

## Learning Through Watershed Governance

### Breakout Group Discussion: "How do we ensure meaningful participation?"

- 2 aspects: surface & groundwater sources – require different types of participation
- surface: handful of people; groundwater: everyone in the area
- surface: going directly to people to educate; groundwater: more general knowledge dissemination
- fear can be a catalyst and unite people in a shared goal
- starting with baseline information about the quality of the water
- keeping the base (citizens) involved, making it relevant and personal to those affected/packaging the message appropriately
- proactive rather than reactive
- need to find a way to communicate directly to people how water degradation affects them
- citizen monitors – can inspire wider public participation?
- begin education at the elementary school level – children take message home to parents and needs to have the local context – first step must be educating teachers
- challenge: moving forward in the current economic context
- challenge: identifying the env/water as a key Canadian cultural value and prioritize over economy
- devolution
- political will is necessary
- prov released a water directory, outlining who is involved in water issues – provide resources like that to public
- legal framework should not dictate participation /governance structures but should support (particularly through policy)
- need hands on learning to generate social learning
- acknowledge power dynamics, perhaps have a leader/champion who is unbiased
- ex: farmers subject to contracts but do want to be good stewards
- need to address the feeling of prov legislation being a forgone conclusion. Knowing that involvement will shape legislation/policy treats apathy
- acknowledge successes, give awards
- identifying an ally in the media
- information and public awareness are precursors to participation
- have water fairs or other public education campaigns that include fun activities so they become family events
- focus efforts across similar causes
- consistent communication material distributed
- free options: community events/booths, facebook
- avoid using the term 'stakeholder'
- how to link social learning with participation:
- programs like Fort Whyte include the educational element
- education, communication
- imperative to establish a core

## Learning Through Watershed Governance

### Break out group discussion: “What are the challenges of Integrating Land Use and Watershed management?”

1. Watershed boundaries don't align with other boundaries (municipalities, conservation districts, etc)

- it is difficult to identify the watershed boundaries on flat land – there is non-agreement amongst communities about boundaries
- need for education – people need to understand their watershed and boundaries – could post information at community halls, etc.
- Suggestion that boundaries of it would be easier to manage if the boundaries for land use and watershed management were the same
  - Not possible to amalgamate with adjacent municipalities – goals may not be the same & other factors at play (ex. Cultural, land ownership spanning more than 1 watershed).
  - Don't need to have the same boundaries – might be easier to manage similar land types (ex. Agricultural) rather than various types within a watershed

2. Communication of the goals of watershed and land use management

- different users have different goals – need to prioritize based on greatest need
- need to communicate goals for land use and watershed management – to find conflicting goals and engage in discussion
- land use and watershed management plans should complement each other.

Watershed management plans should lay out considerations for land use planners (and vice versa)

3. Imbalance/mismatching authority in overlapping management boundaries

- need to balance authority – so authorities involved in land use or watershed planning can't override recommendations and management plans of the other. Ex) watershed plans have no authority to enforce recommendations (municipalities can decide to accept recommendations or not)
- the education of citizenry is an important mechanism to push higher authorities to accept issues and recommendations

#### 4. Communication

- how can/are results and watershed management plan distributed and made accessible to the public

- need to better disseminate information amongst districts

#### 5. 'Newness' of watershed planning

- watershed management plans are still new and evolving

- need to use adaptive management – integrate/feedback issues and findings back and forth between land use and watershed planning

#### 6. Time frames for planning

- currently – usually 10 year plans up for revision after 5. Is this adequate?

#### 7. Knowledge

- constant need to gather and update watershed information

- often very disciplinary knowledge – land use planners may not have knowledge about watershed planning and vice versa

- perhaps there should be a regulation that requires a section in the land use plan about its impacts on the water shed (& vice versa) – would create a necessity for education across disciplines & may encourage participation in the other process/meetings/etc. Could have liaison between the two processes

- need constant communication with landowners/stakeholders to allow a mechanism for learning

## Learning Through Watershed Governance

### **Break out group discussion: “How do you build governance institutions provincially that includes multiple players at different levels including First Nations?”**

First comment made reference to the fact that First Nations do not fall under provincial but rather federal jurisdiction... in that it is a nation to nation relationship and so when it comes to provincial resource matters, this adds a layer of complexity to how provincial governments deal with FNs.

So this suggests that you have to think outside the box in terms of watershed governance.

One participant noted a preference for language used to focus on such things as “alliances”, “networks”, “partnerships”.

One participant clarified that when we talk about institutions, we are not necessarily referring to physical institutions but rather the rules and norms around which governance decisions are made and structured.

One participant wanted to stress that watershed management or governance should not lose sight that it is water that is the focus. That sometimes in these discussion, that gets lost.

Another participant added, however, that water is impacted by other resources, with the watershed seen as marking the geophysical boundary for decision-making. Clear that there is still confusion over what the focus of watershed management should be.

This suggested said one participant that governance of a watershed needs to find its purpose, and from that the various organisations with an interest in subsequent management decisions can be more easily identified.

There was a discussion as to whether Conservation Districts or such smaller-scale organisations are better placed to deal with First Nations. Another participant said that it was important to look beyond jurisdictional barriers and focus on commonalities that can be used to advance dialogue between stakeholders.

One participant made the point that watershed boundaries do not neatly match institutional or jurisdictional boundaries. There are also issues with cross border characteristics and this further complicates governance and management.

At a provincial scale, it was suggested that you need both approaches... a larger macro approach where everyone chips in with suggestions, and then more local initiatives that focus on implementation that can work for that given context.

One participant questioned how does one get diverse stakeholders to fully participate in the decision-making process?

It was then raised that FNs would view themselves as more than just another stakeholder... that this is a nation-to-nation relationship.

In terms of collaboration, it was argued that there has to be a clear goal, and it is this that can bring together diverse interest parties. That there has to be benefits or buy-ins from all those within the area being managed.

Another participant wondered whether it is possible to have someone to cover every area... to question what are there gaps and who fills that gap?

It was felt that maybe watershed governance should start with the organization or organizations that have a province-wide mandate... to bring together those groups who have an idea of what the province-wide interests are. They can then focus on the one issue that brings everyone together.

However, all participants noted the struggle that these multiple layers of governance and institutions imply. A number questioned whether you can come up with a model that works province wide.

One proposal that dominated discussions was, thinking about Manitoba, whether it would be possible to amalgamate municipalities to become the authorities for water governance. Each one of these amalgamated authorities would be responsible for governing a identifiable watershed. It was felt that currently there were just too many watershed authorities and a plethora of administrators that overcomplicated things.

A feeling was expressed that there was little point in trying to layer something over the top of an existing archaic system.

Some of these ideas have been explored... the idea of realigning conservation districts to watershed boundaries... but have met with resistance from municipalities who don't want to be imposed upon by provincial government.

Such a proposal would have to overcome the issue of funding, with conservation districts currently partially funded by municipalities. Speaks to this resistance to change amid vested interests.

One participant wondered how the conservation districts would react to such a plan.

Only 80% of province is covered by water management plans (via the conservation districts). Didn't think that it could be done on a provincial scale. That it was possible to talk about province-wide policies and strategies, but implementation would have to take place at localized scales.

The other point was that governance issues would often place-specific and so implementation could not be standardized across the province.

Another participant also pointed to the resistance to sharing power... that creative ways would have to be found to achieve regional initiatives and collaboration.

Creative in the way that terms of reference could be customized to promote partnership and collaboration without having to change legislation and regulations.

Flood management forums in B.C. were given as an example. The problem is that the complexity goes up as scale moves up to watershed.

Someone posed the question whether the current institutional arrangement in Manitoba is the right one, and if so, in what way?

Again, the idea of amalgamating municipalities was suggested as an easy way to link income/funds (taxes) to management needs.

In response, someone questioned whether it was not easier to tinker rather than revamp things.

Planning documents and watershed management plans are currently separate documents / processes. Planning district and watershed plan have different geographic areas and not enough collaboration between the two. They only talk to each other once a year. Someone suggested that it may be simpler to amalgamate the plans rather than the institutions.

Governance, someone said, was very much about better decisions being made locally. That one can talk about amalgamating conservation districts or amalgamating rural municipalities, but not both together.

Some participants liked the idea of working off of the strengths of existing institutions and to move forward that way. To work on a memorandum of understanding rather than to create something new.

Looking to formulating a new approach that fits within the existing framework... an innovative institutional arrangement for governance.

PEI has a model that allows for institutional collaboration that is bottom-up which then influences policy at higher levels.

Again, others argued that the key problem was the archaic governance jurisdiction functioning currently, which required a whole extra layer of effort because of the institutional complexity... seen as an inefficient tool.

A new act could help to create space for new governance approaches, which then allows local initiatives to experiment with innovative initiatives. It was seen as difficult for a province-wide strategy to succeed when skills and desires vary so widely.

Because learning is inherent in adaptive governance, there was the idea to include schools and to develop a curriculum that encourages a watershed ethic.