

RENEWAL OF THE GREAT LAKES PROGRAM

Discussion Paper on Community Engagement

Prepared For

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The analysis is my own and of course, any factual errors entirely my responsibility.

*Jennifer Dickson
February 24, 1999.*



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION PAPER.....	5
PURPOSE	5
CONTEXT	5
WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?	6
WHY DO WE CARE?	7
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?.....	8
Government challenges.....	8
Business Challenges.....	8
Community Challenges.....	8
Challenges for Citizen Involvement.....	9
CANADA IS NOT ALONE	10
Australia.....	10
Lake Baikal Basin.....	12
CANADIAN MODELS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.....	12
Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP).....	12
Northern Rivers Basins Study.....	14
GREAT LAKES ACCOMPLISHMENTS	15
A Powerful Record	15
International Cooperation	16
Think Globally, Act Locally	17
SUCCESS FACTORS	17
GREAT LAKES PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	19
OPPORTUNITY I - Facilitate	19
OPPORTUNITY II - Participate	20
OPPORTUNITY III - Initiate	21
CONCLUSIONS.....	22
APPENDIX.....	A
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN DECISION MAKING	A
1. The CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK: A GUIDE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY IN VANCOUVER A	A
2. Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI).....	A
3. St. Lawrence River-Lake Ontario Research Initiative (SLRLO).....	A
4. American Bar Association 1995 resolution:	A
5. Rx Engagement - Experience from The National Forum of Health	B
6. The Regional Environmental Centre of Central and Eastern Europe.....	C
7. Charter of Rights of the Czech republic.....	C
8. Center for Ecological Research in Slovenia.....	C
9. Environmental Law and Public Participation Center - FYR Macedonia.....	C
10. Albania.....	C
11. Action plan - Uganda.....	D
12. Twenty-five environmental activists from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. D	D
13. KLUVANKOVA (senior journalist) from Slovakia	E
KEY ENVIRONMENT ISSUES WEBSITES	F
SOURCES.....	I
DOCUMENTS	K

Community Engagement Discussion Paper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper explores the concept and practise of community consultation, collaborative decision-making and citizen engagement – using Canadian and international examples – and then provides community engagement ideas that build on the best among these, for consideration in the renewed Great Lakes Program.

Since the Boundary Waters Treaty was first signed in 1909, when it was sufficient to provide all interested parties a, “*convenient opportunity to be heard*”, and when public information programs were seen as primarily one-way communication – *from* the governing body *to* the citizens, many innovative programs have reflected the evolution of public involvement. The Great Lakes Remedial Action Plans, for example, are advancing the concept of involvement from public consultation into strong models of community ownership for the new millennium.

But many organizations are not so forward-thinking. While established institutions are tinkering with vocabulary and methodologies, citizens and communities are designing and implementing projects independently, sometimes dragging their elected representatives and industry leaders reluctantly behind.

This is happening for several reasons. More and more, those who *are* consulted share a deep sense of frustration. They feel over-consulted and at the same time consider their input to be under-utilized. Others feel that the discussions are too narrow. The ‘either-or’ arguments between economic development and environmental concerns are being replaced by the new ‘quality of life’ paradigm for personal goals and professional success that includes environmental integrity, economic security and social justice.

Since many governments and large corporations are still focussing to a large degree primarily on economic issues and reactive environmental measures, individuals and community groups, organizations and associations who value a strong community within a healthy environment have no choice but to experiment independently with new models for action and involvement. There is a growing immediacy in the effects of both action and non-action, so individuals and groups are less willing to leave unilateral decision making to others. A new value system is emerging – one that positions governments as *one* of the tools citizens use for getting things done.

This new interdependence is a cause for uneasiness among decision-makers across Canada and elsewhere. It is important for the Great Lakes Program to take it seriously, because we know that decisions taken in the context of commitment from those effected are demonstrating much more success than decisions taken without this effort. As well, strong public commitment to GLP activities will be critical leverage in assisting the Government of Canada and partners to do all they can to ensure financial resources and compliance.

But the consultation and collaboration required to build this commitment will be difficult on several fronts. The number, political mandates and agendas of the governments surrounding the

Great Lakes basin present almost unmanageable jurisdictional complexities. Ensuring that industry joins with other partners in addressing ecosystem challenges and takes responsibility for the consequences of long term corporate decisions are formidable tasks. As community organizations initiate and implement more holistic, independent projects, new challenges are emerging around funding criteria and communications/accountability issues. And challenges for citizen participation in consultation include properly integrating individuals into decision-making activities, providing relevant information and skills to help them participate in consensus-building efforts and being more inclusive – youth, seniors and the poor must be engaged.

Powerful Examples

The 1987 Brundtland Report¹ was the crowning achievement of the first truly global consultation exercise - a world-wide collaborative effort that became the catalyst for many other substantial developments on environment and development issues. These developments culminated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil in 1992, attended by most of the world's governments, including that of Canada.

A number of direction-setting documents were signed at UNCED, including the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, providing the broad framework for new approaches to global sustainable development. Many different examples of consultative processes in environmental decision-making are being implemented to accomplish the objectives and commitments made in these agreements. Among the lessons learned in the negotiations leading up to these agreements, is that consensus is one of the most powerful ingredients for success. And the building and sustaining of that consensus requires broad consultation, respectful partnerships, open communication, and the nourishing of committed relationships.

Australia and Canada's North

One example of success in this effort may be found in Australia, where the Australian Commonwealth Government has developed a state of the art National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). The process took three years, involving government officials, industry, environment, union, welfare, community consultation forums and consumer groups, addressing sustainability issues in nine key industry sectors. Open dialogue was a high priority for the process, which was found so successful that the Council of Australian Governments recently agreed that in future, development of all relevant policies and programs will take place within a framework similar to the ESD Strategy process.

In Canada, a successful experiment began in 1991. Taking in an area larger than most European countries, the Northern Rivers Basins Study includes the Peace, Athabasca and Slave River basins - demonstrating that community-driven initiatives are not defined by scale; they are defined by the ability and willingness of people to share in a commitment to place and purpose.

Before getting down to work, representatives of governments and community groups negotiated full partnership with the governments. This model was further strengthened by sustained and

¹ The 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development Report, *Our Common Future*.

deliberate involvement of basin residents in the Study process, through a proactive communications strategy with regular news releases, attentive media relations and frequent community meetings. The result was a community-driven initiative engaging with government in a study which combined cutting edge scientific information with local and traditional knowledge.

An important finding of the Study is that public involvement is a contemporary and politically sensible way to operate that is of immeasurable value in sustaining public good will for any endeavour. The broadly representative Board and the inclusion of open public participation gained greater acceptance and credibility for the Study than could ever be achieved through a closed process.

Great Lakes Achievements

Initiators and participants involved in broad-based partnership initiatives like those touched on above have derived many advantages from this collaborative model for action. Great Lakes Program initiatives have a lot to offer in this regard as well, with a strong record of participatory decision-making and joint initiatives.

In Canada, Great Lakes water quality is a shared federal-provincial responsibility. So the federal and Ontario governments work together to fulfill Canada's obligations under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Both governments co-operate with local communities to develop and implement Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs) and Remedial Action Plans (RAPs), to restore and protect water quality in the Areas of Concern.

Local involvement is an important feature of the process. In spite of many jurisdictional, financial, sectoral and scientific challenges, there have been impressive accomplishments. In December 1994, Collingwood Harbour became the first hot spot to be declared restored. In Hamilton efforts are well under way. Public swimming in some areas of that city's harbour is possible again for the first time in 50 years.

These and many other examples of successful consultative processes lead to the recognition that fostering and enhancing sustained collaboration is the most effective way to ensure that environmental initiatives have the desired effects within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Opportunities

Given the number, mandates, activities and locations of the myriad individuals, organizations, interest groups, government levels and even countries committed to Great Lakes basin environmental issues, the quantity of programs to date and quality of accomplishments are truly impressive. Yet, there is no one place to go to find out who all these folks are, much less what they're doing. Everyone involved would benefit from the knowledge that there is one office charged with compiling this information and making it available to all – not only within the Great Lakes basin, but across Canada and around the world.

Recommendations to the GLP for components of a mandate for such an endeavour include:

- designation of a centre or office provided with appropriate mandate and resources to:
 - compile and maintain an inventory of consultative activities and partnerships;
 - stay in touch with representatives of others initiatives;
 - develop and manage a state of the art website;
 - encourage large organizations to strengthen their own internal mechanisms for communication and collaboration;
- review of the Federal cabinet and committee processes to clarify and strengthen mandate arrangements between the Minister of Environment and relevant cabinet committees and colleagues as regards GLP objectives;
- review of the charters and corporate plans of relevant government agencies to ensure inclusion of GLP objectives;
- examination of GLP current and future initiatives in the light of the success factors found to be key in other initiatives, to ensure that they incorporate leading-edge strategies for successful community engagement;
- becoming a partner in carefully chosen community-initiated projects and programs serving Great Lakes basin environmental interests and
- exploring new ways to evaluate and assess the success of ecosystem initiatives – ways that recognize that preventive, interdisciplinary measures aimed at restoring and sustaining environmental, social and economic well-being are not only desirable but indeed are critical in an ecosystem approach.

Conclusion

Today it is broadly understood that the most effective leaders are enablers, and they are increasingly called upon to convene discussion in the recognition that communities outside government are seeking solutions themselves. Valuable experience with addressing environment and development problems can be found in all sectors of public and private enterprise in the community. These groups have an impressive record of providing practical resources and solutions for these problems.

Canada's potential for successfully implementing a new GLP will depend in large part on our ability to recognize and build on this strong foundation, to facilitate strong partnership among governments, the corporate world, community groups and individuals.

Community Engagement Discussion Paper

Purpose

This paper is provided for the Great Lakes & Corporate Affairs Office of Environment Canada, Ontario Region in February 1999, to contribute to the development of a Strategic Framework Document for renewal of the Great Lakes Program. The framework document will be a key component of the input towards developing a Program Plan to launch a renewed Great Lakes Program in April of the year 2000.

There are many reasons to renew the Great Lakes Program now – Canada’s intergovernmental and international commitments prescribe it, pollution, population and ecosystem challenges require it and emerging opportunities allow it. However, one of the greatest catalysts for action is that the public demands it. Canadians continually declare that environmental issues are high² on their list of concerns. In fact, 75% of Ontario residents polled said they felt that the Great Lakes ecosystem is of major importance to their health and that they would support increased government spending on protecting the Great Lakes³.

The challenge for this paper is to explore the concept and practise of community consultation, collaborative decision-making and citizen engagement – using Canadian and international examples – and then provide community engagement ideas that build on the best among these, for consideration in the renewed Great Lakes Program.

Context

We know that the nature of how and why Canadian citizens participate in decision-making is evolving as quickly as the issues requiring action. When the Boundary Waters Treaty was first signed in 1909, it was sufficient to provide all interested parties a, “*convenient opportunity to be heard*”.⁴ Decisions were then taken and implemented primarily by government bodies, albeit in the light of this input. Public information programs were seen as primarily one-way communication – *from* the governing body *to* the citizens.

Since that time, many innovative programs have reflected the evolution of public involvement. The Great Lakes Remedial Action Plans and Public Advisory Committees in particular, are developing the concept of involvement from public consultation into successful examples of community ownership.

However, excellent progress like this has not been universal. Over the last couple of decades, discussion in many government departments and industry boardrooms about citizen participation

² Second only to health care and education/job training.

³ Renewal of the Great Lakes Program, presentation for EC-DFAIT meeting, December 1998.

⁴ The International Joint Commission and the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, pg. 3.

in decision-making has sometimes become so bogged down in rhetoric and definitions, that genuine progress was limited⁵.

In the words of a recent Institute on Governance Conference Report⁶, "... 'Consultation' has been a common term in the lexicon of decision-makers over the past decade. This has generally meant better canvassing the views of stakeholders and clients in the making of sound public policy, often in the form of advisory boards, forums or task forces. 'Citizen engagement', by contrast, has emerged more recently to denote processes of deliberation with individuals and groups who may be affected by policy or program changes, but who lie outside the circle of departmental clients as conventionally defined. It also entails shared agenda-setting and more open time-frames for deliberation on issues of public policy."

While established institutions were tinkering with vocabulary and methodologies, citizens and communities have been proceeding to design and implement projects independently, sometimes dragging their elected representatives and industry leaders reluctantly behind.

Why Is This Happening?

Even among those who *are* consulted, there's an alarm ringing out there – representatives of business, labour, agencies and individuals often share a deep sense of frustration, even cynicism, about the number, quality and results of meetings they're asked to attend, advisory boards they're asked to sit on, ideas they're asked to contribute and policies they're asked to endorse – all in pursuit of 'pubic consultation' on the part of governing bodies. People feel over-consulted, and at the same time consider their input to be under-utilized.

Furthermore, the old 'either-or' arguments between economic development and environmental concerns simply don't wash any more. The emerging paradigm for personal goals and professional success brings together quality of life *and* economic security, and this includes clean

"... citizens strongly believe that there is a growing gap between their actual and desired level of influence in government decision making. While they want government to consult them more, citizens do not feel engaged in some of the current forms of public consultation.."

Jocelyne Bourgon
(then) Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet
October 27 1998

air, fresh water, protection of natural spaces and other life forms, sustainable industry and social justice.

Since large numbers of governments and large corporations are lagging behind, still focussing to a large degree primarily on

economic issues and reactive environmental measures, individuals and community groups, organizations and associations who value a strong community within a healthy environment have

⁵ See a good discussion of this in, for example, the National Roundtable on the Environment and Economy publication, Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice, Gerald W. Cormick, Norman Dale, Paul Emond, S. Glenn Sigurdson and Barry D. Stuart, 1996.

⁶ A Voice for All: Engaging Canadians for Change; Ottawa Conference on Citizen Engagement October, 1998.

no choice but to experiment independently with new models for action and involvement. Consultation is becoming collaboration; participation is becoming partnership; volunteer advice is becoming direction – not only in decision-making, but in the design, implementation and evaluation of programs and projects as well. A new value system seems to be emerging – one that positions governments as *one* of the tools citizens use for getting things done.

Why Do We Care?

Why don't governments simply carry on in a 'business as usual' mode? Perhaps the numbers and agendas of interested parties have been proliferating, but they haven't blatantly inhibited each other's work, or competed for jurisdiction, or diminished the potential effectiveness of limited financial and human resources - or have they? And if they have, why don't Environment Canada and other departments 'take charge', make decisions and implement them? Wouldn't that approach be ultimately just as likely to produce effective results, be less complicated and furthermore cost less in effort and resources?

Well, no, partly because the changing realities described above wouldn't allow it and partly because there is a growing immediacy in the effects of both action and non-action. The result is that individuals and groups are less and less willing to leave unilateral decision making to others. Furthermore, decisions taken in the context of consultation, substantive input, collaboration, partnership and commitment from those effected are demonstrating much more success than decisions taken without this effort.

"Because each participant (government, non-government organization and civil society) has specific interests, strengths and weaknesses, good governance must facilitate collaboration among all three."

United Nations Development Program, quoted in the Autumn, 1998 ACAP Newsletter, *Keeping Up With Communities*.

As well, many of the strategic directions and actions proposed for the new Great Lakes Program (GLP) will require substantial funding. In light of the very significant budgetary constraints facing all levels of both government and industry for the foreseeable future, each support resource must determine its own priorities for implementation of actions following assessment of the budgetary priority they command, both between individual GLP-related actions and against other competing demands for funding.

Even if, as is hoped, the Government of Canada firmly endorses the new GLP, it cannot bind public and private sector partners to observe the terms of this Plan. So a strong public commitment to GLP activities will be critical leverage in assisting the Government of Canada to do all it can within its power to ensure financial resources and compliance.

So, if we care about the ultimate success of our programs, if we care about positive recognition and support for our work, then we need to maximize the potential for broad commitment to mutual objectives. We *must* care about constituent involvement – from individual to community, from interest groups to industry, from all government levels within Canada to our partners in the United States of America and beyond.

What are the Challenges?

It's a long way from the science and research elements of issues under discussion and ultimate changes in policies and programs that address the problems identified. And it's even more challenging to justify the investment of resources in pro-active initiatives that *prevent* environmental degradation. Multi-participant decision-making has never been easy, and even with the strongest of commitments and the best of intentions, there can be a disconnect among governments, business, organizations and individuals.

Government challenges

The number, political mandates and agendas of the governments surrounding the Great Lakes basin present almost unmanageable jurisdictional challenges. On the Canadian side, at least eleven federal departments have environmental responsibilities that impact on the Great Lakes. A similarly daunting number of U.S. federal departments are engaged. The Provinces of Ontario and Quebec as well as the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, each have several departments with direct interests. And the regional municipalities of Durham, Metropolitan Toronto, Peel, Halton, Hamilton-Wentworth, Haldimand-Norfolk and Niagara, all border on the Great Lakes. Within each of these regions and their parallels in the U.S., many more local municipal governments are truly on the front line, even though in many cases their jurisdictions derive from provincial governments.

How can the Great Lakes Program principles and objectives take into consideration even the institutional arrangements of this number and diversity of interested governments much less their applicable policy making processes?

Business Challenges

Private enterprise in Canada has a critical role to play in supporting the Great Lakes Program by taking decisions and actions aimed at helping to achieve its goals. Of course, many are already active participants in the GLP process. They have taken significant individual steps to ensure that Great Lakes basin industry and business are put on an ecologically sustainable footing. Others, however, are pursuing their economic goals with minimal environmental thought or commitment. Ensuring that industry joins with other partners in addressing ecosystem challenges and takes responsibility for the consequences of long term corporate decisions are formidable tasks.

Community Challenges

A wide range of community-based organizations has a successful legacy of involvement and a long term commitment to GLP-related activities. The GLP has much to gain by continuing to improve consultation that strengthens this participation in policy development, program implementation and overall direction of the Program. However, across the country and beyond,

as community organizations initiate and implement their own independent projects, two new challenges are emerging:

1. Some highly successful programs are finding themselves criticized by funding government departments as a direct result of their creative, leading edge, multiple objectives. Community initiatives vary enormously in their intentions and implementation strategies. More and more local projects are holistic in nature – committed to improving the overall quality of life within the ecosystem. Government departments are only beginning to explore ways to support programs that have components beyond their specific mandates – projects that may, for example, have economic, social *and* environmental significance. Departmental branches and offices that support these initiatives are experiencing difficulties when required to justify resource allocation in this emerging broader context – old, top-down, cookie cutter results indicators and evaluation processes no longer work.

2. The importance of timely, effective, two-way, open communication is emerging as key to both consultative processes and to long term commitment to the resulting programs and policies. Organizations must be listened to and kept informed about results of the planning exercises that go into policy development, so that the process of involvement does not end with their completion. Time and effort are required to nurture the many stakeholders in multi-partner programs (advisory board members, community, industry and labour representatives, government officials, secretariat and administrative staff), to establish and maintain working relationships and to understand one another's perspectives.

Challenges for Citizen Involvement

Citizens often join the public policy process not to represent a sector or organization, but as civic-minded individuals. As engaged citizens, they have a right and a responsibility to be informed about the issues under discussion, to represent their personal views, to learn from others and to work collectively to find common ground. Challenges to be considered in the context of citizen engagement include:

1. As with organizations, individuals as well feel that government decision makers — both elected officials and public servants — have a responsibility to listen and to be accountable to them in explaining how their views are being integrated into the decision-making process.
2. There are individuals and groups who have not traditionally been included and well-represented within governmental decision-making processes – for example, youth, seniors, the poor. These citizens must be engaged.

“Great Lakes United was founded in 1982. GLU achieved its first significant impact on Great Lakes environmental consciousness by holding more than a dozen hearings around the Great Lakes in 1986 to make people aware of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the treaty organization that reports on progress under it, the International Joint Commission. The next year citizens began attending the IJC's formerly sleepy biennial meetings. By 1995 the IJC biennials were four-day, 2,000-person extravaganzas of Great Lakes environmental discussion.”
www.glu.org/history.htm

3. Committed citizens often need help to acquire new skills – knowledge of the issues under discussion and models for negotiation, in order to better participate in consensus-building efforts. Providing relevant education not only results in more positive relationships, but reaps substantial rewards in commitment to results as well.

Canada Is Not Alone

The 1987 Brundtland Report⁷ was the result of a massive consultative effort and became the catalyst for important developments on environment and development issues world-wide, including negotiation of a range of international treaties and conventions. These developments culminated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil in 1992, attended by most of the world's governments, including that of Canada.

A number of direction-setting documents were signed at UNCED, including the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. In some cases consideration of related policy issues was incorporated into the UNCED process, for example in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and in the Convention on Biological Diversity. In this context, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 have provided a broad framework for many approaches to global sustainable development.

Around the world the challenges and opportunities that arise around participation in these important achievements in environmental decision-making are being recognized and addressed by organizations and governments. Following, to inform discussion, are two very different examples of consultative processes. The first is described in some detail to demonstrate that the consensus that brings success requires broad commitment, thoughtful analysis, careful implementation and the building and maintaining of respectful relationships.

Australia

Australia's response to the Brundtland Report has been to adopt and further refine the concept of sustainable development and to develop a state of the art National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).

First, early in 1990, the Australian Commonwealth Government released *Ecologically Sustainable Development: A Commonwealth Discussion Paper* and instituted a process of detailed discussion involving all government levels and the community. As part of this process, then Prime Minister, the Hon R J L Hawke established nine sectoral ESD Working Groups, involving government officials, industry, environment, union, welfare and consumer groups, to examine sustainability issues in key industry sectors. Their purpose was to provide advice on future ESD policy directions and to develop practical proposals for implementing them.

Less formal community consultation formed an important part of this process - a series of one day consultation forums was held around Australia to discuss mechanisms for integrating

⁷ The World Commission on Environment and Development 1987 Report, Our Common Future (the Brundtland Report), recognised that sustainable development means adopting lifestyles within the planet's means.

economic and environmental concerns, and to provide broader community comment on the interim reports of the Working Groups.

By late 1991, Heads of Government had agreed on a cooperative intergovernmental process for examining the recommendations of the ESD reports. They established the intergovernmental ESD Steering Committee (ESDSC) to coordinate the assessment of the many recommendations and their implications for current and future government policies, and to report to Heads of Government on the outcomes of these considerations.

In November 1991, the ESD Working Groups produced reports covering agriculture, forest use, fisheries, manufacturing, mining, energy use, energy production, tourism and transport. In January 1992, the three Chairs of the Working Groups presented further reports on inter-sectoral and greenhouse issues. In all, these eleven reports contained over five hundred recommendations on ways of working towards ESD and provided the foundation upon which Australian governments developed their Strategy.

In May 1992, Heads of Government released a draft of this Strategy as an officials' discussion paper, to promote discussion and to obtain further community views on policy direction. This initiative was in recognition of the nature, range and significance of many of the issues covered by the ESD Working Group Reports' recommendations. The resulting draft strategy was subsequently released by the Prime Minister for a two-month public comment period.

Over two hundred submissions were received in that period. There is much we can learn from them. The majority of these submissions advocated:

- acceptance of and mechanisms for implementation of the final recommendations from the ESD Working Groups and Chairs;
- clearer identification of priorities and agencies responsible for implementation and
- clarification of the linkages between this Strategy and other government policies and initiatives.

The changes in structure and content in finalizing the Australian Strategy are largely in response to these comments. In December 1992, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, noting that implementation would be subject to budgetary priorities and constraints in individual jurisdictions.

The Power of Consensus

While this process was designed to cover a much broader range of issues and larger geographic area than those the Great Lakes Program addresses, the ESD Working Group process is nevertheless valuable to examine in two key respects:

- First, it produced wide ranging and innovative recommendations for action both within and across key sectors of activity. While unanimity was not reached in a number of areas, many of the recommendations were able to achieve a large measure of support from all the interests represented.

- Second and equally important, the process developed and promoted a continuing dialogue between interests and community groups. As a result, there is a better understanding of the factual basis of the debate and a greater willingness from the broad range of participants to encourage action that takes account of all the interests involved.

This process has been found so successful that the Council of Australian Governments recently agreed that in future, development of all relevant policies and programs will take place within a framework similar to the ESD Strategy process and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment. As well, the Council encourages business, unions and community groups to use the ESD Strategy process as a basis for developing actions that contribute to the pursuit of Australia's other national goals.

Lake Baikal Basin

The oldest, deepest and largest fresh water lake in the world, Lake Baikal in Siberia has a long record of environmental interest and activity. One of the best examples of broad-based collaborative activity is the **BAIKAL CENTER FOR ECOLOGICAL AND CITIZEN INITIATIVES**. Founded in 1993 with help from the Baikal Watch project of the Earth Island Institute, USA, the Center coordinates international and local initiatives and programs to restore the ecological purity of the Baikal basin, including:

- helping to coordinate the work of non governmental environmental groups and organizations, activists, and ecologists;
- providing support for citizen initiatives;
- developing and implementing environmental education programs;
- offering direct help in making decisions and taking action to all inhabitants of the region.

It might be argued that Lake Baikal has little to offer us in the way of either science or participatory models, because the region is relatively sparsely populated compared to the Great Lakes region and because the subsequent pollution problems are much less severe. On the contrary, these facts present a unique opportunity to both contribute to and learn from the environmental policies and programs of a highly committed population with a not so pressured fresh water ecosystem. They are well worth our analysis.

Canadian Models for Community Involvement

Within Canada, experiments with broad, comprehensive public participation processes have been a challenging but rewarding component of many Canadian environmental policy development exercises over the last ten years. Two among these are outlined here for discussion.

The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP)

In 1991, faced with an urgent need to restore damaged coastal environments, Environment Canada initiated ACAP, the Atlantic Coastal Action Program⁸, as a means of empowering local communities to address their own environmental and developmental challenges.

ACAP is a community-based program, with thirteen sites across Atlantic Canada - two in Newfoundland, two in Prince Edward Island, four in Nova Scotia, and five in New Brunswick. Each site has formed an incorporated, non-profit organization with its own Board of Directors, and each site maintains a full-time paid Coordinator and an office. Environment Canada provides annual seed funding, while community stakeholders contribute most of the resources through volunteer labor, in-kind contributions and financial support.

ACAP envisions Atlantic Canada as a prosperous, diversified region of healthy, vibrant, sustainable, coastal communities that will retain their lives and livelihoods for generations to come. It helps communities to define common objectives for environmentally appropriate use of their resources and to develop plans and strategies that will help achieve them.

The ACAP process represents a great step forward in the involvement of community interests. Indeed, the fundamental basis for ACAP is the recognition that local communities are, *“the best and most effective proponents for effective action leading to sustainable development”*.

There has been much success and many lessons learned from ACAP to date. Of particular interest here is the finding, in response to a comprehensive follow-up survey, that although the actual extent of cooperation may vary, participants do perceive many mutual benefits in cooperating with other organizations to achieve results.

The future shape of ACAP (ACAP II) is now being defined. We do know that among the general principles advocated for consideration by ACAP partners, several point to strong support of and further commitment to their dynamic and successful consultative/partnership approach.

In fact, ACAP II is so committed to this community-based model, that it is proposing that partnership be one of three key policy pillars it will use to meet its objectives. These pillars are Partnerships, Understanding Ecosystems (including socio-economic influences) and Action.

⁸ Most of this ACAP program description is from website http://199.212.16.18/acap/index_e.html

Northern Rivers Basins Study

In 1991, another successful Canadian experiment began. Taking in an area larger than most European countries, the Northern Rivers Basins Study includes the Peace, Athabasca and Slave River basins. This massive effort demonstrated that community-driven initiatives are not limited in scale; they are merely limited by the ability and willingness of people to share in a sense of place and purpose.

Environment Canada, the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (now INAC), Alberta's Department of Environmental Protection and the Government of Northwest Territories Department of Renewable Resources, invited First Nations, interested citizens and non-government organizations to participate in the Northern Rivers Basins Study (NRBS). Before getting down to work, representatives of these groups negotiated full partnership with the governments. The result was a community-driven initiative engaging with government in a study that combined scientific information with local and traditional knowledge. As well, a considerable contribution was made by a number of Canada's most accomplished scientists, in providing expertise and accessing the most advanced technology available. This helped assure that the science initiated and completed by the Study was accurate and that the approximately 150 technical reports and reviews were credible and responsive to changing environmental factors.

One of the key findings of the Northern River Basins Study (NRBS) has been the success of the process itself. As stated above, although initiated by governments, the study was set up to be arm's length from those governments. The Ministers appointed a Study Board that represented many interests associated with the Peace, Athabasca and Slave river basins, including industry, environmental groups, aboriginal peoples, health, agriculture, education, municipalities and the federal, provincial and territorial governments. While their interests are diverse, the Board members provided broad, comprehensive direction to the Study, and they became united in their shared vision of wise management and sustained use of the rivers.

This representative system was further strengthened by sustained and deliberate involvement of basin residents in the Study process,⁹ through a proactive communications strategy with regular news releases, attentive media relations and frequent community meetings. This provided basin stakeholders with up-to-date information and ensured that their questions and concerns were received and considered in a timely fashion. In accord with Board policy, all information from the Study was promptly released to the public and a final series of community workshops assisted the Board in developing its recommendations.

An important finding of the Study is that public involvement is a contemporary and politically sensible way to operate that is of immeasurable value in sustaining public good will for any endeavour. Very useful information was gathered through the public process that influenced the science program and subsequent results.

The broadly representative Board and the inclusion of open public participation gained greater acceptance and credibility for the Study than could ever be achieved through a closed process.

⁹ from website <http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/water/nrbs/misc/toc.html>

“One factor which was critical to the Study's success involved the unprecedented participation and input of members of the public, and environmental and aboriginal communities. This involvement helped assure that the research program was responsive to community and stakeholder expectations.”¹⁰

Great Lakes Accomplishments

Initiators and participants involved in broad-based partnership initiatives like the four touched on above have derived many advantages from their collaborative models for action. Canadian Great Lakes initiatives have a lot to offer in this regard as well, with a strong record of participatory decision-making and joint initiatives.

A Powerful Record

We've come a long way since the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT) established the principles and mechanisms to prevent and resolve international Great Lakes disputes. The Treaty provided for the creation of the International Joint Commission (IJC). This six-member binational organization still actively carries out its mandate under the BWT. Today, much of the IJC's work is concerned with promoting the clean-up of the Great Lakes and the prevention of further pollution of their waters. The 1987 amendments to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) broaden the challenge, to require the Canadian and U.S. governments to restore and maintain the biological integrity of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem.

Under the auspices of the Water Quality Agreement, forty-three 'Areas of Concern' or 'hot spots' have been identified by the two governments, where the aquatic environment has been most severely affected by pollution. They include tributary rivers, harbours and other places where concentrated urban or industrial contamination is a particular problem. Twelve hot spots are found entirely in Canadian waters; five are shared by both countries; and 26 lie in U.S. waters.

As we know, in Canada, Great Lakes water quality is a shared federal-provincial responsibility. So the federal and Ontario governments work together to fulfill Canada's obligations under the GLWQA. Both governments co-operate with local communities to develop and implement Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs) and Remedial Action Plans (RAPs), to restore and protect water quality in the Areas of Concern.

Local involvement is an important feature of the process. At each of the 17 (now 16) hot spots within Canada's exclusive or common jurisdiction, Public Advisory Committees and other mechanisms bring together representatives of local business, environmental, municipal, industrial and recreational interests with technical experts from government.

In spite of many jurisdictional, financial, sectoral and scientific challenges, there have been impressive accomplishments. In December 1994, Collingwood Harbour became the first hot spot

¹⁰ From the June 5, 1996 letter presenting the Final Report from the 24 community groups to the four ministers.

to be declared restored. The community's water treatment plant was improved to reduce high levels of phosphorus entering the harbour and resulted in millions of dollars in savings for the municipality. As a result of an environmental education program and water conservation measures, the amount of water pumped dropped by 35 per cent. Contaminated sediment from the harbour was also removed.

Progress is being made in cleaning up other Canadian Great Lake hot spots. In Hamilton efforts are well under way. Public swimming in some areas of that city's harbour is possible again for the first time in 50 years.

On the U. S. side, the U.S. Great Lakes Commission has been dedicated since 1955 to securing a strong economy, clean environment and high quality of life for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region and its citizens. An eight-state compact agency founded in state and federal law, the Commission represents the collective views of the eight Great Lake States – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Canadian interests participate but do not vote in Commission activities.

Many, many non-governmental organizations and committed citizens groups are highly active in the Great Lakes basin. They provide leadership in informing the public about the progress of environmental issues, instituting discussion, monitoring and commenting on government programs, developing and maintaining dynamic, successful partnerships and achieving remarkable success, sometimes against all odds.

International Cooperation

Canada is a signatory to many international agreements and treaties with the United States dealing with waters that flow along or across the common boundary. Examples include:

Treaties and Conventions: Boundary Waters Treaty (1909); Lake of the Woods Convention and Protocol (1925); Rainy Lake Convention (1940); Niagara River Water Diversion Treaty (1950); Columbia River Treaty (1961) and Protocol (1964) and the Skagit River Treaty (1984).

Agreements: St. Lawrence Seaway Project (1952); Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (1972, 1978, 1987) and Water Supply and Flood Control in the Souris River Basin (1989).

Global Institutions include, for just one example, the United Nations Environment Programme GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT MONITORING SYSTEM (GEMS) FRESHWATER QUALITY PROGRAMME, managed in Canada by the National Water Research Institute.

Think Globally, Act Locally

The agreements, programs and projects touched on above constitute the most massive

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

collaboration in environmental management activities on the planet. Equally important, however, are the activities focussed at the community level. Some are described elsewhere in this paper. By way of example, however, more recent Federal program initiatives in this regard include:

- ECO ACTION 2000, a community funding program designed to provide matching financial support for community environmental remediation projects;
- Voluntary Environmental Farm Plans, designed to assist farmers to promote environment-friendly management techniques;
- The Great Lakes Wetlands Conservation Plan, a co-operative arrangement between governments and non-governmental organizations to protect, rehabilitate and enhance wetlands in the Great Lakes basin;
- Great Art for Great Lakes, a participatory student activity to raise environmental understanding and commitment among grade 5-8 students;
- a new Climate Action Fund and Public Outreach Program (CAFPOP) dedicated to support for projects that will diminish greenhouse gas emissions and
- a new website, Millennium Eco-Communities (MEC) dedicated to providing communities with on-line assistance for their projects.

Each of these programs was initiated and designed with active citizen involvement and developed and implemented in collaboration with the communities they serve.

Success Factors

Examples of successful consultative processes provided in this paper and elsewhere lead to the recognition that fostering and enhancing both understanding and effective collaboration among the diverse organizations working on environmental issues is an ongoing and worthy commitment for the Great Lakes Program. It is the most effective way to attract and retain the efforts of energetic, resourceful, committed individuals and organizations and the best way to ensure that the resulting initiatives have the desired effects within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

However, successful consultation/collaboration processes do not come easily. They require focussed, thoughtful, committed effort on many fronts. Among the models examined, the most successful had many or all of the following characteristics:

Participants

- Individuals and organizations are *expected* to participate, and although the actual extent of participation may vary, the public and all affected interested parties are provided practical opportunities for meaningful and effective involvement;

- Representatives of agencies responsible for implementation of the final decisions are included;
- Members of decision-making bodies agree to represent the broader interests of that body, not exclusively the interests of the organization that appointed them¹¹;

Mandate

- There is a strong vision and clear, agreed goals;
- A governance model for the project is clearly defined and understood;
- The most durable decisions are arrived at by consensus;

Communications

- All the partner organizations are actively engaged in the ‘listening’ side of communication and consultation among involved individuals and organizations, to build and maintain support, improve understanding and encourage collaborative action on relevant issues;
- Timely, comprehensive information in practical form is provided to all interested parties;
- Linkages in mandate are clarified between the project and other policies and initiatives, in order to minimize gaps and overlaps and to contribute to others objectives;
- There is continuous dialogue between representatives of the lead organization and the partner stakeholders, making use of state of the art communications and information technologies - bolstered by at *least* regular electronic bulletins and quarterly newsletters;
- Actual meetings - annual conferences and workshops provide valuable support, opportunities to maintain working relationships and for partners to provide feed-back.

Process

- Procedures are available for dispute prevention and resolution;
- Mechanisms for implementation of decisions, accountability and results evaluation are clear and acceptable to all;
- Facilitators have excellent people skills to expedite decision-making and coordinators have communications, public relations and administrative abilities.

Operations

- There is a sufficient commitment of time and resources, both human and financial;
- Smooth, reliable logistics and efficient administration are a high priority and finally
- Multiple sources of funding bring broader support for achieving objectives.

“Officials must accept that an ‘engaged citizen’ is not synonymous with a ‘satisfied client’. A spirited and engaged citizenry will make governing more difficult in the short-run, but will ultimately serve democracy well in the longer term.”

Dr. Benjamin Barber, Whitman Professor of Political Science, Rutgers University
Keynote address - Globalization and Citizen Engagement October 1998 Aylmer Quebec

¹¹ This is one of the guiding principles of the International Joint Commission - much easier to say than do.

GREAT LAKES PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the number, mandates, activities and locations of the myriad individuals, organizations, interest groups, government levels and even countries committed to responding to Great Lakes basin environmental issues, the quantity of programs to date and quality of accomplishments are truly impressive. At least ten federal government departments, three provinces (each with several interested departments), not to mention municipalities, international agencies, the scientific community, NGOs and ENGOs, local citizen's organizations, business and industry, special interest groups and individuals are actively involved in public participation on Great Lakes basin issues. And this list is duplicated on the American side.

OPPORTUNITY I - Facilitate

Yet, there is no one place to go to find out who all these folks are, much less what they're doing. Everyone involved would benefit from the knowledge that there is one office charged with compiling this information and making it available to all – not only within the Great Lakes basin, but across Canada and around the world. Following are some recommendations for components of a mandate for such an endeavour:

- 1. "That the Great Lakes Program designate an authority or Office with appropriate mandate and sufficient human and financial resources to provide the services outlined in the following recommendations."***
- 2. "That this Office conduct a comprehensive survey of environmental initiatives within the Great Lakes basin. The object will be to compile and maintain as complete an inventory as possible of individual, group, scientific, community, agency, and government studies, program activities and partnerships."***
- 3. "That representatives of these initiatives be canvassed regularly, in order to develop and nurture linkages, facilitate collaboration, assist program managers to benefit from experiences of others, prevent duplication, eliminate service gaps and to avoid and resolve conflict."***

As may be seen by the examples at the end of this paper, there are many excellent websites that provide access to others efforts on technical, scientific and political issues and also on operational, community participation and citizen engagement models. But the sheer number of websites and quantity and varying quality of information is daunting to the point of becoming too ponderous to be useful. A Great Lakes website where relevant information and links were monitored, updated, evaluated and annotated for the user would be welcomed by all and make a significant contribution to the opportunity proposed above. Therefore it is recommended:

- 4. "That the Office develop and maintain a state of the art website, to stay abreast of and make available the current activities and progress of programs described above. Managing this website would include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the proliferation of potentially relevant websites within Canada and the U.S. and the broader Global Village and providing hotlinks to the best among them."***

And finally, discussion and research revealed that communication within some larger organizations is not optimal. Indeed, committees and branches within departments may not be sufficiently aware of each other's activities to capitalise on objectives, prevent duplication (in some cases even competition) and benefit from experience. The broad facilitation efforts of the GLP Office will benefit enormously if key federal and provincial departments¹² and agencies enhance their own internal communication and co-ordination efforts. So, it is recommended:

5. "That large organizations, for example federal government departments, broad-based interest groups and corporations, be encouraged to strengthen their own internal mechanisms for comprehensive, effective intra/organization communication and collaboration and

6. That Federal cabinet and committee processes be examined with a view to clarifying and strengthening mandate arrangements between the Minister of Environment and relevant cabinet committees and colleagues as regards GLP objectives; and that the charters and corporate plans of relevant government agencies be reviewed to ensure inclusion of GLP objectives."

OPPORTUNITY II - Participate

Traditionally, governments have either initiated or led environmental programs that reacted to a particular problem and were highly effective at reducing point source pollution and improving environmental quality. However, some environmental problems, such as non-point source pollution, those that may involve several types of degradation and widely separated sources, are more amenable to a solution that addresses the various causes of the problems and seeks to understand the interrelationships between human behaviour and pollution.

More and more often, community based initiative is becoming an approach of choice to address these types of environmental issues. Efforts include a strong commitment to stakeholder participation and are based on examining the relationships among different environmental challenges in the ecosystem in order to take a more holistic approach to problem solving.¹³

And there are many benefits. A diverse group of local stakeholders can provide a wide array of expertise, knowledge and experience with an area's interrelated problems. This encourages the development of effective and appropriate problem-solving tools. For example, a tool that may improve air quality levels but exacerbates other ecosystem pollution problems would be recognized earlier and avoided under this approach. Widespread stakeholder collaboration also

¹² If officials and committees working on Great Lakes Program projects were to become better informed about programs with similar and/or complementary mandates within their own department (eg Canada-wide Green Plan activities and the EAGLE project), the duplication of communications and consultations efforts could be diminished.

¹³ In the U.S., the Environmental Protection Agency provides strong support for Community Based Environment Programs (CBEP) CBEP supplements and complements the traditional environmental protection approach by focusing on the health of an ecosystem and the behaviour of humans that live in the ecosystem's boundaries, instead of concentrating on a medium or particular problem. See website <http://www.yosemite.epa.gov/osec/osechome.nsf>

improves environmental protection management by providing a means and forum for adaptive problem solving. If one problem-solving method is not working, the relationships established under collaborative work should facilitate discussion and implementation of alternative approaches. So tapping into a high level of expertise and collaborative relationships is an effective management tool.

The Great Lakes Program could demonstrate its support of these initiatives, ‘walk the talk’, by joining and supporting broad-based community initiatives. It is recommended:

7. “That the Great Lakes Program recognize and strengthen community-driven initiatives by joining with them – becoming a partner in carefully chosen projects and programs serving Great Lakes basin environmental interests and play a supportive role, in order to capitalize on investment, diminish duplication and conflict and improve results.”

There is a perception that Great Lakes Program-supported initiatives are evaluated primarily on remedial benefit – that only measurable improvements to environmental degradation constitute results. It is therefore recommended:

8. “That new ways be found to evaluate and assess the success of ecosystem initiatives – ways that recognize that preventive, interdisciplinary measures aimed at restoring and sustaining environmental, social and economic well-being are not only desirable but indeed are indicated in an ecosystem approach.”

OPPORTUNITY III - Initiate

There are many ways to ensure success in leading multi-stakeholder initiatives. The Great Lakes Program has a powerful record in this regard. The success factors summarized above are starting points to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives lead by the Great Lakes Program. It is therefore recommended:

9. “That the Great Lakes Program examine and evaluate its current initiatives in the light of the success factors found to be key in other initiatives, to ensure that they incorporate leading-edge strategies for successful community engagement and

10. That the Great Lakes Program launch all new projects with a renewed commitment to incorporating the principles reflected in the success factors identified as critical to strong community participation and support.”

Conclusions

Valuable experience with addressing environment and development problems can be found in all sectors of public and private enterprise in the community. These groups have an impressive record of providing practical resources and solutions for these problems. Yet some of this experience has been under-valued in traditional decision making processes. Canada's potential for successfully implementing a new GLP will depend in large part on our ability to recognize and utilize the full range of this experience. This can be facilitated by strengthening the partnership between government, the corporate world and community groups that have a particular interest in, or capacity to contribute to the Great Lakes Program.

"The best way to increase your effect is to raise your standards – decide what you believe in and reach out for it!"
Lauren Bacall January 24 1999

There are profound value changes afoot in Canada and within other western democracies. Canadians are more likely to display low tolerance for secrecy and evasiveness on the part of our institutions, and want to deliberate meaningfully on issues affecting our lives.¹⁴

The increasing efficacy of citizens has narrowed the information and influence gap between the public and our political leaders. In this new context, it is becoming much more difficult to govern in traditional 'top-down' ways. Today, the most effective leaders are enablers, and they are increasingly called upon to convene discussion and to recognize that communities outside government are seeking solutions themselves. Citizen engagement is an important tool to accomplish this end.

Success for the GLP will ultimately rest on the ability of all Canadians to contribute individually, through modifying personal behavior and through opportunities to influence community practices. As a nation we have a great capacity for change, and a high awareness that our individual choices do influence social change.

Every one of us has a role to play in efforts to embrace ecological sustainable development for the Great Lakes ecosystem. The participation of every Canadian - through all levels of government, business, unions and the community - is central to the effective implementation of a sound Great Lakes Program in Canada.

¹⁴ The recent World Values Survey as described by Neil Nevitte at a Conference on citizen engagement October, 1998 in Aylmer Quebec.

APPENDIX

Public Participation and Leadership in Decision Making

Many organizations have strong citizen engagement models. Some are touched on in this paper. Following are samples of others, with brief descriptions and websites for further analysis:

1. The CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK: A GUIDE TO BUILDING COMMUNITY IN VANCOUVER

This is an excellent, comprehensive grassroots organizing guide, recommended by many pointer sites, including Yahoo.

<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/welcome.html>

2. Memphremagog Conservation Inc. (MCI)

This is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the environmental health and natural beauty of Lake Memphremagog and its environs. Their only financial support comes from the public.

<http://www.multi-medias.ca/MCI/index.html>

3. St. Lawrence River-Lake Ontario Research Initiative (SLRLO).

On September 11, 1998 approximately twenty scientists from the U.S. and Canada met in Buffalo to discuss the need for a bi-national research project focusing on the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario ecosystem. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Lake Ontario Research and Management Workshop hosted by UB's Great Lakes Program and sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As a result, the SLRLO Initiative was launched by the New York Great Lakes Research Consortium to develop and promote an integrated, large-scale collaborative project which focuses Canadian and U.S. research efforts on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

<http://www.esf.edu/glrc/SLRLO.htm>

4. American Bar Association 1995 resolution:

“BE IT RESOLVED, that the public participation provisions of local, state, territorial and federal environmental laws and international environmental agreements and treaties should recognize and express the principle that the public and all affected interests should be provided meaningful and effective involvement and should be expected to participate in consensus building efforts to ensure that government decision-making

APPENDIX

regarding the administration, regulation, and enforcement of environmental laws is open, fair, efficient and credible...”

<http://www.abanet.org/publicserv/pubdecis.html>

5. Rx Engagement - Experience from The National Forum of Health

Marie Fortier, Assistant Deputy Minister, Home Care Development, Health Canada, spoke at the October, 1998 Aylmer Conference on consultation. She described her experience as Executive Director of the National Forum on Health, established in 1994 to advise the federal government on how to improve the health and health care system of Canadians. Following are some relevant points from her presentation (not on the net):

From the outset, advisory board members (including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health and 24 health care professionals, volunteers and consumers) identified a need to consult with individual Canadians, stakeholders, and with key experts and opinion leaders. The members decided to integrate consultation in all their activities and to carry out their work in a fully transparent manner.

Dialogue took place in two phases: first, to identify and examine key issues which the Forum should address and second, to test the Forum's proposed directions and options before it made recommendations to government. Drawing on the experience of models in Sweden, the United States and Canada, Forum members chose 'study circles' as the primary vehicle for dialogue. Under this format, 15 to 20 people with different backgrounds and views are brought together to discuss issues with the aid of a consultation document or workbook.

During the first phase of the Forum's work (between November 1995 and April 1996), study circles were held in 34 communities, involving approximately 1300 Canadians. Other consultative mechanisms included an invitational conference for stakeholders in Toronto, an internet discussion group, reviews of letters and submissions, media activities, public opinion polling, and special workshops.

The second phase consisted of providing feedback to phase I participants on proposed directions and options. Given a shortened time frame for reporting, the Forum decided to hold weekend conferences in Vancouver and Montreal with participants drawn from the public and stakeholder discussion groups. Those who were unable to attend the conferences were invited to respond to a telephone questionnaire. 500 additional people, randomly selected from the population at large, were polled on health care issues as a basis of comparison with the responses of Forum participants.

The Forum completed its activities in February 1997 with its presentation of a two-volume report to the Prime Minister, entitled *Canada Health Action: Building on the Legacy*. Outcomes included provisions in the 1997 federal Budget that addressed several of the Forum's key

APPENDIX

recommendations and a number of spin-off initiatives including conferences, research papers and policy development work at the federal and provincial levels.

6. The Regional Environmental Centre of Central and Eastern Europe has launched a Special Earmarked Grants initiative to support NGO efforts to establish advisory services projects and to promote public participation in environmental decision-making.

<http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPAdvise/intro.html>

7. Charter of Rights of the Czech republic
Public participation is guaranteed in the new Czech Constitution, adopted at the end of 1992.

<http://www.rec.hu/REC/Publications/PPstatus/Czech.html>

8. Center for Ecological Research in Slovenia
Purpose – to assist NGOs, municipalities, communities and citizens concerned or affected by environmental problems or participation in decision making processes.

Objectives

- Provide legal and non-formal advisory services to the NGO community;
- Improve public participation capacity of NGOs with input from experts on law and social issues and by stimulating the process of learning with the input of Slovenian and foreign NGOs;
- Improve communication between top decision makers and NGO representatives;
- Link environmental NGOs on the national level by enabling them to use the Internet.

9. Environmental Law and Public Participation Center - FYR Macedonia.
This project proved successful in initiating the formerly almost non-existent public participation processes into Macedonia and establishing a well-functioning advisory service for the public. In one sample case, the ELPPC provided advice to an environmental NGO named Molika, situated in the city of Bitola, on how to develop and initiate a local environmental action plan for the city.

<http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPAdvise/Macedonia.html>

10. Albania

Although public participation is a new notion for the Albanian society, Albanians are taking the first steps in public participation by working to save national treasures like Ohrid Lake. The establishment of democracy and pluralism now guarantees the freedom of speech and the press, but a long tradition of isolation and government secrecy has veiled the public consciousness to its ability and capacity to influence decisions.

APPENDIX

<http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/PPManual/Albania.html>

11. Action plan - Uganda

A stakeholder group made up of representatives from churches, the chamber of commerce, service organizations, market vendors, women, youth groups and local council members from parish to municipal level was formed last year. A vital part of the process is to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to work on a common platform. Bagonza is currently helping to set up lower-level stakeholder groups for each of the three divisions in the municipality. When these are in place, the groups will begin identifying the environmental, social, and economic issues that the municipality should deal with first.

Although the project is still at an early stage, the variety of responses from public participants is providing valuable information. It has been difficult, for example, to make people fully understand how environmental issues relate to them. *"It's almost cultural. Ugandans have never had a problem with natural resources in the past, so they don't see why they should have a problem now."* explains Bagonza.

Despite municipal councilors being deeply involved in the process, there have been surprisingly few political challenges so far, partly because the project has not yet developed enough to come into conflict with conventional planning processes.

<http://www.idrc.ca/books/reports/1996/09-01e.html>

12. Twenty-five environmental activists from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

In spite of dangerous opposition, these citizens speak frankly about NGO cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe. (by Christy Duijvelaar).

Cooperation among environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is the way of the future; indeed, it may be the key to solving many of Europe's larger environmental problems. For years environmental movements in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe survived and worked on their own, if they existed at all. Then came The Change, and with it a plethora of Western development organizations and funding agencies just dying to lend a helping hand. But after five years of intensive economic change, environmental issues in CEE no longer top the political priority list. Western funders and politicians are looking further East or going home. Now, environmental NGOs in CEE must find their own means of support.

<http://www.rec.org/REC/Bulletin/Bull61/coop.html>

APPENDIX

13. KLUVANKOVA (senior journalist) from Slovakia

"We have made progress. Five years ago there was no public participation process." "What about public participation in Bulgaria?" I asked Alexander Kodjabashev as we walked the hills above Visegrad during a public participation workshop in Hungary. "Let me tell you a little story," he said.

"A dairy was producing milk in an unnamed Bulgarian city. It was also producing pollution at levels 250 times higher than allowable limits. For whatever reason, either apathy or innocence, the citizens in the area didn't move to shut it down, though legal methods provided the means to do so. Eventually the municipal authorities put a seal on the door and demanded that operations cease. The very next day, the seal was broken and milk, and pollution, flowed from the plant like water. The local prosecutor was informed but did nothing. Three months later, an inspector arrived, not to shut down the plant, but to issue legal proceedings against seven local officials, including the mayor. Later, two of the seven were punished: the two that put the seal on the dairy. After all of this, the dairy remained open."

This is a microcosm of the public participation situation in CEE. There are legal tools available, but the public sector is either unaware or unwilling to use them. When they are used, low political will and insufficient implementation and enforcement mechanisms often undermine the effort.

But the situation is changing. In CEE, both the legal framework and less formal forms of public pressure are being developed. Most governments have already introduced constitutions and environmental legislation that guarantee citizens, at least in theory, the right to participate in environmental decision making; but an effective implementation infrastructure is lacking. Now, it's just a matter of empowering the public by institutionalizing their right to participate in environmental decision-making.

Defining public participation has never been an easy task. In CEE, the term is so new its very definition has been left open to interpretation, an ambiguous phrase that has confounded a populace unused to rolling up their sleeves and getting involved in the decision-making process. Who is the 'public' anyway? And what exactly is 'participation'? There is a common belief that the public, often referred to as the "third leg of the stool" (along with government and industry), is synonymous with non governmental organizations (NGOs). Policymakers and government officials who don't know any better or have never given the issue a second thought often think that NGOs are representative of the constituency as a whole. This is a mistake.

<http://www.rec.org/REC/Bulletin/Bull52/PublPart.html>

APPENDIX

Environment Issues Websites

A key challenge in developing, leading, facilitating and participating in successful consultative processes will be to know about, monitor, evaluate, interact with and benefit from the mushrooming numbers of websites and hot-links on the issues and processes out there.

Following is a list of the websites explored for this paper - a *sampling* of websites dealing with inland waters, the environment and environmental aspects of the economy. Some are interesting, others informative. Obviously their quality varies with the mandate, resources, competence and vested interests involved.

Canada Centre for Inland Waters
<http://www.cciw.ca/intro.html>

Great Lakes 2000 Cleanup Fund
www.cciw.ca/green-lane/cuf

Great Lakes Commission
<http://www.glc.org/>

Great Lakes Information Management Resource
<http://www.cciw.ca/glirms/intro.html>

Great Lakes Information Network - EXCELLENT
<http://www.great-lakes.net/>

Great Lakes Program at the University of Buffalo
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/glp/>

Green Lane Home Page (Environment Canada)
<http://www.doe.ca/envhome.html>

Lake Baikal
http://www.wcmc.org.uk/protected_areas/data/wh/baikal.htm

National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (Canada) (NRTEE)
<http://www.nrtee-trnee.ca/nrtEnglish/>

State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC)
<http://www.cciw.ca/solec/solec98-desc.html>

United Nations Environment Programme, Global Environment Monitoring System Freshwater Quality Programme (GEMS/WATER)
<http://www.cciw.ca/gems/intro.html>

APPENDIX

OTHER RELATED SITES

Biodiversity (World Resources Institute)

<http://www.wri.org/wri/biodiv/>

Canadian Environment Online

<http://www.canadainfo.com/environment.html>

CICERO - Center for International Climate and Environmental Research, Oslo

<http://www.cicero.uio.no/eindex.html>

Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) - established by NAFTA

<http://www.cec.org/english/index.cfm?format=2>

Committee for the National Institute for the Environment (CNIE)

<http://www.cnie.org/>

Community Based Environmental Protection (CBEP)

<http://www.yosemite.epa.gov/osec/osechome.nsf>

Confronting the Population Crisis

<http://www.intranet.ca/~gpco/net02.htm>

Earth First! The Radical Environmental Journal

<http://www.enviroweb.org/ef/>

EnviroLink Home Page

<http://www.envirolink.org/>

Environment Australia

<http://www.environment.gov.au/>

Environmental Management - ISO 14000 and Pollution Prevention Web and CD-ROM Tools

<http://www.realtools.com/environment/environment.htm>

Environmental Organization Web Directory – EXCELLENT

<http://webdirectory.com/>

Friends Of the Earth - Canada

<http://www.foecanada.org/>

Government of Canada Primary Internet Site - Contents

http://canada.gc.ca/main_e.html

Global Warming (The Warming of the Earth) - The Woods Hole Research Center

<http://www.whrc.org/globalwarming/warmingearth.htm>

Greenpeace International Homepage

<http://www.greenpeace.org/>

APPENDIX

IIS Online - ISO 14000 Standards and ISO Information

<http://www.iso14000.org/>

Institute for Sustainable Development

<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/>

IUCN-US Homepage (International Union for the Conservation of Nature)

<http://www.iucnus.org/>

Measuring Progress

<http://www.foe.co.uk/progress/index.html>

Physicians for Global Survival

<http://www.pgs.ca/>

Redefining Progress

<http://rprogress.org/>

Superfund Program, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/tools/index.htm>

Sustainability Web Ring

<http://sdgateway.net/webring/default.htm>

Union of Concerned Scientists

<http://www.ucsusa.org/>

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm>

United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi

<http://www.unep.org/>

United Nations Environment Programme Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

US EPA Community Based Environmental Protection

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/osec/osec/home.nsf/All/AboutCBEP?OpenDocument>

US EPA Office of Wetlands Oceans and Watersheds (OWOW) – the all-time best acronym!

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/sec7/index.html>

World Meteorological Organization - The Official WMO Home Page – Geneva Switzerland

<http://www.wmo.ch/>

APPENDIX

Sources

The following colleagues, government officials and specialists provided helpful discussion:

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

Documents

- *Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice*, Gerald W. Cormick, Norman Dale, Paul Emond, S. Glenn Sigurdson and Barry D. Stuart, 1996.
- *Community Driven Initiatives: A New Deal in Public Participation?* James P. Ellsworth, January 1999.
- *Global Stewardship Initiative, COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE TOWN OF DUNN*, Calvin B. DeWitt, recipient of the United Nations Environment Achievement Award, Director, Au Sable Institute and Professor, Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison. October 1996.
- *Growth, Human Development and Social Cohesion*, Policy Research Committee Draft Interim Report, October, 1996.
- *Mapping Social Cohesion*, Discussion Paper by Pauline O'Connor for the Canadian Policy Research Network, April, 1998, and
- *Mapping Social Cohesion*, backgrounder speech by Jane Jenson at the Policy Research Secretariat's Conference in Ottawa, October, 1998.
- Notes for an Address by Jocelyne Bourgon Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, to the Conference on Citizen Engagement, "A Voice for All: Engaging Canadians for Change", Aylmer, October, 1998.
- *Protecting Our Environment: The Power of One*, Speaking Notes for the Honourable Christine Stewart, P.C., M.P., Minister of the Environment, Burlington Ontario, December, 1998.
- Summary of Conference Findings of the Institute on Governance Conference on Citizen Engagement, "A Voice for All: Engaging Canadians for Change", Aylmer, October, 1998.
- *Sustaining Community Participation in Turbulent Times*, Report on the 1997/98 International Association for Public Participation Ontario Chapter Research Project.
- THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION AND THE BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY OF 1909, September 1998, ISBN 1-895085-16-0.

Also many 'virtual' documents on the web – see URLs in footnotes and APPENDIX.