).

One citizen was concerned with Laws vs rules or guidelines. There was concern that when new laws / regulations are created, they clearly must be able to be implemented. A concern was expressed that new laws rarely have dollars or new staff as part of the legislation. The group thought this is where lack of enforcement starts.

Question #5:

For whatever issue or regulation being implemented -- for example wetland management, one form / permit should be used whether local or state government is involved. Also it was thought the final decision for a permit decision must come from one agency --various agencies local / state could confer but the final decision must come from one unit of government.

Question #6:

Did not discuss.....

QUESTIONS OF STATEWIDE INTEREST

Question #1:

More power, authority, decision making should be at the regional level --- not central office / St. Paul. It was generally thought that state agencies should not be combined into one super agency but rather at the regional or field level all state agencies need to be housed together. This would foster better communication of state agencies in the field and provide better citizen and local government access to state agencies.

Question #2:

The crux of the problem is we (meaning government and citizens) are always reactive -- reacting to problems. There is a need to be proactive. We create our own problems. We need to look at the future now. Several in the group stated that there are and must be limits to free enterprize. Someone asked the question - how does local and state government say no? They must be able to at times... Again someone offered the statement / question - what is it that we want to do ... and how do we get there?

Question #3:

State government should analyze needs and appropriate dollars. Local government should implement and administer programs.

It was noted that state government can not just be interested in

the urban area of the state.

Question #4:

It was suggested that local government (for example soil and water conservation districts) serve as a clearing house - to assist citizens through different regulation or permitting requirements of the state.

Question #5:

A brief discussion focused on the need for a regional emphasis but there still is the need for the overall state perspective. The regional emphasis is important for delivery.

Question #6:

Did not discuss.....

1) Duplication at local level

- Compliment each other well!
- Each have area of expertise.
 - Watershed District.
 - SWCD
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Co. Extension
 - Environment sites
- Acknowledge limit of expertise.
- Water Plan has helped to coordinate and bring about better awareness of each others roles and responsibilities.
- Water Plan Task Force - represented by all parties within County.
- Preserve functions at local level
- Don't turn over to state
- Co-location helps
- Multiple entities working together to make decisions rather than one entity.
- Decisions made without equal representation (follow the majority).
- Horizontal merger concept.

2) Eco-regions.

- Would allow management that is specific to the area (Eco-region)
- Added layer to govern - no savings.
- Vertical merger - County up to Joint Powers etc.
- Strength in numbers.

3) Citizen Participation

Local boards made up of local citizens.

4) State and local cooperation.

- Faster state action on permits.
- Decentralization of state agencies.
- State delegation to local level.
ie: General Permitting- DNR Waters
- State assistance in local implementations.

5) Three things to improve local service:

- Local implementation/control.
- Staff to respond to citizens.
- Citizen road map to agency.

State Issues

1) State reorganization.

- Loss of local input with consolidation
- Super agency concept loses natural fit agricultural-farming.
- Permitting is fragmented
- Super - Agency loses flexibility
- Skepticism of who would be in charge.

2) Balance Development and resource Prot.

- Strange education of alternatives.
- Can have development and resources protect.
- "0" tolerance is practical "trade offs" may be Okay - local decision
- Strong economy allows for better resource protection.

3) State vs. Local Functions

State	V.s.	Local Functions
-------	------	-----------------

Funding		
General Guidelines-Consistency		
Certain types of regulation - "7020"		

	Implementation	
	Specific Guidelines	

4) State Reg. Simplification

- Decentralization of state government easier local contact with state.
- Timely decision making (deadlines).
- Delegation to local government

5)

- Top heavy St. Paul bureaucracy.

6)

-Concentrate efforts on Education and implementation rather than regulation.
-Need adequate time to comply.

Environmental Reorganization Meeting Key Points

1. Customer Service
 - *one stop shop (ex: permits)
 - *improve communication
 - *expand state agency hours
2. Not consolidation of agencies, but coordination and collaboration
3. State should set standards, local level does not implementation
4. Improve accountability statewide and enforce laws
5. Law judge process should be eliminated
6. Simplify regulations
 - *user friendly
7. If it is not broken do not fix it. Look at current successes
8. Decentralize staff
9. Checks and balances

Local

1. Duplication/Consolidation

- Appoint lead agency - no right of veto
- Political decision
- Counties / Townships / Cities / School District
- SWCD-- Watershed districts / Sewer Districts , joint power boards
- SWCD should be lead agency for water quality (surface and ground) and soil erosion.
- Translates into more local control
- Less DNR

-Lack of coordination between government agencies

2. Eco-regions

- Don't believe it's definable.
- Local flexibility
 - Geology -- soil types
 - Flora
 - Fauna
- Good example of local responsibility -- SWCD
- Watershed Districts
- Local control

Important issues -- Sustainability - to be explored.

3. Citizen Participation

- County environmental communities
- Wait for the right issue.
- Format
 - Local government needs to be responsive.

4. Intergovernmental cooperation

Fund the mandates - send more money to local government.

- State mandates "cooperation".
- Latitude of funding dependent on state regulations.
- MN chapter 145A
 - Good model for sharing responsibilities at both.

5. Improve government customer service.

- Olmsted county organized under environmental management team - includes citizen member - greater efficiency, one-stop shopping.
- More local control
- Time limitations on processing applications
 1. MN Chapter 145A Reference page wells
- Potential appeal process within local agencies.

6. Unique Local Government Functions
 - a. Land use
 - b. Police and Fire protection
 - c. Many public health
 - d. Technical assistance to local land users.
 - e. Zoning - could be state or local.

State

1. Consolidate
 - a. One agency - one stop shopping
 - b. Dissent - Impossible to do one stop shopping, given complexity of government functions.
 - c. Access point by function?
 - d. Example - Ad Agency
 - entry point
 - time limit
 - e. Too disorganized.

2. Striking a Balance
Between the economy and the environment.

-Constitutional Issues-

True cost - cost benefit analysis of standards and regulations.

3.
 - Local input preferable on almost everything.
 - Economic dichotomy of state
 - Public utilities statewide

Statewide - high public impact
Few local events - need efficiency

Role in research and education

4. One local agency authority to issue permit or licence.
Majority rule amongst agencies -- may not work in critical issues.

LOCAL

1) Do not feel there is overlap on the local level.

- function well together within county and between county and SWCD.
- good communication cuts down on conflict.
- some overlap perceived when not full understanding of specific responsibilities of certain departments.
- clarity of job responsibilities- stay within boundary of job; define roles.

Funding

- well sealing
- BWSR
- SRF

Can cause confusion when coming from more than one source.

2) How do you manage something that is changing all the time?

- Local political boundaries are a barrier to ecoregions.
- Water District go beyond political boundaries and each watershed has its own problem.
- Goal defines the boundaries of ecoregion and this goal must be communicated to public.
- Involve the local people of the ecoregion.
- Can not have statewide rules working through ecoregions.
- Best managed by combination of local and state (joint powers).

3) Citizens Advisory Board:

Board should not be created by the oversight agency; hearings.

4)

- No state mandates without funding.
- Rule flexibility
 - case-by-case basis
- District or regional office given more authority.
- Decentralize
- Authority and responsibility must go hand-in-hand.
- Local response more quick.

4b) Cooperation depends on the agency.

5) More flexibility

Mechanism of accountability.

Authority and responsibility at the local level.

No state mandates without funding.

More standardized education.

-What services are available and where to get them; easy access.

-One stop shopping

Treat people as people.

6a) Counties

Well code

Septics

Zoning

Recycling

6b) Septics

Joint boards between counties.

STATEWIDE

1) Fine tune what exists instead of tearing down.

Better communication and cooperation.

Super Agency would be intimidating citizens.

Make clear boundaries-will make more efficient (separation) and more credibility.

-Regulatory

-Education

-Research

Coordination-compliment each other (instead of duplicating).

2) One solution will not apply for the entire state.

Funding applies to everything talked about.

Local input on definition of what sustainable development should be and how to achieve it.

Economy is a subsidiary of natural resource base.

State Agency Reorganization in general

Decentralization

-more responsibility and staff on local level - better service.

BWSR - not an advisable agency.

-voice for local units

- 1)
 - Review permit requirements and eliminate dupes (1 permit).
 - Permit time
 - One stop shopping
 - Eliminate different requirements.
 - Local input into developing procedures and regulations.
- 2)
 - Let local government do it's job.
 - Manage at the local level
 - Coordinate at a decentralize state level.
 - More decentralization of services and support from the state.
- 3)
 - Sustainable Development example (CRM)
- 4) Agencies must share the responsibilities NOT compete.
Ex: permits
- 5)
 - Responsiveness
 - Communications
 - C.M., Cooperative decision making
 - Problem solving
 - Planning
 - Permits
- 6)
 - Know the area
 - Most direct contact with landowners
 - Water District set up on hydro units for resource management
 - More timely service.
 - SWCD -- Very personal contact with landowners.
 - Technical and financial--
 - Local delivery of state and federal programs.

Minimize duplicate to improve efficiency and delivery.

MN has done a good job --> just fine tune.

Legislation needs to clearly define state agency roles.

COMMUNICATION ISSUE

Better sharing of services between state and local.

I.e. : data base
engineers
planners

7) State can do best.
-enforcement

Locals have accountability for fiscal project/prioritize projects, etc.
Clarify who does what!

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS FLIP CHART MATERIAL FROM SMALL GROUPS

State Questions:

1. Don't consolidate-need cooperation
Reengineer from top to bottom
Define roles, quit reshuffling
System is not broken, do not fix it(adjust it)
Controversy about overlap
Where there is overlap, determine state level, Who should do what
Gov't from bottom-up
 ex: several classification systems for Water
Rethink at State level
 Planning-study what is
Stop turf war
Legislature should define what problems they are trying to fix
Do it with protection and best use of resources. Not the political fix
Legislature should think through what they are trying to achieve and coordinate
 with current statutes
Not every political subdivision is EVIL. There is a lack of trust between state and local.
Legislature does statutes. Agencies write rules with regard to courts and constitution
Grant funding clearing house on statewide level
2. Better pay for Ag sector
Attitude of people root of problem
Multiple use of resources possible
Long term=more than 3-5 years. Generational planning (25 years)
Common sense in the process
Incentives for sustainable practices
Consider impacts of decisions
 Ex: cheap food
3. State should be responsible for:
 tech support and education (locals doing citizen education)
 Enforcement
 financing
 policies and statewide-standards with discretion
 decisions at local level with citizen participation
 avoid duplication
Difference across state regarding policies and standards
 local permitting should occur
 federal and state regulations deteriorating

Computerized licensing and permitting in the state
Single source entry
info and referral system
Electronic distribution for local review and comment

Local Questions:

1. Overlap is at the state level not at the local level(except the metro area)
There are overlapping issues and jurisdictions
Ex: cities and watershed districts
Locals getting along-cooperation
Political boundaries-what are they?
Conflict of priorities between different levels of local government
3. The citizen is being heard and participates
Better participation at the local level
Better notification
Better response
Foster opportunity-more interest at local level
4. Regional offices
State agency people meet amongst themselves too often
More effective communication between state and local
Same state agency person
Continuity
5. State agencies need to know who their customer is
including local units of government
Local agencies need to become responsive
Local could be more cost-effective
Local could be more accessible
Let customers know how to access service (public education)
State could advertise local services

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS FLIP CHART MATERIAL FROM SMALL GROUPS

State Questions:

1. Steps to consolidate programs:
Consolidation-results in loss of local input - loss of positive results
Little cooperation between state agencies
80% of funds go to admin
More money should go to local projects
State policies unknown:
 developed case by case
Inconsistent application across state
Is consolidation more efficient? NO
Local are best at implementing programs
More consolidation results in less ability to deal with diversity in state
All state agencies need to be concerned with water quality/mgmt
Must recognize differences across state
2. Sustainable Development:
Red River Valley - 3 policies
Regional planning is important
Uniform state policy
 to bring people together
 agreement on Water Quality standards
State develop guidelines/policies
 Locals deliver/implement apply guidelines to protect Nat Res
Rule making authority
 too often isolated from public
 WCA - independent group made rules Legislature should have finished job
EPA/COE assume rulemaking authority
Locals need to hire expensive consultants to deal with rules - locals do not have expertise
Delegate authority to locals to get done
5. Citizens - Info:
Citizens are more likely to contact local agency to get info
Changes in state law/rules are surprise to locals
Need to keep public informed
Media/public meetings
Recycling incentives needed

Local Questions:

1. Overlap of Local government:
Perception of overlap around for years
Advantage-checks and balances
Low cost
Local Water Plans**
 provides for coordination and communication
Coordination more important than consolidation
Is little overlap
Have different skills/methods/techniques
4. Steps for better local/state coordination:
Need to know state policies
Local water plan provides for local coordination/elimination of overlap
BWSR in place to deliver services to locals
Resolution system for state/local conflicts/goals needed
Other agencies should be more organized like BWSR
6. Smaller number of agencies
Should be same number/better coordination
Small/local agencies are far more efficient
Bigger is not better
Complaint that locals do not see big picture/state issues
Big agencies do not see small local issues

**ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS
FLIP CHART MATERIAL FROM SMALL GROUPS**

ROCHESTER-DAVE PETERSON

State Questions:

1. Do we know what is broken?
 - Turf
 - Multiple sources of info
 - Lack of coordination of issues
 - Inconvenience for users
 - One stop shop
 - Assessment of responsibilities
 - Eco-system-consistent boundaries decentralize for service to LGU's and citizens
2. Over reg industry
 - hidden costs of gov't vs clean-up
 - Good science needed for regulatory base then balance cost
3. Responsible at lowest level
 - State fund pass thru grants to local level
 - ex: watershed based management, funding, enforcement, etc
 - State oversight where LGU's are inconsistent, and minimum standards
 - Stricter standard cost/LGU
 - Delegation of authority (eg: DNR-WD)
5. Respond in timely manner
 - Honor deadlines
 - Regions more power for decisions
 - Agency Consolidation(existing structure offers checks/balances)
 - Fear of recedent prevents decisions being made
6. Economic incentives for compliance ex: tax incentives
 - Negative incentive -- polluter pays
 - State has not enforced regulations
 - Compliance too complex to meet or regulate
 - Economic factor - narrow margin

Local Questions:

1. Common sense

State do not micro-manage
Why isn't there cooperation?
Reorg is not necessarily the answer
Start making decisions

3. Citizen participation is required
Information needs to be generated locally
4. Clarify goals and process both ways
Gov't hoops
State service not timely
Why should it take 6 months to get a permit?

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION MEETINGS FLIP CHART MATERIAL FROM SMALL GROUPS

State Questions:

1. Overlapping regulations shouldn't be
 Needs to be a definition of who is doing what
 Accountability-staff to board to commissioners
 Best qualified agency should be working on the issue: communicate and knows client
 Decentralize-empower regional staff with statewide consistency
 Agency communication
 Improve customer service at the local and state levels
2. Define and educate about sustainable development.
 Common sense/win-win-there should be a happy medium
 Public information-who,where,what. Agency 800 number
 Real live person to call and talk to in an agency or office

Local Questions:

1. One stop shop-close co-location
 Lack of funds
 Define eco-regions
 Inventory/evaluate resources
 Done by LOCAL who know the area and the land
 Educate and it will lead to better participation at hearings
4. There is good cooperation between local and state
 Very poor communication between agencies and divisions
 Decentralize/empower regional
 Educate
 MNDOT/county/township cooperation

SWCD-landuse

info and assistance
face/human contact is important

1. Local Overlap

- Occurs due to state authority over them
- Doesn't feel there is overlap due to collaboration by CO. BC.
- Overlap with state - doc permit
- Collaboration with tribal councils and CO.SWCA-WD's
- Seems to be no big problem
- Yes, overlap needs to go to multiple districts (EGO's) won't let go
- Ditch

A.C.O.E.

County

D.N.R.

WD

2. Manage resource by county if it seems that an issue crosses county line, cooperation(that takes place)

- Drainage issues on watershed bases
- Eco-region or watershed good - but politically impossible
- With multiple political divisions within watershed one could offset the other
- solution -JPB
- MO's
- Problem differences of water management from one end of watershed to the other

3. Water plan task force

- WD's Citizens advisory boards
- SWCD - no real process
- yes - open meetings

4. One stop for permits coordinate issuance

- Local coordinator - to walk prospect through permit process
- state and local (45 days)
- If denied, answer why
- Don't delay permits

5. Funding for adequate staff

- county
- state
- fees
- Streamline process
- Delegate more authority out to field people - speed up process
- ex.
- Make someone responsible to act
- Want authority but doesn't want responsibility
- SWCD is the only one that does soil conservation
- Other districts may receive the dirt (watershed ditches) it is saved to address problem with programs

- SWCD there to implement fed and state farm program
- WD are a special purpose district

6. State

1. If BWSR moves - go to Ag (Farmer response)

Problem

Wetland	404
	401
	WCA
	DNR
	NRCS
	Local WD's

- Abolish EPP

Gen.

-All want turf to protect. Have to deal with multiple procedures with these agencies.

Pro-As to having existing agencies to provide balance of management for ag as well as recreation

2. Ag big for state. Need to protect the Ag. Interest from resource management

- Ag - need no more protection. Economics will provide it

3. State as advisory

- Local control - provides local contacts- work out issues
- Is set by state through enabling agency
- Need to regionalize all resource management

Local

#1 Steps to eliminate overlap local government jurors

- *Statewide erosion and development control tailor for each area
- *One form - WCA one stop shop
- *Better educate public on process
- *Duplicative funding - not
Water taxes - no complaints

#2 Managing resources

- *Ecoregion - water
- *Local Management - soil managed
- *Services - local level

#3 Mechanism for citizen participation

- *Task forces - local
- *Locals tell what they want to Task Force
- *Local votes = more impact
- *Educate on issue

#4 Improve intergovernmental cooperation state/local agencies

- *Issue - State local not bypass
 - state step on local
- *Boards to suggest
 - work with locals

#5 3 Priority Improvement of customer service

#6 Types of service - local government

State

#1 Steps to consolidate

- * No more consolidation
- * More communication/coordination

#2 Issues achieve Sustainable Development in all regions

- * SD = good definition
- * Economics
- * Scientific rather than economic
- * Draw line - up to area people
 - local decision

#3 Functions best fulfilled by government

State

Set standards

-make sure locals understand

Equitable

- sign off end at local level

Permit granted

Local

Sign off on implementation

Better with field

4. Regulations be simplified

*Checklist form

*Agency exchange lists - who does what?

*Within agencies simplify process

*Joint notification form = simple

- all information included

*timeliness - one month or less

*cost-too expensive

5. Improve delivery of service. Citizens receive information

Ex: Drs -

Different offices move around state

Staff spread around field

6. Better balanced regulatory controls and fin incentives

*better education - save money

*show \$ factors (soil has this)

- 1)
1. Identify local roles
2. Communicate as public education - other agencies
3. Common set of rules and regulation - (consist) consist. parameter
4. Common goals
5. Best suited for task

- 2)
1. Tying in high priority in water-shed
2. Strike an equal balance
(wildlife, ag, forestry)

- 3)
1. Delivery of service on local basis

- 4)
1. Local and State coordination

- 5)
 1. Local coordination needed. Assistance available
-

- 1) Base on sound principal

- 2) Implementation of practices

*Simplify permitting process

- A) Agreement
- B) 509 Plan (water managing plan)
- C) Water 110B
State agency ex

- 3)*Public Hearing

- *Water Planning process
60 day public hearing
- *Level 1

- 4)*Keep politics out

- *Task force - local H2O
planning - state, local and federal
- *Local and state consist
- *Support of each other
AG County partnership

- 5)*Returning phone calls

- *available for on site

- *Downloading of permit
- *Local driven - permitting
- *Zoning and land use
 - Enforcement

Statewide

- 1)*Focus of priority
 - *Are agencies willing to get up turf
 - *Roles and communication
 - *Remove politics
- 2)*Some things can be changed
 - *All or none - no flexibility
 - *Long term - goals and obj
 - Previous history
- 3)*Permitting - with state (consist)
 - *No micro-management from state level
 - *State oversight (consist)
 - *Finding local agency best suited for program-determined by state
 - *User friendly system - one stop shopping
- 4)* Law in affect - no education and information - get rule before law takes affect
 - *Citizens need to understand the law - user-friendly
 - *Do you need law in delivery system
- 5)*Provide technical alternatives
 - *Benefited (party)
 - *watershed based - all part of problem

Bemidji-One small group session

More coordination at county level
Too many laws and regulations - federal/state/county/local
One stop shopping
Local authority to inspect/cite or permit
Eliminate overlaps in regulations
(Establish "clearing house")
*Local flexibility

"Tailored" enforcement
Consider local conditions
Service delivery at county level

Co-location of agencies
Consolidation of central admin
Local coordination

Division of responsibilities among available resources
Policy must be sound
Process - "who makes it run"
State = Policy (with consultation)

*Pilot projects to test
Local = Enforcement
Rules try to address too many problems
Prioritize laws and rules
Need for public education
Information = compliance
Use databases to identify audiences
Early education curriculum
Prevention
% of budget for education
Accountability
Communication - coordination among different units of government - including tribal government
Also coordinate with federal requirements
Joint powers projects
"Preventive maintenance"
Reward good management practices

Special Purpose Districts

1. Different roles/responsibilities

Local water planning

No duplication of effort

Different expertise in each

Facilitate meetings with state without county conflict

Legal ditch petition

Not done uniformly when not in statute

2. See #2 stature

3. Local boards

elected/appointed-WD advisory committee < WP advisory committee

(ADD) Referendum (regional not statewide)

Public hearings/meetings

4. Listen honestly

Take out politics; laws do not apply uniformly for everyone

5. Improve business relationship; how can local/state better serve the tax payer; how can we help.

Decreased cost of business with increased need of service

1. Decreased Enviro. Beau

SWCD - DNR PWW's/COE

Reduce duplication

State program - Planning and Zoning/ Ag inspection

- Local permitting

-Local Governmental Unit's review
permits already

-highway projects/up to three years

Two Agencies - no loss accountability

Strengths/Benefits

Final say to LGU's

Multiple Review of Problem by State Agencies

No Accountability

Set goals/objectives - different; not compatible

Won't fix by consolidation

Less understanding with consolidation

Delegate regulation to local level

Lose V's and balance

State Agencies - governmental units in charge

Statewide

2. Natural Resource Management/Protection at local level by geographic regions

Allow them to set regional conditions

3. Allow drainage for ag/maintenance.

"Grass roots" tool; not pawns

better local landuse management by local than state (state lands)

Locals manage public lands

State - broad picture of natural resources; facilitate information exchange

AMC/MAWD/MASWCD

info. exchange

4. See #1

Licensing regulate by state; permitting both.

Should be local

GP-17 (3 acres/COE)

Confusion of IO @ State/Fed with permitting

MPCA - blanket permit

make decision locally!!

High - 30 days - coordinate with construction season - Low/Medium/High priority

Low - 90 days

Total permitting process - 30 days

5. Statewide

See #4

Co location of agencies

Need clarity of rules (no lawyers) with guidance/interpretation

Staffing by eco-region

Empower area offices

local agents

6. Don't pay polluters to pollute

Do within the laws w/o financial uncertainties

Local Government

- 1) No single environmental agency to easily controlled by special interest.
 - agencies have separate mandates.
 - Should be two groups.
 - Regulator
 - Service Separate functions
 - Improve leadership from EQB.

State

- 2) Water quality and rural sewer systems.
 - a consensus as to what sustainable development issue.
 - Strong economy meets social and environmental needs.
- 3) Locals best at service delivery and national resources activities.
 - State level best at planning, coordinating, and technical assistance.
 - Locals know the problems.
 - State better at close maintenance of funds and policy.
 - Local government resources accessible to customers.
- 4) Have local control on it.
 - St. Paul is coming out with to many regulations for the local government.
 - Large facility permitting is appropriate to the state; in some cases it's appropriate.
 - State shouldn't override local units of government, should mandate.
- 5) Shorten decision making process, accountability.
 - Board representatives attend meetings, don't cancel meetings.
 - File conference notes for meetings.
 - Make meetings more accessible to the people.
 - Decrease differences in answers between and amongst programs, levels and departments.
 - Separate content of regulation from implementation.
 - Prohibition against calling more than three people at state. Identify one person to handle calls.
- 6) Pollution pays is not a well issue for states to face.

LOCAL

- 1) Water planning process is a good model, has worked well.
 - Consolidating country and township roads.
 - Local units should maintain identity, should be combined in a centralized facility.
 - Better define jurisdictional boundaries of various agencies and clearer responsibilities, Don't cross boundaries.
 - Define roles of various local government.
- 2) Eliminate present eco-regions boundaries. Don't like map.
 - Different landscapes can be used for planning and coordination but not decisions-making.
- 3) Public meetings, elections.
 - State citizens participation is as important as local citizens participation.
 - Term limits -- not appointed positions.
 - Appointed positions must be more accountable.
- 4) Move technological and administrative activities out of state and into legions.
- 5) The public is not government customers, it's the government owner.
 - Improve the consistency between level within agencies.
- 6) Three themes
 - a- Access and availability to decision making.
 - b- Strengthening of local control.
 - c- Greater level of consistency.

State

2) Sustainable Development

- One shoe does not fit all-WCA
- Regional differences require flexibility in WCA
- Sustainable human progress should not be ignored
- Property rights are largely ignored - society bear costs of environmental protocols
- Provide JUST compensation for wetlands/-Rules
- Local wetland management plan may be solution-Local Water Plan
 - *Let it work!

Local

5) Customer Service

- State should respond within 30 days - or considered approved.
- Recognition of property rights
 - heavy handedness of state/federal
 - fifth amendment needs to be followed
- Water permitting should be coordinated by one agency - one fee/ one application is all that is needed.
- Don't consolidate, designate one agency/one leader.
- Reduce number of state regulations.

Appendix D

Letters of comment

Many letters of comment were received from interested individuals and organizations. Some followed the suggested format of responding to the questions which were used for the basis of discussion at the regional meetings. Others were extended expositions on central themes or special topics of interest to the responder. It was felt that these letters were best viewed as they were received, without interpolation by staff.

Some letters included extensive references, articles, or reports of activities by agencies. These sometimes voluminous attachments are not included. Many may already be available to staff of EQB member agencies in their reference libraries; otherwise they can be provided upon request..

Appendix E

Metropolitan Council Comments

Comments were received from the Director of the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services division. They follow the suggested questionnaire format, and address those issues identified by the Environmental Services as being relevant.

Metropolitan Council

Working for the Region, Planning for the Future

Environmental Services

November 20, 1995

Charles Williams, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear *Chuck* Williams:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Chair of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board. It is apparent the Governor has confidence in your abilities to provide leadership for the state as evidenced in part by your expanding role within the environmental arena.

Despite increasing demands on your time, I hope you'll still be available to meet with us from time to time, as our agencies continue to have opportunities to work together on numerous environmental challenges ahead.

One such opportunity relates to the EQB's recent series of public meetings soliciting input to improve the delivery of statewide environmental services. The Metropolitan Council's Environmental Services Division has a keen interest in the goals and outcomes of this survey and how they impact the overall picture of environmental services in Minnesota, especially in the metropolitan area.

In reading about the state's intended reorganization of environmental services, it became clear that the goals and challenges of the EQB and this reorganization are very compatible with the new mission and challenges of Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES).

Inasmuch as the EQB survey is drawing heavily on public input regarding the delivery of environmental services at the state and local levels, one important piece of the tapestry missing is that provided by regional government. In the Twin Cities, as you know, the Metropolitan Council provides a variety of important public services in the areas of community development, transit service, and environmental services including wastewater treatment.

Charles Williams -- Page 2

As Director of the Environmental Services Division of the Metropolitan Council, I would very much appreciate the opportunity to visit with the EQB and provide a regional perspective on the questions asked in your recent survey. In fact, I am attaching to this letter for EQB consideration my answers from the Council's perspective to the questions asked in the survey.

At your convenience, I would like to propose a meeting with the EQB to discuss the regional perspective on future delivery of environmental services. I feel strongly that MCES has much to offer on this important subject, and feel strongly the Council should be represented in the ongoing discussions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Helen Boyer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Helen Boyer
Director
Environmental Services Division

cc: Curt Johnson
Jim Solem

Helen Boyer, Director
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services
230 E. 5th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1634

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

- 1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?**

Before any consolidation of state programs takes place, it is imperative that the various programs in natural resources and environmental protection be identified that are similar in scope and design, and that have compatible goals and outcomes that would lend themselves well to consolidation... for example, to avoid redundancy or overlapping service. If consolidation is begun too precipitously, we may not be improving the delivery of public services or saving time or money.

At a minimum, we should begin to consolidate and cross-reference our data gathering efforts as well as storage, retrieval, manipulation and presentation. For those functions identified as common in two or more programs, we should consolidate functions in a flexible enough way to assure decentralized access to information.

Second, key strategic objectives and results in similar programs should be reported at similar frequencies and in compatible formats to clearly see what results have been achieved.

Third, each program should have measurable outcomes to determine whether the various aspects of consolidated programs are adding value to the desired outcome. Finally, if in the course of consolidating programs, some programs are more successful than others, they can be emulated and replicated as the standard bearer for others to follow.

- 2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy.**

Inasmuch as the term "sustainable development" can and does mean many things to many people, before the discussion proceeds any further, I think it is important that all principal parties create common understanding, if not commonly-held values, of the term, to assure that we are all working from a similar point of

reference. It will also be necessary to develop specific, objective criteria in order to establish state priorities on which to base decisions among competing interests, including the allocation of resources such as people, money, and other assets.

Similarly, we must work together to establish programs, strategies and objectives so we will know what it is we're striving for, whether we get sidetracked along the way, and whether or not we arrive at the target goal. Interim goals and objectives will also be necessary, such that incremental progress can be demonstrated to encourage ongoing progress toward a goal. An appropriately designed public education and outreach program would help bring the public along through common understanding, knowledge and support.

With respect to the "substance" of sustainable development, since we are looking at a wide range of resources and functions, we need to look at "systems" and approaches that cut across geographical or political boundaries or barriers, including state, regional and local jurisdictions. For example, within the realm of "livable communities," we will need to look at the social and economic issues, including fairness and equity. We should identify all systems that are directly or indirectly impacted... transportation and educational systems, for example.

There must be agreement on commonly-held values regarding the relative importance of outstate versus metro systems, the value of preserved or undeveloped land; i.e., do we want to encourage rural versus developed land... negative consequences on economy. A commonly-held value system will help us determine the expected outcomes of the process.

Finally, in the area of preventing or reducing pollution, we will need to determine what level of "clean" we are willing to pay for, i.e., How clean is clean? And, what is the reasonable cost of clean, and who will pay? Again, a commonly-held value system will help sort out those larger questions, for the both the direct agents who are involved as well as the larger beneficiaries of the discussion, including the public.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

The state should issue standards of excellence, uniform criteria, the broad framework of reference, technical support, criteria for allocating resources, determine appropriate funding sources for the range of services to be delivered by levels of government, and articulate the roles and functions carried out by various jurisdictions. It is also appropriate for the state to interface with the federal government at times, and to manage interstate compacts or joint ventures.

A

The regional level--not the state, not the local level--has a key role to play in coordinating and guiding regional development and assisting a broad range of communities on issues of regional interest. In the metropolitan area especially, the Metropolitan Council has been effective in helping plan and guide those systems that are unique in the urban region.

On the local level, smaller governmental units have the capability and authority to create and implement community-based actions, foster community input and create customized local-based solutions through community-based education and community relations. Local units of government can also work with regional and state partners, and work with elected officials on issues of mutual concern.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

In general, the environment can best be protected and managed by focusing on goals and outcomes--which we may not have determined yet--rather than the particular means created to reach the goal. That said, regulations should become more flexible, less prescriptive and less complex procedures or methods while still protecting the environment in order to achieve the predetermined goal or outcome.

To the extent that all licenses and permits include overlapping local, state and regional interests, it may not be feasible to create a "one stop shopping" outlet. However, what would be beneficial is helping permittees with a frame of reference and additional, specific information on specific permits and where to get them, as well as additional information on other permits and other agencies' responsibilities.

It may be necessary to create a coalition or consortium of relevant state, regional and local interests to work together to lobby the U.S. Congress on issues important to the state--and also within the state--to simplify the process. In the future all public service units will benefit greatly by working together for common goals or interests rather than working alone.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Improving the delivery of services must start by improving the internal organization and management within each agency. That would include the establishment of agency missions, objectives, and strategies with the goal of improving services that are cost-competitive, timely and high quality. Procedures should become

simplified and lead to more user-friendly service and access to information. After all, a lot of data exists for people who know where to look, but it needs to be repackaged into more user-friendly, less overwhelming, less intimidating access. Again, this gets back to cross referencing and data sharing.

Services would be better delivered if they are better understood and better known through better packaging, more public education, and marketing through additional channels beyond simply using the written word. We must tell the public what information is available, where, and how to access it. The sky's the limit on interagency cooperation, but it could be as simple as different agencies building effective partnerships with regulated parties in order to develop more mature environmental programs statewide.

Public services can best be provided using a decentralized delivery system where each agency is held accountable for their respective responsibilities. Overall improvements can be demonstrated through more effective partnering within each agency and with the customers they serve.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter pays" principle?

The state should strive to eliminate minor and non-value-added regulations, create strategies that are oriented to achieving specific goals, simplify the regulatory process and create systems that are more flexible, less prescriptive and less complex.

In the future it will become imperative for all public agencies, especially the state, to focus more resources on pro-active efforts rather than end-of-the-process controls and regulations. All public agencies should work together on more public education initiatives to change consumer behavior where appropriate, and promote the notion to "think globally, act locally" by developing broad goals within each community to deliver customized local solutions.

As leaders, state agencies should develop credit and incentive programs to fund and support proactive activities that are again more flexible, less prescriptive and outcome-based. In all efforts, overarching state goals should be clear and demand better program monitoring to assure that goals are met, and to not issue unfunded mandates.

Many of the traditional "control and punish" strategies in environmental protection assume the worst about the state's waste generators, in effect punishing the majority of good actors as well as the minority of bad actors. It is necessary to recognize there are two tiers of players, separate the recalcitrant from

the good, and deal with each accordingly.

We have to move away from an overall philosophy of "polluter pays" to a philosophy in which the majority of good actors are rewarded for their good deeds, receive time and attention--and incentives--while the bad actors are singled out for more punitive treatment. This approach will require more incentives, support and assistance for the group of good players who are caught "doing things right." It will also require more punitive, prescriptive, traditional approaches for bad actors with ongoing compliance problems. Such treatment could included providing appropriate support and assistance to correct their problems, which, if not corrected, could also lead to financial disincentives, public exposure (listing in media), and other traditional techniques.

Helen Boyer, Director
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services
230 E. 5th Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1634

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. **What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions?**

As with consolidation of services at the state level, it is first necessary to identify areas within local jurisdictions that overlap or are redundant, and identify the areas which lend themselves well to consolidation or elimination. It may also be necessary to determine what agency, program or jurisdiction is involved in performing the identified function, as well as the population that benefits from service.

In recent years, regional government entities like the Metropolitan Council have been employed to sort out and formulate joint ventures or compacts among local interests, and work with all the interested parties toward a goal of merging overlapping or redundant services. In this case, an interim task force could be created to develop plans to incrementally assign duties over time to one or another government agency or new compact.

2. **What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)?**

It's now become clear that environmental planning and management is best carried out on the level of an eco-region, watershed, or regionwide basis that is inherently holistic and not divided by political or other boundaries.

The task of developing eco-region or watershed management plans--whatever the issue--must necessarily involve all stakeholders in the region. There is no one jurisdiction or entity that can best manage an eco-region or watershed; therefore, there is a great need to build effective partnerships and collaborations across all boundaries, whether political, geographical or other. Such a comprehensive plan will draw input from all stakeholders on all sides who, working together, can then best assign responsibilities and duties for effective management of that region.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Public interest in any given issue greatly increases proportionally as the impact on their lives increases. Therefore, it is imperative to clearly identify the impact that any public decision would have on a specific audience. It may be helpful to limit public input and feedback to the few decisions that really impact a large portion of the public, rather than deluging the public, and diluting the quality of discussion, on every case.

But in every case, public education and public outreach are vital tools for every public agency to help draw the public in and explain how they can become involved and influence the decision-making process. In every situation, these two questions have to be answered for the public on a case-by-case basis: Why should I care? What's in it for me?

Finally, as public service providers, our answers have to become more meaningful and less abstract.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

In the future it will become increasingly important for all public agencies to create effective partnering systems across all jurisdictions, and leave behind more traditional, paternalistic, patronizing and divisive styles of public leadership.

It will become important to create real partnerships within all levels of government--not more and larger government units with a "business as usual" philosophy. All public service providers will have to become partners and work within the concept of true partnering, while replacing the autocratic prescriptive ways of days gone by.

All public agencies must work together to clearly identify mandates that really matter, and provide legal authority and funding to carry them out. Conversely, all levels of government must avoid unfunded mandates.

Further, all levels of government must work to clearly delineate the separate, unique functions and services we provide. The state has responsibility to provide broad goals, funding and support. Regional government can become a greater catalyst for change and mediator among jurisdictions sharing common challenges. And local government is in a unique position to spearhead the creation and implementation of local solutions. All levels must work to avoid areas of competition.

How well do they cooperate now? It seems that the degree of cooperation would depend on the specific issues and specific agencies involved.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

First, there is an ongoing need to educate the public--as well as public agencies--about the importance and function of "regional public service," for example, that provided in the Twin Cities area by the Metropolitan Council.

Three priority improvements that could and should be implemented at all levels of government--state, regional and local--include the following, one of which leads to another and another:

- A clear definition and explanation of the services provided, and clear, easy access to those services, including actions, resolutions, decisions and findings. This step alone would help improve government credibility and accountability and improve the quality of services delivered.
- Timeliness of response.
- Consistency among government units across all jurisdictions, and consistency over time.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

In most cases, local municipalities each provide their own infrastructure (streets, storm sewers, sanitary sewers and water supply). Municipalities also build and maintain their local parks, police and fire stations and city hall. Some also provide community centers and additional recreational facilities.

Other major responsibilities on the local level include police and fire protection, snow clearing, public health inspections (restaurants), building inspections and recreational programming. Some cities help support joint programs with neighboring cities which provide services for various groups in need of specialized social services.

Many cities have entered into successful joint powers agreements to continue to provide the same services with fewer employees and shared equipment. The City of Crystal, for example, has more than 25 joint powers agreements. Additionally, some cities contract with the county for certain services, such as health inspections, police dispatch, and assessing. Some cities also contract for legal services and to a lesser degree engineering services. Increasing the size of cities probably would result in less services being contracted out and more staff positions in areas such as engineering and legal.

It may be that many city services could be managed by larger

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governmental units than those currently used in most Twin Cities' municipalities. However, the fear expressed by many residents is that increasingly large governmental units also bring a diminished sense of community. If government consolidation is to take place at any level, public fears such as these must be addressed and resolved honestly, in full and up front.

Appendix F

Meeting Summary - Board of Water and Soil Resources

Many of the group facilitators for the small group discussion came from the staff of the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). As a result, their comments were compiled by their agency and are appended here.



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October 9, 1995

OCT 12 REC'D

TO: Mike Sullivan, EQB

FROM: Susan Tsakakis, BWSR

RE: enclosed compilation of (most) notes from reorganization meetings

Enclosed is a compilation of most of the notes from the reorganization meetings. Although you may have received some notes from the individual meetings, these are all formatted in a similar fashion and may also be useful.

cc: Ron H.

ENVIRONMENTAL REORGANIZATION REGIONAL MEETINGS

SUMMARY

ST. CLOUD
SEPTEMBER 5, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- focus of priority
- agencies need to be willing to give up turf (need to identify roles)
- work in unison--automatic consolidation
- remove politics

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- "all or none" mentality--no flexibility
- long-term goals instead of reacting or over-reacting to immediate concerns

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- Local:

*permitting with state oversight for consistency

- State:
 - *state oversight for consistency
 - *identifying local agency best suited for program
- no micro-management from state
- user-friendly-system; one-stop shopping

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

The group did not address this question.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Need information and education efforts before laws take effect; citizens need to understand the law

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in a "polluter-pays principle"?

Response:

- provide technical alternatives (low cost options)
- watershed-based; entire watershed is part of a problem

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- identify local roles

- communicate to other agencies
- public education
- common set of rules and regulations
- identify the best suited for task

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- identifying what is high priority in the watershed
- strike an equal balance (wildlife, ag, forestry, etc.)
- delivery of services on a local level
- local and state coordination
- simplify permitting through using agreements, water management plans, local coordination, provide assistance if needed

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- public hearings
- water planning process
- 30/60 day review process
- levy--gets the public's attention

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- keep politics out of it
- task force representation on local water plans
- governmental consistency
- support between agencies of decisions
- attorney general/county partnerships

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- return phone calls promptly
- be available for site visits
- permit decisions made locally

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- zoning/land use
- enforcement
- efficiency to better the environment, not just protect it

BEMIDJI--GROUP #1
SEPTEMBER 6, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

- General consensus is that there should not be a consolidation of state agencies--bigger is not better--one or two large state agencies would result in more delays, more red tape, less service to local governments and citizens
- Permitting needs to be revamped in Minnesota
 - *if a state agency does not respond on a permit application within 30 days it should be automatically considered approved
 - *there should be one permit application for all agencies
 - *one agency should be designated the lead agency for permits that fall into areas of their authority--all other agencies would feed comments back to that agency within a time limit
- Regional staff should be empowered to take action on permits
- Related to sustainable development, economic growth needs to be given more consideration than it has in the recent past
- Property rights need to be considered more and there should be fewer regulations
- There should be compensation to landowners if there has been a decrease in their property values due to regulations

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

- There should not be a consolidation of local environmental agencies--these agencies were formed for specific reasons and those reasons still exist; "if it's not broke, don't fix it"; one size does not fit all
- SWCDs and WDs have improved coordination considerably in the last few years, especially since local water planning
- The local water plan helps define each local agency's role in water resource management
- There is very little overlap in the actual work of SWCDs and WDs
- A little bit of overlap is fine, because it fosters cooperation
- "Eco-region" management is already taking place through existing cooperation of joint powers, WDs, cooperation between SWCDs, etc.--there is no need to create another layer of government at the regional level
- Citizens have the opportunity to participate in local decision-making through SWCD meetings, WD meetings, local water plan meetings, and planning commission meetings

BEMIDJI GROUP #2
SEPTEMBER 6, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- No need for change; especially not for SWCDs, WDs, and the BWSR--this would hurt this state/local connection.
- If BWSR is moved, it should go to Ag not DNR
- Overwhelming thought was that bigger isn't better
- Need the different disciplines (Agencies) to balance the concerns (Ag vs. Recreation)
- There is some overlap in state agencies which leads to everyone wanting to be the boss. Especially apparent in wetland issues.

Staff summary: No real offering of how to fix the problem of overlapping jurisdiction; however, bigger isn't better and it is important to retain diversity in agencies so there is a balance between the interests (checks and balances)

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- Ag land escaping from us
- In Aitkin Co. Ag land is being converted to timber
- environmental regulations ignore economics
- Ag needs no more protection--economics will provide the protection
- Some ag is protected at the cost of negative long-term environmental impact

Staff summary: Need to back off on the environmental protection stuff for the sake of ag land protection; however, we need to be careful not to go too far and cause irreversible damage.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local government or agencies?

Response:

- State act as advisor/local provide the control
- state set policy and goals/local do implementation
- Like it or not all local authority is controlled by state through enabling legislation
- Develop regional approach to resource management
- When there is local control then there is someone readily accessible to discuss concerns

Staff Summary: There needs to be a regional approach to resource management--possibly a scenario in which the state sets goals and policy; then acts as advisor while the locals implement the actions to achieve those goals.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

See question 4 in the "questions of local interest" section.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service deliver best be accomplished?

Group 2 did not address this question.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle?"

Group 2 did not discuss this question.

Staff final thoughts: I heard the folks I worked with saying the locals have their act together to deliver the goods. They know when and how to work together formally and informally, even if this means crossing political boundaries. They need to be more involved in the planning and delivery of regionally-based resource management (watershed more than ego-region). It isn't the local special interest districts that have the organizational problems--it's the State. They identified the need to get the decision-making out of St. Paul and into the field offices. Let St. Paul assist in setting regional policy and goals; then act as advisory with the real state-local connection taking place at that local level. And there is a need to retain the diversity of agencies for purposes of balanced protection between ag and the environment. Permitting is necessary, but it should be locally coordinated, which would be more expedient and locally-driven process.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- The majority of the participants didn't feel there was an overlap of jurisdiction, mainly because there is good collaboration amongst the SWCDs and the county boards.
- One participant felt there was terrible overlap, mainly resulting from competing egos. The attitude of the highest ranking organization rules so there is no willingness to communicate.
- There was some discussion of relations with tribal councils. Basically it was good and there seemed to be a willingness to work together in most cases. However, there is no requirement for tribes to collaborate, which did lead to a few instances where cooperation was limited. (This question was asked by an EQB board member.)
- One other major thought was all these special interest districts are governed by enabling legislation which to some extent doesn't promote overlapping jurisdiction.

Staff summary: No real problem with overlapping jurisdiction when there is a willingness to collaborate and cooperate.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- Had feelings both ways on resource management based on some type of geographic characteristic (watershed) or political bases (county)
- Issues that cross county boundaries that need collaboration of multiple counties haven't been a problem in past. Counties simply agree to work together or in some cases have formed joint powers boards or signed a memo of agreement.
- Management on watershed basis is good but tough for counties to give up total authority or control of what is to happen in their county.
- Need a broader approach to resource management to assure uniformity; otherwise actions by one entity could cancel out actions of another.

Staff summary: Management on a broader scale than county boundaries has merit but there needs to be some reassurance that the counties will not have to give up much authority or say in what takes place in their county.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- There are process that exist to have citizen participation.
 - *Water plan task force
 - *Watershed advisory boards
 - *not much at SWCD other than its meetings open to the public

Staff summary: No real hinderance for citizen participation at local level

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- Need to get the decision making process out of St. Paul. Let the local state employees have more decision making authority.
- Need one stop shopping for permits
- Have a local staff person designated as a contact person to assist in permit process for federal, state, and local permits (similar to the WCA combined project notification form)
- A 45 day notification limit
- if a permit is denied tell why

Staff summary: Permit process was really the only item discussed here. It seems there needs to be coordination of the permit process particularly when there is a need for a local, state and

federal permit for one project. This coordination would be handled locally. Put a time limit on the process (45 days)

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- delegate more authority to local staff to speed up decision making process.
- provide sufficient funding to locals to hire staff to meet the needs of the people
- The people with authority need to accept the responsibility of their authority (actions)

Staff summary: Need to get the decision-making authority as close to the people as possible. Those in authority need to accept responsibility for their actions.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could these services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

Staff summary: Very similar question to number one. These are special interest districts established under legislation that spells out their purpose so their niche is identified. This then allows for success through collaboration as in water plan implementation.

BEMIDJI GROUP #3
SEPTEMBER 6, 1995

GENERAL

The group consisted of approximately 20-25 landowners [MLRA], watershed district staff/managers, SWCD staff/supervisors, county staff/board, and MPCA.

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- Needs to be a reduction in "environmental bureaucracy" related to regulation and permits
- The public has the most difficulty with access to DNR Waters and C.O.E.
- Some participants stated that SWCDs are and could do more local administration of environmental regulations/programs. Local governments are already reviewing permit applications. Authority needs to be delegated to the local level.
- Consolidation of state environmental agencies would lead to less accountability. Everyone agreed that better communication and coordination would be a suitable alternative to consolidation. There were no perceived strengths or benefit from consolidation. There would be less understanding of local resource needs/issues with consolidation. Consolidation would result in the loss of checks and balances. The problem won't get fixed by consolidation.
- There is a problem with the need for multiple review of permit applications by state agencies. A few persons suggested that the agencies need to set agency goals/objectives because they have different roles/responsibilities which are not always comparable.

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- Natural resource management/protection should be done at the local level by geographic region [watershed or river basin]. Need to give local government the opportunity to set regional conditions. Need to allow for "grassroots" input that will be a tool; not token or pawns.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- Some participants felt that land use management is being done better by local government than by the state.
- Suggested that local government should exercise natural resource management on public lands [not the state].
- Some thought state had role in "painting" the picture of natural resource management statewide through information exchange. Others disagreed and suggested that several state associations (AMC, MAWD, MASWCD) already provide a forum for information exchange.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

- See #1.
- Many felt that permitting should be done at the local level (not both). A county implementing the C.O.E. GP-17 program stated that they felt this was an important step toward better citizen service.
- There is confusion by landowners regarding state/federal permitting. Decisions need to be made locally.
- Discussed a reasonable amount of time for agency review of permit applications. Suggested that permit application review should be coordinated in regard to construction season. The group put forth the following: Allow 30 days for the review of applications considered "high priority," 60 days for medium, and 90 days for low priority applications. Stated that the total permitting process should not take more than 30 days.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their deliver of service sand ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service deliver best be accomplished?

Response:

- See #4.
- Suggested that co-location of the state environmental agencies would be a positive step.
- There is a need to better clarification of rules (not in lawyer language) through clearly written guidance/interpretation.
- Make staffing by eco-region through local agents that are empowered with the authority to make decisions.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter pays principle?"

Response:

- Don't pay polluters to pollute. Require that they operate within the laws without financial incentives.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be

eliminated?

Response:

- WD/SWCD/LID have different roles and responsibilities. Felt that these are being coordinated through local water planning. Group stated that there wasn't a duplication of effort. Different amount of expertise.
- Possible conflict between watershed district/county related to drainage authority. Not a problem with law/rule but with things not specific in drainage law; i.e., legal ditch petitions are not done consistently.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- Group felt eco-region should be kept on smaller areas; i.e., watersheds or river basins. See #2 [statewide].

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- Group listed the following as possible citizen access to special purpose districts:
 - *Local Boards [both elected/appointed]
 - *Watershed District Advisory Committees
 - *LWP Advisory Committees
 - *Public Meetings/Hearings;
 - *Referendums [suggested the addition of these on regional, rather than statewide, basis)

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- Need to listen honestly. Take the politics out; laws/rules don't apply uniformly to everyone. Make state agencies follow the same procedures that local government must follow.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government

could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- Need to improve relationships so that local/state government can better serve the taxpayer.
- Need to find ways to reduce the cost of business in light of the increased demand for service.

FERGUS FALLS GROUP #1
SEPTEMBER 7, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

- Reorganization seems to come up every few years and it is always rejected because it is a bad idea
- permitting for flood control projects needs to be streamlined
- regional staff should be empowered to take action on permits
- there should not be consolidation of state agencies; bigger is not better; it is better to have more small agencies than a few very large agencies.
- more flexibility in regulations should be allowed to account for the tremendous diversity in Minnesota; e.g., the WCA--local wetland management plans may be the answer to local flexibility for wetlands
- state should set standards and guidelines and let locals implement the programs with state financial assistance
- state agency staff should be more accessible to citizens
- the existing state agency situations sets up a certain level of checks and balances that is more like the private sector
- "more state agencies should be like BWSR"

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

- There is little overlap between the SWCDs and WDs; where there is, it lays the foundation for better cooperation
- there should not be consolidation of local environmental agencies; these agencies were formed for specific reasons and those reasons still exist
- SWCDs and WDs have improved coordination considerably in the last few years, especially since local water planning
- The local water plan helps define what each local agency's role will be in water resource management
- There is very little overlap in the actual work of SWCDs and WDs
- "eco-region" management is already taking place through existing cooperation of joint powers, WDs, cooperation between SWCDs, etc.--there is no need to create another

layer of government at the regional level.

- Citizens have the opportunity to participate in local decision-making through: SWCD meetings, WD meetings, local water plan task force meetings, planning commission meetings.

FERGUS FALLS GROUP #2
SEPTEMBER 7, 1995

GENERAL

The group consisted of approximately 10-15 watershed district staff/managers, SWCD staff/supervisors, county staff/board, and DNR.

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Group did not discuss this question.

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Group did not discuss this question.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Group did not discuss this question.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

- Need for checklists/standard operating procedures for different project types; standardized forms.
- Need for local field office that can provide "one-stop-shopping".
- Make grassroots effort to educate @ local level; state regulations.
- Rules should follow intent of legislature.
- Provide funding for better standards and technical information.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their deliver of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Need more staff in local offices; give authority to field staff to make decisions related to permitting, design, etc.; regional system with authority.
- Make information accessible through the "information highway".
- Rotate state field office staff through local government offices one day/week.
- Manage staff based on the resource, not the population.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle?"

Response:

- Don't have adequate resources; need more technical assistance at local level; more \$'s for technical assistance to pay for inspections.
- Need more staff @ field level; decentralization/\$'s.
- Get technical/financial assistance to those that need help immediately; spread out more evenly between polluters/non-polluters.
- Incentive conflict with health and social needs.
- More low cost loans.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- Didn't see problem with overlapping/duplicative jurisdiction; each was created for a specific purpose; reduced or eliminated through local water planning, joint powers agreements, etc.; better coordination through local water plans and other projects/programs; see problem with state permitting.
- More involvement has resulted in better solutions.
- Local governments have specific areas of expertise.
- Landowners need technical/financial advice and assistance.

- Need clearinghouse at local level.
- Management of natural resources at ecological, hydrologic, political boundaries.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- Identified need to better educate local governments on eco-regions.
- SWCDs/Counties work together when needed to address resources issues.
- There are common issues (priorities) even with differences in diversity.
- Need to address the "larger picture" on a watershed/river basin basis.
- Political boundaries can cause friction related to the ability to focus on the solution of the problems.
- There is too much influence by the Twin Cities.
- Would result in less customer service (because of large size).
- Water planning priorities are being matched up with other counties.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- Strong point of local government boards (both elected/appointed); watershed district advisory committees; local water planning advisory committees; public meetings/hearings; need elected not appointed representatives.
- Provides for participation not just input.
- Need more public relations so citizens know that input needed.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

Group did not discuss this question.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

Group did not discuss this question.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could these services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- SWCDs: Responsible for soil/water; educational/technical assistance to put conservation on the land. Non-regulatory. Landowners more receptive to planning assistance when not regulatory. Locally elected board--know l.o. needs/concerns. Quick response to prevent resources problems.
- Watershed districts: formed to solve specific problems that county couldn't address (too political); Have taxing authority. Can plan on watershed and not political boundaries. Can do projects without direct assistance.
- County: Could do what WDs do through joint powers agreements/other. Have planning and zoning authority. Can delegate responsibility.

MARSHALL GROUP #1
SEPTEMBER 11, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- more power, authority, decision making at the regional level--not central office/St. Paul.
 - State agencies should NOT be combined into one superagency; but regional and field offices of all agencies should be co-located. This would foster better communication in of state agencies in the field and provide better citizen and local government access to state agencies.
- 2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?**

Response:

- government and citizens always reacting to problems--need to be proactive.
- must be limits to free enterprise
- state and local government must be able to say no at times

- need to determine what it is we want to do...and how to do it

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- State should analyze needs and appropriate funds
- Locals should implement and administer programs

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

- local governments (e.g., SWCDs) could serve as a clearinghouse to assist citizens through different regulation or permitting requirements of the state

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Need for a regional emphasis (important for delivery) but still maintain an overall state perspective.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

The group did not discuss this question.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- it is important to establish who is doing what
- mission and roles of local governments must be clearly defined--nearly every county is different.
- local water planning has helped define roles and create better working relationships and partnerships. (One person commented that this was very true in Nobles County, and that they were in the process of developing one county plan that would encompass the local water plan, the SWCD comprehensive plan and a watershed district overall plan.)
- state environmental agencies should define their roles/responsibilities better.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- state is clearly different in different regions; this should be considered when programs and resources are managed
- people most comfortable with the county as the most recognized local unit of government; citizens recognize these historical/political boundaries.
- WDs work well in regard to managing resources--but maybe doing watershed planning within county boundaries most preferable, with the recognition that adjoining counties need to work and plan closely together.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- a variety of information and education is constantly available to citizens--people are as interested as they want to be. No one can force people to participate.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- communication is the key
- more local/state sharing
- more decentralized decision-making for state agencies (to regional level)
- better local/state communications at the local level (i.e., county). One suggestion: a consolidated advisory committee of local and state agency staff from the field needs to

- meet consistently at the local level (i.e., county).
- one person concerned with laws vs. rules or guidelines. Concern that when new laws/regulations are created, they clearly must be able to be implemented. New laws rarely have dollars or staff--this is where lack of enforcement starts.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- for whatever issue/regulation being implemented--one form/permit used whether local and/or state government is involved
- final decision for permits must come from one agency--various state and local agencies could confer but final decision from one unit of government.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could these services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

The group did not discuss this question.

MARSHALL GROUP #2
SEPTEMBER 11, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- The group did not feel as though consolidation of state agencies would be of benefit to Minnesota and its resources.
- Consolidation would create a larger agency(s) that would be less responsive to local government and the public. Currently large agencies have this problem, it would only compound this situation.
- Super agency concept loses its natural fit of specialization in different resource areas. Super agency would have to be very general to cover all the resources.
- As agencies become larger they tend to lose their flexibility and creativity in dealing with issues. Textbook approach.

- Skepticism of who would be in charge of a large agency. DNR and MPCA cited as not desirable leaders.
 - Permitting is fragmented and often requires permits from several state agencies. State agencies should coordinate who will issue the permit and coordinate this activity rather than the landowner having to talk to all the different agencies individually.
- 2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?**

Response:

- Group felt as though they could have development with REASONABLE protection of the resource. Zero tolerance to resource impacts is not practical. These trade-offs are best determined at the local level.
- Alternatives analysis should always be performed to minimize impacts.
- A strong economy results in ability to protect resource. Farmers are as good environmentalists as they can afford to be.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- State functions:
 - *funding
 - *general oversight to provide consistency
 - *certain types of regulation best handled by state
- Local functions:
 - *Implementation of programs
 - *Development of specific guidelines tailored to fit the county.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

- Decentralization of state agencies which would provide easier access by county and citizens.
- Timely decision-making process with deadlines.
- Delegation of authority to local level.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Decentralization to remove the top-heavy St. Paul bureaucracy.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balance system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

Response:

- Concentrate efforts on education and implementation rather than regulation.
- Public needs adequate time to comply. Big government may not allow this flexibility. Locals typically can work things through on a reasonable time schedule.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- Group felt duplication was minimized locally due to:
 - *each entity in county has their own area of expertise and works within that area.
 - *co-location of agencies has helped in serving the customer.
 - *Local water planning has brought about better communication and coordination of local agencies.
 - Maintaining multiple local agencies allows better decision making process as more people involved. It's too easy for one entity to make a decision if there are no checks and balances.
- 2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered base on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?**

Response:

- Minnesota is a diverse state resource wise. Resource decisions should be made for each eco-region. What works in the Metro doesn't necessarily work in SW MN.
- Would this add another layer of government? Implementation still needs to be maintained on a county level as the delivery mechanism. Reference made to Area II River Basins and RCRCA as being additional government formed as a result of eco-region management. This does build more government.
- Working as a region would likely give more power as there would be strength in numbers. Currently counties are on their own unless they are a part of a joint powers organization.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making process?

Response:

- Citizen participation is best achieved by representation on locally elected boards. Local boards act on behalf of the area they represent. Very efficient way to have the voice of many recognized and involved in local decision making.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- Reduce response time on local requests to state government.
- Decentralization of agencies thereby placing more emphasis on regional offices to provide timely service and easier access.
- More delegation of state programs to local government and have state agencies provide assistance to local government as they implement the program.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- Delegation of state responsibilities to local government.
- Adequate staff at local level to respond to public.
- Need to further educate and develop roadmap to local agencies so public knows who can assist them with what.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number

of agencies?

Response:

- See question 1.

NEW ULM GROUP #1
SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- Minimize duplication to improve efficiency and delivery.
 - Minnesota has done a good job but needs some "fine tuning."
 - The Legislature needs to clearly define the roles of state agencies.
- 2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?**

The group did not discuss this question.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- State:
 - *Enforcement
- Local:
 - *Accountability to track fiscal projects and prioritize projects. (For example, RIM Reserve is guided by the state, but local SWCDs prioritize the applications; Cost-Share is financed by the state, but local SWCDs pick the projects and make sure all the state guidelines are followed.)

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What

steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

The group did not discuss this question.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Improve communication.
- Share services between state and local governments (i.e. data base, engineers, planners).

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

Response:

The group did not address this question.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- Review permit requirements and eliminate duplication: one permit, one place. Eliminate duplicate requirements on different permits.
- Reduce the time it takes for permits.
- One-stop shopping: the landowner wants to go to one place for everything. Similar to joint notification on WCA.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- Obtain local input into developing procedures and regulations.
- Let local government do its job.
- Manage at the local level and coordinate at a decentralized state level.
- More decentralization of services and support from the state.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- South Dakota system of Coordinated Resource Management.
- Group participation
- All stakeholders should be invited in to solve a problem; everyone then would buy into the solution.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- Agencies must SHARE the responsibilities, not compete for power and money.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- State needs to be more responsive.
- Communication needs to be improved between state agencies and between state and local government.
- Cooperative decision making: state and local government needs to work together on making decisions. For example, problem solving (single issues), overall planning (collective decision), and permits.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- Local success:
*Local government officials and staff know the area and people better than

larger state or federal agencies.

*Have the most direct contact with the landowner: personal, one-on-one.

*Timeliness (quicker response).

- Watershed Districts: set up on hydrologic units for resource management.
- SWCD: Very personal contact with landowner; carry out state and federal programs for technical and financial assistance; "arm of state program." Technical delivery system for local, state, and federal soil and water conservation programs.

NEW ULM GROUP #2

SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
- Fine tune what exists instead of tearing down.
- Promote better communication and cooperation.
- Super agency would be intimidating (unapproachable) to citizens.
- Educators educate best, researchers research best, regulators regulate best; therefore, make clear boundaries.
- Making clear boundaries (separation) will create more efficiency and credibility; regulation, education, and research are examples.
- Coordination between agencies so that they compliment, not duplicate, each other.
- Eliminate turf battles.

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- One solution will not apply for the entire state; be flexible depending on where you are in the state.
- Funding - this applies to everything discussed here.
- Obtain local input on the definition of what sustainable development should be and

how to achieve it.

- A good economy is a subsidiary of our natural resource base. If we take care of our resources, our economy will be good.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

The group did not discuss this question.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

The group did not discuss this question.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

The group did not discuss this question.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

The group did not discuss this question.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON STATE REORGANIZATION

- Decentralization: more responsibility staff on the local level will produce better service.
- BWSR is not an adversarial agency; it is a voice for the local units.
- BWSR was in DNR and MDA and it did not work because it was small and not really listened to.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- A strong county water plan is needed.
- Do not feel that there is overlap on the local level.
- Overlap maybe perceived when there is not full understanding of the specific responsibilities of individual departments.
- Overlap may also be perceived when individuals do not stay within their defined job role. Clarity of job responsibilities could eliminate this perception.
- Function well together within county and between county and SWCD.
- Good communication cuts down on conflict.
- Weed inspection by township and county sometimes overlaps.

Funding

- When more than one funding source is involved, confusion is created. In Blue Earth County, well sealing is an example of funding which comes from more than one source: BWSR and SRF.
- All related funding should be filtered through one source.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- How do you manage something that is changing all the time?
- Is an eco-region another potential overlap area?
- Local political boundaries are a barrier to managing by eco-regions.
- Watershed districts go beyond political boundaries and each has its own problem which it concentrates on.
- Goal defines the boundary of an eco-region and this goal must be communicated to the public.
- The local people of the eco-region must be involved in developing eco-region goals.
- Cannot have statewide rules when working through eco-regions; rules need to be flexible based on location in state. For example, >80% wetland areas are different than <50% wetland areas.
- Joint powers agreements seem to be a good structure which allows for state and local

cooperation.

- Joint powers, such as the 13 county local water planners group, is a good way of looking at eco-regions.
- Resources are best managed by a combination of local and state (joint powers): local with state oversight.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- Citizens advisory board; however, the board should not be created by the oversight agency.
- Public hearings

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- More flexibility in rules, such as PCA landfill sightings.
- No state mandates without funding.
- Rule flexibility: case-by-case and area-by-area basis.
- District or regional office given more authority
- Decentralization (DNR and BWSR are better than PCA)
- Authority and responsibility must go hand-in-hand and be given to local offices.
- Local response is quicker and understanding is better due to the accountability to local peers.
- Cooperation is pretty good overall but depends on the agency and where you are in the state.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- Agencies are improving services by supporting joint powers agreements.
- More flexibility in state agencies based on the circumstance and where you are in the state.
- There must be a mechanism of accountability.
- Authority and responsibility at the local level.
- No state mandates without funding.
- Education on what services are available, where to get them, and easy access.

- One-stop shopping
- Treat people as people. This was mentioned a couple of times. Customer service is improving.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- Counties: well sealing, septic, feedlots, zoning, recycling (These are only done by the county in Blue Earth County.)
- Septics and feedlots are areas where cities and SWCDs are sometimes involved.
- Joint boards between counties is a good way to combine services so that not everyone has to do everything. However, there needs to be someone supervising joint powers staff. County board(s) may not be able to properly oversee staff.

NEW ULM GROUP #3
SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

**** "NOTE!!!** One individual stated during his review of all the questions that there are no real answers to any of the questions. Questions maybe based on a perception that the reader doesn't agree with!! Legislature mandates programs and legislation...they need to listen to citizens and ask the citizens who (agencies) should handle what."

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- There is not a need to consolidate! There is a need to cooperate!
- State and federal agencies were put in place by legislative action for a specific purpose.
- We need the state and federal agencies to regulate and protect our resources, otherwise too many people out there will run rampant...drain, pollute, etc.
- We need agencies with knowledge and familiarity of the industry they are working with.
- There is a need to improve communication with and between all agencies.

- There is a need to reduce duplication, probably by a house-cleaning of programs. May need legislative action to bring this about to control turf battles.
- One individual proposed consolidating all the environmental programs in one arena, and all the natural resource programs in another arena. This was not well received by the others in the group. How do you differentiate between environmental and natural resource?

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- The state is so diverse...it makes it extremely difficult to do. What has been mandated across the state may not work the same in all areas of the state, i.e. wetlands!
- We need to factor in all of the costs compared to the return when addressing sustainable development. Industry can add to the sale price to make up their cost of doing business. Agriculture doesn't have that opportunity.
- We need to determine sustainable for who--agriculture, industry, environment, etc.
- We need grass-roots (local level government and citizens) involvement in any decision making!
- Consumer should pay the true cost of services for sustainable development.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- Only one comment made for this question, which was agreed to by all in the group....This question (when and if answered) would be the answer to Statewide question #1.

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Response:

- Too many agencies involved, and rightly so...very complex.
- Incentive program(s) to pay landowners for good practices, conservation. Right now it's only a penalty type program--fining the polluters.

- Example of problem existing today:
 -a landowner who owns a feedlot that is polluting makes application to SWCD/NRCS/CFSA for technical and financial assistance. MPCA knows the landowner is a polluter, but because the landowner has made contact with and application for assistance to remedy the problem, MPCA backs off on any type of enforcement. Knowing this, the landowner drags his feet and eventually backs out of the process, and then some time later starts the process all over again...Landowner signs up, MPCA backs off, landowner backs out.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Response:

- Agencies need to get away from telling the citizen that "this is the way it's going to be". They need to say "this is the goal, how can we work together to reach it?".
- Local participation and involvement gives a sense of ownership.
- Educating the agency staff on customer service.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

The group did not discuss this question.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- Is there a problem of overlapping? Who has the problem with overlapping--citizen or staff?
- Examples of overlapping:
 *feedlot permit, too many different agencies, steps and hoops to go through and

takes too long before permit is actually obtained.

*desiltation basin, somewhat the same lengthy process and number of agencies to deal with.

*Army Corps of Engineers interference with local issues.

*County commissioners not trusting their appointed P & Z board, staff.

- Micro-managing can be the problem, not empowering and trusting staff, others.

*county commissioners micro-manage their appointed boards, staff

*legislative bodies micro-manage

- Solution options: local government taking on more responsibilities.

*empowering of appointed boards, staff trusting in their recommendations

*better for local control

*need regulations restricting number of feedlots per area.

*enough regulations in place, need someone in authority to have the say, not over turned/micro-managed by superiors.

*education of elected officials--where job begins and ends

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Response:

- Eco-region is still not the answer -- still will be political boundaries.
- How can services be divided and still service all the needs of the area?
- What will be needed: good inventories; GIS; good data needed to manage best; tailor regulations based on eco-region, not state-wide, and dealt with locally; need adequate funding to administer programs and regulations.
- Water planning efforts--cooperate with other counties on joint activities within the watershed--neighbor's water comes through my county.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- Educate, motivate, involve those people you want to participate.
- Educate those in the local governmental unit (elected, appointed, staff)
- Build trust through communication and listening.
- There is trust in local government, but not too much for federal or state.
 - *how federal/state manages, trains, and places its people/staff should be improved so they can work with locals and citizens better.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- Differentiate between policy, goals, mandates of both sides--state and local.
 *communication needed, cooperation, compromises, education.
- Example of bad cooperation: watershed district and MDNR disagreement of dam replacement elevation...has been going on for years...can't seem to resolve.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- Add staff, increase budgets (although someone said this does not always improve the situation).
- Stable funding.
- Decrease micro-managing by elected officials...empower/train staff.
- Be more user friendly and cooperative.
- The state should not mandate without providing adequate funds to administer.
- Provide for public participation/input...and use them.
- Use the new communication technology.

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- Local knowledge of the area and specialized attention to the citizens.
- User friendly services to the citizens -- local trust.
- By consolidating/combing the LGUs into a larger LGU, you still will need the staff to provide the services to the citizens at the grass-roots level.
- Less and larger LGUs may not be the answer...lose the local trust, cooperation.

ROCHESTER
SEPTEMBER 13, 1995

GENERAL

- Major reorganization of either local or state environmental agencies is not needed.
- Need a better coordination of the existing system
- Local government should be the focus of program delivery

ST. PAUL GROUP #1
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995

MAIN POINTS

- Need to re-define state/local roles: state should be responsible for policy, guidelines, funding, research; locals should do more day-to-day running of things
- Cooperation, not consolidation of state agencies

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- Coordination not consolidation
 - *a more cooperative approach involving letters of agreement, general permits, MOAs is preferable to consolidation
 - *a superagency would not be able to balance agricultural needs with economics
- Policy should be coordinated at state level
- A unique opinion: favor the current unmanageable system because he believes fewer wetlands get drained.

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Response:

- The funding source: sometimes economics pull in one direction, sustainable development in another
- Need to determine the best way to achieve sustainable development; right now, it cannot be done with partnerships--perhaps eco-regions are a possible solution?
- Need to take more of a cost-benefit approach of weighing the costs and benefits of various projects, activities, etc. Right now there is no "policy" or "approach" set up on how to do this-maybe a state role to develop one?
- A superagency could not balance the needs of agriculture with economics--would not achieve sustainable development. (see question 1)

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

Things state level does best:

- Research
- technical assistance to LGU
- conflict resolution
- large capital projects
- develop performance standards and guidelines for LGUs to follow
- multi-jurisdictional issues
- setting policy (example: no net loss)--a caveat is that the agencies must also agree on policy; the feeling was expressed that there is often no agreement on policy between agencies or even within agencies

Things local level does best:

- do more day-to-day activities
- carry out state guidelines
- resource monitoring/data collection
- technical assistance to public

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Group did not address this question.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Group did not address this question.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

Group did not address this question.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? How could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Group did not address this question.

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Group did not address this question.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Group did not address this question.

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Response:

- State/local partnerships most effective, i.e.: state should provide more technical assistance to LGUs; be more service-oriented (less regulatory); and allocate more responsibilities (and commensurate funding) to LGUs. Solid waste, land use are good examples of where this works. A potential problem with increased responsibilities at the local level: locals tend to be less protective of resources, whereas the state can take the "big picture" approach. To maintain this, the state should maintain regulatory authority.
- They do not cooperate all that well now, mainly because state agency organization is not conducive to functioning smoothly with the current overlapping jurisdictional areas (such as water). This has led to problems of escalating permitting costs--needs to be dealt with.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Group did not address this question.

6: What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? How could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

Response:

- One improvement would be co-location of resource agencies, regional offices
- LGUs do not duplicate; instead, they provide a system of "checks and balances" for each other
- LGUs do resource management better; but it depends on the LGU--some are administering programs without staff and/or qualified staff
- Should look at giving LGUs with regulatory authority taxing authority; this might be better given to a resource district, but any source of funding creates an agenda

SUMMARY OF OTHER GROUPS' COMMENTS

- Public education and communication needed; better access to information and laws
- Better communication needed; public perception of overlap is greater than actual overlap
- More emphasis on customer service; better hours, more service
- Need better definition of state/local roles
- State functions: policy setting/oversight; no unfunded mandates. Need more state accountability
- Need re-definition of state/local roles: state should do more policy, guidelines, funding, research; locals more of the day-to-day operations
- Cooperation not consolidation of state agencies
- Need to focus on performance rather than procedure
- No single model to follow
- State should set policy; but allow for local adapting
- State should do research, provide expertise, training for LGUs and public, identify significant resources, provide enforcement assistance to LGUs
- Locals have best idea of significance and quality of local resource, public relations and education to the public, financing, and use their ability to improvise
- May not be a need to "fix" it
- Should not consolidate to two or three agencies
- LGUs do it better--more accessible, cost-effective
- Customer service: local permitting is appropriate
- LGUs don't overlap--the problem is confusing direction from the state
- Consolidation is the remedy for the wrong problem
- Get locals involved--get local "buy-in)

ST. PAUL GROUP #2
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS

1. What steps should be taken to consolidate state natural resource and environmental programs? What might be done to better coordinate these programs?

Response:

- Perception of state agency overlap is greater than the reality; need to emphasize better cooperation, coordination, communication between state agencies and within divisions of agencies; memos of understanding, letters of agreement are ways to do this
- If it ain't broke, don't fix it; consolidation is a remedy for the wrong problem--what is needed is better cooperation; reorganizations in the past haven't worked; stop the turf battles between agencies and within agencies between divisions.
- Problem: agencies don't know what the others are doing
- Problem: legislature passes something AND decides which agency will do it; should identify who can best do various jobs and reexamine who would be best to assign responsibilities.
- Locate similar programs together in agencies
- Outcome or performance-based: look at who needs to be involved to get the job/task done
- Definitely should NOT consolidate into a few mega-agencies
- Focus on performance: policy/operative vs. a procedure
- No single model works; everywhere is different

2. What are the most important issues to address in achieving sustainable development in all regions of the state and all sectors of the economy?

Group did not address this question.

3. What functions are best fulfilled by statewide government, and which are best addressed by local governments or agencies?

Response:

- State:
 - *research
 - *setting minimum standards
 - *provide adequate funding (no unfunded mandates!)
 - *should provide some flexibility in standards between regions
 - *oversight of local implementation
 - *more delegation to locals
 - *most rules too prescriptive, should be more outcome-based; look at goal/outcome and allow some degree of flexibility to accomplish
 - *provide training and technical support
 - *help locals with enforcement
 - *consistent standards statewide

• Local:

- *implementation, creativity of implementation: outcome based or performance based
- *better way of doing things
- *public education and public relations
- *better at accountability in financing
- *identifying significant resources in their locale
- *better customer service through local permitting

4. How might regulation to protect and manage the environment be simplified? What steps could be implemented to integrate licensing and permitting through a single access point?

Group did not address this question.

5. What specifically can state agencies do to improve their delivery of services and ensure that citizens have the information they need? How can decentralization of service delivery best be accomplished?

Group did not address this question.

6. What changes should be made to develop a better balanced system of regulatory controls and financial incentives? What factors are important in developing a "polluter-pays principle"?

Group did not address this question.

QUESTIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

1. What specific steps should be taken to eliminate overlapping local governmental jurisdictions? how could these overlapping responsibilities be combined and handled by one local government? Identify duplicative funding mechanisms; how can they be eliminated?

Response:

- Increase accountability
- differentiate (and possibly have different divisions/agencies) handle natural resource and environmental problems/programs
- have cities/townships (except for a few of the larger cities/townships) delegate environmental programs to SWCDs, counties, or watershed districts

2. What are the most important issues to address in managing resources based on appropriate geographical natural resource characteristics (eco-regions)? Should services also be delivered based on eco-regions? Is an eco-region based system best managed by local government, a decentralized state system, or both?

Group did not discuss this question.

3. What mechanisms would best accommodate citizen participation in relevant decision-making processes?

Response:

- local forums, e.g., planning commissions, city councils
- local boards, e.g., county boards, watershed boards
- general public involvement, e.g., citizen advisory committees
- find out what local citizen expectations are; if don't know how to do this contact professors at U of M (John Brindle)
- requirements for public notification may be too minimal; send letters of notice directly to all affected people
- burden of proof should be shifted from applicants to agencies

4. What steps could be taken to improve intergovernmental cooperation between state and local agencies? How well do they cooperate now?

Group did not discuss this question.

5. What specifically are the three priority improvements that state or local government could or should make to improve customer service?

Response:

- State should delegate more; too much "chain of authority"
- both should use alternative dispute/conflict resolution more
- state should differentiate natural resources on a qualitative basis
- state should avoid prescribing administrative procedures
- both should improve customer service
- state should strive for one-stop shopping
- state should adopt a default approval process; e.g., if a permit isn't acted upon within a certain amount of time, it is automatically approved)

6. What types of services does each local government provide that no other local government provides? how could those services be provided through a smaller number of agencies?

The group did not address this question.