

# **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES:**

**A Reader of Ten Years Experience at the  
Institute for Water Resources**

Prepared by

James L. Creighton, Ph.D.  
Jerome Delli Priscoli, Ph.D.  
C. Mark Dunning, Ph.D.

Institute for Water Resources  
U.S. Corps of Engineers  
Alexandria, VA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD: A DECADE OF CONTRIBUTION by James R. Hanchey .....7

INTRODUCTION ..... 13

SECTION I: THE RATIONALE AND NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ..... 16

THE CORPS' PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MANDATE  
by Lieutenant General F. J. Clarke ..... 17

THE OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
by James R. Hanchey ..... 21

PLANNING AS A PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE  
by A. Bruce Bishop ..... 31

THE CONCEPT OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST  
by Glendon Schubert, Jr. .... 41

THE USE OF VALUES: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS  
by James L. Creighton..... 45

WHY THE FEDERAL AND REGIONAL INTEREST IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN WATER  
RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
by Jerry Delli Priscoli, Ph.D..... 61

SECTION II: PRINCIPLES FOR STRUCTURING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS ..... 73

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
by Ann Widditsch..... 75

COMMUNICATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS  
by A. Bruce Bishop ..... 85

THE IMPACT OF DECISION MAKING STYLES UPON THE PUBLIC  
James L. Creighton ..... 105

A PROCESS FOR FIELD LEVEL WATER PLANNING  
by Leonard Ortolano ..... 111

INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING  
by James R. Hanchey ..... 123

A "THOUGHT PROCESS" FOR DESIGNING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
IN PLANNING  
by James L. Creighton..... 131

SECTION III: INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS ..... 141

ACHIEVING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS, WATER RESOURCES PLANNING	
by B. H. Dodge.....	142
AN EVALUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CORPS OF ENGINEERS FIELD OFFICES	
by James F. Ragan.....	150
CONSTRAINTS ON EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
by James F. Ragan, Jr.....	166
IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS IN FEDERAL AGENCIES	
by Jerry Delli Priscoli.....	171
CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	
by James L. Creighton.....	182
SECTION IV: WHO IS THE PUBLIC.....	187
IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION	
by Lorenz Aggens.....	189
IDENTIFYING PUBLICS/STAFF IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES	
by James L. Creighton.....	195
"INFLUENTIAL" IDENTIFICATION: RESEARCH METHODS AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	
by Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner and J. William Wenrich.....	202
IDENTIFYING INFLUENTIALS IN THE COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE	
by James. L. Creighton.....	211
CREATING A POLICY PROFILE	
by William D. Coplin, Donald J. McMaster and Michael K. O'Leary.....	221
SELECTING A MEETING FORMAT	
by James L. Creighton.....	238
DESIGNING WORKSHOPS	
by James L. Creighton.....	248
SMALL GROUP PROCESSES FOR IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	
by James L. Creighton.....	257
THE SAMOAN CIRCLE: A SMALL GROUP PROCESS FOR DISCUSSING CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS	
by Lorenz Aggens.....	265

SECTION VI: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES AND METHODS .....	271
A SHORT CATALOGUE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES	
by James L. Creighton.....	273
ESTABLISHING CITIZENS' COMMITTEES	
by James L. Creighton and Jerry Delli Priscoli.....	290
GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA RELATIONS	
by Jerry W. Schmunk and David W. Hewitt .....	299
HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE THE MEDIA	
by Paul Robert Edwards .....	304
WORKING WITH THE MEDIA	
By James L. Creighton .....	318
USE OF SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES	
by Jerry Delli Priscoli .....	326
CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES	
By James L. Creighton .....	337
ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMMENT	
by James L. Creighton and C. Mark Dunning.....	347
SECTION VII: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL PERMITTING.....	359
WHY CONDUCT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS FOR THE REGULATORY PROGRAM	
by James L. Creighton.....	360
A THOUGHT PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN REGULATORY PROGRAMS	
by James L. Creighton.....	364
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL PERMITTING: THE SANIBEL WORKSHOPS	
by Merle Lefkoff .....	370
SECTION VIII: EVALUATION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS .....	377
PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF A PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM	
by Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner and J. William Wenrich .....	378
THE SANIBEL EVALUATION: WHAT WAS LEARNED?	
by Judy B. Rosener .....	392
BENEFITS AND COSTS OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM SANIBEL ISLAND	
by Paul Munch.....	407

DEVELOPING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVALUATIONS: A FEDERAL AGENCY PERSPECTIVE	
by Jerry Delli Priscoli and James L. Creighton.....	420
SECTION IX: FUTURE ISSUES IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT .....	434
ACTING AS A CONFLICT CONCILIATOR	
by James L. Creighton.....	435
CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
by James L. Creighton.....	450
INTEGRATING PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT THROUGH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	
by James L. Creighton, James A. Chalmers and Kristi Branch.....	455
THE ENDURING MYTHS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	
by Jerry Delli Priscoli .....	463
IWR PUBLICATIONS ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT .....	471

FOREWORD

A DECADE OF CONTRIBUTION

by James R. Hanchey  
Director of the Institute for Water Resources

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed into law on January 1, 1970. This was a fitting symbol heralding the changes which would sweep through water resources decision making and management in the decade of the seventies. No decade in recent memory has produced such rapid and fundamental changes in water resources policies, procedures, and operations. NEPA required that planners conduct a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions to insure that these impacts were given adequate consideration in agency decisions. The U.S. Water Resources Council (WRC) issued Principles and Standards for water resources planning which established two equal national objectives; economic development and environmental quality. In addition, the Principles and Standards further de-emphasized the traditional focus on primarily economic decision variables, by establishing an evaluation framework consisting of four accounts--national economic development, environmental quality, regional economic development and social well-being. These changes in the traditional "ground rules" for water resource development prompted fundamental and far-reaching responses by Federal water resource agencies.

During the past decade, the planning process of the Corps of Engineers has gone through an evolutionary period. The Corps' planning process that has emerged is frequently referred to as an "iterative-open planning process." The iterative nature of Corps planning is reflected in the multiple sequences of need identification, alternative generation, impact assessment, and evaluation that a planner goes through during the planning period. The open nature of planning is reflected in the strong commitment to providing effective opportunities for public involvement at all stages of planning and decision making.

The Institute for Water Resources (IWR), like most governmental entities, found the seventies were a decade of challenge. IWR is an interdisciplinary research center which, through staff studies or funding of studies by consultants, provides policy guidance and research and development in the area of water resources planning to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As such, IWR played a considerable role in shaping the Corps of Engineers adaption to the 1970's. It was a decade of challenge, but it was also a decade of contribution in which IWR was able to contribute substantially to policy and procedures which resulted in a more adequate balancing of economic, environmental, and social values in water resources decision making. Central to this contribution was IWR's work in public involvement.

This collection of articles documents, in a general way, that IWR contribution. While comprehensive, it is not definitive. We are still learning. However, the materials reflect the types and ways the Corps, as an organization, has attempted to meet new public involvement demands. As such, it is as important for what is absent as what is included. We have tried to synthesize, by topic, the contributions of IWR staff and consultants. Throughout, further original source material is referenced for those desiring more "indepth" discussion.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Prior to 1970, the participation of the public had been limited largely to formal public hearings on water resources studies. However, as early as July 1968, the Corps had initiated a research study by a University of Michigan research team consisting of Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner and J. William Wenrich to explore techniques for improving communication between the public and the governmental agencies involved in comprehensive river basin planning. This study, titled "The Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study," was published as an IWR Report in December 1970.<sup>1</sup> (See pages 382-395.) Reflecting the increased interest within the Corps regarding public involvement, IWR initiated a staff study, by Dr. A Bruce Bishop, which was also published in December 1970.<sup>2</sup> (See pages 26-35.) This coincided with experimental efforts by the Seattle and Rock Island Districts of the Corps to increase public involvement in their planning programs.

In February 1971, IWR conducted its first conference on public participation. The course was held in Atlanta with the assistance of Dr. Gene Willeke, of the Georgia Institute of Technology. The conference was attended by all chiefs of planning and all public affairs officers in the Corps. The objective of this first conference was to sensitize Corps planning officials to the need for public involvement in planning and decision making and to begin to explore opportunities for developing meaningful and effective relationships with the public. As an indication of the increasing commitment by the Corps to public involvement, the Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant General F. J. Clarke, made a presentation at the conference in which he emphasized, "I want each of you to know that I consider 'public participation in planning' of critical importance to the Corps' effectiveness as a public servant." (See page 11.) Subsequently, materials used in this course were modified into a multimedia training course, prepared by Charles W. Dahlgren, of IWR,<sup>3</sup> which was distributed to Corps districts in 1972.

Following this conference, IWR began an extensive program of research, consulting, and training. Many of the results of this program are reflected in this reader. The success of the program can best be measured by comparing Corps planning in 1980 with planning a decade earlier. A 1973 paper by B. H. Dodge provides a good picture of public involvement theory and practice in the early 1970's. We hope this document will provide a contrasting view of theory and practice in 1980.

In the fall of 1971, IWR initiated a Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to provide 13 districts and two Corps divisions with consultants to assist in expanding and improving public participation activities. The consulting team was headed by David A. Aggerholm and myself, and included as consultants David J. Allee, A. Bruce Bishop, Thomas E. Borton, Donald G. Butcher, James F. Ragan, Katherine P. Warner, J. William Wenrich, Ann Widditsch, and Robert D. Wolff. The program was not entirely successful. Some consultants were used efficiently and effectively, others were used haltingly and sparingly. Most consultants felt their assistance had little effect on field office adoption of more intensive public participation programs. Because of consultant efforts, some field offices did experiment with new approaches in selected studies, but in no case did the field offices follow through with the development of district-wide programs. The consultants did, however, have the opportunity to observe field office attitudes and approaches to public participation. This resulted in a report by James F. Ragan which "stirred the pot" internally and was published in November 1975.<sup>4</sup> (See pages 145-161.)

The Institute also funded an evaluation of public workshops conducted as part of a major study of Puget Sound, in which the Corps was one of the participants. This evaluation was conducted by Ann Widditsch, and was published in June 1972.<sup>5</sup> (See pages 70-79.)



In 1973, IWR sponsored the first of a series of training programs on public involvement conducted by SYNERGY Consultation Services. James L. Creighton, the founder of SYNERGY, had developed a course which taught practical communication skills, meeting leadership skills, and assistance in identifying and understanding public values. The course was taught by the four SYNERGY partners: James L. Creighton, Magdalen B. Creighton, D. E. Merrill, and W. A. Wiedman, Jr. The course was highly successful, and began a relationship which exists to this day. IWR has sponsored three to four "basic skills" courses annually for Corps personnel ever since 1973. Altogether some 800 Corps people have attended these courses, with additional courses scheduled into 1981. W. A. (Bill) Wiedman, the current owner of SYNERGY, is assisted by other consultants including Lorenz Aggens, Lucy Gill, Dick Ragan, and Judy Walsh in this ongoing training effort.

During the same period, IWR also sponsored a workshop on planning processes on Orcas Island. During the same period, IWR also sponsored a series of workshops on environmental impact assessment. These workshops, while focusing on the environmental aspects of water resource planning, began the IWR effort to restructure the planning process to enable the planner to more effectively incorporate multiple objectives and public involvement into water resource plan formulation and decision-making. The "open-iterative" planning process developed by Dr. Leonard Ortolano, with the assistance of members of the IWR staff, was introduced for the first time at these workshops. This conceptual model of the planning process, which is described more fully in the paper on pages 103-144, has been further developed over the last few years and has recently been incorporated into a series of planning regulations which specify procedures for Corps preauthorization planning.

IWR also funded two large studies during the 1974-1976 time period. The first, by A. Bruce Bishop, was an effort to analyze public involvement in the light of modern communications theory.<sup>6</sup> (See pages 80-97.) The other study by a Stanford University team headed by Leonard Ortolano, focused on changes that would have to be made in the planning process if public involvement were to be meaningful.<sup>7</sup> (See pages 103-114.) Subsequently Ortolano and Thomas P. Wagner conducted a "field test" of an "Iterative, Open Planning Process" on a water study with the San Francisco District.<sup>8</sup>

During this period Corps' policy had been revised to substantially strengthen public involvement requirements and modify the planning process in the direction indicated by Ortolano and Wagner. It was now clear, if it hadn't been before, that the Corps was clearly "in the public involvement business." Therefore there was a need for simple direct instructions on how to design a public involvement program. In response to this need I developed an IWR manual entitled "Public Involvement in the Corps of Engineers Planning Process."<sup>9</sup> (See pages 115-123.)

With the conclusion of the manual, however, my responsibilities within the Institute changed and responsibility for the development of an executive course and other aspects of IWR's public involvement program was shifted to a new staff member, Dr. Jerry Delli Priscoli. This involved more than simply shifting staff responsibility for the program. More important, it brought a new perspective to the Corps' problems. Dr. Delli Priscoli, a political scientist with extensive research and practical experience in the area of public participation in government, began an intensive effort to evaluate program objectives and needs. A major need which was apparent was to involve the "executive level" of the Corps--district engineers, deputy district engineers, chiefs of planning, chiefs of engineering--in training programs. It was clear that for public

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

involvement to become a way of doing business, this level of Corps management needed to understand and support it. James L. Creighton was retained to extract materials from the "basic skills course" which were suitable to the executive level, and develop a workbook for the course. Again the course was highly successful and has become a continuous element in IWR's program. Over 200 executive level had participated since 1976. Consultants who have participated in this course include Larry Aggens, James L. Creighton, Magdalen B. Creighton, Benjamin Dysart, Lucy Gill, Richard Ragan, and W. A. Wiedman. Mr. Wiedman holds the contract as coordinator and lead consultant through 1981.

It was also apparent that many Corps' planners were becoming increasingly sophisticated, and now needed more than simply the basic skills course. In particular, there was a need for training in the wide variety of public involvement techniques that were being developed. Following the usual competitive proposal process, James L. Creighton was selected to develop this techniques-oriented course which we have come to call the "advanced course." The challenge in course design was to teach techniques in a way which required active participation, allowed for the inclusion of numerous guest consultants, yet retained continuity and coherence. The course was originally taught by James L. Creighton and W. A. Wiedman, Jr. assisted by Dr. Delli Priscoli and myself, Mr. C. Mark Dunning, Richard Ragan and Lucy Gill. This course is now repeated approximately once a year with several hundred people attending the course to date. Numerous papers were developed for the Advanced Course Workbook which have never been published except in the workbook form. Since we believe many of them to be quite valuable, they are included in this reader for the first time.

As an outgrowth of these programs IWR continues, on occasion to provide direct assistance to districts with specific public involvement concerns. This assistance ranges from special consulting on public involvement program design, special district seminars, to specialized technical aid. The IWR professional staff also continues to publish professional papers related to public involvement. Papers by Dr. Delli Priscoli and by C. M. Dunning are included in this reader to illustrate the issues dealt with by IWR staff.

In addition there are numerous studies carried out by IWR on Social Impact Assessment and future studies which relate to public involvement. Recently IWR has begun two major studies on hydroelectric power and the future of American waterways which themselves require public involvement. James F. Ragan has assisted in developing the public involvement program design for the hydroelectric study. Other IWR staff members have been conducting a study on the assessment of cumulative impacts, which has considerable public involvement elements.

During the early 1970's, the Corps, as well as other agencies, focused on public involvement in planning. With the 1972 and 1976 Federal Water Pollution Control Acts, the Corps assumed major new responsibilities in wetlands protection and regulation. As the Corps' regulatory program has grown, so has the Corps' awareness of the central role of the public in a successful program. Thus, our most recent challenge has been to adapt our public involvement expertise to the expanded Corps regulatory program.

James L. Creighton, assisted by IWR staffers Dr. Delli Priscoli and Thomas Ballentine, has been developing a training program entitled "Public Involvement in Regulatory Functions." Fortuitously, the Jacksonville District of the Corps has been exploring innovative approaches to public involvement in regulatory programs, and this team conducted a two-day seminar for the entire regulatory staff of the district. An outgrowth of this seminar was the public involvement process followed in developing a general permit on Sanibel Island.<sup>10</sup> (See pages 373 and 396.) IWR assisted with partial funding of this process which was supervised by Merle

Lefkoff, with facilitator training by Lorenz Aggens, and program evaluation by Judy A. Rosener. A five-day version of the regulatory program training course has now been successfully conducted twice on a regional basis, with substantial demand for similar training in the future.

Work on our regulatory program has broadened further our understanding of public involvement. Substantial needs in other phases of Corps operations have emerged. As we now move into the 1980's it is a good time to look back. Public involvement has become far more than window dressing. It builds on central tenets of our democratic ideology. For an engineering organization, public involvement has become crucial to our ability to provide engineering service to changing social values. Public involvement has helped define our role as engineers in the 1970's, and will continue to do so in the 1980's.

IWR is pleased to have had the opportunity to make a contribution to public involvement over the past decade. Several of us on the IWR staff have had a long-standing professional commitment to the development of public involvement expertise, and it is gratifying to see the progress that has been made. It has also been pleasing to work with, and provide support to, many of the outstanding consultants in the country, to develop processes for making government even more responsive to the needs of the public.

<sup>1</sup>Borton, Warner & Wenrich, "The Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study," University of Michigan, IWR Report 70-6.

<sup>2</sup>Bishop, A. Bruce, "Public Participation in Water Resources Planning," IWR Report 70-7.

<sup>3</sup>Dahlgren, Charles W., "Public Participation in Planning: A Multi-Media Course," IWR Report 72-1.

<sup>4</sup>Ragan, James F., "Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: An Evaluation of the Program of 15 Corps of Engineers Districts," also "Summary Evaluation and Recommendations," (Internal Distribution Only), IWR Report 75-6.

<sup>5</sup>Widditsch, Ann, "Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study: An Evaluation," IWR Report 72-2.

<sup>6</sup>Bishop, A. Bruce, "Structuring Communications Programs for Public Participation in Water Resources Planning. IWR Report \_\_\_\_.

<sup>7</sup>Ortolano, Leonard, "Water Resources Decision-Making on the Basis of Public Interest," IWR Report 75-1.

<sup>8</sup>Wagner, Thomas P. and Ortolano, Leonard, "Testing an Iterative, Open Process for Water Resources Planning," IWR Report 76-2.

<sup>9</sup>Hanchey, James R., "Public Involvement in the Corps of Engineers Planning Process," IWR Report 75-R4.

<sup>10</sup>Lefkoff, Merle, "Public Involvement in General Permitting: The Sanibel Workshops."



## INTRODUCTION

The genesis for this reader was two-fold: 1) A recognition that a great deal of material had been developed for IWR-sponsored training programs which many practitioners inside and outside government believed represented an important contribution to the field of public involvement, and therefore deserved publication; and, 2) A desire to provide recognition to IWR's contribution to the field over the past decade.

It is not unusual for editors to include two, or sometimes even three, of their own articles in a reader on a topic within their areas of expertise. A quick glance at the Table of Contents for this reader will indicate that we have liberally used this editorial privilege. The reason for this relates to the first motivation for this reader: A desire to make materials available to others in the field which had previously been available only in Participant's Workbooks for IWR-sponsored training programs. Over the past few years Mr. Creighton has been privileged, to develop, under contract, the format and workbooks for three IWR courses: Executive Course; Public Involvement in Planning; Advanced Course on Public Involvement in Regulatory Functions. The materials in this reader under his authorship come from these courses.

IWR was among the first natural resources planning agencies to fund research and training in the field of public involvement, and has consistently sustained this commitment over the decade. As General Clarke's speech (page 11) indicates, at the beginning of the 70's the Corps management had gotten the word that the public was demanding something different. But as General Clarke notes, all the troops had not yet "gotten the gospel." This conclusion was certainly verified by the findings of the Technical Action Program (TAP) described in James Ragan's article (page 145). Those of us who conducted training for the "troops" during these early years can also verify that the commitment to public involvement throughout the organization was, to be generous, uneven. As a result, IWR was in the position of being a change agent, at the request of management, to bring about an attitudinal shift within the organization. Although there has not been a master strategy for the decade which has guided IWR's action, IWR has nevertheless engaged in most of the tactics of a change agent in a large organization:

- C Identifying existing conditions and problems.
- C Funding model programs.
- C Defining policies and standards for adequacy.
- C Propagating information about successful programs.
- C Providing technical assistance to the organization to solve problems "on the ground."
- C Sponsoring the development of training programs appropriate to different organizational and experience levels.

In the process of responding to the problems and requirements of the Corps, IWR has generated many studies and guides which have usefulness for other agencies (just as the Corps has benefitted from the work of other agencies). This reader is designed to provide an overview of this contribution. In many cases the

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

selection shown is a section of a larger document. For this reason you may find it useful to refer to the original references themselves, if the topic is of particular interest.

The criteria for selection of materials was as follows:

- a) The materials were either prepared by IWR staff, or the work was funded by IWR.
- b) A selection either represented a significant document in IWR's past, or is an unpublished document of significance that has previously had internal distribution only.

The only exception to these criteria is Mr. Creighton's article, "Establishing Organizational Climates for Public Involvement." Our logic for including this article was simply that it provided an important addition to the discussion of Institutional Implications and Constraints, and it followed sufficient discussions with Dr. Jerry Delli Priscoli, of IWR's staff, that it "felt" like it had been done for IWR.

In general, the structure of the reader responds to the following questions:

- c Why is public involvement necessary?
- c What are the general principles for conducting successful public involvement?
- c Who is the public?
- c How do you conduct effective public meetings?
- c What nonmeeting techniques are also a part of effective public involvement?
- c How do you evaluate public involvement?
- c How do public involvement programs interact with the organization that conducts them?
- c How might public involvement procedures developed for planning be adapted to regulatory programs?
- c What are the future trends for public involvement?

Within each section the articles often follow a rough chronology, with selections from older documents preceding more recent ones. When the materials are of roughly the same vintage, then the logic of the subject matter prevails.

We think that most who have worked in public involvement see it more as an art form rather than science. Still, artists' work can often be enhanced by knowing how others have dealt with similar problems. The articles in this reader are largely reports from practitioners and people actually engaged in trying to make public involvement work. As a result they often reflect the practitioner's bias. While being open to criticism

for not having observed all the academic formalities, e.g., some of them contain no footnotes at all, i.e., we believe the intellectual content justifies a careful reading by academics and practitioners alike.

Above all, we hope that it is one more significant contribution which IWR can make to the field of public involvement.

James L. Creighton, Saratoga California  
Jerry Delli Priscoli, IWR staff  
C. Mark Dunning, IWR staff  
Washington, D.C. February, 1983

Introduction to Section I:

THE RATIONALE AND NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This section deals with the questions: Why is public involvement necessary? What does public involvement accomplish?

The first article is actually a presentation made by Lieutenant General F. J. Clarke, at that time the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, to the first public involvement course sponsored by IWR. This presentation was made early in the decade--1971--and reflects the belief of the Corps of Engineers' top management that public involvement was essential as a means of adapting the Corps' program to the "environmental conscience" of the 70s. General Clarke also establishes another theme which recurs in this reader: implementing public involvement in a large governmental agency is not just the introduction of new procedures, but a fundamental program of change in the values and outlook of the agency.

James R. Hanchey's article describes the objectives of public involvement from the perspective of the planner. While also written early in the decade, it remains an important summary of purposes served by public involvement recognizing that public involvement has multiple objectives: 1) providing legitimacy to an agency; 2) providing an exchange of information to and from the public; and, 3) serving as a vehicle for conflict resolution.

A. Bruce Bishop's article, first published in 1970, begins with the premise that water planning is, in fact, a program of social change. This premise allows him to draw on the literature of organizational and social change to develop a framework within which the planner approaches interaction with the public as a change agent, consciously working with the community to produce desired social change.

One argument offered in opposition to public involvement is that decision makers should act as advocates for the public interest, even when that public interest may be at odds with the popular sentiment of the moment. Glendon Shubert, Jr. deals with this issue by describing the competing theories of the public interest, then analyzing their usefulness for the decision maker.

In a paper written in 1974, but not published until 1976, Creighton suggests that the current demand for public involvement has been created by a breakdown of a consensus on the social values governing the management of natural resources. The result is that competition is created among vying political interests to become the new conventional wisdom. During this struggle there is a demand for issue-by-issue accountability which puts unexpected demands on the representative form of government. Public involvement is an effort to cope with these demands.

Toward the end of the decade, Jerry Delli Priscoli provides an overview of public involvement in the context of changes in government generally. He notes that planners often make decisions of a magnitude that is really legislative rather than administrative, and discusses the relationship between public involvement and other processes of political representation.



THE CORPS' PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MANDATE

by Lieutenant General F. J. Clarke  
Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army

This is a unique opportunity for me, and I'm delighted to take advantage of it. It is a rare occasion when I can talk to representatives from each of our Civil Works districts and divisions, the Board of Engineers, the Coastal Engineering Research Center, the Waterways Experiment Station, the Institute for Water Resources, and my own staff--all at one time and in one room. I also want to acknowledge the presence of our distinguished guests and faculty who have shown their interest in what we're trying to do by being here to participate and to help. I thank them on behalf of all of us in the Corps.

I would be carrying "coals to Newcastle" if I tried to impress on you the major impact which the awakened national environmental conscience is having not only on the way we live today, but also on the way we plan for better quality living in the future.

Suffice it to say that the future quality of life in this country will depend to a great extent on how the resource management plans we formulate in the 70s are responsive to our national environmental goals. The nationwide participation by the Corps in this week-long course on Public Participation in Water Resources Planning is not only gratifying, but evidence of the Corps' commitment to assure better quality living for this and future generations.

All agencies are trying to adjust to a period of rapid change and evolution in our national concerns, values, and philosophies. Within the Corps, this is being reflected in a very large number of new directives, regulations, guidelines, and instructions being sent to you from Washington. We do our best to anticipate the problems you may face in implementing these instructions. The diversity of situations in each local area and between the local areas in which you are individually concerned is immense. Much of the guidance points to the directions that we want the Corps to go. We rely upon each of you as individuals to use your professional judgment to make it truly effective.

Such guidance is not and never should be a substitute for thinking. It is especially important to remember that in these times of rapid change, you are where you are because you have the capacity to be alert, to think, and to use common sense. Whenever you find a situation in which the guidance apparently makes no sense, a request for clarification is in order. Don't be discouraged if there are times you are told to go ahead and carry out the action anyway. Try to remember that there may be considerations and perspectives at a higher level that do make sense. I'm sure that most of the field personnel of the Corps are convinced that we in Washington are not the source of all wisdom, and I hope only a few of you believe that we think so. On the contrary, the wisdom, the insights, and the questioning we receive from the field, coming as it does from all parts of our Nation, are priceless assets.

---

These remarks were made at the first IWR Public Participation Training Program on February 2, 1971. Reprinted from: IWR Development Report 72-1, Dahlgren, Charles W., "Public Participation in Planning: A Multi-Media Course." U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, April 1972.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Yesterday you heard a discussion from some thoughtful observers of the Corps who described how the Corps appears to concerned citizens. Among professional Corps watchers--and that has become a real growth industry--I have noted one observation that recurs frequently to the effect that there are two Corps of Engineers. One in Washington and another in the field. In press conferences around the country many a reporter has told me in effect that the "higher ups" in the Corps are responsive to changing times, but that over in such-and-such a district "they ain't got religion yet." When I turn the tables on the reporter by asking him or her a few questions, it usually becomes evident that one of two situations prevail: Either there in fact has been a breakdown in communications between OCE and the field office, or, and more commonly, the apparent discrepancy results from the application of an apparently clear and simple policy to a specific complex situation. I recognize that it is much easier to "word-smith" a policy statement on public participation in planning than to apply this policy in a specific study on project. I hope that you can bridge that gap in your deliberations this week.

I want each of you to know that I consider "public participation in planning" of critical importance to the Corps' effectiveness as a public servant. It is a subject on which we have much to learn in terms of today's society, and an area I won't be satisfied with until we can truly say that the Corps is doing a superb job. This is a large task. You planners, even though you must be personally, heavily, and intimately involved, cannot do it alone. Neither can your public affairs office do it alone. I believe that by bringing these two talents together in a truly cooperative effort we can reach our goal.

Over the years, we have carried on a considerable amount of public participation in a manner which has been--if I can use the over-worked word--relevant to the times. We have even been criticized--believe it or not--for having too much participation. That kind of interaction is no longer appropriate for today's needs. In the past, we have coordinated our planning activities with a relatively small percentage of the people who have actually been concerned, and largely these were Federal, state, and local governmental officials of one kind or another. Today, there are, in addition, vast numbers of private citizens who, individually, or in groups and organizations, and through their chosen representatives, are not only keenly interested in what we are doing with the Nation's water resources, but who want to have a voice and influence in the planning and management of those resources.

And this brings up an interesting question ... who speaks for the people in the planning process? Is it the Governor, the county commission, the mayor? ... or is it the League of Women Voters, the local conservation association, the Sierra Club, or the Wildlife Federation? There is no categorical answer to either question. We look to elected officials for required assurances because they alone can meet certain required statutory requirements. However, we cannot and must not ignore the other voices which not only demand to be heard but also have a contribution to make. I hope this problem will be addressed directly and effectively in your deliberations this week.

This growing public interest is not confined to water resources but has spread to all aspects of the government. Coupled with, or perhaps stemming from, present-day mass communication facilities, it is making a radically new ball game of planning and public affairs everywhere. No one has yet sorted out all of the implications, but it may well be that future historians will point to our times as a period of significant transition in the way we govern ourselves.

In relation to our concern with water resources, this changing situation calls for a cooperative effort that rests very fundamentally on developing free and open communication links from the Corps to all concerned citizens and from them to the Corps. This is the essence of our concern over the means for communication. Communication links are the machinery which make it possible to achieve public participation and to hear all relevant voices. We welcome the prospect, but we have much to learn. We must first accept the fact that "talking to the public" is not necessarily "communicating." We must also listen and respond. Effective dialogue is perhaps more an art than a science. The distinction is probably the basic aspect of the problem that we are gathered here to overcome. The nature of our work is founded on the so-called "hard sciences" and their applications, and we have developed outstanding expertise in economics, geology, hydrology, and other "exact sciences." However, only in recent years have we developed staff capability in the "soft sciences." I hope that all of you will keep these basic facts in mind as you participate in the planning simulation and role playing exercise throughout the week. For most of us this is strange territory, but I am confident that you will explore it with enthusiasm and meet the challenge it presents.

Finally, I want to say something about a question that I know is in all of your minds, and that is the matter of making the resources available to do the job. All of us recognize that establishing communication and achieving wide public participation in the planning process, in the scope being discussed here, is going to require significant time, effort, and funds. Contrary to the perceptions of some of our critics, we do not enjoy unlimited access to the Federal Treasury, and we are going to have to take continuing hard looks at how we allocate our resources for survey reports. The problem is even more difficult in view of the added effort and cost that grows out of multiple objective planning. The IWR has underway an indepth critical analysis of the entire preauthorization planning process which should result in a solid base of information on this subject. Each of you who is responsible for preauthorization plans must also on a case-by-case basis carefully consider the allocation of resources available to you. We must also discover and learn to use the many external channels of communication that are free and open to us, and I would suggest that this is an area in which the PAO's can be particularly effective. We must also make maximum use of the resources that local interests can contribute in terms of such things as publicity, meeting facilities, and the like. Notwithstanding all these efforts, it is likely that there will still remain significant added costs which must be budgeted. Over the long range, I think we can all recognize that such added costs will be more than offset by the savings that will accrue from reduced controversy, reworking of completed reports, and, importantly, the development of a solid base for terminating reports before their completion in situations where no productive outcome can be foreseen.



THE OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

by James R. Hanchey

Introduction

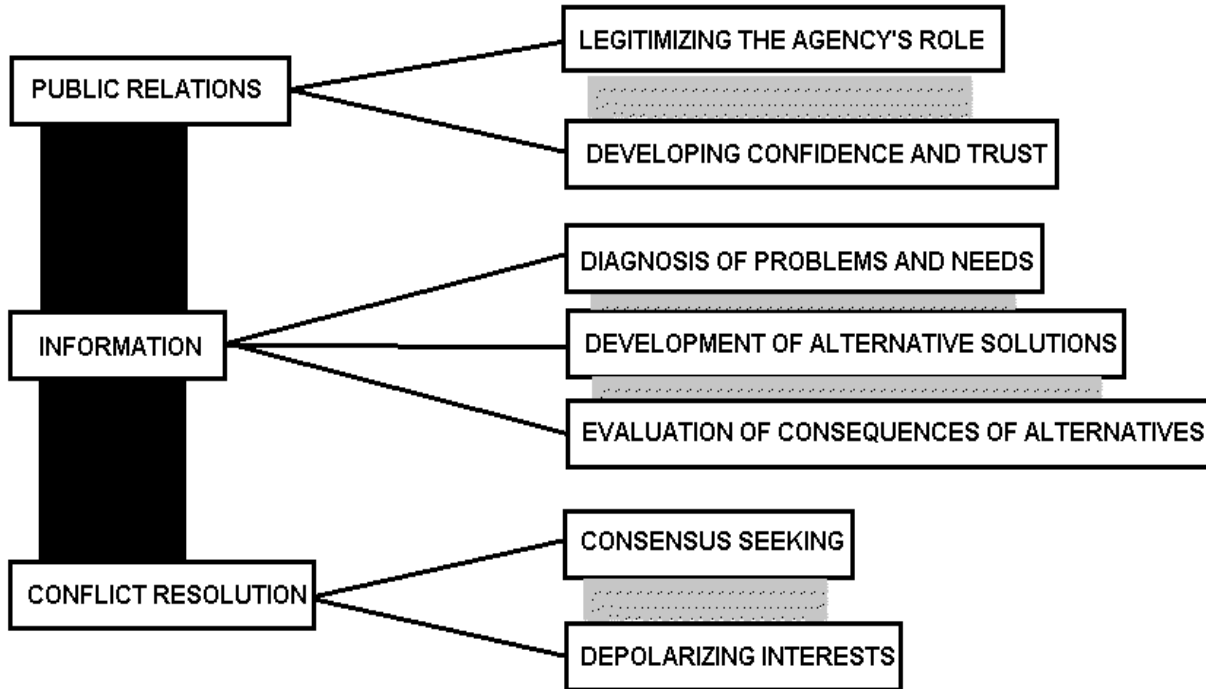
Despite the increased attention given to public participation in planning by many of the Federal agencies involved in the development and management of natural resources, the initial efforts to implement this concept reflect numerous uncertainties about the development of effective programs, and the absence of criteria by which to measure its effectiveness and overall worth. This at least partially stems from the fact that there has seldom been an adequate resolution in policy or practice of what is expected to be accomplished by involving the public in planning.

Some of the more common reasons given in planning directives as justification for a public role in planning, deal with such issues as facilitating agency programs by development of community consensus, the creation of a favorable public image toward the agency and its planning procedures, and providing for an adequate exchange of information between the agency and the public. General objectives such as these offer the planner very little guidance in his attempts to effectively involve the public in water planning activities. These efforts are made more difficult because there are many objectives which can be achieved by public participation and there is no single procedure, such as public hearings, which is effective in achieving all of them. Rather, there are a wide variety of public involvement techniques from which the planner can choose, and decisions must be made initially and throughout the planning process as to which techniques to use, when to use them, and how to apply them. In order to make these decisions it is important that the objectives of public participation be clearly spelled out and that the techniques which are used are structured for those specific objectives. The techniques which are used depend on such variables as the particular "publics" concerned, the relevant information requirements, the overall planning situation, and time, resources, and skills available, including those that can be contributed by the public and outside consultants.

Three general objectives are suggested which should be considered by the planner in the design of a public participation program for a specific planning situation. These are referred to as: 1) the public relations objective; 2) the information objective; and, 3) the conflict resolution objective. These general objectives are broken down into eight second-order objectives which serve to clarify and to provide workable concepts for both the design and evaluation of such programs (Figure 1).

---

Reprinted from: IWR Development Report 72-1. Dahlgren, Charles W., "Public Participation in Planning: A Multi-Media Course." U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, April 1972.



**Figure 1 - Objectives of Public Participation**

I. Public Relations Objective

The public relations objective is based on the premise that in order for the planning agency to develop plans which have broad public support and acceptance, the public must view the agency's role in the planning process as legitimate, and must have confidence and trust in the agency and its planning procedure.

Legitimizing the Agency's Role in the Planning Process. The need for legitimizing the agency's role in the planning process results from the fact that the public is frequently uninformed about the responsibilities and the authorities of the planning agency. A large measure of the public dissatisfaction with water resource plans stems from a failure by the public to recognize and understand that the agency operates under constraints imposed upon it by higher authority. There are limitations to the authority of the planning agency to undertake certain alternative solutions which may be desired by the public. In certain circumstances, this may lead to a disparity between the capability of the agency to satisfy community needs and the expectations of the community. This is a manifestation of the more general disparity between the global manner in which citizens perceive community problems and needs, and the compartmentalized structure of public programs designed

to meet them. This disparity can result in a loss of legitimacy for the agency unless the constraints under which it operates are fully understood by the public. This indicates that one of the initial tasks in a planning study should be to inform the public about the agency's authorities, responsibilities, operating procedures, and constraints. It should be noted however, that an agency cannot maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the public if the public doesn't accept these limitations as being legitimate. The agency must, therefore, continually be alert for changes in public values in this respect, and be ready to modify those procedures and constraints over which they have control, and to urge and support changes in their authority and responsibility which require action by others. An example which will help clarify this concept can be found in the recent shift to multiobjective planning by the Federal water resources agencies. When it became apparent that the public was no longer satisfied with national economic efficiency as the sole criterion for evaluation of water projects, the agencies played a large role in having the objectives of Federal water resources development expanded to include such considerations as environmental quality. The Federal agencies have thus improved the legitimacy of their authority and responsibility. However, the agency operating procedures and policies for the implementation of these new objectives must still stand the test of public scrutiny, and must also be subject to modification if they are found to lack legitimacy by the public.

Development of Confidence and Trust. Another important factor is the development of confidence and trust by the public toward the planning agency. Hovland, et al. (1953, p. 21), suggests two factors which affect an individual's tendency to accept a conclusion advocated by a communicator: (1) the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions (his "expertness"); and, (2) the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid (his "trustworthiness"). In the absence of this confidence and trust, communication between the agency and the public is likely to break down. Poor communication enhances the possibility of error and misinformation of the sort which is likely to reinforce the lack of confidence and trust in the agency. If an agency is to communicate effectively, it must strive to develop and maintain an image of itself as the most reliable source of information available on water resources issues. This does not necessarily mean that the agency must be perceived by the public as the leading expert in all aspects of water resources technology, but rather that they will perform the function of gathering all the information necessary for the study, relying as appropriate on outside sources of expertise. In order to maintain this image of reliability, the agency must demonstrate a willingness to develop information on all aspects of the planning problem and to share this information with the public even though some of it might be damaging to programs or solutions which the agency favors. The agency must also avoid giving the impression that it favors certain alternatives early in the study; rather it should present the image of an objective investigator of all alternatives.

The word "image" is stressed in this discussion because the key to this concept is in the public's perception of the agency's expertise and objectiveness. It is not sufficient that the agency actually possess these qualities; the public must be convinced of this as well. On the other hand, the fact that public perceptions are involved also means that an agency might attempt to create a favorable image of itself by merely going through the motions of public participation. Very likely it will not take long for at least some segments of the public to sense that the process of participation is not genuine and as a result otherwise sound and basically acceptable plans may be opposed. It follows, therefore, that if the agency is to gain the public's confidence and trust over the long term, the image which the agency attempts to create must be matched by reality.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### II. Information Objective

The information objective deals with the stage of the planning process in which the planner determines the problems to be solved during the planning effort and searches for solutions which are acceptable to the public. There are three separate concepts making up this objective: 1) the diagnosis of community problems and needs; 2) development of alternative solutions; and, 3) the evaluation of the consequences of solutions.

Diagnosis of Community Problems and Needs. Quite frequently water resources projects have been rejected by the public because the planner and the public had a different view of the local problems which needed solution. This is partly because people do not have the same values and thus do not perceive the same problems, even when viewing the same situation. Water planners, because of self-perceptions of superior qualifications and knowledge, often tend to discount the way the general public views a problem. Wilson (1971, p. 109) reported that over four-fifths of the Federal water resources planners interviewed by him expressed the opinion that the public generally lacked competence in technical areas and nearly two-thirds felt that the public was unaware of the issues involved in water resources planning. In addition, the public was seen as lacking in objectivity and extremely parochial in their viewpoint. The public, because of their view of the technician as a narrow specialist with no appreciation for social values, often has equally unfavorable attitudes toward the planner's problem perception. As an example, in one of the case studies presented later in this report, the Corps of Engineers originally considered construction of a leveed floodway through an area which was frequently flooded, in order that urban development of the area could occur. This plan was later abandoned when it was learned that a large segment of the local community was opposed to the development of this area and considered the major problem to be one of devising means to insure that the land, which was privately held, would be preserved in its natural state.

It follows that public participation techniques should provide the planner with an opportunity to test his perceptions of the local community problems and needs stems from the fact that large-scale water development projects are frequently very disruptive to the local community and to the general environment of the area. In other words, a project may create almost as many problems as it solves. The planner must then assure that the local community has an adequate knowledge of the possible adverse effects of solutions to the problem under investigation, and that the community prefers the new problems to the old.

In order to overcome this second difficulty, the planner must attempt to explicate the conceivable implications of possible problem solutions. This is to be distinguished from the thorough evaluation of the consequences of alternative solutions which would take place as a part of the choice process between alternatives later in the study. The object at this early stage should be to assist the public in evaluating their problems and to aid the planner in insuring that all affected interests are provided with an opportunity to participate in the structuring of the problems.

Development of Alternative Solutions. The need for involving the public during this stage of the study is based on the advantages to the planner of being able to test the social and political feasibility of alternatives early in the study. The purpose of public involvement at this early stage should be to allow the planner to begin to bracket the range of social and political feasibility early in the study, in order that more of the planning effort can be confined to plans more likely to be feasible and acceptable with the result that the planning process will more likely lead to a productive outcome. The planner should be careful, however, that



he does not prematurely discard alternatives. This may happen for two reasons. First, it is very likely that the "public" as it is first encountered does not represent the full range of interests which will be affected by the ultimate plan, and thus, initial feasibility limits may not accurately reflect the actual community feelings. Second, social and political feasibilities do not have fixed predetermined limits. They depend to a significant extent upon a clear understanding of the possibilities and the significance of choice. These limits are subject to change as the planning process progresses and increased information is exchanged between the participants.

Another reason for public involvement in the development of alternative solutions is because of the recognition that not only does the local community have problems which it wishes the planner to aid in solving, but it also occasionally has an awareness of potential solutions. Often solutions suggested by the public are ignored by the professional planner because they are advanced at the wrong point in the study, are not very clearly thought out, or are presented in an unorganized manner. This happens largely because the public does not know the proper time to advance solutions and because they are rarely consulted by the planner at the proper time. While public participation might never be the major source of alternative solutions, it might contribute to the enlargement of the set of alternatives by providing ideas on variations of proposed alternatives to meet particular problems. Quite often a slight variation of an alternative may receive a quite different reaction from the public than the original alternative, particularly if the change is in response to a specific local problem.

Another benefit from involving the public in the development of the alternative solutions is that in doing so, a commitment to change may be created among the participants. Often individuals and groups resist solutions and plans which are imposed upon them. As Burke (1968, p. 289) points out, "the making of decisions, the working through of the problem, so to speak, are the dynamic factors which change behavior." In order to give the public a real sense of participation in the development of alternatives, it is necessary that they be consulted at an early stage in the study, before the planner has suggested all the most likely feasible solutions.

Evaluation of the Implications of Solutions. One of the major purposes of involving the public in planning is to produce plans which are consistent with local community values. In order to do this the planner is faced with the difficult task of getting the public to articulate their values. Even if the planner were successful in obtaining an expression of individual values, it would be impossible to aggregate them into a combined community value index which would be helpful in determining the proper solution to the community's problems. Although the planner may encounter difficulty in working with the concept of community values, he can indirectly approach this problem by structuring the choice process so that community values are, in a sense, revealed. In other words, he can allow the public to make a series of value judgments regarding alternative solutions to the problem. In order to do this, alternative solutions embodying quite different values must be developed so that the public can get a feel for the implications of different values.

Arrow (1951, p. 22) in discussing conflicting values on decisions about resource allocation argues that it is not necessary to explicitly stipulate these values, rather all that is required is to be able to decide between various possible outcomes which would result from alternative courses of action. To make a decision between two or more different alternatives, it is not necessary to make deductions from formulated principles. A decision can be made simply by taking into account all the features of each alternative outcome that are subject to preference.

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

Arrow has stated the position in this way: "As with any type of behavior described by maximization, the measurability of social welfare need not be assumed; all that matters is the existence of a social ordering ... all that is needed to define such an ordering is to know the relative ranking of each pair of alternatives." This means that individuals need not explicitly formulate their values and organize them in order of priority. Therefore, all the unconscious psychological mechanisms which influence value judgments are allowed to operate freely. One can make a decision by selecting the alternative which subjectively seems superior without rationalizing the basis of his decision. Since choices are judged by their outcomes, value judgments require calculations that extend into the future. For the public to make rational value judgments, they must be supplied with not only the alternatives, but the future consequences of the selection of each alternative in as much detail as possible. Although the planner will have the major responsibility for developing and providing this information, the public, by virtue of their familiarity with the community, may also play a role in forecasting the consequences of the selection of certain alternatives.

Unfortunately, even though the planner is successful in obtaining individual preference orderings of a range of alternatives embodying different values, it is unlikely that these will be consistent among all participants in the study, because of the different values held by individuals and groups in the local community. This results in the need for an additional objective for public participation, the conflict resolution objective.

### III. Conflict Resolution Objective

Conflicts among the participants in a water resources study may arise from differences in opinions or beliefs; it may reflect differences in interests, desires, or values; or it may occur as a result of a scarcity of some resource. Conflict can occur in a cooperative or competitive context and will be strongly influenced by the processes of conflict resolution employed by the planner. There are two concepts which are useful in describing a favorable approach to conflict resolution, consensus seeking and the avoidance of extreme positions. It should be noted that these components of the conflict resolution objectives are not independent of the other two objectives; rather they are influenced to a great extent by the degree to which the planner has been successful in achieving the other objectives.

Consensus Seeking. Consensus seeking can be described as cooperative problem solving in which the conflicting parties have the joint interest of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution. Deutsch (1968, p. 23) has given a number of reasons why a cooperative process is likely to lead to a productive conflict resolution:

1. It aids open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants. The freedom to share information enables the parties to confront the underlying issues involved in the conflict, and to facilitate the definition of the problems which they are confronting. Open and honest communication also reduces the likelihood of the development of misunderstanding which can lead to confusion and mistrust.
2. It encourages the recognition of the legitimacy of the other party's interests and of the necessity for searching for a solution which is responsive to the needs of each side. Influence attempts tend to be limited to processes of persuasion.
3. It leads to a trusting, friendly attitude which increases sensitivity to similarities and common interests, while minimizing the salience of differences.

However, in itself, cooperation does not insure that problem-solving efforts will be successful. Such other factors as the imaginativeness, experience, and flexibility of the parties involved are also determinates.

There are a number of factors, over which the planner has control, which can influence whether the conflict resolution effort will be a cooperative or competitive process.

The first is the approach used by the planner in attempting to gain acceptance of a decision. Such tactics as coercion, threat, and deception lead to a competitive orientation, while openness and a sharing of authority and information lead to a cooperative or a competitive process. The planner should avoid, if possible, references to his ultimate authority in the decision-making process or to the possibility that lack of community agreement will result in abandonment of agency efforts to solve the local problems.

The prior relationship between the parties in a conflict is a strong determinate of the course which the conflict resolution effort will take. Experiences of successful prior cooperative relationships will enhance the possibility of present cooperation. This concept is closely related to the objective of the development of confidence and trust discussed earlier. Thus, it can be seen that cooperative actions by a planner in a current study can enhance his ability to reach agreement with the public in future studies.

Finally, the attitudes, strength, and resources of interested third parties are often crucial determinants. Thus, a conflict is more likely to be resolved cooperatively if powerful and prestigious third parties encourage such a resolution and help to provide problem-solving resources to expedite discovery of a mutually satisfactory solution. This is particularly important when the conflict is between two groups within the public, rather than between the planning agency and the public. In this case, the agency can be a major factor in limiting the controversy and guiding the conflicting parties toward a mutually acceptable solution by adopting the position of an impartial arbiter and by providing the opportunities for interaction between the groups.

Avoidance of Extreme Positions. Quite frequently, conflicts over water resources issues have been perceived by participants as situations where a party to the conflict can take only one of two positions: for or against. This is unfortunate in that it implies that what is good for one party is necessarily bad for the other. Anyone who perceives it as such, must of course, align himself with one of the two positions.

Deutsch (1968, p. 12) calls such a situation (where if one gains, the other loses), a competitive process, and describes some of the effects which result from such a relationship. First, communication between the conflicting parties is unreliable and impoverished. The available communication channels are not utilized or they are used in an attempt to mislead or intimidate the other. Little confidence is placed in information that is obtained directly from the other party; more circuitous means of obtaining information are relied upon.

A competitive process also stimulates the view that the solution of the conflict can only be of the type that is imposed by one side on the other by superior force, deception, or cleverness. The enhancement of one's own power and the complementary minimization of the other's power become objectives. The attempt to create or maintain a power difference favorable to one's own side by each of the conflicting parties tends to expand the scope of the conflict as it enlarges from a focus on the immediate issue in dispute, to a conflict over who shall have the power to impose his preference upon the other.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Finally, it leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude which increases the sensitivity to differences and threats, while minimizing the awareness of similarities of interests between the opposing parties.

An examination of the factors which tend to force the conflict into a competitive process provide some clues for the planner who would like to avoid such a situation. Deutsch points out that competitive processes are most likely to occur when there is misjudgment and misperception on the part of one or more of the parties involved in a conflict. The planner then must strive to maintain reasonably full communication between the opposing interests and should search out and make use of common values and common interests which could serve as a basis for the formation of cooperative bonds. The adoption of a polarized position also depends, to some extent, on the perception by the opposing interests of the flexibility of the other parties' position. If one of the parties to a conflict is perceived to be unwilling to significantly modify his position, the other party is left little choice but to adopt the opposite extreme position as a defensive measure. The planner should avoid presenting issues to the public in a manner such that the agency's position is perceived to be rigid. This is likely to occur when only one plan is presented to the public for consideration. The public is left with very little choice but to be "for" or "against" the plan. The reference to constraints imposed by higher authority on agency action as a justification of the agency position also contributes to a perception by the public of a rigid agency position. Here the planner is in a dilemma; quite often constraints, such as the benefit-cost ratio, do operate to make his position inflexible. In these cases, it is important that these constraints have been presented to the public, understood, and accepted by them at an early stage in the planning process. It can be seen that the achievement of the "public relations" objective discussed earlier, can aid significantly in the achievement of the "conflict resolution" objective.

While each of the public participation objectives discussed above is important, the relative importance between them will no doubt vary from study to study. For example, in certain areas because of past unfavorable experiences the planner may feel that the public relations objective should be emphasized and may decide to devote the major portion of available resources to this objective. The techniques which are selected for involving the public in the study should reflect this desired emphasis. The planner can choose from a wide variety of public participation techniques; including such things as public meetings, news releases, citizen advisory boards, or informational brochures. Decisions as to which techniques should be used, when they should be used, and how they should be used, must be made during the first phase of the planning process, and must be reviewed and updated throughout the process as the planner gains insight into the community forces shaping the study. The planner in attempting to make these determinations should be guided by two principles: 1) the objectives of involving the public in the study should be clearly spelled out; and, 2) the techniques used should be designed to meet these objectives.

The next chapter discusses the general scope of the water resources planning activities of the Corps of Engineers, the policies of the organization with respect to public involvement in studies, and an overview of the extent of participatory techniques used in recent studies.

Bibliography

1. Hovland, Carl I., Janis, Irving L., and Kelley, Harold H. 1953. Communication and Persuasion, Yale University Press, New Haven.
2. Wilson, Raymond H. 1971. Toward a Philosophy of Planning: An Investigation Into Attitudes Held by Federal Water Resources Planners, Report EEP-42, Project on Engineering-Economic Planning, Stanford University.
3. Arrow, Kenneth, J. 1951. Social Choice and Individual Values, John Wiley & Sons, New York.
4. Deutsch, Morton. Jan. 1969. "Conflicts: Productive and Destructive," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. XXIII, No. 1.



PLANNING AS A PROCESS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

by A. Bruce Bishop

Water Resources Development and the Process of Change

The relationship between a public work and social change is one of both cause and effect. In the past, water development was considered to represent the effect of social and economic change rather than its cause. Viewed in this light, the water supply, flood control, and navigation projects can validly be considered the effect of such social forces as an expanding population, and the need for water for municipal, industrial, trade, and recreation, and changes in economic conditions which attract people to different areas. Accepting water development as an effect of these forces, planning has been concerned basically with existing or anticipated needs.

The other view is that water development is an instrument of social policy since it can serve to stimulate economic and social change. Community response to this stimulus will of course depend on the capacity, ability, and desire to change which exists in the areas to be served and on the planned use of the water resources. This places a significant responsibility on communities and state agencies to determine those changes deemed desirable in the community and those that are not, and the possibilities, if any, for stimulating or preventing them through the location and design or deference of water resources projects.

A Descriptive Model of Planning

Just as with the physical problems of engineering, if engineers are to successfully plan public works involving social change, they need models which describe this process. Such models should define the functions of the planning process, and the range of choices open to planners in deciding the means by which to approach planning problems. This includes the types of decisions which are made, the process by which planned change occurs, and the relationships of the participants in the planning process. With such understandings, the planner can operate more effectively in his role as an agent of change. He can focus not just on the end product of planning, but on how to structure the planning process in order to produce a product which achieves a more widely accepted solution to the wants and needs of society.

Engineering of Planned Change

The basic purpose of engineering planning is controlling and guiding the changes made in man's environment to serve his needs and best interests. A typology adapted from Bennis (1961, p. 154) lends insight into the kinds of change processes which might occur within our political and economic structure. This is described in Table 1.

The approach to water resource development may be either planned or technocratic change since it entails intentional goal setting which may or may not be mutual. In the past our approach has been primarily technocratic. However, if "planning" in its broadest sense is to be a reality, intentional mutual goal setting through public participation is required.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

Table 1: Typology of Change Processes

Planner-Community Relationship	Approach to Goal Setting	
	Intentional by planner and community	Nonintentional by planner, or community, or both sides
Mutual Goal Setting	Planned Change	Interactional Change
Non-Mutual Goal Setting (or goals set by one side)	Technocratic Change <sup>a</sup>	Change Without Goals

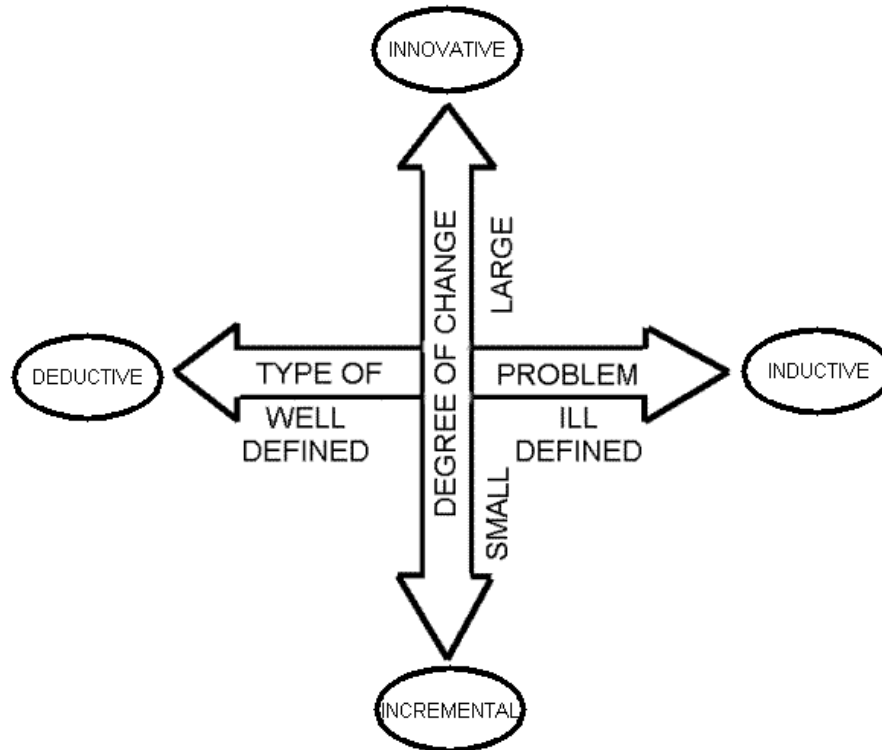
<sup>a</sup>The technologist sets the goals whether or not there is participation of the other side.

In discussing water planning, as one area of engineering planning, some consideration must be given to the nature of and approaches to planned change. Figure 1 depicts the dimensions of planning problems and relates them to the range of approaches to planning. At one end of the spectrum, planning is deductive with a definite course of action for achieving desired goals. Design is completed before any steps are taken toward its realization. Deductive planning suggests the ability to plan comprehensively, using rational methods of analysis that employ quantitative techniques and decision rules. It seeks to evaluate the short and long run effects of the alternatives and weigh the benefits against the costs to determine an optimal decision. This planning approach works well in the setting of a well-defined problem. At the other end of the spectrum, inductive planning applies more to the ill-defined problem, and attempts mainly to resolve conflicts of interest. The solution is usually synthesized as the result of interaction between political or other forces.

In another dimension, planning may be either innovative or incremental. In incremental planning, an optimal distribution of resources among systems is sought through small changes from the status quo, while the innovative mode leaps into a new state of affairs through large transformations of the existing situation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For a detailed discussion of the incremental approach, see Braybrooke and Lindbloom (1963). Other aspects of planning approaches are discussed by Bruck, et al., (1967), Friedmann (1966), and Petersen (1966).





**Figure 1 – Approaches to Planned Change**

Public works affect many different social and political bodies and bring large changes to the physical, social, and economic structure of society. In this kind of setting, comprehensive planning, although often held to be ideal, is very difficult to achieve in practice since both tools and data are lacking. But the development of such tools is an important long-term objective. Even if tools were available, however, this approach does little about overcoming the tensions between the political system and the requirements of comprehensive planning (Bolan, 1967, p. 234). In other words, a comprehensive analysis may develop excellent plans and solutions that are completely unacceptable to the affected parties, and therefore politically infeasible in terms of being implemented.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that an inductive and innovative approach is more appropriate for many aspects of public works planning. Such approaches depend on understanding planning as an ongoing process where the accomplishment of planning tasks depends on the participants and their communication with one another as well as on the ability to design and evaluate the physical plans. Planning and decision making are part of a process of social change involving a number of issues and interest groups. Planning cannot proceed only on the basis of future predicted events, but must recognize the possibility of stimulating desirable social change (or preventing undesirable change) as part of alternative solutions, in conjunction with

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

the other legitimate objectives in maintaining the community environment. Planning must be recognized as an adaptive process, i.e., sequential in time and capable of moving in many different directions. As Petersen (1966, p. 136) points out:

1. Planning concerns a process and not a state; it pertains not to some idealized future, but to the mode of moving from the present.
2. A plan for the physical or social environment has utility only as a step in a means-end continuum that casually relates the physical workmanship to the socioeconomic and political.

### Development of the Need for Change

It is helpful to classify the participants in the change process into two interacting parties, the change agent and the client system (Lippitt, et al., 1958). In this relationship the change agent is seeking change or helping it occur, and the client system consists of those being helped. In the context of water resources planning, the responsible planning agency practically always emerges in the role of change agent. However, in the community structure it is possible for different interests to assume the roles of both change agent as an active promoter of resource development, and the client system as one who is affected by the change. In other instances, the community groups may act solely in the role of client system. One of the important tasks for the planner is to identify the interest groups in the community and the roles which they may assume in the planning process.

A process of planned change typically begins with problem awareness. This is translated into a need and desire to change. In the relationship between the planner and the community, problem awareness should revolve around water resource problems and needs as part of overall community planning. The development of need may come from:

1. The Agency Planner. The planner, acting as change agent, finds certain difficulties in the basin system such as flooding, pollution, water shortages, or significant changes in land use or recreation patterns, and offers help or takes steps to stimulate the community to an awareness of the problem.
2. The Community. The community becomes aware of difficulties and seeks help. Local desires should be a significant factor in the decision to undertake planning studies. These are usually expressed in the form of resolutions from city and county government bodies, or requests of state legislators, ultimately leading to congressional resolutions.
3. A Third Party. An industry considering location in the community or a consulting engineer working on a problem may suggest the need for water resources studies.

Many problems in planning may be due to the failure of the planner and the community to agree on the need for a study. For example, if the planner attempts to convince the community of the need, the community must assess the validity of the diagnosis and the urgency of the proposed studies. If the community suggests the need, then the planner must assess the extent of the community's desire for the study. In cases where the agency proceeds with a study unilaterally, as when operating solely on the basis of a congressional directive

and a rigid program of planning and construction, then the community is likely to be unresponsive. If both agree on the need, then a viable change relationship can be established; otherwise, there could be conflict from the outset.

In developing the need for change, an important consideration, then, is the means by which decisions are made to undertake particular planning studies. Agreement between the planner and the community upon the existence of a problem which demands a study of feasible solutions is extremely important.

#### Establishment of a Change Relationship

A workable change relationship between change agent and client system is essential to the success of the planning process. Yet, in water resources planning, establishing the proper working relationship between the agency and affected interests in the community is often neglected.

Establishing a successful change relationship requires a "legitimization" of the planning process. This entails a full understanding between the agency and the communities as to the exact procedure of the study, the institutional arrangements and responsibilities, and the possible ultimate outcomes. All parties need to recognize that the purpose and intent of the study is to develop a comprehensive plan and that a decision will be made. The studies should always include nonstructural and "statusquo" alternatives as possible decision outcomes. The activities and timing in the study, and decisions to be made should be outlined from the time of commencing studies through to its final submission to the Congress.

Other important factors in establishing change relationship include:

1. Client System's Perception of Change Agent. The community's perceptions of the agency with respect to estimates of its ability to give help, its inferred motives, and its attributed friendliness or unfriendliness are important to the change relationship. Government agencies have a particularly difficult task altering their images as large impersonal organizations into something that can be dealt with by a community. As Lippitt, et al., (1958, p. 134) note:

"Often the client system seems to be seeking assurance that the potential change agent is different enough from the client system to be a real expert and yet enough like it to be thoroughly understandable and approachable ... (and) will identify himself with the client system's problems and sympathize with the system's needs and values, but who will at the same time be neutral enough to take a genuinely objective and different view of the system's predicament."

In the minds of community interests, the agency should qualify as the expert in water resource development and demonstrate that it is sensitive to the effects on the community of any action that might be taken. The agency planners must accept the necessity and responsibility of convincing the community that it is prepared to understand and work with the community's needs and values.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

2. The Client System's Role. If a successful change relationship is to develop, the community must be aware of its responsibilities to the change agent (Lippitt, et al., 1958, pp. 134-135).

"...the client system must ... (understand) about the kind and degree of effort which must be put forth in the collaboration with the potential change agent. The client must not only understand the arrangement but he must at least tentatively agree to it."

This emphasizes the importance of legitimizing planning so that all parties are agreed and committed to the change process.

Establishing the proper change relationship and legitimizing the planning process are partly organizational and procedural questions. As Lippitt, et al., (1958, pp. 135-136) state:

"Usually one subpart is more ready to change than others. Hence, this subpart must attempt to engage the sympathy of the other subparts toward the projected plan of establishing a working relationship with an outside source of help .... The success or failure of almost any change project depends heavily upon the quality and the workability of the relationship between the change agent and the client system ...."

In the organizational and institutional structure, the main concern is the kind of working relationship that should be sought between the change agents and clients. This is a question of what might be termed "planning strategy."

Working Toward Change

The phase of working toward change in water resources planning covers the full range of tasks involved in arriving at alternative sets of physical plans, nonstructural alternatives, or maintaining the status quo. This involves decisions at levels in the hierarchical structure which produce integrated subbasin studies and finally a set of alternatives. These decisions evolve through three subphases of working toward change.

Diagnosis of the System. The essential purpose of the system diagnosis is to provide the planners with information on which to base decisions about broad alternative approaches. Consideration should be given to how and from whom information is obtained:

1. Defensive Reaction of Vested Interests. Often change relationships may be impaired as information is gathered, unless defensive reactions can be anticipated and avoided (Lippitt, et al., 1958, p. 137).

"This is the point at which vested interests--either particular pressure blocs within social units or particular segments of the individual personality--are likely to become aware of the threat which is posed by change, and their defensive reactions may smash the whole mechanism of collaboration between the system and the agent."

2. Hostility of the Client System. Because of past experiences with planning studies, preconceived ideas about the agency and its objectives, or fears about alteration of the status quo, the community may develop hostilities toward the planner. Such hostility may exist even though the community ostensibly continues to cooperate. For these reasons, it is important not to propose solutions at this stage. Instead, the development of social and economic data can promote cooperation between the planners and the community, and can provide valuable information on the community's structure and needs.

Setting Community Goals. This subphase deals with transforming diagnostic insights into definite sets of community goals and relating them to the potential changes that can be induced by various projects and alternative plans. The hierarchical levels of decision involved in relating goals and potential change may be expressed in physical terms by specifying the problem areas which are of greatest interest to the community. Success or failure in defining community goals depends on the kinds of mechanism in the community to undertake this process, and the relationship between the community and the planner.

Development of Alternatives for Change. Lippitt, et al., view development of alternatives for change as a transformation of intentions into actual change efforts. In the planning process the objective of this phase is to develop a set of alternatives. These alternatives must be understood to represent the ultimate physical realization of the change process. If any one of them is to be implemented, at this time it must have the sympathetic acceptance of the various subparts of the community and of affected parties.

Because water resources planning studies often span a considerable period of time, maintaining continuity in planning falls to the agency since people and office holders move on. It follows that the type and quality of community participation during this phase depends to a large extent on the policies agreed upon in establishing the change relationship, and on the type of planning strategy which is adopted.

### Stabilization of Change

Lippitt, et al., in looking at change in the behavioral sense, note that unless attributes are fixed by becoming institutionalized, they may regress to their previous state. In public works planning in general, and water planning in particular, the process of change becomes stabilized through the period of public evaluation of alternatives. Choosing among alternatives requires, in part, direct public confrontation of the planners, and local government officials, interest and pressure groups, and the general public. Stabilization requires a period of adjustment to the decision by the affected parties and may not be completed until after the programs, plans, and/or projects have been implemented.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Achieving a Terminal Relationship

Achieving a terminal relationship does not imply that after the implementation of plans the need for any further planning is terminated. Adjustments and changes are induced by programs and projects after they are operational. The need for an active relationship between the client and change agent must extend beyond the project completion in order to correct, where possible, any undesirable short and long term effects of the project which were not foreseen. Items that should be considered for a successful terminal planning relationship are:

1. The unforeseen problems caused by a completed physical facility or a program plan.
2. Immediate short term effects of placing the completed project into operation.
3. Implementation of long range future plans in connection with a facility or program.
4. Maintenance of working relationship for undertaking new planning studies and/or projects in the future.
5. Evaluation of community consequences of programs or projects in order to provide a data base for projecting effects of projects yet to be planned and built.

These items encompass the important kinds of decisions and adjustment in the operation of the facility.

### Conclusions

In this descriptive analysis of planning, a number of conditions based on theoretical and case studies of planned change have been identified which are necessary if planning is to proceed efficiently and effectively. These include:

1. That the planners, state agencies, and community groups should have an awareness of the problems which may require change and agree to the need for a study.
2. That establishing workable change relationships depends on "legitimizing" the planning process, i.e., getting agreement on the way in which the study will be organized and conducted.
3. That an important element of working toward change is the exchange of information. This begins with a diagnosis of the basin and its communities through socioeconomic studies. Otherwise the process can be disrupted by a misunderstanding of the agency and its motives, or of the community's responsibility for participation.
4. That stabilizing change and achieving a terminal relation depends on an acceptance of the final decision, and a continuation of the planning relation after the facility is operational.

The importance of these conditions, particularly with respect to local community attitudes toward the planning procedures, have been demonstrated through research on the planning process.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>See Bishop (1969).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bennis, Warren G. 1961. "A Typology of Change Process" in Bennis, W. G., Benne, K. D. and Chin, R. (Eds.) The Planning of Change, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. pp. 154-156.
- Bishop, A. Bruce, "Socio-Economic and Community Factors in Planning Urban Freeways." Report EEP-33, Project on Engineering - Economic Planning. Stanford, California: Stanford University, 1969.
- Braybrooke, David and Lindholm, Charles. A Strategy of Decision - Policy Evaluation as a Social Process. New York: Free Press, 1963.
- Bruck, M. W., Mannheim, M. L. and Shuldiner, P. W. "Transportation Systems Planning as a Process," Transportation Research Forum Papers, 8th Annual Meeting, Oxford, Indiana: The Richard B. Cross Co., 1967. pp. 67-98.
- Friedman, John. "Planning as Innovation: The Chilean Case," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 32, No. 4 (July 1966). pp. 194-204.
- Lippitt, Ronald, Watson, Jeanne, and Westley, Bruce. The Dynamics of Planned Change, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1958.
- Peterson, William. "On Some Meanings of Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, Vol. 32, No. 3 (May 1966). pp. 130-1





THE CONCEPT OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST

by Glendon Schubert, Jr.

[This is an adaption of an article by Dr. Schubert by the editor, for use in IWR Training Programs.]

THE UNACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC OFFICIAL

The decision-making power of nonelected government administrators poses a problem for democratic theory. The democratic mandate for elected officials comes from the fact that they can be booted from office at the next election. Theoretically, government administrators are accountable to elected officials, so this provides some indirect accountability back to the people. In reality, however, government is now so large and complex (and civil service provides so much job security) that government administrators make innumerable decisions daily, with only the most controversial ever known to elected officials. The question becomes: "How can we ensure that nonelected public officials are acting on behalf of the public interest?"

The prevailing theory of how to cope with this that has dominated administrative law is that the way to solve the problem of the official endowed with discretionary powers is to increase the definiteness of legal standards (including statutes and administrative rules), decreasing the area of discretionary authority. Recent theorists have argued that this is based on an oversimplified view of the kind of discretion that officials have. They see officials as having three kinds of discretionary authority: 1) technical discretion in which the ends or goals are well-defined, but the official has discretion on how best those goals can be met; 2) discretion both in determining how goals are met, and in establishing criteria for goals that are vague, e.g., "clean water," "hazardous substances," etc.; and, 3) discretion in determining actions which should be taken, while the goals themselves are still in dispute.

Only the first of these kinds of discretionary powers lends itself to the clarifications of administrative law. In the second case the official is actually in a position to define the standards against which programs (and therefore his/her performance) will be measured. In the third case, where there is a dispute over goals, there can either be a paralysis of action, the official can--if his agency possesses exceptional authority--proceed based on his own values and beliefs, or more likely, the official must use his ingenuity in political mediation.

These last two categories are of particular importance to the Corps' programs because both these conditions often exist: 1) The criteria which are to be applied, containing such phrases as "cumulative impact" are sufficiently vague that there are wide differences in interpretation and practice; and, 2) while the regulations exist, there is by no means consensus within the society on the goals implicit in those regulations, so that each question of interpretation becomes a new battleground for the conflicting interests. The Corps, motivated by practical realism, finds itself in a position of having to create processes for political mediation and problemsolving if it is to both break the decision-making impasse and provide the accountability to the public which is a fundamental of democratic society. Public involvement is the primary means by which this mediation can take place.

DEFINING THE PUBLIC INTEREST

But the question which is asked frequently about public involvement is whether it will result in "the public interest," or whether public officials have an obligation to act on behalf of "the public interest" regardless of what various affected interests may say? The answer to that question requires some clarification of what the public interest is.

The problem of determining the public interest exists in every society. At various times the public interest has been defined by kings, priesthoods, military dictatorships, parliaments, etc. Each claims to represent the public interest. In a democratic society any claim for authority in determining the public interest must result ultimately on the mandate of the people, rather than claims to divine knowledge, royal prerogatives, or superior wisdom.

There are three competing theories about what the public interest is which emerge in current American political thought:

The Common Will: Some theorists presume there are definable common interests, a common good, usually based on the interests of the majority. With this assumption, political events tend to be viewed as a contest between the common good, and the wiles of the evil and nefarious special interests who attempt to block the common good for their own interest. But having assumed the existence of a common good, these theorists divide into separate camps of those who believe that this common will is best expressed by direct electoral vote of the public, and those who believe that political parties are a necessary moderating influence upon the special interests.

A Higher Law: These theorists believe that the public interest is an absolute, a matter of higher law, or natural law. These theorists characterize themselves as representing the true interests of the people, even if their perception of the public interest does not coincide with the interests of the public as perceived by the public itself. They appeal instead to the still small voice of conscience, and urge administrators to be creative manipulators of public opinion, and resist the blandishments of the special interest groups.

A Balance of Interests: These theorists start with the assumption that competition among the multitude of interests and groups is the reality of political behavior at all times both outside and within agencies. The term "the public interest" really is a symbol which only has meaning as the outcome of the process of group or interest interaction. In effect, "the public interest" is whatever people can agree it is at any point in time. Any consensus about what constitutes the public interest may break down at a future date to be replaced by a new definition. Political scientists who take this position originally emphasized the relative balance of various interest groups on the decisionmakers. Others have pointed out that the pressures of external interests are often countered by the pressures from within agencies. Still others have pointed out that the values of the decisionmaker play a role in the decision, so that a decisionmaker may make a decision at odds with the self-interest of his agency, or at odds with pressuring interest groups, in response to such values as "freedom, equality, or equal opportunity." Psychologists have also pointed out that both conscious and unconscious factors play a role in decisionmaking, so that the psychological make-up of the decisionmaker can play a role in the appraisal of public interest. Finally, other theorists have pointed out that the decision-making

process itself can substantially shape a decision, and emphasize the importance of providing equal access to the decision-making process for all groups, so that decisions will not be predetermined by the decisionmaker hearing only from some groups, or being exposed to only some kinds of information. Democratic decision-making processes are necessary because these provide the maximum opportunity for diverse interests to seek to influence governmental decisions at all levels.

#### USEFULNESS FOR THE DECISIONMAKER

Each of these theories makes a critical assumption. The "Common Will" theory assumes that there is a common or at least majoritarian interest, instead of an infinite number of conflicting interests. The "Higher Law" theory assumes the existence of a higher or natural law which transcends the momentary will of the people. The "Balance of Interests" theory assumes that the outcome of negotiations between the various interests will produce an outcome which over time (even though not every decision will be a perfect balance of the public interest) will be the best and most democratic representation of the public interest.

While it may be difficult to evaluate these three theories on an abstract basis, it is possible to evaluate them based on their usefulness from the perspective of the agency decisionmaker.

The "Common Good" theory is one which most agency decisionmakers are trained to believe. The difficulty is that the theory provides no practical guidance to the decisionmaker in the face of ardent, articulate, and well-organized competing interests. Since few decisions facing agency decisionmakers generate the visibility which would justify either the attention of political conventions or an election, the decisionmaker is left with no practical way of determining the public good. If he attempts to substitute his own assessment of the public good at odds with the resolution acceptable to the interests, then he is likely simply to have acted based on either his own personal values or some intuitive perception of the public good, neither of which is truly acceptable as a basis for decisionmaking by nonelected officials.

The "Higher Law" theory provides some sense of direction to the decisionmaker, but at the expense of democratic principles. The idea that there is a higher law that should be imposed on the people for the good of the people--even though the people may not want it--is fundamentally anti-democratic. It doesn't take much of a step from this premise to get to a dictatorship based on one group's or one individual's version of higher law. Understanding the anti-democratic nature of this theory is very important in environmental matters, since there has been a tendency of many engineers and scientists to believe that decisions should be made for the public by a technical elite, since the public is "so poorly informed and doesn't know what is best for it." Claims of superior wisdom, whether because one has "divine wisdom" or exceptional technical training, are fundamentally anti-democratic.

The "Balance of Interests" theory does provide guidance to the decisionmaker in that it makes it his job to create processes for resolution of conflict between the competing interests. It has the additional advantage of accurately reflecting the bombardment of conflicting interests which is experienced by every significant agency decisionmaker. But it does produce a significant shift in how a decisionmaker perceives his role. The emphasis shifts from being a decisionmaker, to being the creator of decision-making processes that lead to resolution. The skills are less of content than of process.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

If the "Balance of Interests" theory is accepted, then the need for decisionmakers to be political--to create processes for balancing the various interests (a skill which most successful decisionmakers possess but feel they must hide from public view)--is a legitimate and politically essential role which must be played to provide accountability in a democratic society.

Once this is accepted as a legitimate and valued role, then decisionmakers can turn their attention to constructing processes that do ensure equal access of all interests. It is an act of faith that democratic processes will result in the public interest. But it is a well-justified act of faith, based on a history of tyranny whenever a government believes it knows what the people need even better than the people know themselves.

THE USE OF VALUES: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

by James L. Creighton

Not too many months ago a planner in a large governmental agency discarded about 150 letters from the public on a controversial issue because they were no help to him--they contained no facts, no specific proposals--all they contained were feelings.

Like many other planners, this planner has been faced with a dilemma: While law and agency policies have required him to seek out greater public participation in the planning process, he is ill-equipped to know what to do with the information once he has gotten it. Typically the materials he receives from the broader public appear to him to be "overemotional," "ill-informed," and "not dealing with realities." But at the same time, any public participation program which puts all the emphasis on well documented, carefully prepared, scientific presentations from the public will build in a bias for only the well-funded interest groups. The planner is trapped between his professional training--which typically equips him to deal with scientific fact, demonstrable propositions, and economic feasibilities, but not with feelings--and the democratic philosophy which stresses that all the people should be involved in the decisionmaking, not just the special interests.

After some years as a consultant and trainer in public participation, I have arrived at the conclusion that in the early stages of planning the previously avoided and discarded feelings and emotional expressions are a critical and valuable resource and go straight to the reason citizen participation is necessary. Feelings and emotions are indicators of values; and differences in values are what citizen participation is all about.

This paper details the thinking which led to these conclusions, as well as a practical method by which planners can use values in the development of planning alternatives.

Making "Political" Decisions

Most planners argue that they do not make political decisions. They mean they do not make decisions which would, or should, be made by the political process (through elected officials or a legislative body). But a careful examination of the difference between a decision the planner makes and a decision made through the political process indicates that the only difference is the "stake" involved--the importance of this decision in terms of the benefits and costs distributed to different segments of the public. Every planner has had the experience of making a decision he considered to be "professional" only to find it made "political" by someone's intense reaction to the decision. A decision is political by its nature if it distributes benefits and costs to different segments of the public--regardless of whether or not it is made through the political process.<sup>1</sup>

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Executive Seminar in Water Resources Planning, " U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1976.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

By this definition purely professional decisions tend to be limited to assessments of resource capability or determinations of technical feasibility. It is a professional decision as to what level of pollutants is now in a river, or what percentage of the pollutants a particular method will remove; it is a political question (backed by the professional information) to determine how much pollution will be tolerated.

### A Broader Definition of Benefits and Costs

The term "benefits and costs" immediately conjures up images of economic standards of measurement. Certainly many decisions made by planners bestow economic benefits and costs, e.g., the allowable density of a proposed development.

Most planners have expanded their definition of benefits and costs to include conflicting uses. A planner can make a decision which benefits hikers and cross-country skiers while assessing a cost in loss of land which can be used by snowmobilers.

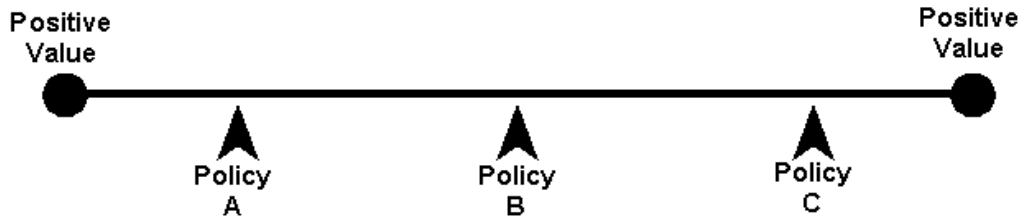
I wish to add still a third dimension to the definition of benefits and costs -- the dimension of values. By values I mean those internal standards by which we judge events or behavior to be good/bad, right/wrong, fair/unfair, just/unjust.<sup>2</sup> They are the normative standards by which we judge the way things "ought" to be. When a planner makes a decision to allow a timber cut in an isolated backcountry part of Alaska he may hear outraged cries from apartment dwellers in New York City, based not on any direct economic gain or even any realistic expectation that they will ever visit the land in question -- but based on the fact that the planner's decision is distributing a benefit or cost on the way they believe the land ought to be managed. The benefit or cost is solely in the values dimension.

Values choices are essentially choices between two positive goods.<sup>3</sup> For example, if the issue is the use of seat belts one must find a position which balances "comfort" with "safety." If the issue is the mandatory use of seat belts, one must find the balance point between "individual freedom" and "public safety." All of these values indicated are good, desirable, positive; no one is against any of these values, the issue is which values should prevail in this instance. The act of "valuing" is one of finding the proper balance point between the two values in a given situation at a particular point in time.

A policy is a balance point selected between competing values. Competing policies are competing judgments as to the relative importance of particular values in a particular situation.

This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Each policy is a balance point between two "goods." An individual may oppose a policy of an agency because he considers that the policy does not adequately recognize the importance of a "good" he supports. To the planner, this individual may appear to be an "aginner" -- an individual who will consistently oppose anything proposed by the agency. This opposition is based on this individual's positive support of some value which he believes the agency consistently does not properly value.



**Fig. 1**

It is one of the characteristics of values arguments that the opponent will usually appear "overemotional and irrational," committed to premises that he cannot rationally justify. The difficulty is that both sides -- both the planner and the various publics -- see the other as locked into preconceptions that no number of facts will shake. Values are a perception of reality based on our own set of personal rules governing our feelings. By virtue of unique life experiences, upbringing, training, and personal introspection, each individual develops his own set of "meanings" for his experiences. These "meanings" -- and values are major standards by which we evaluate events to provide meaning to them -- cause each of us to have an individualized reality, a perception of reality which is always to some extent unique to that individual. When we confront someone with an individualized reality based on values which are substantially different, then the rules by which we judge reality are contradictory. We usually cope with this threat to our definition of reality by judging the others to be ill-informed or badly motivated. When one individual views an act as an "outstanding program to stimulate economic well-being" while another individual views the same act as a "vicious desecration of nature's natural order," they are operating with individualized realities with premises so fundamentally different that these individuals appear to be emotionally committed to unjustifiable positions.

One reason that much information from the public is viewed as overemotional and irrational is that it conflicts in much the same way with unconscious values held by the planner, or the agency for which the planner works. For underlying each agency's mandate and basic operating policies are very definite values. For example, many natural resources agencies have "multiple use" policies which attempt to balance the conflicting interests by providing a number of uses from the same land. Typically this orientation is described as "the Greatest Good for the Greatest Number." However, this orientation predisposes agency planners to naturally seek out ways of accommodating several uses, and avoid solutions that maximize single uses to the exclusion of other uses. When individuals or groups advocate that land be used solely for the one use they consider to be the "highest good," planners will tend to consider these individuals as selfish and self-serving, inconsiderate of others' needs and interests, and will instinctively resist such proposals. The policies of the agency, and the values inherent in them, form a barrier of resistance to the proposals of individuals whose values differ from those of the agency.

It is my conviction that the environmental battles of the present are primarily on the values dimension. While the battles of the past may have been among those most immediately affected and concerned about economics and use, the battles of the present are a struggle among competing fundamental values about how the land should be used and the lifestyles associated with that use. The demands for citizen participation in the planning process are demands that agencies be accountable to a broader range of alternative values.

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

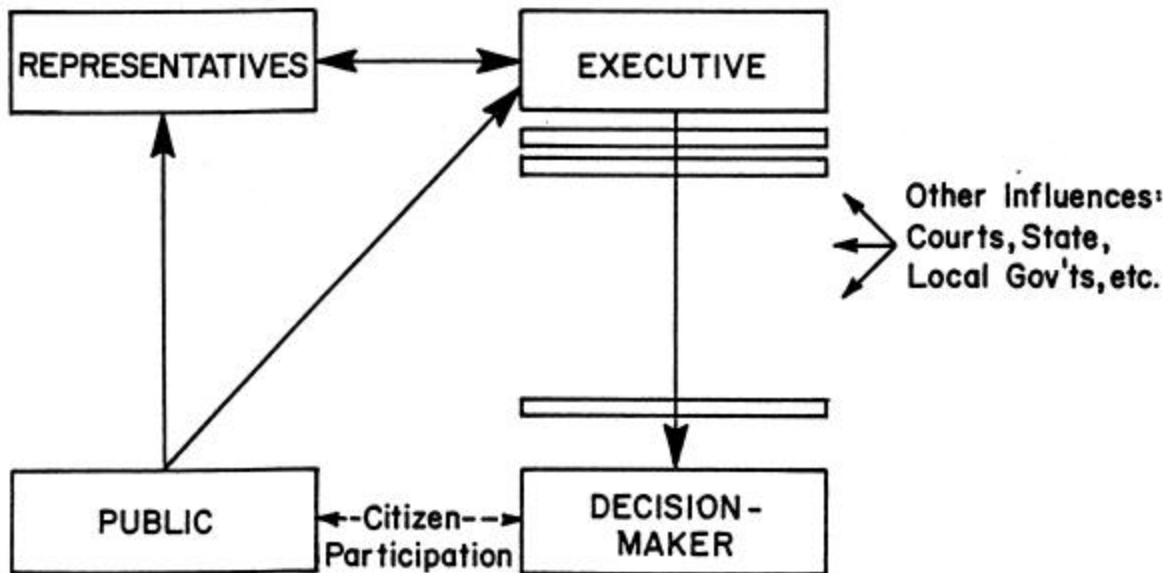
---

Accountability for Political Decisions

It is the essence of a democracy that there be accountability back to the public for decisions made by the government. If a school superintendent makes a decision about busing of school children there are immediate demands that the school board make the final decision; the logic being that the school board can be held accountable to public sentiment at the next election. A central theme in our philosophy is that governments can rule only with the consent of the governed.

Yet the national malaise is the fear that no one is able to make the system responsive; that increasingly there is no way to hold the government accountable. The reasons are multiple: the vastly increased size of the bureaucracy, the increased technical complexity of the decisions, the specialization of disciplines and agencies involved in decisions. There are many other explanations given as well, but whatever the reason the citizen still feels uncertain of his ability to exercise any control over "his" government.

To illustrate this problem, let's explore the chain of accountability for a Federal policy or project (Fig. 2):



**Fig. 2**

First the public selects representatives. Already some degree of accountability is lost because they cannot select these representatives on one issue alone. They must buy them "as a package" with the possibility of stands on one issue canceling out stands on another. Issue-by-issue accountability is already diminished.



The public also selects the President, the Executive. But it is a different public -- a national public -- than the local or state publics which elect the representatives. The result is that each may be accountable to a different version of public need.

Out of the interaction between these conflicting definitions of public need comes the legislation which defines "policy" for the agency. These policies are in turn modified as they are interpreted by the various layers of bureaucracy who are in turn impacted by the courts, other agencies, state and local governments.

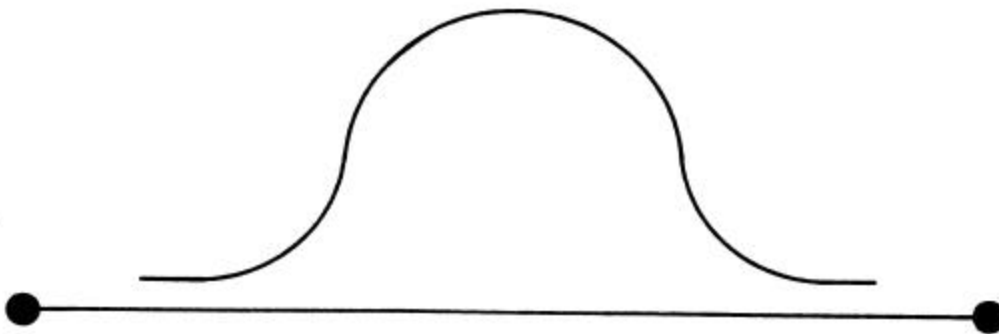
The result is that by the time we reach our planner the chain of accountability is very long and tenuous indeed. Typically there is a time lag of several years or more before a shift in public sentiment is reflected in policies which are recognized and followed down at the level of the individual planner. Even when these changes occur there is little possibility of issue-by-issue accountability: the giant bureaucratic wheels turn too slowly for decisions already "in the pipeline" to be adapted to the change in policy.

Yet somehow the system usually works. Many of the natural resource and development agencies went on for years being the "good guys" among the governmental agencies. It is only recently they have been portrayed as the "bad guy." What made the difference?

#### The Melting Consensus and the New Battleground

It is my belief that the long chain of accountability still worked as long as there was a framework created by a consensus of values within our society about the proper use of the land. So long as decisions did not stray too far from the great middle of this consensus there was little demand for accountability -- only those groups most directly affected by economics or use needed to contest the issues.

One way to conceptualize this consensus is as a normal bell-shaped curve with the great consensus in the middle and an overwhelming majority occupying a relatively homogenous values position.



**Fig. 3**

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

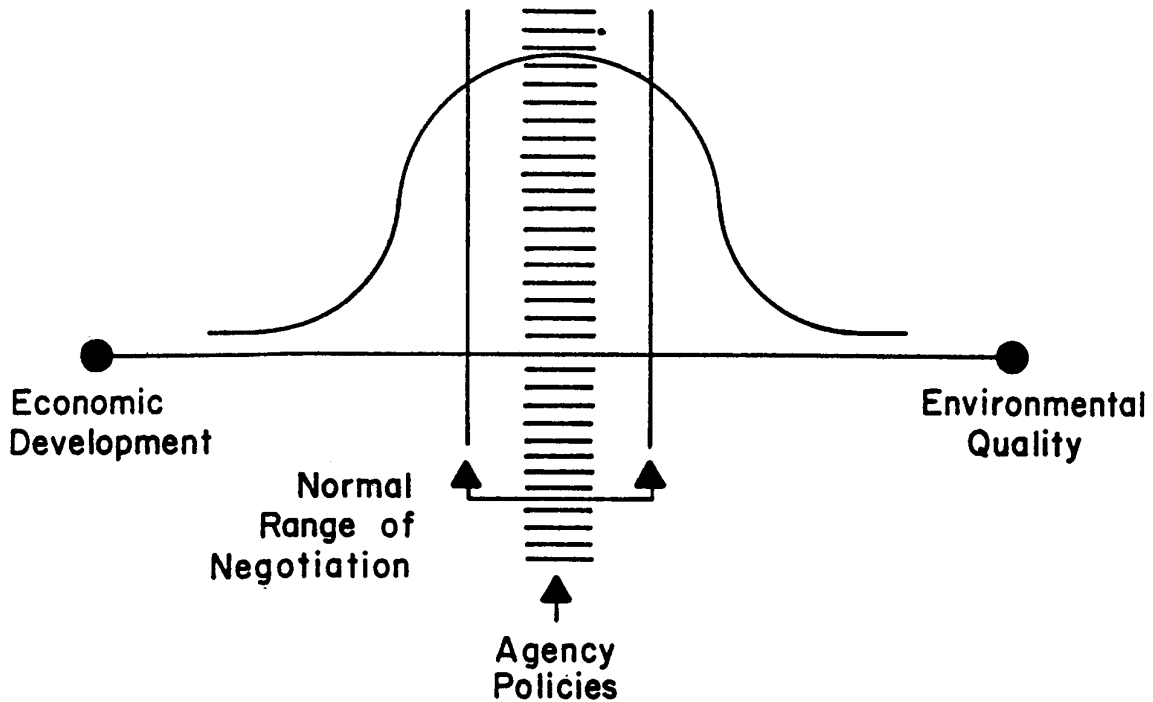
---

Since the issue is "the proper use of the land" -- and bearing in mind that valuing is an act of selecting a balance point between two positive goods -- the polar extremes can be stated as follows:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT -- Optimal development of the land to meet man's material needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY -- Optimal maintenance of the total ecosystem.

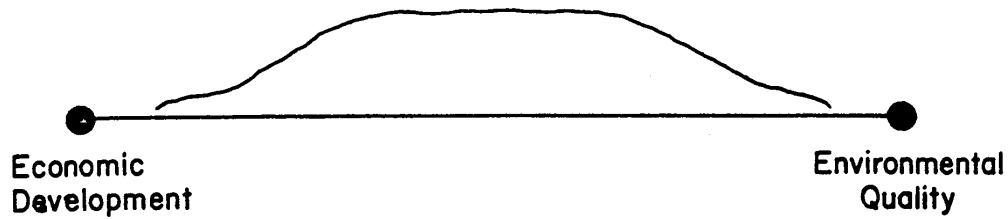
Continuing our image of the consensus as a bell-shaped curve, we can place the bell-shaped curve on this scale of values with Economic Development at one end and Environmental Quality at the other (Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4**

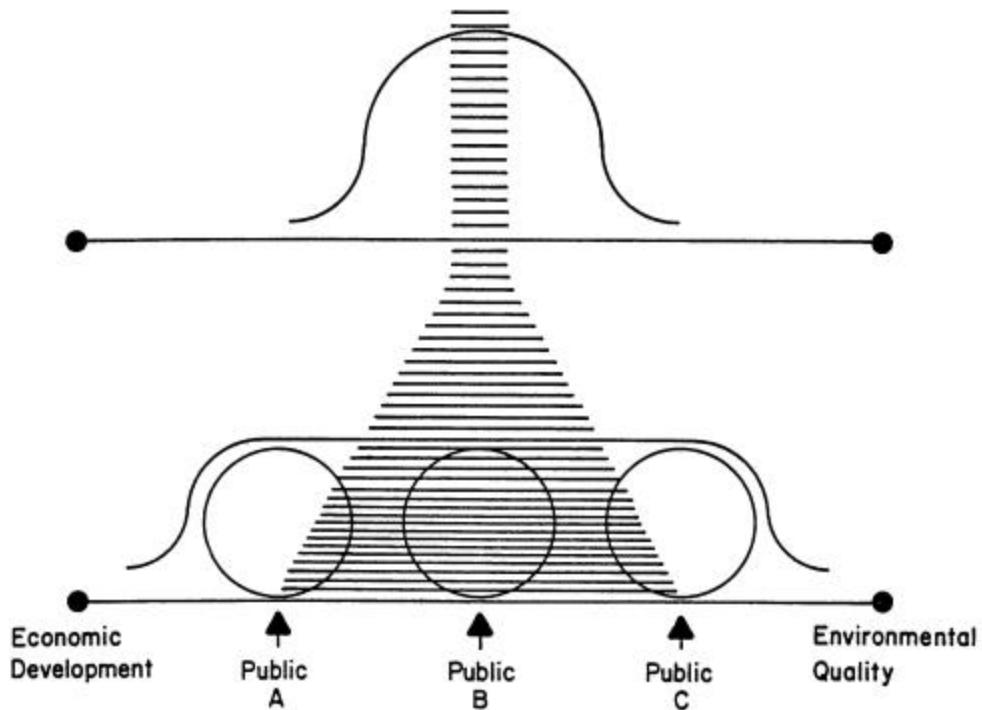
Since the agencies whose policies affect land use (with the exception of the Environmental Protection Agency) were established during the period when this consensus existed, they operate within organizational mandates and philosophies which reflect this consensus.

The Environmentalist Movement which began in the mid-sixties was, in my opinion, a function of the breakdown of this consensus. Instead of a homogenous cluster toward the center, the consensus broke down and began to spread over a broader range of values. Graphically, the result would look more like a melted eskimo pie than a normal bell-shaped curve (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 5**

The effect of this was to leave agency mandates and policies stranded without a consensus. Political strength was distributed across a broader range of values. New groups emerged who saw the agencies as adversaries -- and from their values position, rightly so -- because the agencies now spoke on behalf of one segment of the public (occupying the values position on which formerly there was a consensus) rather than a consensus of the public at large. The agencies were "adversaries" because they could wield vast administrative and economic powers on behalf of those values embedded in agency mandates and policies. Finally, because power was distributed, strong new political forces emerged to challenge the groups and agencies which represented the old consensus. Each issue became a desperate battle for political superiority. Groups began to demand issue-by-issue accountability because each issue became a testing ground of political strength.



**Fig. 6**

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Providing Issue-by-Issue Accountability: Public Participation

The line of accountability was far too drawn out and tenuous to provide issue-by-issue accountability. To survive, the system had to find an adaptive mechanism to provide this accountability in the short term while buying time until either a new consensus would form (one of the groups would establish clear political dominance), or the land use agencies would learn ways of responding to the greater divergence of values. The adaptive mechanism was public participation.

Returning to our earlier diagram of the line of accountability: By constructing a link directly across the chasm between the public and the planner through public participation, the system could provide issue-by-issue accountability while still maintaining a representative form of government. The planner himself would be the direct recipient of the thoughts and feelings of groups which normally did not have access to decision making within the agencies.

### The Use of Values

Now back to our tragedy of the discarded letters (referred to at the beginning of this article). These letters were discarded because they contained no specific proposals, only feelings and general philosophical statements about the way the land should be managed. In effect they were discarded because they only contained values data. But if the purpose of public participation is to ensure consideration of the total range of values held by the public, then information about values held by the public was the most important information this planner could receive. His failure was to consider unimportant the information which would be most helpful in ensuring that public participation would do the job it was designed to do.

But the fact remains that even if he had appreciated the importance of the letters, he probably would not have known what to do with the information in them anyway. Few, if any, tools have been provided to the planner to assist him in utilizing the emotional, subjective and irrational world of values

Having confronted this problem with numerous clients, I have been developing a technique for analyzing contributions from the public for underlying values and using these values specifically as the basis for developing the alternatives to be displayed for the public as part of the public participation process.

### Identifying Values

Typically, values are implied in people's speech or behavior rather than explicitly stated. While they play a strong role in shaping our lives, when they are stated explicitly they sound vaguely like "motherhood" or "apple pie" and are difficult to defend except as an act of faith. (For example, the writer of the Declaration of Independence fell back on the phrase "we hold these truths to be self-evident" to justify values as fundamental as Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.)

Because values are rarely stated explicitly, we have found it necessary to train planners to identify implied values. The first part of this training involves teaching specific communications skills designed to acknowledge both content and feelings. We have found that a greater comfort with feelings is generally necessary for effective public participation and is especially important in learning to identify values. Until

there is a value placed on the emotional component of communication there is little sensitivity to the fund of information from the public that communicates values.

To get planners started in identifying values, we first suggest they pay attention to three stratagems used to communicate values:<sup>4</sup>

- 1) Use of Values-Laden Language - This includes terms such as "raping the land," "locking up the land," "bureaucratic juggernaut," etc.

Some of my favorite examples of values-laden language comes from within the agencies. The Forest Service refers to certain stands of timber as "overmature, decadent timber" because the trees have ceased to grow as rapidly as they did when they were young. The same trees, if located near a highway right-of-way, would be viewed by the Federal Highway Administration as "fixed hazardous objects." The point is that the terminology reflects an orientation: The Forest Service is viewing the trees for potential timber harvest, while the Federal Highway Administration is viewing them as a potential safety hazard to drivers. This orientation communicates the values framework within which the agency is operating.

Naturally the different publics have their own collections of choice values-laden terms which can serve as a guide to their values for the planner.

- 2) Predicting a Dire Consequence - People will predict that an action will eliminate all the jobs in a locale, or will predict that the air won't be fit to breathe if an action is carried out. The kind of consequence they fear will reflect their values. The man from the Chamber of Commerce will predict a loss of jobs, while the preservationist will predict a total disruption of the ecosystem. By implication, the consequences they select also indicate their values.
- 3) Referring to a Venerable Source - People may quote the Bible, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, famous presidents or writers as proof that their position is the only right one. The strategy is to quote a source so venerable that people won't dare question the individual's position for fear of appearing to attack the venerated source. The difficulty is that sources which are venerated by one group may appear downright disreputable to another. The individual citing the latest Department of Commerce report on the Gross National Product is unimpressive to the individual who would more likely quote Henry David Thoreau. However, their selection of venerable sources is a source of information to the planner about their values.

While these three guides merely serve to make planners aware of values, we have found that these guides combined with the communication skills training provide a sufficient introduction that soon planners are able to reliably identify the values of one individual or groups as compared with another.

#### The Methodology for Developing Alternatives Based on Values

The basic methodology for developing alternatives based on values is as follows:

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

---

1. Analyze Public Contributions for Underlying Values Issues

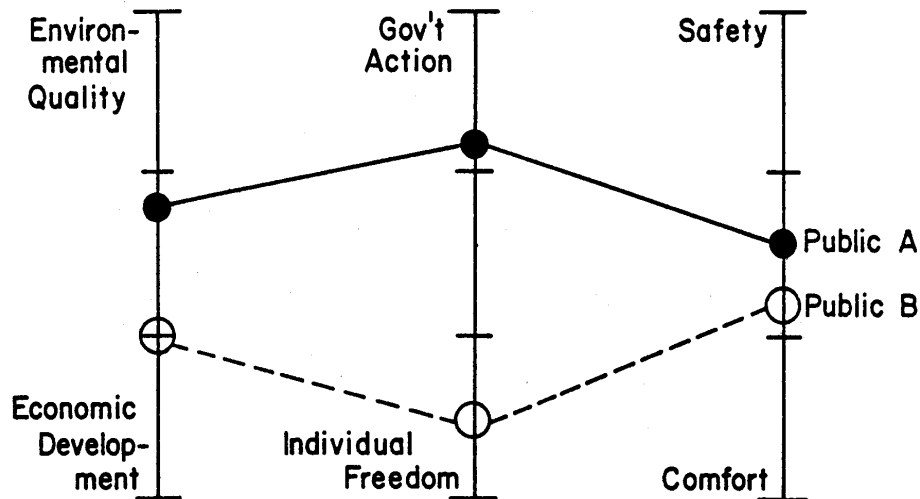
Using all of the guidelines indicated above, the planner analyzes all the contributions -- whether letters, reports, comments at meetings -- to determine which values issues appear to separate the various publics. Once the planner has isolated the major values issues he can set up values continuums with the opposing values at opposite ends as illustrated earlier. He may also be able to identify other positions which constitute mid-points along the continuum.

We have found that it is often possible to capture the differences between publics with as few as two continuums. This allows for the planner to set up a simple matrix as a way of displaying the continuums. For example, the matrix which most frequently defines the issues in Federal public works projects is as follows:

		<b>Gov -t Action / Environmental Quality</b>
<b>Gov -t Action / Public Welfare Or Safety</b>		
<b>Limited Gov -t Controls Maintaining Individual Freedom and Free Enterprise</b>	<b>Limited Gov -t Controls / A Balance of Opportunities</b>	
<b>Individual Freedom / Free Enterprise</b>	<b>Individual Freedom / Economic Development</b>	
	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>A Balance of Opportunities</b>
		<b>Environmental Quality</b>

Fig. 7

When there are more than two continuums necessary to distinguish the publics then other display methods may have to be used. For example:



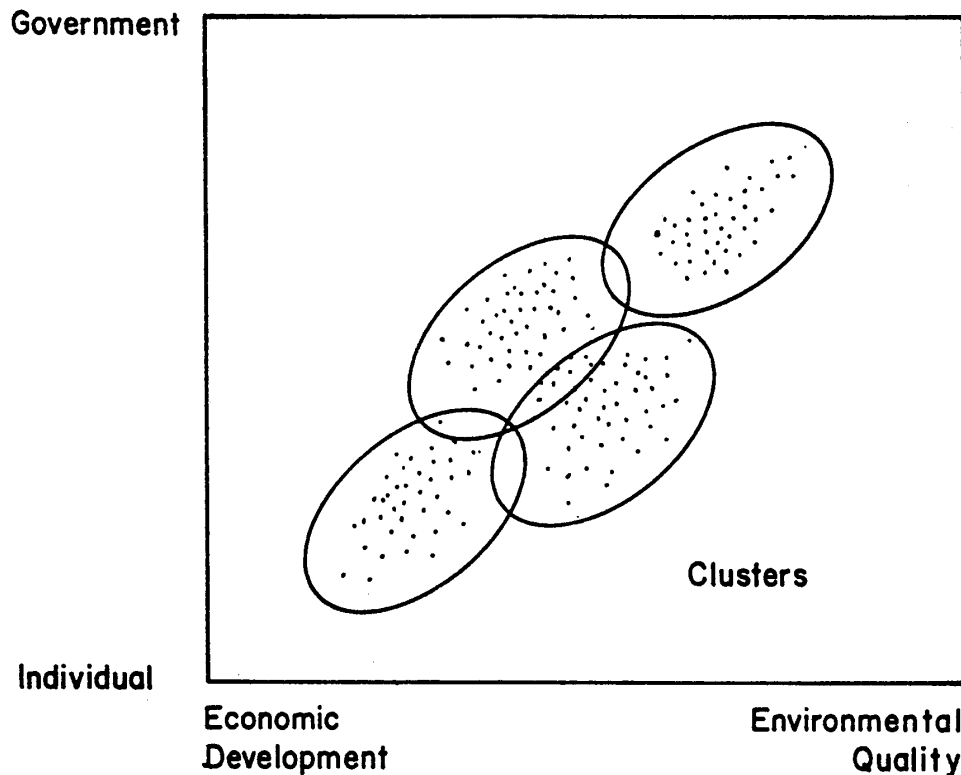
**Fig. 8**

The planner may then want to conduct a "trial run" on the values continuums he has selected by tentatively placing significant groups in the position he believes they occupy on the display. If the display does not succeed in differentiating the different groups the planner will have to re-examine the continuums selected, as they apparently are not the distinguishing values issues.

2. Identify Clusters of Publics

Using the actual information received from groups and individuals (so as to avoid preconceptions as to what their positions may be), the planner indicates the location on his display of the publics he has identified. It will probably prove desirable to use acetate overlays so that groups and individuals are displayed on separate sheets other than having to decide how many individuals a group leader represents. The resultant display will resemble a frequency distribution based on the publics' contributions. For example (Fig. 9).

For the purposes of this analysis it is not necessary to have a precise numerical tally; we are attempting only to identify significant clusters of individuals or groups around values positions. In the graph above, for example, there are four significant clusters, even though there are numerical differences in size between the clusters.



**Fig. 9**

3. Write Descriptions of the Values for Each Cluster

Using the numerical tally as a guide, the planner now writes a brief description of the values that appear to be associated with each cluster. It is these descriptive paragraphs that will be shared with the public. It is our experience that the displays can be misunderstood (an individual doesn't like seeing himself as nothing more than a mark on a chart), while the philosophical summaries are quite acceptable. To be certain that the values of the different groups are accurately portrayed the planner may want to share the statements he has developed with selected groups important to each cluster to ensure that the statements capture their positions. This also ensures a clearer understanding of the values for which the group stands.

4. Develop an Alternative for Each Values Cluster

Using the value summaries as a guide, and where available the actual recommendations of the group as a "reality check," the planner now does the best professional job he can of developing an alternative which best incorporates the values held by each value cluster. In effect, it is a form of advocacy planning, except advocacy planning on behalf of all the different values positions.



One problem that frequently emerges is that the alternative which best portrays a particular values position runs afoul of laws, financing procedures, or agency mandates. Our experience suggests that it is extremely important that these alternatives not be excluded, but that the limitations be identified as part of the Implications (Step 5).

The reasons for this are:

- a) There is a natural tendency for agencies to limit alternatives to those which have been acceptable within the agency in the past. Yet the whole point of public participation is to seriously consider a broader range of values.
- b) Some of the constraints which the agency believe to be real can be surmounted when the public feels strongly enough about an issue. For example, contracts that have already been let can be bought back if enough importance is attached to doing so. Alternative sources of financing can be found if people feel strongly enough about a project.
- c) People feel excluded from the process if after sharing their thoughts and feelings no alternatives are developed which indicate that the agency heard and understood those thoughts and feelings.
- d) If the public is never confronted with the implications of its values -- if the agency always rules out options that it considers "way out" -- then the public is never smarter about the consequences of what it is proposing. Public participation does also serve the function of public education.

5. Identify Implications of Each Alternative

The planner has "taken on" different values premises to develop the alternatives, but now he must describe the implications of the alternatives in as "values-free" a manner as possible. These implications include all the economic, social, and environmental consequences of each alternative, but ideally these implications can be stated with sufficient objectivity that almost everyone -- regardless of values position -- can agree that the implications are accurately stated.

To do this the planner must learn to describe implications with a minimum of values-laden language. For example, we have learned from experience -- some of it a trifle bitter -- that implications should not be stated as "pro" or "con." An anticipated increase in population in an area, for example, is positive to one person and negative to another. The implication should be stated as factually as possible, e.g., "anticipated increase in population of 5-10%."

6. Evaluation of the Alternatives Through Public Participation

Once the alternatives and implications are developed (and they may have been developed with the assistance of a task force or steering committee made up of the various public interests) they are then shared with the public through the whole gamut of public participation techniques including public meetings, workshops, newspaper articles, show-me-trips, etc.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

While the great bulk of the public will rule out certain of the extremes when faced with the implications, this narrowing-down process is not being done for them by a paternalistic agency. As a result they feel - and are - a genuine part of the decision making. In addition they may devise ways of improving the alternatives, or combining features of several alternatives to avoid undesirable implications. By listening to public comment carefully, the planner also acquires a great deal of information as to which trade-offs would be acceptable, and which not.

Nothing about this technique removes the agency from its final decision-making role; the technique simply serves to clarify the fundamental values differences, expose them to the public along with the implications of each alternative, and provide the decision maker with substantial information on how the public would negotiate the differences. Our experience is that when this technique is used as part of a thorough and open public participation program that the various interests will arrive at substantial areas of common agreement.

### The Validity of Values Analysis

Since this process has been taught as a part of training programs with a number of agencies we have had a chance to get at least a subjective response of on-the-ground planners to this approach. Uniformly they have been enthusiastic about the method, feeling that it opened up entirely new material that they had not considered, and that it provided them with an approach that more nearly fit the emotional realities of their planning situation.

Two examples of the value of this method were presented in an advanced training program we put on for the U.S. Forest Service in Juneau, Alaska:

The Mendenhall Glacier: For some time the planners for the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area had been stymied by the apparently overwhelming divergence of views they had received in letters from the public. Analyzing the letters for specific proposals they had identified over 200 alternative proposals. Naturally, there was no way to respond to the vast majority of the proposals without turning the entire area into wall-to-wall concrete. In addition, the Glacier area was politically sensitive since the glacier is only 15 minutes from downtown Juneau, capital of Alaska. The small valley in front of the glacier contains housing for most of the governmental and business elite of Juneau.

Using the method of values analysis described above, the planners reviewed the letters a second time for the values communicated by the publics. To their astonishment they found that in terms of values there was almost complete unanimity on a minimum human impact approach to the recreation area. In effect the letters said, "the most important thing is to keep the area in its natural state, but it would be nice to have nature walks (4-wheel drive trails, bicycle trails, etc., etc.)."

As a result of using the values analysis the planners felt they were now able to proceed to develop alternatives that would be generally acceptable to the public, incorporating only low impact developments in the alternatives.

The South Tongass National Forest: Planners from the South Tongass National Forest (Alaska) also participated in this training program and used as their material a large politically sensitive planning unit on which they had just completed public participation and were ready to announce a decision.

With the public input fresh in their minds they were able to quickly identify four values positions around which significant publics had clustered. When they reviewed the alternatives they had developed it became apparent that they had not developed an alternative for one of the values positions around which some of the most politically active groups clustered. While this was caused in large measure by an effort to stay within pre-existing contracts with a logging firm, they could see that this did pose a potential for court action by the groups which could maintain that their viewpoint had not been considered. And, in fact, this predicted "dire consequence" did occur. The planners now believe that by using the values analysis approach on future projects they will reduce the risks of significant publics feeling unrepresented by the alternatives developed.

### Conclusion

If the purpose of public participation is to ensure that the full range of values held by the public be incorporated in the planning process, not just those values normally accepted by agencies, then it will be necessary to learn to recognize and deal with emotional values-laden contributions of the public, not just the factual information with which the planner is more comfortable. By recognizing emotional contributions as a rich resource for information about values held by the public the planner can begin to extend understanding to values he would not ordinarily consider. The technique of developing alternatives based on all major values positions held by the public ensures that the planner is not an advocate for some groups, and an adversary of others. It is also a clear communication to the public that the agency is responsive and accountable to all the publics.

### Notes:

1. This definition is adapted from a distinction of "party politics" (who occupies the seats of power) and "policy politics" (what happens--decisions which grant benefits and bestow costs) by Dr. R. W. Behan, University of Montana, from a presentation to a Tri-Forest Conference of the U.S. Forest Service, April 27, 1972, at Boise, Idaho.
2. This definition of values is taken from Clarifying Public Controversy, Fred M. Newmann and Donald W. Oliver; Little, Brown & Co., 1970, p. 43.
3. Newmann and Oliver, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Newmann and Oliver, op. cit.



WHY THE FEDERAL AND REGIONAL INTEREST

IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

by Jerry Delli Priscoli, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

It should surprise few that public involvement has become so important to water resources planning. After all, in a world of increasing population and limited resources some democratic distribution of those resources is to be expected in the United States. In the past, American idealism has sought solutions to societal crises in the faith of more democracy. During the depression of the thirties, the New Deal called for "grass roots" democracy. When cities burnt in the sixties, the Great Society looked to neighborhood citizen participation. Mired in the thicket of sharpened environmental and alternative water use conflicts of the seventies, we again fall back on our idealism--the people should have a say.

At face value, such idealism can appear naive--even dangerous. Indeed, numerous commentators have pointed to the pitfalls of unchecked faith in the ideological cure of more democracy.<sup>1</sup> Consequences ranging from anarchy to totalitarian cooptation have been forecasted results of such unchecked faith. Even worse, public involvement might encourage short term political decisions contradicting contemporary scientific advice.

Despite the warnings, that faith lingers. And not without reason. For planners have come to create as much as predict our futures. Thus, "Who are these planners" and "Who are access to them" are questions critical to maintaining democratic accountability.

More than 100 existing public involvement programs are witness to the Federal government's vital interest in both the limits and potentials of public involvement. This paper addresses these limits and potentials by discussing how public involvement helps resolve five key planning questions:

1. Should experts or citizens decide alternatives?
2. Is planning administration or legislation?
3. How can the government know if it is effective?
4. How can we project impacts of plans?

---

Reprinted from: IWR Working Paper 78-1, Delli Priscoli, Jerry, "Why the Federal and Regional Interest in Public Involvement in Water Resources Development," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1978.

5. How can we reconcile regional needs with realities of jurisdictional boundaries?  
1. Should Experts or Citizens Decide Alternatives?

That society has become more complex and technology more sophisticated is well argued in literature. That this complexity and sophistication has encouraged debate over the rational strategies for maintaining and controlling societal change is clear. However, the debate over who has sufficient wisdom to "rationally" decide for society is far from new. In fact, it is a classic dialogue of Western civilization.

In planning, we often assume that all experts are citizens, but not all citizens are experts. But is this really true? Certainly, not all citizens possess the expertise for calculating the strength of concrete necessary for a bridge abutment. But do all concrete experts possess the expertise to determine whether that bridge should be built? Just who should decide the how, why, and where of this bridge?

Democratic theory would find the answer in the collective wisdom of a body politic. Representative government would have us believe that such collective wisdom manifests itself through decisions of legitimately elected officials. But we all, from time to time, have questioned that "representativeness." So where does that leave us?

Some modern theorists calculate that most people do not want to participate.<sup>2</sup> In fact, too much participation, particularly in highly specific "technical" decisions, might encourage poor decisions. Others look to our mass communication technology for citizen opportunities to participate on more national issues.

Public involvement in planning is more than simply increasing the quantity of participation. It builds on a currently neglected but classical democratic faith. That is, the experience of participation at all levels of social activity makes good citizens.<sup>3</sup> Good citizens create a good body politic which support good decisions.<sup>4</sup> The dividing line between citizen and expert becomes amorphous, indeed less relevant.

The good citizen theme recurs throughout Western literature. Pericles passionately describes the strength of Athens as the good character of its participating citizens.<sup>5</sup> In nineteenth century Britain, John Stuart Mills finds representative government strong because it produces "active-self-helping" citizens.<sup>6</sup> Robert Cole expands the theme of participating experience into industrial democracy.<sup>7</sup>

In current literature, planning as social learning is reflected in the "new humanistic" approaches to planning of Turner, Dunn, Schon, and Freidman.<sup>8</sup> Recent empirical planning studies by authors such as Gross and Benevise show that the rational system of planning theory rarely fits the reality of the human conditions.<sup>9</sup>

Several years ago, Robert Merton pointed out that social planning is really social interaction.<sup>10</sup> In other words, when you plan for society, you interact with that environment for which you are planning. The "stand off" objectivity of planning becomes a false perception. Indeed, one of the

most documented sources of social impacts in water resources planning is that the very length of planning time can dramatically affect communities.

Under a philosophy of public involvement, planning "with" replaces planning "for" in the planners' vocabulary. Both theory and practice argued for this substitution. The government has a classical interest in our mutual education of good citizens. It has a practical interest in diffusing the illusion that citizen and expert somehow always differ.

However, the educative potential of public involvement also contains limits and pitfalls. For example, the language of education can easily slip into that of government propaganda. Also, if you believe in the strict expert-citizen dichotomy, education can mean giving the citizen the facts. Public involvement then becomes a subtle cooptation effort.<sup>11</sup> Once all the objective facts are presented to citizens, the story will be clear and the solutions obvious. The government has both a deep interest and obligation to avoid wasting resources on such false efforts.

## 2. Is Planning Administration or Legislation?

Talking about blending citizens and experts is easy; doing it is difficult. Public policy decisions are made by people working in institutions. One of the tenets of democratic ideology is that our institutions provide citizens the opportunity to have a say in decisions which will affect them. Gradually, more important decisions affecting our lives seem to be made while carrying out activities we call planning. Government planning activities are generally housed in administrative bureaucratic agencies. Consequently, it is easy to see how planning can be viewed as an administrative problem. But is it?

For example, reducing the risk of flood damage obviously involves a set of "rationally" thought out steps. A situation can be objectively studied, a structure proposed, engineering specifications established, personnel requirements estimated, etc. Certainly these technical operations require administrative skill. But, is there a risk if potentially flooded farmers don't perceive one? Should a structure always be built? Could you propose an economical earth dam in a locality with a large cement industry? In short, does planning really assure public interest and social welfare?

This question has spawned numerous approaches to planning, each with different answers. For example, systems planning has evolved sophisticated economic cost-benefit calculations assumed to embody social welfare. Among others, operations researchers look to optimization criteria. However, as Kenneth Arrow eloquently suggests, that searching for objective bases to value social welfare can be futile.<sup>12</sup> It is hard to imagine such bases independently from the political system.

Indeed, water resources policy observers continually point to the increased importance of social and cultural issues and increased politization of water resources management decisions.<sup>13</sup>

Expanding demands for valuable water could rapidly deteriorate into a Hobbesian nightmare of selfish maximization. Even the powerful utilitarian arguments that public interests can be realized in the market place summation of individual interests could break down. As we come to realize that planning creates as much as predicts our future--open resolution of resource use conflicts becomes

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

more important. Social welfare functions are more clearly found in the acceptance of decisions of legitimate deliberative bodies than in "objective" economic calculations.

So what else is new? Water resources development has always been political. This is true. However, the rules for making such decisions are changing.<sup>14</sup>

A northern congressman cannot easily vote for the "far-away" flood protection or navigation system. Constituents are now likely to be vitally interested. Shared values cut across time and geography. Although that northern constituent may never see or use the facility, he (she) can have definite psychic participation stakes in its construction. In short, natural resources management policies are national issues complete with vocal national, as well as local, constituencies.

Responding to changing rules, public involvement is encouraging the political systems to adapt to mixes of new issues, new values, and new clients. But there are limits. Public involvement should not and cannot substitute for established political processes. It can and will increase conflict. It should not encourage planners to think of themselves as elected representatives. However, it could also help define new bases of consensus.

Given the high cost and potential increase in conflict--what is the government interest? Although public involvement requires heavy planning costs early in the decision making process, it can increase the probability of eventual consensus and implementation. Although public involvement will confront planners with problems they have no authority to solve, those with that authority will have to exercise their responsibility earlier in the decision process. Although public involvement might support a new professional class of elite bitches, it also increases the risk to elected officials in avoiding issues. In short, public involvement will help force the elected political system to make political-legislative decisions now masquerading as administrative-planning decisions.

### 3. How Can the Government Know if it's Effective?

As planners, our plans should be useful, effective, and do-able. However, evaluating federal programs is difficult.<sup>15</sup> Thinking about how planned projects affect a cross-section of society is also difficult. One useful analogy is to view the government as producing goods and services which are consumed by various publics.

A proposed consumer protection agency and required consumer protection plans give considerable importance to this analogy. In fact, consumer protection concepts have begun to blend with older public involvement experiences. Recently, over two hundred federal employees from eighty agencies met in Washington to discuss this mixture.<sup>16</sup>

The emergence of a service-oriented society is a common theme in the futures literature.<sup>17</sup> Such a society is likely to increase nonroutine jobs and leisure time. New values will change emphasis on competing water uses. For example, recreation use demands on water are likely to increase with leisure time. New client-interest groups will make demands on operation and maintenance of existing fiscal plants as well as those being planned.



Increased operation and maintenance expense as a percentage of new construction is not simply a new spinoff of the projected service society. It is a recurring historical phenomena. In fact, operating and maintaining public works projects has often been observed as a critical factor in rise and fall of civilizations.<sup>18</sup>

Various cultural anthropologists, comparative historians, and political scientists have found crucial links between the type of political/social system and the way societies organize to use water.<sup>19</sup> As societies move from irrigation to navigation, population increases. Political organization expands and centralizes to allocate public works resources. However, ecological deterioration such as silting and sedimentation along with rising operation and maintenance costs diminish social willingness and ability to pay. As physical plant deteriorates, population shifts and the sociocultural systems decay.

What society maintains is a critical social choice. In this light, the planner is clearly a social change agent. However, since the implications are so vast, we are all clients using physical plant as well as experts on what physical plant we need.

Public involvement offers one strategy to maintain the dynamic process of operating facilities in the face of changing public needs. It is one institutional mechanism by which government producers can gauge the effectiveness of their services and proposed plans.

Also, public involvement will force more continuity onto projects over time. Long lag times between planning and construction and operations can create the illusion of planning for one project, building another, and operating a third. Once planning is done with serious public involvement, building and operating decision environments will change. Projects will have legacies of interest groups and other involvement which cannot be avoided. Although actors and issues might change, the commitment to public interaction cannot be avoided. In this sense, public involvement will help create a more integrated, rather than fragmented, view of a project. Public involvement will become a valuable record of project history. In the Corps' case, this will mean new synergy among planning, engineering, construction, and operation departments.

Such continuation of commitment is vital to responsive public works. In being sensitive to changes over project history, we planners will be in a better position to anticipate future public needs. While not perfect, it is a start in confronting a critical planning problem: What will future generations--the consumers of today's project--want and need?

Although the literature refers to the feedback and/or monitoring utility of public involvement, there are important limits. For example, how much freedom should be sacrificed to gain an equitable view of social needs? The government interest in monitoring social needs is good. But it should not become a license for citizen harassment.

#### 4. How Can We Project Impacts of Plans?

Federal legislation and agency regulations are fraught with impact assessment terminology.<sup>20</sup> Holistic, interdisciplinary, cumulative, and social effects assessment are common vocabulary in today's world of water resources planning. In part, this is a realization that public works projects are

not simply distributive, but redistributive public policies.<sup>21</sup> As such, questions of justice and equity have renewed importance.

How do we know if a project costs and benefits unduly favor or discriminate against groups? Legally, the concept of unduly revolves around some aspect of affected and interested parties' claims.<sup>22</sup> Impact assessment generally, and social impact assessment specifically, is replete with attempts to objectively define distributional impacts. However, unless we understand the perceptions of affected parties, both our expectations of claims and our view of "unduly" are likely to be inaccurate.

Losses and gains of impacted parties will be perceived relative to other affected parties. It is not so much the absolute gain or loss as the perceived relative deprivation that is the key to projecting claims.<sup>23</sup> Even if a project demonstrates that each party gets more benefit than cost calculations than others, not all will be gaining equally.

Public involvement can provide the planner with insight to perceptions of equal and/or nonequal gain or loss. Such insights will aid the planner's continued working relationship with the community. It can also provide solid leads to effective and efficient mitigation of uneven distribution. For example, the T.V.A. produces a social monitoring report of ongoing construction at its Hartsville Power Project.<sup>24</sup> The Corps Seattle District is cost-sharing classroom construction necessitated by construction-related impacts.<sup>25</sup> The North Dakota REAP monitoring program relies on local contact points for impact information supply.<sup>26</sup> In short, the qualitative public involvement insights are critical to the more objective impact assessment efforts. As such, public involvement can be used to do better social impact assessment.

5. How Can We Reconcile Regional Needs With Realities of Jurisdictional Boundaries?

Upstream-downstream controversies are the familiar starting points in illustrating conflicts in water resources development. Why should downstream residents pay for upstream pollution? Will an upstream channelization transfer a flood problem to downstream? How much water releases should the upstream city allow for downstream city in drought situations? Who will use the upstream impoundment for recreation? These and other such questions are familiar to water resources planners.

The national search for institutional solutions to be responsive to both regional needs and jurisdictional interests is not limited to the United States. In France, institutional arrangements incorporating user groups, representative citizens, and water resources managers have developed to regionally set and collect pollution fees. Britain also has reorganized water management supply along regional boundaries.<sup>27</sup>

Internationally, the concept of mobilizing regionally defined constituencies into larger societal institutions capable of affecting resources allocation is at the heart of discussion on nation-building.<sup>28</sup>

The concept of mobilizing cross-national impacted constituencies to simultaneously affect various national administrative and planning decisions is at the crux of the emerging transnational relations field.<sup>29</sup> Thinking that regionally defined functional needs will lead to development of regional institutions has deep intellectual roots. Nineteenth century functionalists clearly addressed this

problem.<sup>30</sup> Adding public involvement to the argument recognizes that functional need can only lead institutional change if it has firmly rooted citizen support.

The Federal and state governments have attempted to institutionally deal with such problems through regional arrangements such as interstate compacts, Federal interstate commissions, interagency committees, ad hoc coordinating committees, TVA, intrastate special districts, and recent Title II, River Basin Commissions.<sup>31</sup> From the 1808 Gallatin report through the Newlands Commissions, Roosevelt and Truman Committee to the Hoover Commission and Water Resources Council, coordination in water resources planning has been a recurrent theme.<sup>32</sup> From nineteenth century multiple objective legislative through the Green Book, A-47, Senate Document 97, the Orange Book, to Principles and Standards, the government has sought comprehensiveness in planning water resources development.<sup>33</sup>

Continued interest in the parallel themes of comprehensiveness and coordination are symptoms of the increasing discontinuity between water resources social choice decisions and jurisdictional boundaries.<sup>34</sup> In this light, public involvement is often viewed as a way of mobilizing a regionally affected constituency which cuts across state, local, and even international jurisdictional boundaries.<sup>35</sup> By offering new opportunities for interested parties to interact, public involvement will encourage a broader spectrum of costs to be articulated, a more comprehensive trade-off analysis among alternatives, and increased regional plan acceptance by institutions and people within a region. Public involvement then becomes another strategy in the tradition of encouraging comprehensive and coordinated water resources planning.

Public involvement plays several roles in encouraging such synthesis. For example, public involvement can help sensitize regional plans to community impacts, thus helping close a difficult micro-macro gap in planning methods.<sup>36</sup> It will sensitize planners to special strategies and needs of locally impacted people and thus suggest mitigation approaches. By bringing local volunteer and interest groups into a regional dialogue, overall citizen planner information exchange can be improved.

Given resources and time constraints required, none of these outcomes will be accomplished without clearly defining public involvement goals. Much of the water resources literature, as well as actual programs, are vague about what public involvement should accomplish. Broadly speaking, regional public involvement can be viewed having data generating, evaluation, and/or broad service-oriented goals. Data generating goals refer to such activities as defining public perceptions of regional needs, issues, and goals. Evaluation generally involves identification of alternative action, impact location, and potential social reaction. The public service goals of participation can include things such as representing the public, acting as a "surrogate" public sounding board, aiding public acceptance of, and consensus for, a regional plan.<sup>37</sup>

Numerous techniques are available and are being developed to accomplish these goals. They can be broadly classified in the following "categories": organizational, field work, simulation, expert paneling, survey work, base line data generation, and legal-political. Organization techniques, among others, include citizen advisory groups, technology assessment, monitoring systems, and ombudsmen. Field work includes such techniques as participant observation, multiple field offices, workshops, and demonstrations projects. Simulation includes gaming, role playing, and mute court

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

type techniques. Expert paneling refers to brainstorming, Delphi, and policy-capturing techniques. Base line data generation can use election data returns, census, geo-coding, secondary and primary survey analysis. Legal-political techniques involve such things as voting, referendums, and campaign platforming.

Although the above typology offers one route to conceptualizing public involvement techniques, it illustrates an important point. Numerous public involvement goals and techniques are available to the regional planner. The critical problem for the planner is to match techniques to goals.

The Corps Sacramento District's San Pedro Creek study is a good example of how public involvement techniques can be molded into a strategy built on specified public involvement goals. Public workshops, a Citizen Advisory group, citizen information bulletins, and feedback questionnaire techniques were phased throughout the planning. The public involvement program actually generated new alternatives. It encouraged creative synthesis of these alternatives and produced a workable solution. This was done with relatively little expense and little sacrifice to planning time schedule.<sup>38</sup>

Beyond technique, the type of decision will impact public involvement goals. In general, regulatory decision making is primarily concerned with evaluating goals such as alternative identification, impact location, and social reaction. Long-term government planning, while concerned with evaluation, is more likely to be involved with the goals of data generation on regional needs, issues, and goals. Short-term implementation planning is likely to focus more on service goals such as plan acceptance and representation. Nevertheless, whatever typology is most useful, the critical point remains. For public involvement to help regional planning adjust to jurisdictional boundaries--form should follow function in designing a public involvement program.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Perhaps the preceding discussion can be summed up with the following thoughts:

1. Public involvement is not a technique, but a strategy, approach, or philosophy. There is no "one way" to do public involvement. Avoid the technique-looking-for-application syndrome. What works one place will not always work some place else. Anyway, it is not the technique as much as the people and their attitude who employ the technique that is important.
2. Public involvement does not substitute for the representative political process. In fact, it cannot be useful without complementing that process. However, public involvement will impact that political process.
3. No one public involvement program can claim to have "represented" the people. No planner should allow a public involvement program exclusive sovereignty over his (her) interpretation of the public will. However, it can be used to show competing views of that will.
4. Public involvement is not a panacea. More conflict will be generated; new time allocations and resource commitment will be required. But remember, it is not the question, "How much will public involvement cost?" but "Can we do anything at all without it?" that is more relevant.

5. Think of the positive contributions of public involvement--How can it supplement and improve other technical efforts? How will it make my decisions better?
6. Once started, be honest. Public involvement based on false assumptions and expectation of clever cooptation will be disastrous. Whether your efforts are honest can only be judged by you and your participants.
7. The goals of your public involvement program and the roles of participants must be clearly defined.
8. Be prepared to accept and implement decisions of participants. Just be clear on what types of decisions both you and participants in the public involvement program should be making.

FOOTNOTES

1. For example, Lyle E. Schaller, "Is the Citizen Advisory Committee a Threat to Representative Government," Public Administration Review, 24:3, Sept 1964, 179; Nelson W. Polsky and A. Wildavsky, "Toward Participating Democracy?" The Wall Street Journal, Aug 3, 1972; Samuel Huntington, "Paradigms of American Politics: Beyond the One, the Two, and the Many," Political Science Quarterly, Vol 89, No. 1, Mar 1974, p 22.
2. For the modern empirical view of Democratic Theory note: Giovanni Satori, Democratic Theory, New York, Praeger Press, 1965; Robert Dahl, Preface to Democratic Theory, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1956; H. Eckstein in Division and Cohesion in Democracy, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966.
3. For a full development of this line of reasoning note: Carol Pateman, Participating and Democratic Theory, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970.
4. This argument is best laid out in Plato's Republic Cornford Translation, London, Oxford University Press, 1941.
5. Thucydides, Peloponoesian Wars, Crawley Translation, New York, Modern Library, 1951.
6. John Stuart Mills, Considerations on Representative Government, New York, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958.
7. G.D.H. Cole, Self Government in Industry, London, C. Bell & Sons, 1919.
8. E. S. Dunn, Economic and Social Development, A Process of Social Learning, Baltimore, Hopkins Press, 1971. D. A. Schan, Beyond the Stable State, New York, Random House, 1971. John Freidmann, Retracking America: A Theory of Transactive Planning, Garden City, Doubleday, 1973. Charles Hampden-Turner, Radical Man: The Process of Psycho-Social Development, New York, Anchor, 1971.
9. Guy Beneviste, The Politics of Expertise, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972; Bertram M. Gross, Action Under Planning: The Guidance of Economic Development, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967; Political Intelligence for America's Future, Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 1970.
10. Robert K. Merton, On Theoretical Sociology, New York, Free Press, 1967.
11. Philip Selznick, TVA and Grass Roots, New York, Harper and Row, 1966.
12. Kenneth Arrow, Social Choice and Individual Values, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1951.
13. Daniel Dreyfus, "2020 Hindsight, Another Fifty Years in Irrigation," Journal of Irrigation and

- Drainage Division, Jun 1975, pp 87-95.
14. Helen Ingram, "Changing Decision Rules in the Politics of Water Development," Water Resources Bulletin, Vol 8, No. 6, Dec 1972, pp 1177-1188.
  15. For a good overview, note: Elmer L. Struening and Marcia Guttentay (d), Handbook of Evaluation Research, Beverly Hills, Sage Publication, 1975.
  16. Federal Interagency Council on Citizen Participation, At Square One, Washington, DC, Mar 1977.
  17. Bertram Gross, "Planning in an Era of Social Revolution," Public Administration Review, May/Jun 1971, pp 259-297.
  18. For a bibliographic discussion of this point, note: Chapter 2 of Douglas James (ed.), Man and Water, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 1974.
  19. In addition to the cited chapter in James, also note: Karl Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957.
  20. For example, Water Resources Council, "Water and Related Land Resources," Federal Register, Vol 38, No. 147, Sep 10, 1973; Department of the Army Corps of Engineers, "Water and Related Land Resources: Feasibility Study," Federal Register, Nov 10, 1975.
  21. For further explanation of the terminology, note: T. Lowi, The End of Liberalism, New York, W. W. Nanton & Co., Inc., 1969.
  22. Note: David Benny and Gene Sterken, "The Concept of Justice in Regional Planning: Justice as Fairness," AIP Journal, Nov 1974, p 414.
  23. For a complete development, the concept of relative deprivation and its relation to behavioral note: Ted Robert Gaw, Polimetrics, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1972.
  24. Tennessee Valley Authority, "Hartsville Nuclear Plants--Socio-Economic Monitoring and Mitigation Report, September 30, 1976," Apr 1977.
  25. Art Harnisch, Chief Joseph General Design Memorandum, U.S. Army Dist., Seattle, North Pacific Div., Corps of Engineers.
  26. North Dakota Regional Environmental Assessment Program, "REAP INFOCOM," No. 2, Sep 1976.
  27. Ronald Toms, "Reorganizing Pollution Control in the U.K.," and Francois M. Fiessinger and P.F. Teniere-Buchot, "Pollution Fees are for Real in France," Water Spectrum, Vol 8, No. 1, Spring-Summer, 1976.
  28. Note: Karl W. Dentsch and W.J. Foltz (ed.), Nation Building, Aldane Press, Chicago, 1966; K.W.
-

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

- Dentisle, National and Social Communication, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1953.
29. Note: R.O. Keohave and J.S. Nye, Jr. (ed.), "Transnational Relations and World Politics," International Organizations, Vol XXV, No. 3, Summer 1971.
30. For a broad discussion of the topic, see Ernst B. Haas, Beyond the Nation-State Functionalism and International Organization, Stanford University Press, 1964.
31. Water Resources Council, Alternative Institutional Arrangements for Managing River Basin Operations, Washington, DC, August 1967.
32. Gary D. Lynn, Emory N. Castle, C. Gibbs, Alternative Evaluation Procedures and Water Development Projects, The Multiple Objective Problem, Department of Interior, Office of Water Resources Research, B-022-ORE, Feb 1, 1973; and Gilbert White, Strategies of America Water Management, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1969.
33. Theodore M. School, "Legislative History of Federal River Basin Planning Organization," C. E. Kimsauter (ed.), Organization of Methodology of River Basin Planning, Atlanta, GA Institute of Technology, 1964.
34. For a complete review of regional institutions note: Martha Denthick, Between State and Nation: Regional Organizations of the United States, Brookings Institute, Washington, DC, 1974.
35. For a broader picture of this concept, note: J. Delli Priscoli, "Beyond Public Hearings: Suggestive Techniques for Public Participation in a Transnational Resource Management Environment," Proceedings of a Workshop on Public Participation, Ann Arbor, MI, June 23-24, 1975, Standing Committee on Social Sciences, International Joint Commission, Windsor, Ontario.
36. For example note: Joseph L. Schofer and Danvin G. Stuart, "Evaluating Regional Plans and Community Impacts," Journal of the Urban Planning and Development Division, Mar 1974, p 93.
37. For a full development of this framework note: J. Delli Priscoli, op. cit., p 53.
38. Thomas P. Wagner and Dr. Leonard Ortolano, Testing an Iterative Open Process for Water Resources Planning, IWR Contract Report 76-2, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA, Dec 1976.



Introduction to Section II:

PRINCIPLES FOR STRUCTURING PUBLIC  
INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

This section provides guidance on basic principles that can direct the structuring of public involvement programs.

The article by Ann Widditsch provides the simple direct suggestions of a practitioner coping with a sometimes apparently insurmountable task with common sense and intelligence.

In his second selection in this reader, A. Bruce Bishop uses communications theory as a basis for approaching the design of public involvement programs. He makes the important points that everyone has membership in multiple publics, and the credibility of information depends as much on the credibility of the source as on the content of the message. Finally he emphasizes that there are different communications tasks during public involvement, each requiring different approaches and methodologies.

Effective public involvement requires not only changes in the planning process, but a shift in the role of agency leaders from decision makers to creators of decision-making process. The article by James L. Creighton describes the impact of unilateral decision making upon the public, and suggests that in the long run mutual problem solving can be more economic al and efficient.

In the early part of the decade, many of us who were working to introduce public involvement into planning continued to run up against constraints imposed by the planning process being used by the agencies. Leonard Ortolano's paper describes a planning process, which was subsequently employed in a demonstration study, that attempted to eliminate many of these constraints. Many of the ideas expressed in this article were subsequently incorporated into the Corps of Engineers' planning process.

Both Leonard Ortolano and James R. Hanchey contributed to the formulation of a new Corps of Engineers planning process. In his second article, Hanchey describes a process by which the planner can design public involvement so that it is an integral and related part of the planning process. This article is actually a chapter from one of the earliest public involvement manuals produced by any agency.

Creighton's article is an expansion of the kind of thought process described in Hanchey's article, and provides a structured approach to designing public involvement programs.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE  
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

by Ann Widditsch

I cannot answer the question on how citizen participation can be best achieved. As yet no one has come up with an answer to that question. It is obvious that citizen participation is a difficult thing to motivate until someone is adversely affected, then they come out in droves . . .

From a written comment by  
a King County participant

The following suggestions are based primarily on experiences conducting workshops for the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters study. [This was a very large study developing a regional plan for the entire Puget Sound area. Leadership for the study was provided by a task force including representatives of the affected counties and relevant state and Federal agencies. The need for broader public involvement was not recognized until late in the study when the author was retained to set up the workshops discussed in this article.]

Start early, plan carefully, know what you want, be flexible

Many of the problems with the Puget Sound workshops grew out of their lateness in the study and the short time available to initiate them. One such problem was convincing people that the workshops could affect the plan after the study was essentially completed. Ensuring broad participation, encouraging thorough review of the limited number of copies of the study documents, and inducing productive ideas and useful interchange were all made more difficult by lack of time.

Public participation should be an intimate part of planning throughout, not just at the end, or from time to time. The call for public involvement throughout the planning process has become a cliché (in this paper as elsewhere), but whether the call will be answered effectively remains to be seen. As one of the King County workshop participants wrote,

... Citizen participation can best be achieved with the realization that participation cannot be channeled to flow only at specific instances and that government must be responsive to citizen input to make that or any input credible. Citizen input and participation is where you find it. Citizens will only become part of the procedure when they realize they have a definite stake in what is happening, and not before.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Report 72-2. Widditsch, Ann, "Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study: An Evaluation," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1972.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Public participation should be part of the program, planned for and budgeted for from the beginning of the study. It must be understood to be a continuing activity, and those running the program must be committed to the idea and its value. People must be convinced that what they say and do can make a difference in the final results; otherwise, they may be unwilling to participate in a productive manner. A continuing process will help accommodate changing ideas over time and will help bring the planners and the public along together.

Before the first workshop, advisory committee meeting, or public meeting, planners should decide what they expect to get from public participation, how they propose to get it, and what will be done with it. One or more persons should have responsibility for the public participation program, probably persons not involved in the actual study (though well informed about it)! Such a person would advise on the public impact of the study throughout.

Provision for schedule slippage should be built into plans. Everything always takes longer than it should, and planners might as well be prepared. The Puget Sound Task Force had much too short a time to deal with the workshop results before the public hearings. And the, perhaps subconscious, expectation that the results would be neat and easy to summarize was a miscalculation. The time constraint meant that there was little time to make mistakes and learn from experience--there was no opportunity for feedback. Plans for public involvement should be flexible and reviewed frequently, so that planners can benefit from experience and change plans, if necessary.

A reasonable public involvement procedure is for experts to lay out alternatives in broad outlines at the first public meetings in various places, with widespread publicity and appropriate written material available. After the experts and technicians have heard from the public, organizations and governmental bodies, they can begin discussing different ways of reaching public goals. Subsequent meetings with the public can discuss alternatives and gradually narrow objectives. The whole planning process must display the alternatives clearly, so people understand the choices before them. All this should increase the probability of public acceptance of the plan in the end.

It may seem unfair, but the primary responsibility for effective public participation is the government's, not the citizen's. The government has the money, the staff, and the time, and can hire the needed talent. (Government people who feel they lack these things should make a realistic comparison of their resources with the citizens.)

The workshop coordinator, Mr. Dennis Lundblad of the Water Resources Branch, Washington State Department of Ecology, agreed substantially with these conclusions.

In a speech in Des Moines, Iowa, Mr. Lundblad stated:

Start public participation early; seek to budget for it well in advance; plan to include all who are willing; build in clear guidance for participation; strive hard for a cross-section of interests; and keep people's interest alive. Plan to spend extra time--and patience--to consider and use ideas that people take time to develop . . .

Finally, the first step in gaining truly useful participation both from the standpoint of good public relations as well as obtaining valuable information, is to fully educate participants on the purpose and scope of the job at hand. No amount of repeating can ever substitute for a clear and complete set of ground rules at the beginning of the process. That process is called public involvement, but it is clearly the obligation of all government to assure that it is informed public involvement.

Mr. Sydney Steinborn, the Corps of Engineers' representative on the Task Force, also agreed. In a similar speech given in Des Moines he stated:

... we should: (1) keep the public fully informed and participating during the entire study--and we should leave a good record of this effort; (2) we should operate in a manner that surfaces as many ideas as possible; (3) we should operate to permit and encourage citizen contribution to the study process; (4) we should do all this in a very visible way as citizen participants want to be seen, and visibility can help compromises to be worked out locally rather than deferred to our traditional arenas of compromise, the State or Federal legislature; (5) and always we should remember our responsibility to furnish our bosses--usually an elected official or someone appointed by an elected official--a recommendation for action or inaction articulated in a manner that can readily be translated by that official to the electorate.

Achieving these goals will require thorough planning and a good deal of finesse. It will also cost money--in the Corps we estimate this cost at between 25 percent and 40 percent of the study effort, and we are beginning to budget on that basis.\*

Remember, too, that public participation in the planning process is not likely to be a routine affair--it can and will be wild and disorganized, discomfiting and discouraging, but always informative if you keep your eyes and ears open.

#### Know who is doing what

Responsibilities and lines of authority must be clear to all. The entity having primary responsibility for public involvement should arrange for meeting places, send out notices, get publicity, and take care of follow-up and any other attendant activities. If responsibility, or part of it, is given to someone else, as was the case with the Puget Sound workshops, enough money and time to do the job well should go with the responsibility.

A citizens advisory committee which would serve throughout a study, with broader public meetings or workshops scheduled at intervals, could be effective. A citizens committee alone may tend to become too much the voice of the affluent, respectable and interested. But such a committee as part of the effort could

---

\* (IWR note: The overall Corps program is evolutionary at this time, and no firm or representative data is available on costs. However, tentative indications from other sources lead to expectation of lower percentages.)

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

provide continuity, and could have as one of its missions the involvement of other citizens. Committee members must be recruited, not just invited. A real campaign may be needed to get some of the most useful people. Such a committee should be a representative cross section in all ways, including geographical. Prospective committee members should be given a realistic idea of the amount of work involved--the group will not be an honorary, status list.

An existing voluntary group like the League of Women Voters could be used to help organize and conduct meetings like the Puget Sound workshops, but if this is contemplated, negotiations should start very early, as such groups need a lot of lead time. The Snohomish County Planning Department even suggested that citizens be included on planning teams themselves for future comprehensive plans. Any of these suggestions could help improve the credibility of the end product.

Some way should be devised to pass on what is learned from experience. Those who are involved in conducting the meetings could get together and exchange ideas. A written manual or checklist of what to do could be written and distributed. However, it should never be assumed that people will necessarily follow written directions. There must also be continuous personal contact between the planners and the public involvers. Briefing sessions before meetings and critique sessions afterwards could be helpful.

### Provide useful information

Appropriate written material must be available. Documents produced by a planning agency are often not suitable for review and understanding by most people. Early publication of short pamphlets or booklets would be helpful, as well as constant scrutiny of the planning documents by a lay-oriented interpreter who could help bring out the points that people are really concerned about. A digest of lengthy material may well be enough for most people, but those who are really anxious to study the complete documents should be encouraged to do so. The formal governmental review process should not prevent people from seeing plans in the making.

People working on the study should come to meetings prepared to explain what they are doing and why. Even if the best person to answer a specific question is not there, people are reassured to see that real live human beings are doing the work. A telephone number to call (without toll, if possible) for answers to questions would be helpful.

Maps, displays, slides or films may be useful. But they should not make the study look so finished that people will think that the conclusions have already been reached and that they will have no chance to change them (as was the case with the printed appendices of the Puget Sound study).

Visual material may not be necessarily more effective than appropriate written material. The flow chart of the Puget Sound study seemed a good idea, but turned out to be confusing. All informational materials should be carefully thought through with the help of the public participation staff, and should be changed or abandoned if experience proves them ineffective.

Work for broad participation

Every effort must be made to assure attendance of persons known to be interested in water resources and public affairs including, for example, those from farm groups, chambers of commerce, garden clubs, improvement clubs, public utilities, labor unions, industries, conservation and environmental organizations, students and other young people, and governmental agencies. Participation by minority groups is highly desirable but difficult to achieve--another area in which active recruitment is necessary. Special efforts may be made to get participation from persons felt to be most valuable, but the impression should never be given that other people are not welcome. If there is a citizens advisory committee, members should not be so expert or so talkative that they overwhelm the other citizens.

Public officials and civil servants should take part, but also should not overwhelm the group, either by their numbers or their expertise. Public officials should come to watch the performance of their staff people.

Ways to maintain interest throughout the study should be devised, so that participants keep coming--and new participants are attracted.

Make meetings convenient

Times and places should be convenient and suitable for the general public in the area. In most communities, weekday evenings are best, but custom may be different and should rule. Meetings should be scheduled reasonably far in advance. The meeting place should be centrally located in the geographical area, easy to find, and comfortable--or at least not forbidding. Gathering around a table is ideal; sitting in a sloped amphitheater or a formal court room far from ideal.

Get lots of publicity

Individual notices (specific and simply written) should be mailed to all known interested people. They should be encouraged to invite their friends and associates. Everything should make the gatherings sound welcoming and open to all. Those who are not really interested will drop out anyhow. If there is an information bulletin, it should be clear, nontechnical, and interesting. Notices should be sent "address correction requested" so that address changes will be learned. One individual should have responsibility for developing and maintaining a mailing list.

The chairman, coordinator, or someone on the public participation staff must have time and appropriate contacts to get publicity in local newspapers (including weeklies) and on radio and TV. He should talk to the press in all the major towns, including radio and TV. This will take time, but good relations with the press will pay dividends for a long time.

If at all possible, people should be called about meetings--especially the most needed people. The results will be worth the effort. Busy people do not always read their mail, and a personal call adds motivation even when the notice is seen.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Other possible ways to get publicity and maintain or increase interest include: getting the news into newsletters of organizations, posting notices, using advertising, publishing a newsletter, or sending out various other types of written material.

There should be an effort to get publicity throughout the study and public participation process. Controversy will help--it may be uncomfortable, but it will keep people interested and coming.

### Be organized, but informal

Some sort of organization should be set up at the first meeting. One or more prospects for chairman can be lined up in advance, and if the group does not immediately organize itself, one of these people can volunteer. The job need not be difficult, and it helps assure continuity. A citizen is probably best as chairman. He or she should not be expected to do the staff legwork, like mailings and telephoning. That is what makes it hard to get chairmen!

Meetings should be run informally, but moderated in a businesslike way, without technical jargon, intimidation, or defensiveness. The purpose and expected results of the meeting or series of meetings should be clearly defined each time. The atmosphere should be that everyone is pooling knowledge and experience to work constructively for a common goal. Everyone's contribution should be welcomed, as long as he lets others have their say. Any presentations by staff or invited experts should be dynamic. There should be no unnecessary rules about whether comments are to be in spoken or written form--or anything else. If the group is large, consideration should be given to breaking into smaller groups with discussion leaders--who might then need some training. The major points raised should be reviewed at the end of each meeting.

There should always be an attendance sheet at each meeting, with space for names, addresses, telephone numbers and affiliations. The list should be made available to all participants. Name tags may be helpful, as may a blackboard or bulletin board.

### Report conclusions adequately

People should be encouraged to write down what they think. It will be more organized if they have taken time to think it over and summarize it, and it is easier to deal with. It can be read back or distributed to the group for further comment (with the writer's permission). But, in addition, somebody should take full notes of all the meetings to capture the flavor and make sure that no useful information escapes.

### Unanswered questions

Giving advice, like the foregoing, is intoxicating. There is just one little problem about it: Will it work? Many questions, some of which appear below, remain unanswered.

Inducing public involvement is not an exact science, and there will be much trial and error in devising methods for it. As Johannes Kurz of the Puget Sound Governmental Conference said in his King County workshop comment:



Procedures for meaningful citizen participation and for the involvement of local government in the planning of federal and state public works projects, such as highways, dams, power plants, river and shoreline corrections, have yet to be developed.

All recommendations must be regarded as tentative. Mr. Kurz goes on to say:

Also, funding by the project sponsor of these participatory efforts will have to be established in order to enable local agencies with their limited resources to allocate an adequate amount of manpower.

If local governments are to review lengthy planning documents of other governments, and contribute to them, should they get money to pay for the time of the staff that will do the reviewing, and other expenses? If not, how does it get paid for?

If the public is expected to come to meetings and spend time reviewing such plans, who pays for working people to take necessary time off work, or for out-of-pocket expenses like babysitting and parking fees? Should planners continue to depend on people who can afford this activity to represent the entire public? Should citizens, perhaps, even be compensated for the time spent on such projects, or would this destroy their independent status?

One participant had an interesting idea. He said:

I've lived here for 27 years, and I haven't been a citizen. I want to be . . . I didn't come here because I'm interested in planning, but because I'm interested in what kind of life I'm going to have . . . We should set up a system so we get a day a month off the job to be a citizen.

How should the ideas of different people and groups be weighed? Dennis Lundblad commented on this problem in his Des Moines speech:

. . . how to seek consensus on various projects and programs being considered in planning. Whether or not to weigh comments and preferences continually arises as a question from planning agencies as well as the public. If weights are not assigned, then the next question is the consideration that should be given to often opposing views. Planners consider this situation as one when both views should be shown along with the consequences of each. However, with the variety of attitudes and preferences available from a broad public cross-section, new methods of treatment are needed. "What are you going to do with all the ideas and comments?" was a common question from workshop participants.

Who does or should speak for the various parts of the population or interest groups: blacks, Indians, farmers, sportsmen? How does the would-be public involver know? How does he bring in those who are reluctant to get involved, but whose views are needed, like some of the above mentioned minorities?

How should the views of local people be weighed against the interests of the whole state or nation, as in the Nisqually Delta or North Cascades National Park controversies? What about, for example, a dam on the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, desired for flood control by many local people, but opposed by some

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

nearby city dwellers (and some local people) because it will drown a free-flowing stretch of river? One King County workshop comment on this particular question was:

Flood storage projects for the Snoqualmie River may have been "locally" reviewed, but the real base of interest in this project is regional, at least. At this time, a truly broad exposure must be insisted upon. This would call for full disclosure in the press and on television, with local review groups being given up to a year to thoroughly evaluate and respond to the overall plan.

Even if a plan like that suggested above is carried out, what mechanism can be devised for resolving such conflicts? Who will decide what is really in the public interest? It cannot be done by merely using cost-benefit ratios, nor even environmental impact statements. How does this fit into the political process, or does it? Referenda on all such issues would be impractical. (For one thing, who would get to vote?) If our government were working the way it is supposed to, would we need public involvement in planning?

How can interest in a plan or project be kept alive over the long period of planning? With every agency competing for citizens, the minority who can and will participate will be worn out with going to meetings about highways, parks, dams, schools, and other projects and plans. The process will also wear out the planners and public officials. Even when citizens maintain their interest, there is much turnover because people move away, change jobs, have babies, start or finish school, grow up, get sick, or die. How can continuity be maintained?

How can electronic media be used to inform the public and get feedback from it? One King County participant suggested:

Community awareness time should be made available by TV and radio for presentation of things that would be bettered by community involvement. This type exposure, coupled with workshop input at both early and mid-study points, could introduce more meaningful citizen participation.

How can the public keep control of the specialists it has hired? What happens when they disagree? The public may trust an engineer to decide how to build a dam, but not to decide whether to build one. The public should make this decision, but how? And citizens need to influence planning early enough so that their only option is not just to say yes or no. How can planners ask the right questions to get the answers they need from the public?

These questions, among others, will provide further adventures in public participation in planning in the years ahead.

---

Upon reflection, I find little in the workshop experience to change the opinions expressed in my first paper on the Puget Sound workshops. I am still convinced that:

. . . People will no longer quietly accept massive changes in their personal environment, or that of a group or minority, without having had--and feeling they have had--a substantial role in the planning process . . . even though there may not necessarily be tangible good results from the workshops, tangible bad results can probably be expected if they are not held . . . Workshops must be held, they must be carefully planned and executed, and their results must be taken into account before the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters study is made final.

The workshops were held. They were far from perfect, but many people worked hard on them, produced worthwhile results, and learned something about public involvement in planning. I am glad I was able to be there.



COMMUNICATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

by A. Bruce Bishop

INTRODUCTION

A growing concern about the use and allocation of natural resources along with the demand of more and more citizens to participate in resource planning decisions has created an atmosphere in which improved communication between the public and the Corps of Engineers, as an agency responsible for resources management, becomes increasingly important. Poor communication and general misunderstanding by the involved parties in a particular study can produce conflict which may become detrimental to both the public interest and the Corps.

Significant changes in social values have taken place during the past years creating problems between the public and various agencies, including the Corps, and agencies find themselves as coordinators and arbiters among groups with different ideas, goals and values. Some of these groups have existed and dealt with the Corps for many years. However, others are relatively new and may be associated with some of the various social and environmental movements which have become popular during the past decade. The various publics affected by the work of the Corps, covering the broad spectrum of the various social, economic, and environmental groups, need to be informed about studies and to have an opportunity to participate in the planning through effective opportunities for communication.

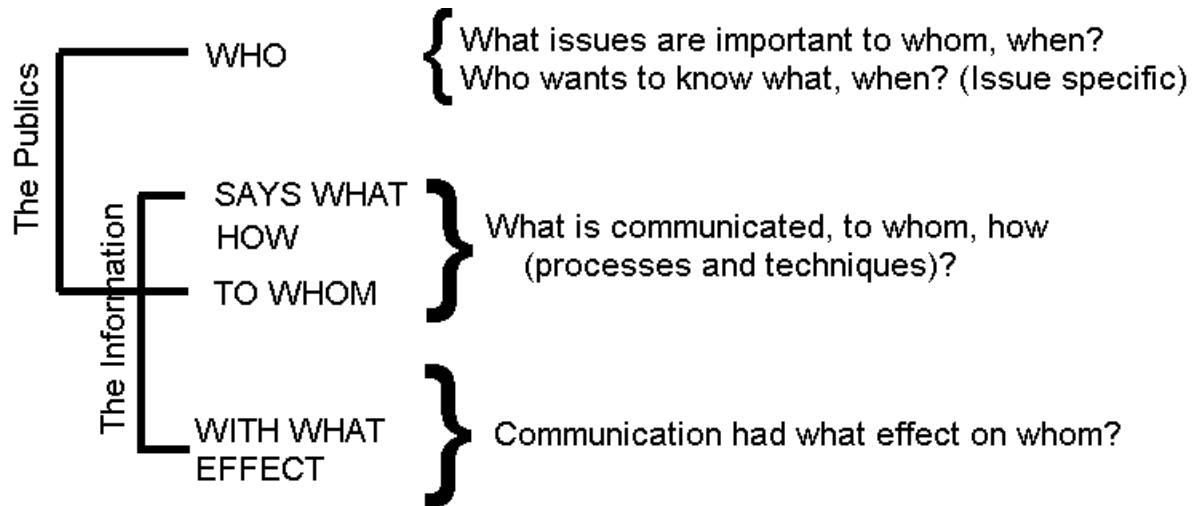
The importance of the communications role of government agencies is underscored in a study by Bohlen and Beal (1957). They state that:

In all stages (of the adoption process) the complexity of the idea is related to the choice of sources (of information). The more complex the idea, the greater is the tendency to rely on government agencies.

This fact would seem to reinforce the importance of the Corps of Engineers (or any government agency) developing and maintaining a highly efficient information program to communicate with the public if the agency's mission is to be accomplished. The Corps authorities and studies need to be explained and information provided for members of interest groups and the public as a whole. At the same time, the Corps needs to better understand the publics that they are trying to serve, so that the needs and values of the various publics can be incorporated into plans. Improved communication is the key to accomplishing these aims. If communication is to be improved, a planner must be able to critically examine the efficiency and effectiveness

---

Reprinted from: Review Draft, A. Bruce Bishop, "Structuring Communications Programs for Public Participation in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineer Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1974.



**Figure 1. A Description of Communications**

of his communications during the planning process. A framework for the analysis of communications, adapted from Laswell's (1948) succinct description, is presented in Figure 1 below.

Some of the considerations in using this description as a basis for analysis of communications, requirements and effectiveness in planning are presented in Table 1. Types of analyses noted are those commonly used in communications investigation. In relating Laswell's key elements of communication more specifically to water resources planning, this chapter is developed in three sections:

1. Identification of Publics: The Who and to Whom
2. Communication Processes: The How
3. Information and Content: The What and Effects

If the planner conscientiously addresses these questions in developing communications programs, better public participation in planning studies should result.

TABLE 1. ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTIONS

Model Function	Type of Analysis	Components
WHO	Control Participation	Identification of parties involved at phases of planning process.
SAYS WHAT	Message Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issue analysis</li> <li>2. Message analysis relevant to issues (a) information, (b) persuasion, (c) requests inquiries, (d) attacks or accusations, (e) demands.</li> </ol>
IN WHICH CHANNEL	Media	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encoding of message (Semantic Noise)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Written--Technical vs. Layman's language</li> <li>b. Graphical &amp; pictorial forms</li> <li>c. Verbal forms</li> <li>d. Mass media</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Transmitting Device (Mechanical Noise)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Written forms (reports, letters, press)</li> <li>b. Mass media (TV, newspapers)</li> <li>c. Group contact forms</li> <li>d. Individual contact forms.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
TO WHOM	Audience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frame of Reference</li> <li>2. Social context</li> </ol>
WITH WHAT EFFECT	Effect	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interpretive response               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promote understanding?</li> <li>b. Disrupt understanding?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Communication goal: Produce rational decisions. Hence, did communication tend to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reduce conflict?</li> <li>b. Produce conflict?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

IDENTIFICATION OF PUBLICS: THE WHO AND TO WHOM

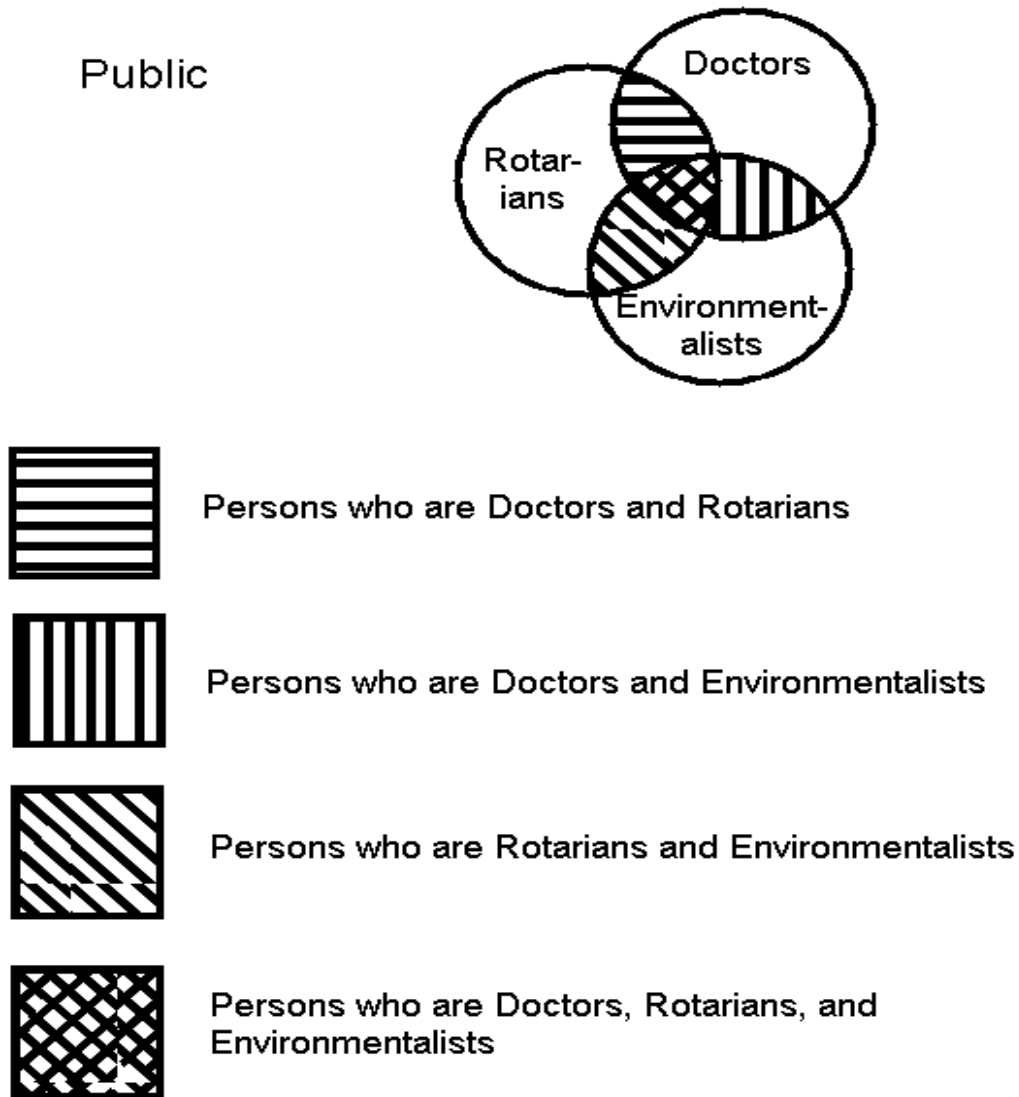
Perhaps the most elusive aspect of "public participation" is the publics themselves. Yet, communication in water resources planning cannot be independent of the characteristics of the "public." The general public cannot be considered as one body. The public is diffuse, but at the same time highly segmented into interest groups, geographic communities and individuals. There are sets or groups of "publics" that have common goals, ideals, and values. Any one person may belong to several different sets of these publics since they may be professionally, socially, or politically oriented. The Venn diagram, Figure 2, illustrates the overlapping of some of these groups, and the fact that an individual may identify with one, a combination of two, or all three of the groups. Two significant points may be drawn from this in terms of communication.

1. Individuals are likely associated with various social, economic and cultural orientations from which he draws his information and structures his values.
2. Multiple association thus allows the opportunity for multiple access to individuals as participants, clients or critics in a planning process.

The key questions in identification of the publics then are: Who are the "publics" that should be involved? and, How can the planner pinpoint them so he can direct some of his efforts toward them? These questions are difficult to answer in view of the continual flux of the planning process. One thing is sure--the "wait for the public to come to us" approach will not produce effective communication and participation. The agency needs to engage in an aggressive program to draw out public interests relevant to planning problems. To do this requires a framework for identifying publics that goes well beyond working with particular special interest or client groups. Elements for developing such a framework are organized in Figure 3, indicating an identification of participants according to issues and interests and their relation to the study. The matrix illustrates a cross-categorization along two important lines. The first breaks out the groups that have organized along the lines of common interests and issues presently existing within the social and political structure. The second identifies the "publics" relation to the planning study, whether affected by the problem and/or proposed solutions, and in what way. Categorizing publics within this schema is paramount to understanding and recognizing the roles and interests that various groups and individuals will play in a planning study. Circular No. 1165-2-11 from the Office of the Chief of Engineers, dated May 28, 1971, states the following:

Water resources development impacts broadly on people with different philosophies and points of view on plans, programs and aspirations of other agencies, groups, organizations, and individuals. Public participation must reflect this broad impact. Every effort must be made to identify and bring into the process influential groups and independent individuals (those who do or can significantly influence decisions as well as those who can actually make them). Local, regional, and national aspects should be considered. The working list of independent individuals, groups, and organizations should be continuously reviewed and updated as studies progress.





**Figure 2. Example of Multiple Public Association**

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

Interests/Issues	Relation to the Study				
	Affected by the Problem		Affected by Proposed Solutions		Not Affected
	Directly Beneficial/Adverse	Indirectly Etc.	Users ...	Non-Users ...	
Individuals					
Property Owner/Users					
Conservation/Environmental Groups					
Sportsman-s Groups					
Farm Organization					
Business/Industrial					
Professional					
Education Institutions					
Labor Unions					
Service Clubs					
State/Local Agencies					
Elected Officials					
News Media					

This advice is of prime importance. Since public participation is essentially a social communication process, without the identification of the publics involved in this process it cannot operate efficiently.

#### Considerations in Identification of Publics

Identification of publics is an effort to determine who will be communicating in the planning study. This entails not only an inventory of various agencies, organizations, individuals and influentials, but also some picture of the institutional structure in the study area. Publics can include governmental officials, both elected and nonelected. Nonelected officials will include those working within other operating agencies. Organized groups existing within the region should also be inventoried. Those groups with special interests related to the existing problem and potential solutions will be fairly obvious. However, groups, clubs and organizations including lodges, civic groups, educational groups, religious groups or organizations, neighborhood groups, professional groups, unions, and any other group with which persons in the area may become associated should all be considered. In identifying publics, considerations to be kept in mind relating to identification are:

1. Identification Needed for Each Study.

Efforts should be made when identifying the "publics" which may become involved in the planning process to consider both those with whom the agency has previously dealt and those with whom working relations will be needed for the efficacy and effectiveness of a particular study.

2. Identification Continues Throughout Planning Process.

Identification of publics should be made not only at the outset of the study, but throughout all phases of the planning process.

3. Recognition of Potential for Voluntary Organizations.

The potential for the formation of voluntary organizations should be kept in mind as publics are identified. These groups may either favor or oppose potential solution to the problem or may be formed for other reasons related to the study. As an aid in determining if such voluntary groups may develop, planners can look at both the beneficial and adverse effects of the problem on various segments of the public in general. This can include individual citizens or groups who may not have already expressed their preferences through, or participated in, the types of groups or organizations mentioned earlier. The beneficial and adverse effects should not be limited to economic benefits or impacts. Individual citizens and groups that may be affected by the proposed solutions, and users and nonusers of potential solutions, are other categories of individuals and groups that may lead to voluntary associations.

4. Recognition of Change of Public Participating Over Time.

The planner must also be aware that identification of publics has the dimension of participation through time. At the onset of planning, a certain segment of the public will have an interest in participating. These are usually people or groups that: (1) have participated in the past; (2) are affected by a problem; or, (3) will be affected by a possible solution to the problem. Circle A in Figure 4 (a) indicates this identified portion of the public. As planning progresses, some of those identified do not participate, while some previously unidentified publics will identify themselves. Circle B in Figure 4 (b) illustrates those who are participating after the process has progressed for some time. Looking forward into time, there will always be those who may not be identified who may come into the process. This is shown by Circle C in Figure 4 (c). Hence, the planner must be prepared to communicate with three sets of publics: (1) those that can be identified and will participate, (2) those that become identified as the process progresses, and (3) those that will be identified in the future. Thus, of the publics initially identified by the agency, some will follow through, others will drop out, and some previously unidentified interests will enter the arena of participation. Indeed, controversies in resource planning have often occurred as a result of new participants entering at the end of the process in opposition to proposed actions. Many of these difficulties might be averted if the agency had a clairvoyant on its staff. Personnel with this qualification being hard to come by, three other approaches can be taken: (1) actively seek out and engage at the outset of a study a broad and representative range of public interests; (2) keep as much flexibility in the process for as long as possible, insofar as selecting a plan or recommending action; and, (3) document the process and the public inputs relating to alternatives and impacts studied.

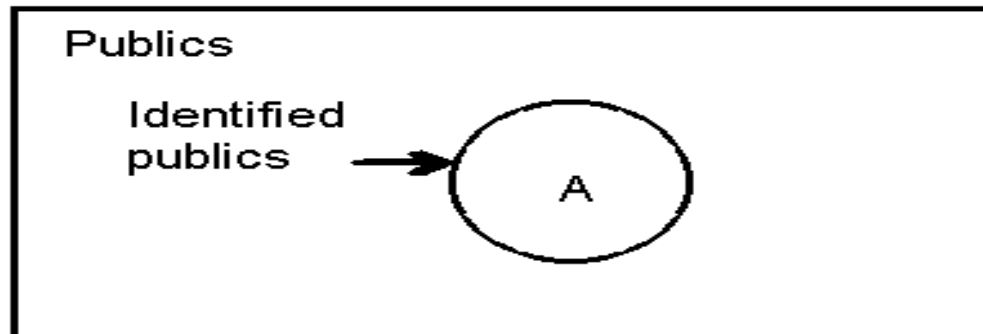
Summarizing these points suggests that certain interest groups may choose not to participate, while others will be adamant about being included in everything. As a general rule, the agency should provide the opportunity for all to participate. The publics may choose to respond or not to respond. It is their prerogative. But the agency should make the choice available.

**COMMUNICATIONS PROCESSES: THE HOW**

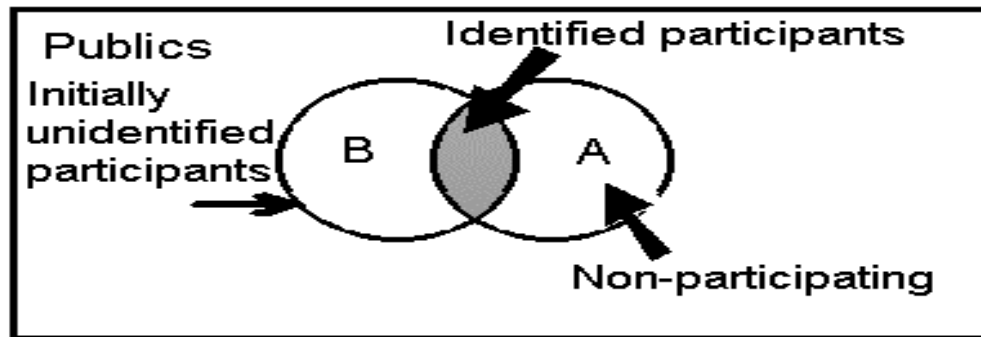
The "how" of public involvement in the planning process is essentially the application of appropriate communications methods and techniques to engage the participation of the target groups. This section will describe the general framework for communications. The purpose of this discussion is to provide some insight into the functional elements of communication so that specific methods and techniques can be viewed within a systematic context.

**Elements of Communication**

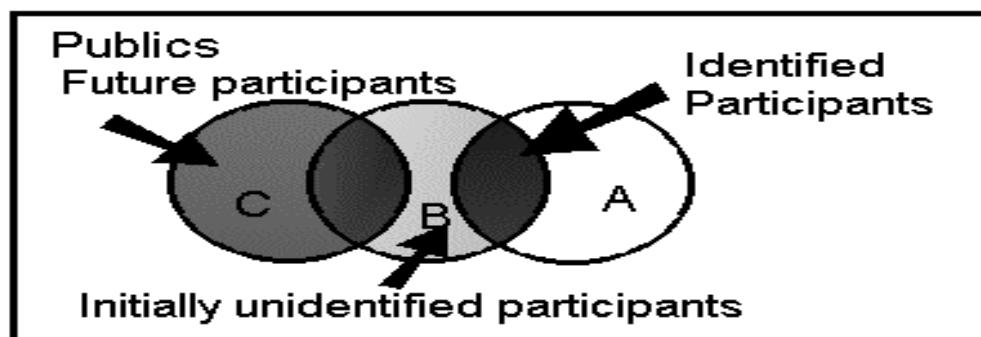
The basic elements of communication may be represented by the simple communications model (abstracted from Shannon, 1941, Schram; 1971; Berlo, 1960; and Willeke, 1974b. An excellent review of communications theory may be found in Kahle and Lee, 1974) shown in Figure 5.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 4. A Temporal Perspective of Identification of Publics

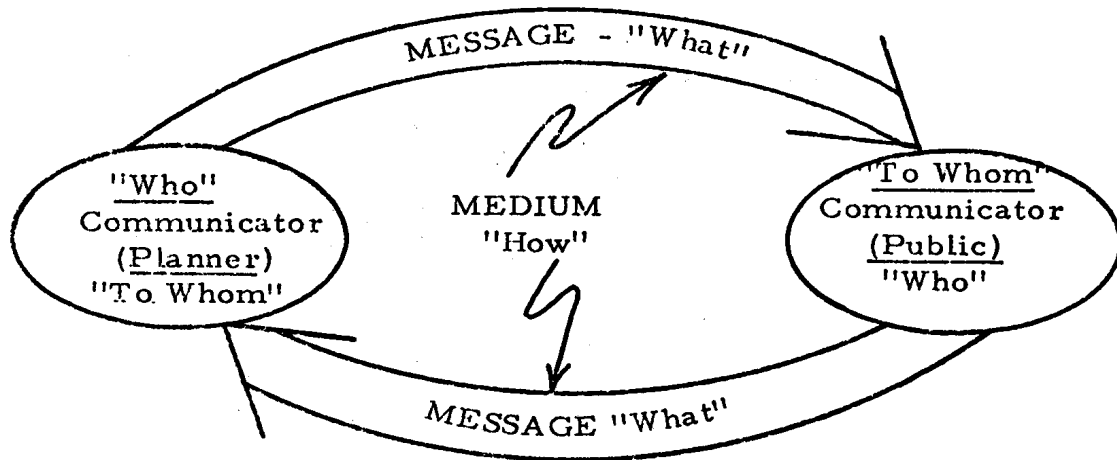


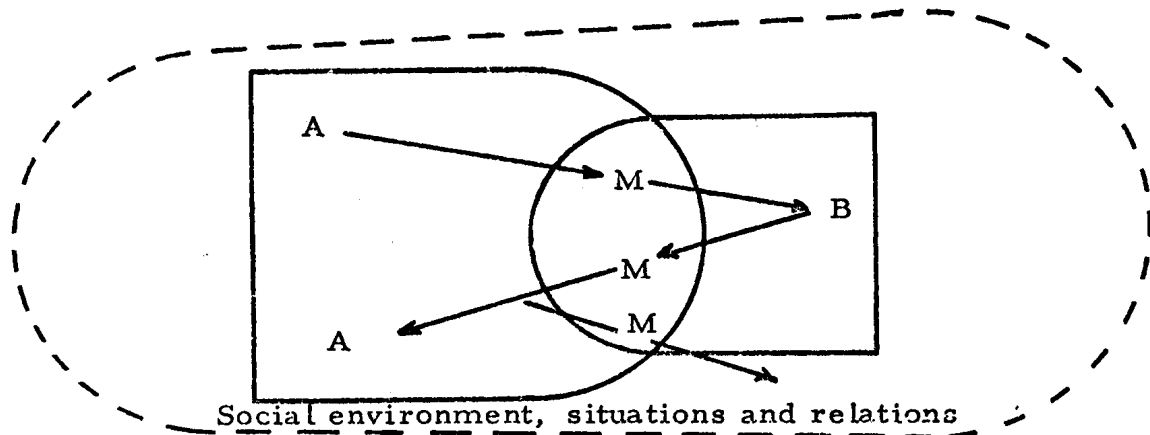
Figure 5. Elements of Communication

Identification of those who should communicate in planning has, of course, been discussed in the previous section. The mechanism by which communication actually takes place is determined by the participants through their selection of message, i.e., the information content of communication, and the format, method and techniques by which the message will be "transmitted." Effective communication requires not only the dissemination of information, say from planner to public, but also for many purposes, the opportunity to complete the loop through feedback, say from public to planner.

#### Factors Affecting Communication

It should be noted that there are a number of possible disturbances in communications which can hamper effectiveness. These factors may be conveniently considered in two groups:

1. Frame of Reference. The idea of frame of reference is particularly important to the planner in developing a communication program for a study. As Figure 6 illustrates, parties A and B interacting in a communications setting have different frames of reference or experience that they bring to the planning process. The area "M" represents a commonality in A's and B's frames of reference in which they can communicate effectively with one another. The task of the planner is to familiarize himself with the background and reference frame of various participants, then structure his message and utilize media which exploit the commonalities of the participants' experience and roles.



**Figure 6. Communication Within Common Reference Frame**

2. Noise. Types of noise in communication are classified into two groups: as semantic noise, associated with putting information into written, oral or graphic message forms; and mechanical noise, associated with the medium for transmission, such as mass media, meetings, etc. Figure 7 illustrates how communications noise may arise.

Since communications effectiveness is conditioned to an extent by the message form and media used for transmission, the use of multiple message formats and media to transmit the same information increases the opportunity to convey a complete message, and also the likelihood that the message will be received. From the standpoint of the communicators, the process of interpretive responses gives the key as to how problems of noise are overcome. Basically, this is accomplished through feedback on the messages between the communicators. This is illustrated in the diagram of Figure 8, where  $f_1$  represents feedback to the planner by observing his own message; and  $f_2$  represents the feedback of interpretive response from the public. Through comparison of the two, the sender can evaluate whether the message has been correctly received, and if not, take further steps to achieve clarification.

#### Communications Process Models

The preceding paragraphs have taken essentially a micro view of communication in looking at basic elements.

For an overall perspective, communications interchanges should also be viewed within the multi-public context of the planning process. In structuring communications programs in this multi-publics social setting, four basic kinds of processes seem appropriate in meeting the basic objectives of public participation:

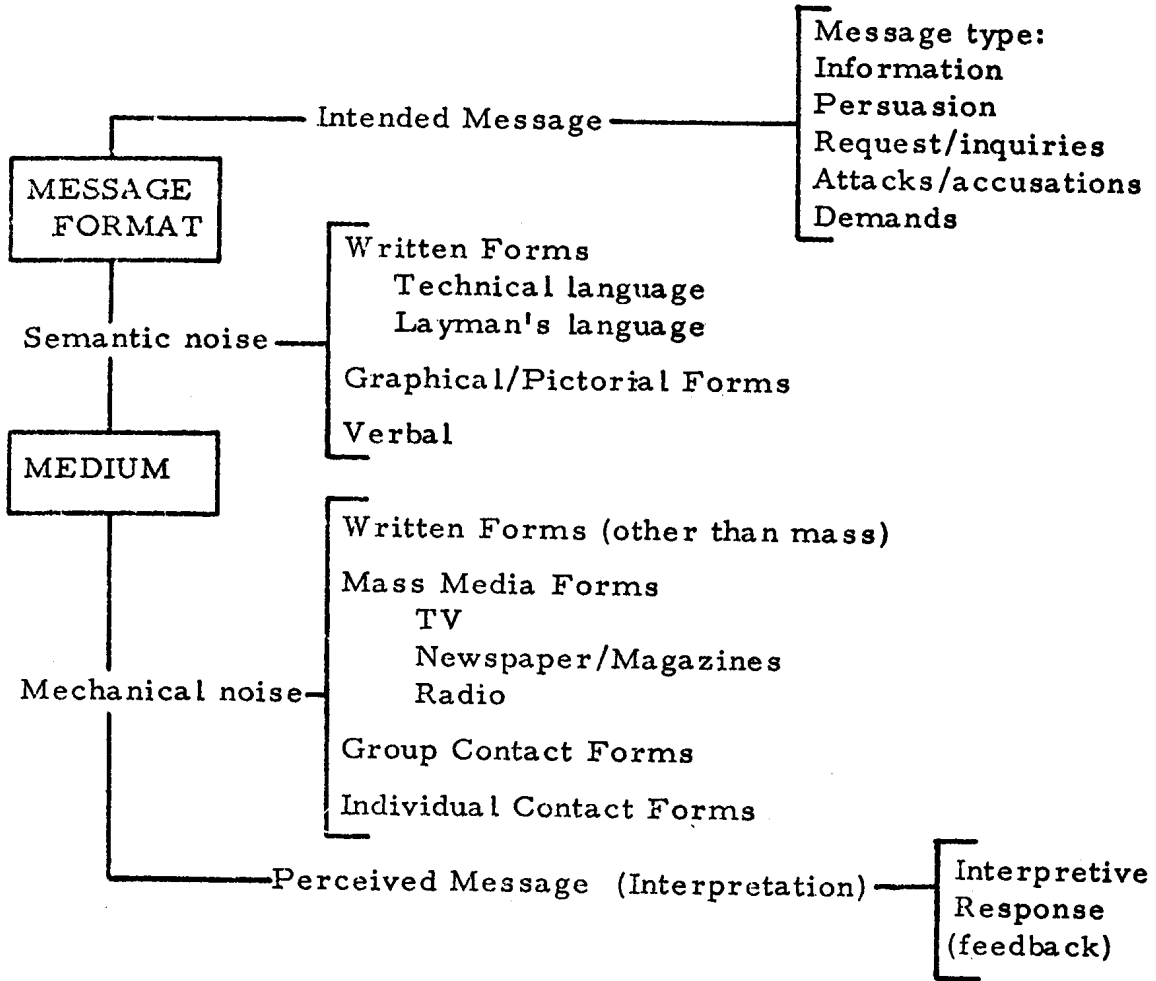


Figure 7. Forms of Noise in Communication

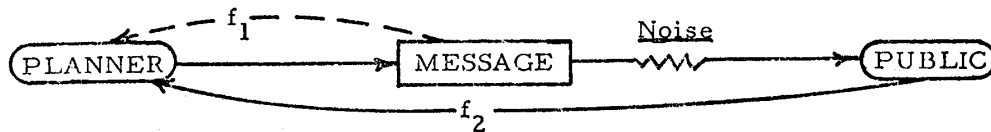


Figure 8. Compensation for Noise Through Feedback



1. Diffusion processes. The earlier reference to multiple media also points to the possibility of multiple access to target groups or publics through the communications system. An operational example of this is illustrated in Figure 9. In this process, the agency sends a message via different media to various target groups, who in turn transmit the message to still other groups or individuals. The net result enables the agency to reach a broader segment of the public in terms of the total impact than just the initial target group.

The diagram brings out three important points. First, communication is not just a single, but a multi-step process where target groups become senders in transferring a message to others through media which they can access. Corollary to this is the fact that the sender cannot completely control the communication process since intermediaries are present to influence or interrupt the process. Second, a target public can be contacted through several media, thus giving opportunity for reinforcing and clarifying the message. Third, if some media are inoperative due to frame of reference or noise problems, the diffusion process can still get the message to target groups through other media types.

2. Collection processes. The collection process can be seen as diffusion in reverse. It may serve to obtain feedback to complete a communication loop or to collect information. The messages may or may not return by the same media.
3. Interaction process. Interaction describes the situation where communication is an interchange among several groups, as illustrated in Figure 10. The agency may assume the central role in acting as a moderator and facilitator in the communication exchange among other groups, or may simply take the role of one of the communicators in the interaction. The interactive processes generally imply communications media which involve meetings, work groups, committees, advisory panels, and the like.
4. Diffusion-collection processes. This process describes the situation where information is disseminated with the specific intent of eliciting some desired information in response. Usually, in addition, the mechanism or medium for response will be specified or provided in order to facilitate information collection. A simple example is a questionnaire that is sent to some public groups and to a newspaper (see Figure 9). Target publics are asked to send their responses by individual letter to the agency as the originator of the questionnaire.

To summarize, it is interesting to match the communications process models with the key communications objectives. These cross-comparisons, organized in Figure 11, then help to select an appropriate communications approach to meet a particular information objective in the planning process. For example, inform, educate and liaison objectives are all dependent on dissemination of information. The diffusion model describes this process. Identification, assessment and feedback are objectives that are described by the reverse, the collection model. Idea generation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and consensus are generally best accomplished by interaction processes. Review, reaction and evaluation objectives require a two-step process. An information "stimulus" is first directed to the "publics," then the publics respond with their reactions or evaluations. A total communication process will usually require all of these processes.

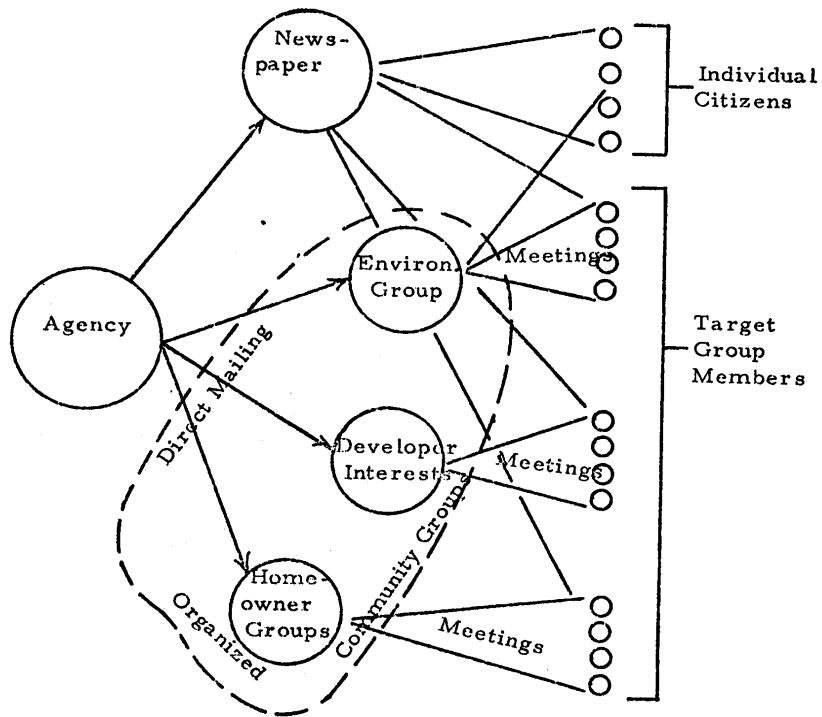
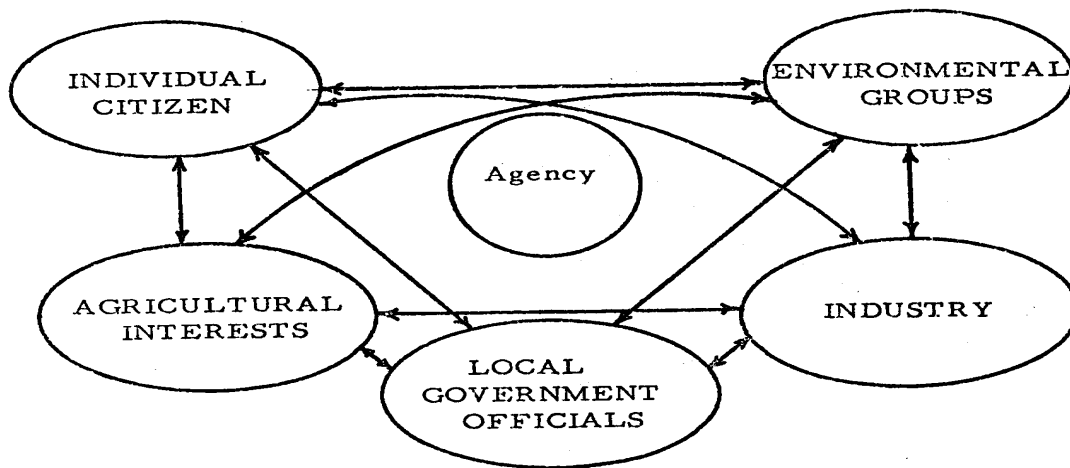


Figure 9. Example of a Diffusion Process



**Figure 10. An Interaction Process**

COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION CONTENT: THE WHAT AND WITH WHAT EFFECT

To insure that there is "substance" in the communications process, the water resources planner must know what information or message content is appropriate and needed for the various planning activities at the present stage of the planning process.

Table 2 attempts to describe in general terms what the information content is in each planning activity. The table also indicates, in general, who the communicators are. Since two-way communication is presupposed, the agency and target groups are "lumped" into the category of communicators. The column headings in the table recognize that the planning process, even though highly interactive and dynamic, will usually progress through three general phases--plan of study, intermediate plans and final plans. Within the table are noted the communications elements associated with these phases.

If the objectives and desired information for each public participation activity are clearly specified, there is a much better chance for productive communication. The information flow in a study should promote and establish proper roles and relationships between planner and publics. The agency should be legitimized, not only as the expert, but also as the facilitator of publicly desired actions. The agency should be thought of as understandable and approachable. The interest groups should consider themselves as sources of input to the planner. Other agencies' roles as information sources should be outlined. Finally, the involved publics should be made aware of what will happen to the results of the planning effort. As a final ranking of alternatives nears, it is important for the agency to establish continuing relationships in order to maintain communication after decisions have been reached, so that the various interests do not lose track of the process through congressional acceptance, funding, implementation and operation.



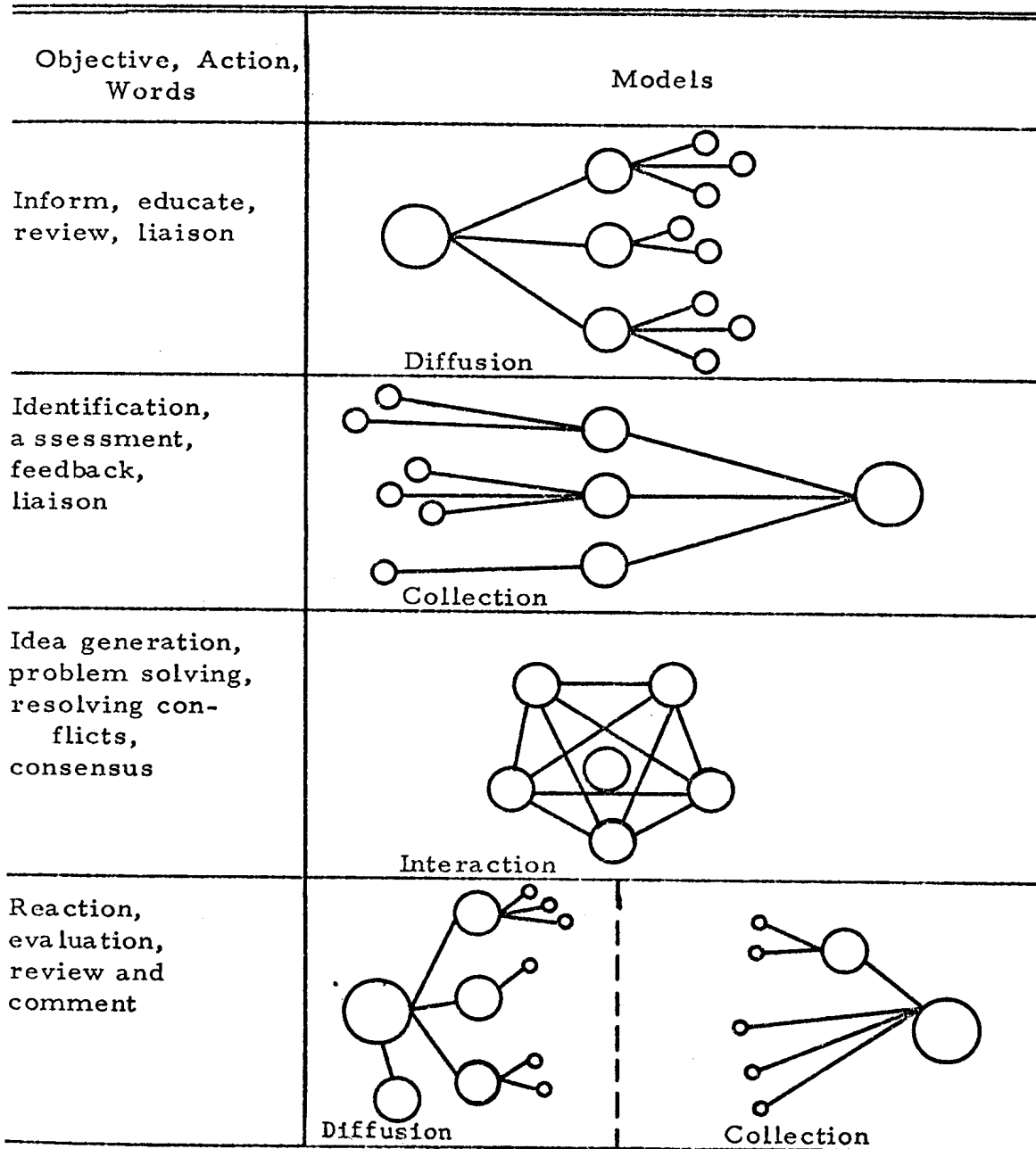


Figure 11. Correspondence of Communications Objectives and Models



TABLE 2. INFORMATION EXCHANGE FOR COMMUNICATIONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

ACTIVITIES-- Information Type	Plains of Study	Study Stages	Final Plans	
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	Societal Wants and Needs	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Resource Conditions	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Objectives	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Alternatives	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
PLAN FORMULATION	Agency Objectives	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Alternatives	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Criteria	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Impacts	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
IMPACT ASSESSMENT	Agency Criteria	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Impacts	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Values/ Trade-offs	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Evaluation Methods	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
EVALUATOR	Agency Values/ Trade-offs	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Evaluation Methods	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Criteria	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans
	Agency Impacts	Agency Publics	Intermediates Plane	Final Plans





THE IMPACT OF DECISION MAKING STYLES UPON THE PUBLIC

James L. Creighton

THE IMPACT OF THE POWER ROLE

In conducting public involvement programs it is essential to realize that you, as the agency representative, will be perceived by the public as having significant power. This power is one of two kinds: 1) Administrative or Coercive Power--the power of someone in a position to reward or punish, 2) Psychological power--the significance or power "invested" in another person based on the fact that they represent an important institution, are famous, or are exceptional in appearance, even though they may not have actual ability to reward or punish.

As agency representative you will usually be perceived as having an exaggerated amount of both. First, it will be assumed that you have virtually unlimited decision-making authority, even though these decisions may contradict mandates, regulations, even laws. In fact, when it is discovered that you don't have this unlimited authority, there is sometimes a compensatory reaction, where you are perceived as a nobody and they begin to try to find the official who does have this kind of authority.

There is also a great deal of public reaction to "official" people based on psychological power. This is a status in which you are perceived as having all sorts of wisdom, access to information, insight. A good example of this sort of power is the credence given to Nobel Prize laureates in all sorts of fields unrelated to their personal accomplishment. Once people have granted you this status they then may spend a great deal of effort getting you "back down to size" by being super-critical or antagonistic. Having granted you extraordinary powers it takes an extraordinary effort to get you back to normal.

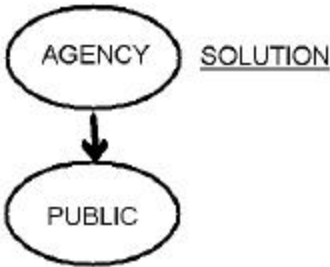
The important point is that people react not to the power you actually have, but to the power they perceive you to have. You may be acting within a very realistic (and thus probably modest) view of your power, and yet, have people reacting to you in an exaggerated manner.

People tend to find some way to equalize large discrepancies in power. They may do this by becoming very friendly, by demonstrating exceptional performance or skills, by becoming critical or antagonistic, by withdrawing emotionally or physically, by organizing in opposition, by affiliating with another power source. To complicate things, since people are reacting to perceived power it is possible for both sides to see themselves in the less powerful role, and therefore, both feel justified in engaging in "equalizing" behavior. You may see an interest group as having "the power" and be reacting to it at the same time it sees you as having the power and is reacting to you.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

THE IMPACT OF DECISION-MAKING STYLES



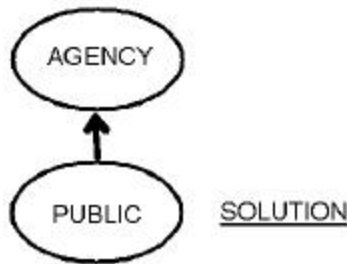
These counter-reactions to power can be exaggerated or minimized based on the decision-making style of the agency. One way of characterizing the alternative styles of decision making is shown below:

METHOD I:

In Method I the agency is in the position of figuring out what is good for the public, communicating it to the public, selling it to the public, and in some cases, proceeding with the plan in the face of significant opposition from segments of the public.

The major effect of a Method I decision is to establish a win/lose climate--an adversary relationship--between the agency and significant publics, as well as between the agency's supporters and other publics. The result is usually a climate of mistrust, competitiveness, and vilification of the intentions of the opposing sides. Often this results in increased rigidity in the positions taken by the different publics, as well as a desire to play "power games" by going to the courts or gaining the support of national political figures. Even though the agency may have tried hard to balance all the publics' needs, it is still deciding for the public, it is still in a "paternal" role.

When your boss gives you a command you may find that there are times that although you don't really disagree with the actual command you still may feel resentful at the manner in which he/she gave you the order. You may feel that the manner in which he gave the order communicated that he didn't trust your judgment, or wasn't concerned with the impact of the decision upon you. Likewise, the public can feel patronized and resentful if governmental agencies are constantly deciding "what's good for them." Even if it is "good for them" they resent the manner in which the decision was made.



METHOD II:

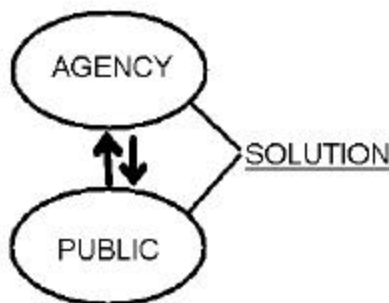
One of the main reasons that Method I has been the traditional decision making style of most agencies is that the only alternative that is seen is Method II. In Method II the agency abdicates all responsibility and simply communicates that whatever the public wants is what they'll get, without communicating the limitations of the agency.

In reality Method II is usually a disguised Method I: the agency will invite the public to participate with no limits, but when the public comes up with the "wrong answer" the agency will reassert its decision-making prerogatives. The result is that the public feels much more betrayed than if the agency had used Method I.

In effect all Method II does is reverse losers. Inherent in either Method I or Method II is the premise that it is acceptable for one side to win and the other side to lose. There is an old law of labor negotiations which states that "if at the end of the negotiations one side feels it has lost, then the negotiations have been unsuccessful."

In other words, successful problem-solving rests on the premise that the needs of the agency and the needs of the public are totally interdependent. To create a climate for effective problem-solving we must attempt to avoid a win/lose orientation and stress incorporating all needs.

METHOD III:



Method III differs from Method I in two major ways: (1) the process of arriving at a decision is a shared, visible, and jointly owned process; and, (2) the goal is to arrive at a decision responsive to everyone's needs.

Obviously the diagram above is oversimplified in that it shows the agency in relationship to a single monolithic public when in fact the agency is in relationship to a large number of conflicting publics. The task is not just to create agreement between the agency and a single public but to create a process by which broad areas of general agreement are created between a number of conflicting interests.

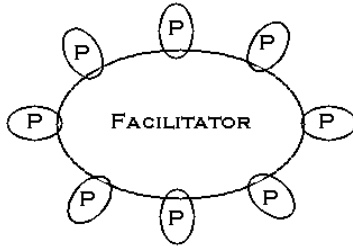
ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

This necessitates a shift in the agency's role as the decision maker to its role as the creator of a decision-making process. The first role stresses the making of a decision, the second stresses the creation of a climate and methodology for resolving conflict other than through unilateral decision making on the part of the agency.

For many managers this shift raises questions about their accountability and responsibility, with a fear that sharing the decision making with the public is a means of avoiding responsibility. So that we can discuss the issue let's define those two terms, accountability and responsibility. Accountability is that officially designated thing in which the agency (or the law) says "you will be rewarded or punished depending on the outcome of the decision." Responsibility is a feeling; you may feel responsible for some things for which you are not accountable (and you may not feel responsible for some things for which you are accountable).

Agencies are accountable for seeing that the best decision about the uses of resources are made. If, because it is accountable, the agency emphasizes its role as the decision maker, no one else may feel any responsibility for seeing that the decision is implemented. If, by sharing the decision, people feel responsible for the outcome, then the agency may have more wisely exercised its accountability by insuring that implementation is more likely to result.

One way to diagram the agency's role is by showing the agency as a "Facilitator" of problem-solving between a number of groups, as indicated in the diagram.



The agency is a participant, in that the needs of the agency must also be recognized or we have reverted to Method II; but the participation is an equal among interdependent groups rather than the agency's needs being "more equal." The agency's chief contribution is in creating the decision making process.

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY

Anybody who has ever worked with the public --or a committee, for that matter--can spot the flaw in Method III. It takes a lot of time for a group of people, particularly a group of people with widely differing interests, to arrive at a decision. One person or a small group can certainly arrive at a decision faster and more economically than can a number of conflicting interests. This made Method I look much more attractive when you measure efficiency and economy by decision making time. As the diagram below indicates, the time for decision making under Method I is usually shorter than under Method III, but at the time that the decision is made in Method I the only person committed to its implementation is the decision maker. If, through participation in the decision people accept "ownership" or feel responsible for the outcome, then implementation may occur more rapidly in Method III. The ultimate economy may belong to Method III.

**Method I:**                    **Problem----->Decision----->Implementation**  
**Method III:**                **Problem----->Decision----->Implementation**

THE TRACK RECORD OF METHOD III

While few people find Method III objectionable philosophically, many when first exposed to the notion, have questions about its practicality. As a result of our consulting and training efforts with a number of agencies in a variety of geographical locations we have had the opportunity to see Method III "in action." Our observation is that Method III can and will work to develop large areas of substantial agreement. Some areas of conflict may remain, and the agency may have to make decisions to resolve these areas. When Method III has worked well, however, the area of common agreement is large enough that the different publics can gain more from the area of agreement than they lose from areas of continuing disagreement.

There is no question that it is difficult to make Method III work when the opposing forces are already polarized into win/lose adversary positions. This underlines the importance of creating a problem-solving climate from the very beginning. The trust necessary for problem-solving will not be present unless the public participation program has been totally open, visible and responsive to public comment. The public's

know how to play "win/lose" just as well as the agency (if you don't believe that, just count how many projects in your agency are held up in court decisions, administrative reviews, etc.). The agency must establish the problem-solving orientation as a ground rule and total philosophy from the very beginning if it hopes to have problem-solving on the decision at the end.



A PROCESS FOR FIELD LEVEL WATER PLANNING

by Leonard Ortolano

In order to accommodate the citizen critics of economic efficiency who have argued for a meaningful role for publics in district level planning, a more loosely structured preauthorization planning process is required. Such a process should aim to integrate public involvement activities with all other planning activities, including the determination of factors and weights which form the basis for decision making in the public interest.

This chapter presents one alternative to the highly structured preauthorization planning process commonly employed during the 1950's and '60's. This alternative process is not unique; a planning process that is similar to the one advocated herein has been developed by Manheim, et al., [1972]. The process presented is of special interest inasmuch as it was developed especially to meet the demands of preauthorization planning.

The process considered herein is presented at a conceptual level and in rather general terms. Many of the detailed considerations required in implementing the process are currently being examined in the context of a case study application. The case study, which is being carried out as a joint effort involving the San Francisco District, the Institute for Water Resources, and Stanford University, involves an ongoing study of San Pedro Creek, California. Results from the case study will be presented in a forthcoming report.

The planning process advocated herein has the following general features:

1. There are four planning activities: identification of concerns, formulation of alternatives, impact (or effect) analysis, and plan ranking.\*
2. These activities are highly interdependent and are linked together by the goals, concerns, constraints, etc., that various decision makers and affected publics consider important in ranking alternative actions. As a matter of convenience, we use the term "evaluative factors" to refer to these goals, concerns, constraints, etc.
3. Each of the planning activities is carried out by both planners and affected publics.

-----  
\*While these planning activities are typical of those found in many descriptions of planning processes (e.g., see Hightower [1969]), they are organized herein in an unusual way.

4. The four planning activities are carried out simultaneously, not sequentially.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Report 75-1, Ortolano, Leonard, "Water Resources Decision-Making on the Basis of Public Interest," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1975.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

5. During any particular stage of the planning process, the relationships between activities are defined in terms of information flows (see Figure 1).
6. As planning proceeds, each activity is repeated a number of times at increasing levels of detail. However, at any one point in time, one activity may receive more emphasis than other others (see Figure 2).

### THE FOUR PLANNING ACTIVITIES

#### Identification of Concerns

This activity involves determining existing and projected future conditions that would obtain in the absence of a Corps action, and identifying evaluative factors (i.e., those goals, concerns, constraints, etc., that affected publics and other decision makers consider in ranking alternative actions). The term evaluative factor is introduced to eliminate the tiring and often fruitless exercises which are undertaken to carefully distinguish between "goals," "objectives," and "constraints."

There are three sources of evaluative factors: institutions, community interaction, and technical and scientific judgments.\* The discussion below considers the ways in which planners are involved in the identification and description of evaluative factors from each of these sources.

First, planners must identify the factors to be considered in ranking alternatives from the perspective of affected publics who are not easily reached directly (i.e., on a face-to-face basis). As a matter of convenience such people are loosely referred to as "nonlocal" publics. The concerns, goals, objectives, etc., of such nonlocal publics are expressed institutionally at the national, state and regional (and even local) levels in laws, pending legislation, policies, regulations, programs, etc. For example, a state law may govern the preservation of marshes. Examples at the Federal level include the Principles and Standards of the U.S. Water Resources Council [1973]. Still other examples include the policy statements of various interest groups (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club). Planners can obtain this type of information by communicating with various local, state and Federal officials, and agency and interest group representatives, and by examining relevant laws, policy statements, regulations, etc.

Second, planners must interact with "local" affected publics to provide information which helps these publics figure out what their problems are (from a local perspective), and helps them identify the factors which they would consider important in ranking alternative actions. To accomplish this, planners need to describe not

---

\*The term "institutions" is employed in an unusual way; it refers to the various laws, regulations, and policies of government agencies, and the policy positions of various interest groups.



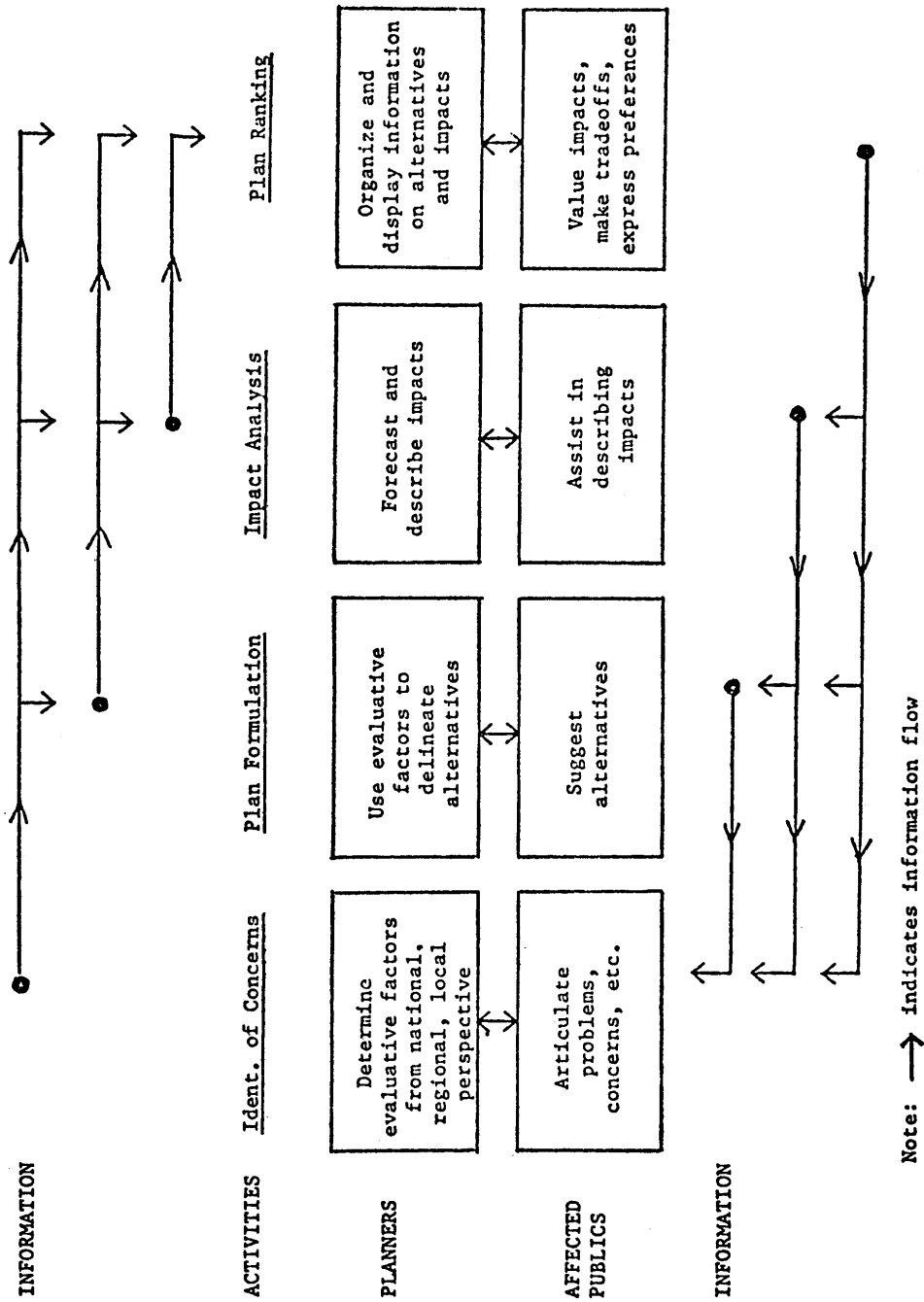
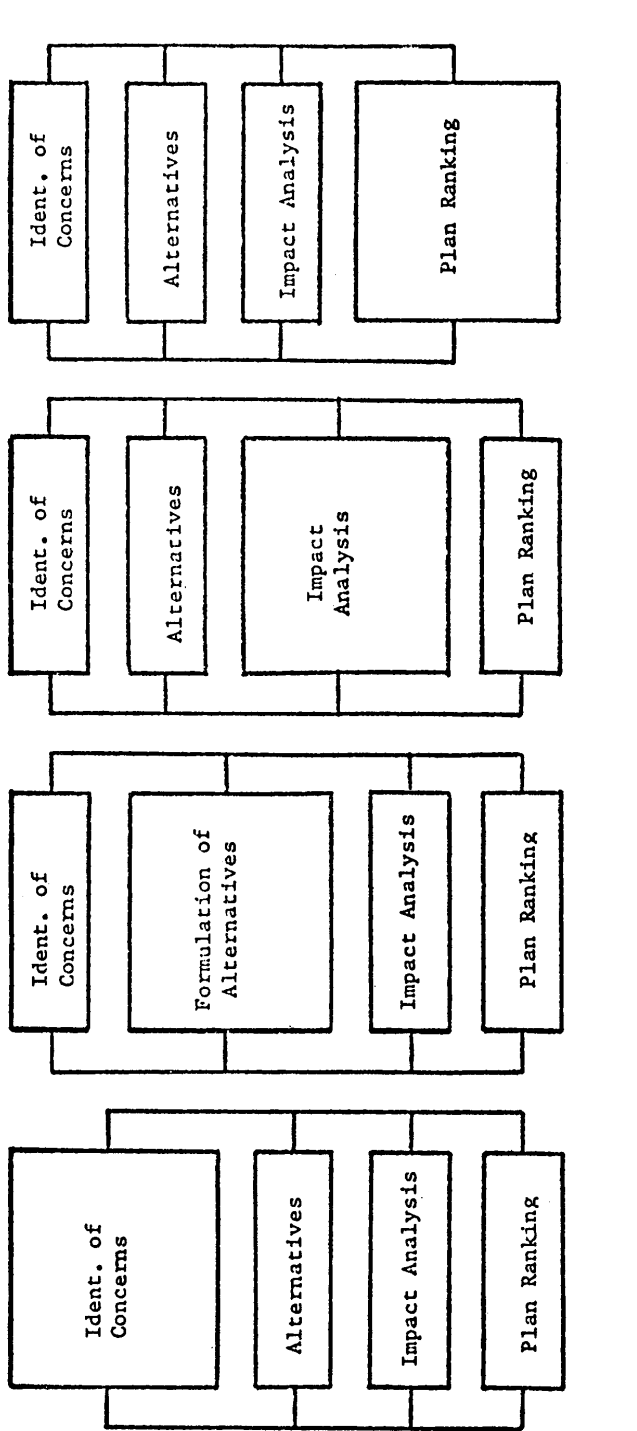


Figure 1. Information Flow During Any Particular Stage of the Process



TIME (increasing levels of detail and refinement)

Figure 2. A Representation of the Planning Process Over Time

- Note:
- (a) The lines between boxes summarize information flows noted in Figure 1.
  - (b) The sizes of the various boxes suggest the emphasis placed on the four activities at any one point in the process.
  - (c) The figure does not show all possible variations in the way emphasis on activities may shift over time.

only the water related concerns as they understand them, but also possible actions and the kinds of effects which might be associated with these actions. Local publics need this information in order to help them think about evaluative factors. Local publics provide information to planners about their own perceptions of their problems and what they would consider important in ranking alternative actions. Methods that can be employed in accomplishing this interaction between planners and local publics include: public meetings, interviews, workshops, questionnaires, citizen advisory boards, etc.

Third, planners must identify evaluative factors based on technical or scientific judgments which affected publics may neither appreciate nor recognize at any one point in the planning process. For example, planners may deem it important to maintain the habitats of certain species in the interests of long-term ecological stability. This is one type of information that planners should provide to affected publics.

Planners play a central role in the articulation of evaluative factors. In addition to relying on the aforementioned sources for the identification of factors, planners must continually work to translate the various concerns, needs, etc., of affected publics into technical concepts and parameters that can be used to guide the formulation of alternatives, impact analysis and plan ranking. For example, the "need" to maintain trout fishing in a local stream may be translated by planners into evaluative factors that relate to specific measures like stream dissolved oxygen, temperature, etc.

In addition to the delineation of evaluative factors, this activity also involves developing a sense of the relative significance of such factors. It is essential to avoid the development of long and unmanageable lists of evaluative factors without at least a crude indication of their relative magnitude and the extent to which they are considered important by various decision makers and publics.

Although the identification of concerns may receive the major emphasis in the early stages of the planning process, information relating to all four planning activities is continually developed and communicated right from the beginning of the process. That is to say, information on the formulation of alternatives, impact analysis, and plan ranking is also developed and exchanged at this stage of the process.

The identification of evaluative factors influences the conduct of other planning activities. For example, such factors serve to guide the formulation of alternatives, and to identify the impacts that need to be analyzed. Furthermore, evaluative factors provide a framework for ranking the proposed alternatives. It is also noteworthy that information from the other activities influences the identification of concerns. Information about alternatives and their impacts permits a redefinition of the individuals or groups to be included among affected publics. It may also permit a more refined definition of evaluative factors, and enable affected publics to express their concerns more clearly.

#### FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

Conceptualization of alternative futures. The design of alternative actions rests on a set of assumptions, either explicit or implicit, regarding which goals, objectives, constraints, etc., the actions will attempt to deal with. Different sets of planning assumptions (commonly referred to as "design criteria" or "planning objectives") represent different conceptions of what the future will be like; i.e., they represent "alternative futures."

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

The discussion below considers how the evaluative factors can be used in conceptualizing alternative futures. Recall that evaluative factors are the goals, concerns, constraints, etc., that affected publics and other decision makers consider in ranking alternative actions. Some evaluative factors take the form of operational constraints; e.g., some residents may feel that concrete lined channels would be so ugly that they do not want them to be considered among the feasible actions. Other evaluative factors may take forms which planners can translate into constraints; e.g., the goal of maintaining water quality at levels that permit swimming can be translated into a set of specific constraints on turbidity, coliform bacteria, etc.

Suppose that, wherever possible, evaluative factors are put in the form of constraints. Because people with different values and needs are involved in the identification of evaluative factors, it is to be expected that some of the constraints will not be compatible; i.e., it will not be possible to satisfy all of the constraints simultaneously. For example, it would not be possible to design an action that stimulated economic development of a floodplain and maintained floodplain vegetation in its existing form. Thus, before actions can be formulated, it is necessary to group the constraints into sets that can be satisfied simultaneously. Different constraint sets represent "alternative futures" (see Figure 3).

To illustrate the process of grouping evaluative factors into mutually consistent sets of constraints, a concern for flood damage reduction might be put into the form of a constraint requiring protection against the "X" year flood. As another example, a concern for visible appearance of the floodplain might be transformed into a constraint that prohibited the use of channel modification works. Table 1 contains one view of how various evaluative factors might be put into a form which provides the basis for designing alternative actions.

The process of conceptualizing alternative futures involves grouping the various constraints into sets that are consistent. Since the number of constraint sets that can be formed is often unmanageably large, it is useful to employ alternative visions of the future as a device for organizing the constraints into different groups. Thus, in a typical case, it might be possible to imagine two polar cases; one representing only minimal change from existing land use and population, and a second representing an increased intensity of land use based on an expanding resident and tourist population in the area. The constraint sets consistent with these perceptions of the future are labeled as No. 1 and No. 3 in Table 1. Clearly, it is possible to imagine a number of alternative futures which, in some sense, lie between the polar cases (e.g., constraint set No. 2 in Table 1).

Conceptualization of alternative actions. In designing alternative actions there is no reason to restrict attention to only a single set of constraints. Different constraint sets represent alternative futures, and the planning process should serve to elucidate the nature of different futures. One especially important constraint set is the one that includes no Federal action. This constraint serves to define the so-called "null alternative" which should be explicitly considered in all phases of the planning process and used as a reference point for determining the impact of other alternatives [Manheim and Suhrbier, 1972, p 431].

Each of the constraints in any given set can be used in one of two ways. A constraint might be used in designing an action; e.g., a reservoir might be designed to provide a safe yield of 40,000 acre feet/year. Alternatively, it might be used in testing a given design; e.g., the reservoir project has national income

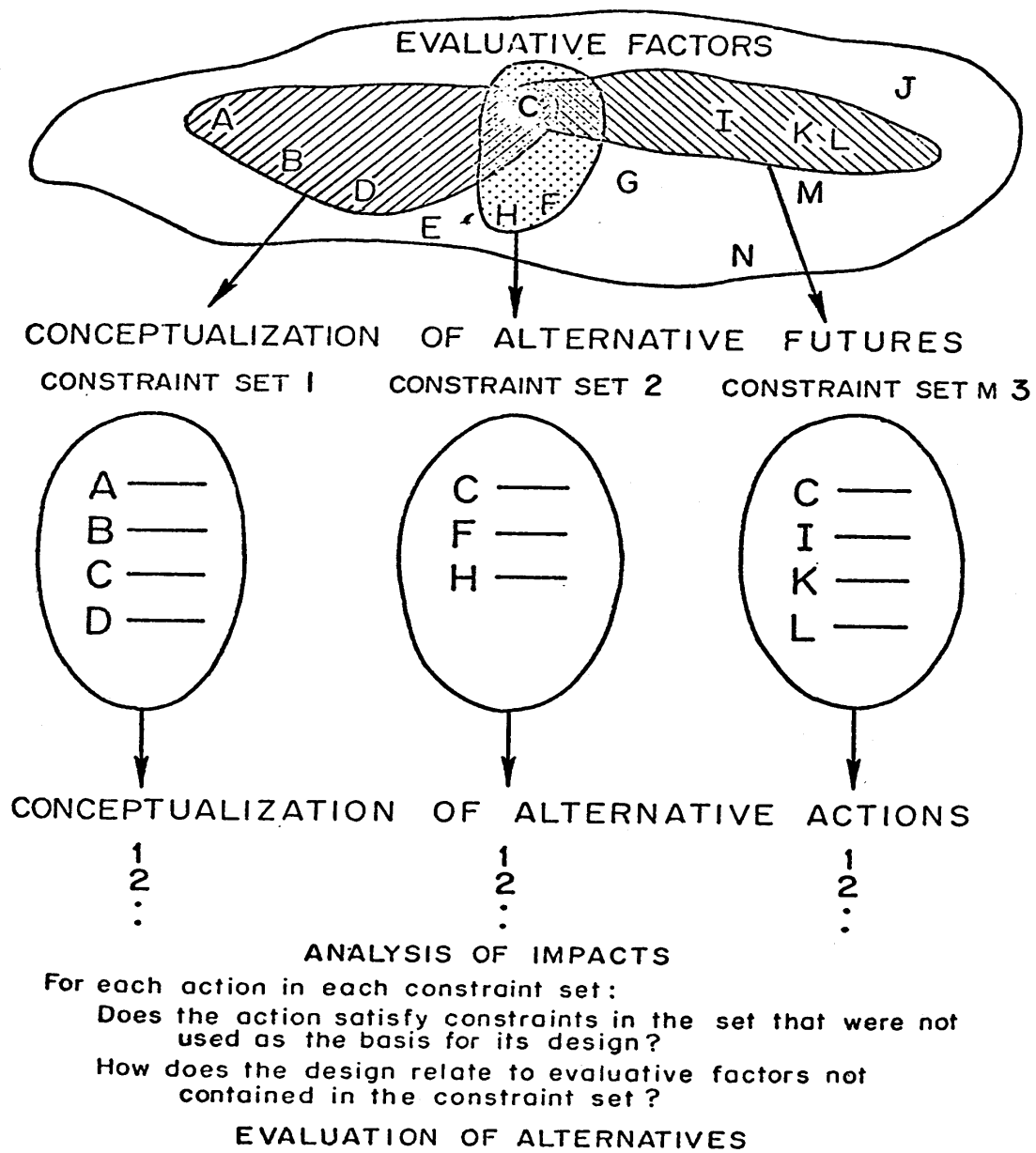


Figure 3. Formulation of Alternatives

TABLE 1

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Evaluative Factor	Constraint Set No. 1	Constraint Set No. 2	Constraint Set No. 3
Flood damage reduction	Protect against standard project flood	Protect against 50-year flood	Utilize flood proofing, flood insurance and zoning--no "structural measures"
Water supply "requirements"	Supply safe yield of 40,000 AF/yr	Supply safe yield of 20,000 AF/yr	Reduce future demand by limiting local growth
Reservoir-based recreational opportunities	Supply recreational facilities consistent with regional demand and project type	Supply recreational facilities consistent with local demand and project type	Supply no reservoir based recreation facilities
Tourist population			Use zoning to control motel and commercial development
Development of view site lots			Control via zoning and subdivision regulations
Development of flood plain lands		Zone flood plain to <u>limit</u> more intensive development	Zone flood plain to prohibit more intensive development
Visual appearance of flood plain (cottonwoods)		Prohibit channel modification works	Prohibit channel modification and minimize visual changes
Recommendations in County general plan			Carry out recommended flood plain zoning

"benefits" that exceed costs, and therefore, satisfies the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) constraint that the benefit-cost ratio exceed unity. In other words, some constraints are satisfied in the process of formulating the action, and others (e.g., the benefit-cost constraint) can only be examined after the action is conceived. The examination of the consequences of an action is a part of impact analysis (see Figure 3).

The process of conceptualizing alternative actions is more an art than a science. In the past, much of the "art" has involved the use of "engineering-judgment" to narrow the range of alternatives early in the planning process. Often this narrowing has been premature because it was based on the value judgments of planners who: (1) restricted their attention to actions which their agency could implement; and/or, (2) did not obtain much information about the values and perspectives of publics. One of the important ways to prevent this premature narrowing in the range of alternatives is to involve the public in planning, especially in the continual articulation of evaluative factors. It is especially important that publics be informed of the way in which alternative constraint sets have been deduced. This is critical since it is the delineation of alternative constraint sets (or "design criteria") that serves to "flavor" the types of alternative actions that both planners and publics will be encouraged to think about. For example, no one is encouraged to think about floodplain zoning if a pervasive constraint is that protection against the "standard project flood" must be provided.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

Impact analysis involves forecasting and describing changes (impacts, effects) resulting from proposed alternative actions. Such forecasts are generally carried out by planners using technical judgments and various models of how certain changes bring about other changes. Publics can assist planners in making forecasts by virtue of their special knowledge and insights regarding how the local area will respond to new influences (e.g., a reservoir project).

Planners and publics need to make choices in conducting the impact analysis activity. These choices concern the types of impacts that need to be analyzed and the level of detail required in the analysis. Choices have to be made because there rarely are sufficient resources (time, manpower, etc.) or the basic knowledge necessary to determine everything that it would be useful to know about the impacts caused by a particular action. For any given alternative, the information about evaluative factors and their relative importance serves to guide such choices.

To illustrate how evaluative factors can guide an impact analysis, consider the designs for a project that would be consistent with constraint set No. 1 in Table 1. Such actions might include projects designed to protect against the standard project flood, supply 40,000 AF/yr of safe yield for water supply, and provide water based recreational facilities consistent with regional demands and project type. The analysis of impacts associated with such designs would provide information relating to those evaluative factors which were not used in conceptualizing the designs. Thus, using the factors listed in Table 1, the impact analysis would involve forecasts of how the alternative actions influenced tourist population, the development of view site lots and floodplain lands, and the appearance of the floodplain. The listing in Table 1 is not intended to be complete. A more complete list of evaluative factors would include the OMB requirement that national income benefits exceed costs, since this is a relevant consideration for any investment proposed by the Corps.

As with all activities in the planning process, impact analysis is carried out continually. In the earliest stages of the process, evaluative factors are defined crudely, alternative solutions are sketched out in very rough

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

form, and impacts are forecast in general terms. This information is necessary for various decision makers and publics to: (1) think through their own perceptions of what the key evaluative factors are; (2) make their own judgments concerning preferences for different alternatives; and, (3) suggest new alternative actions. As the planning process continues, impact analysis becomes more detailed, since the meaning and relative importance of various evaluative factors becomes more clear, and the alternatives under consideration are fewer in number and described in greater detail.

### PLAN RANKING

The ranking of alternative actions requires that individual citizens, interest groups and those with formal authority for decision making render judgments, at least implicitly, regarding the relative worth or value of alternative actions.\* It is essential to recognize that in making such judgments, the question of whether an impact is adverse or beneficial is determined with respect to the interests of those affected by it. Moreover, the important consideration is not how significant any particular impact may be, but the relative importance of that impact as compared to other impacts. This is the basis upon which choices are made. For example, an individual may consider the maintenance of a natural stream channel important. However, he may consider it more important to accept the aesthetic impairment of a concrete lined channel if, all things considered, that appears to him to be the best way to prevent flooding of his property.

The plan ranking activity is complicated by the fact that rankings are made at several different levels. At the most basic level, individuals perform rankings which are reflective of their own interests. At a second level, individuals within groups perform rankings which are intended to reflect the interests of the groups which they represent. In the process of choosing among alternatives, impacts are valued and weighed and a trade-off analysis is performed. Such trade-off analyses are generally done implicitly and with imperfect information.

Although the plan ranking activity is conducted throughout the district level planning process, the district office must ultimately make an evaluation of its own. The district engineer is charged with making this evaluation on the basis of a broad range of considerations. As indicated in recent guidelines, the district engineer "should recommend the alternative that is in the best overall public interest considering the planning objectives, the benefits and costs, and the significant economic, social, and environmental effects, including the cost of treating those that are adverse" [U.S. Army, 1972].

---

\*Plan ranking is not the only activity that involves value judgments. Such judgments are made when publics and planners articulate evaluative factors and indicate the relative importance of these factors. They are made implicitly when alternative futures are conceptualized and alternative actions are proposed. And they are made in the course of deciding which impacts to analyze and at what level of detail. As Fox pointed out, complete objectivity in water resources planning is "an impractical ideal" [1966, p. 269].



CONCLUDING REMARKS

The description above provides only general guidelines for carrying out field level water resources planning. There is much to be done in the way of testing the ideas presented in the context of real world planning situations. The process is currently being "field tested" by utilizing it on the San Francisco District's study of flooding on San Pedro Creek in California.

Although the San Pedro Creek study is still in progress, the results to date have been interesting. The study is clarifying the problems involved in getting local publics to take an active role in all planning activities from the beginning of a planning effort. It is also revealing that some of the key issues involved in moving away from a structured, sequential planning process and toward the more open and iterative process described above relate to the way in which districts are organized and management controls are exercised.

The results from the San Pedro Creek study will provide a sequel to this report. They will demonstrate, more clearly, both the strengths and weaknesses of the process described in this chapter. They will also provide the basis for a discussion of specific issues relating to implementation (e.g., questions relating to planning budgets, staffing, organization, etc.).

Because the nature of Federal water resources planning is changing rapidly, experimentation with alternative processes for planning should be encouraged. The San Pedro Creek study represents one such experiment. Other experiments, perhaps with planning processes quite different from the one described herein, are clearly called for.



INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN PLANNING  
AND DECISION MAKING

by James R. Hanchey

Effective public involvement programs must be integral parts of the overall planning process and they must build to provide for full consideration of public comments in the making of key study decisions.

A public involvement program is not an end; rather, it is a means to an end; a plan which reflects and combines public values and preferences with professional knowledge and experience. Public involvement programs must be designed, implemented and managed within the context of the planning and decision-making processes--which requires that the elements of those processes be clearly specified before public involvement program design proceeds. Thus, this chapter first addresses these planning and decision-making processes and then describes how public involvement can be related to them.

This approach runs the risk of oversimplifying planning, which is a highly technical and complicated process. However, effective public involvement requires that planning be described in a way that is understandable to nonprofessionals with varying degrees of knowledge about the way the Corps does business. If the planner accepts this constraint, the guidance will be useful. This approach relies on a careful examination of the objectives of planning as it moves through successive stages and a clear delineation of the key decision points which are reached as planning progresses from one stage to another. The recognition that there are key decision points, even though some may be more implicit than explicit, enables one to approach the development of a public involvement program on a stage-by-stage basis.

A. THE STAGES OF PLANNING

The Corps' planning process is divided into three stages by specifying three points for monitoring study progress and scope (by consolidating interagency coordination through formal review and by negotiating intraagency consensus through checkpoint conferences). The three stages are: (1) the development of a Plan of Study; (2) the development of intermediate plans; and, (3) the development of detailed plans. Each stage has specific study outputs that are intended to provide for sequential review of study progress and to serve as a basis for making decisions about the nature, scope and direction of the study effort. During each stage, four functional planning tasks are carried out: problem identification, formulation of alternatives, impact assessment and evaluation. Practically, of course, each of these tasks receives different emphasis depending on the planning stage. The important point is that the tasks are iterative throughout the planning process, and if public involvement is focused on the tasks rather than the stages, integration and consideration of public comments becomes exceedingly difficult.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Report 75-R4, Hanchey, James R., "Public Involvement in the Corps of Engineers' Planning Process," Chapter 1, U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1975.

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

1. Public involvement and the stages of planning. While each stage involves the conduct of common tasks, the required planning output from each stage and the nature of the decisions made at the end of each stage are sufficiently different to suggest that both the form of the public involvement program and the definition of relevant publics who should be involved in each stage may also be different. In other words, public involvement should be planned for on a stage-by-stage basis rather than looking at it in relation to the study as a whole. Moreover, the transition from one stage to the next, with the requirement for clearly specified, reviewable outputs at each stage provides a convenient opportunity for ending one phase of a public involvement program and beginning the next.

Development of public involvement programs can best be approached in two parts--the first concerned with the involvement of various segments of the public during the various stages and which necessarily occurs more or less continuously throughout the time allotted for each stage, and the second concerned with broad public review of the results of each stage.

2. Public involvement during stages of planning. Providing the opportunity for public review of planning accomplishments at the end of each stage through public meetings is not, by itself, meaningful public involvement. The public must also have the opportunity to participate during each planning stage. The major objective of public involvement during these stages is to improve the two-way information flow on which planning is based. It requires informal, sometimes time-consuming dialogue between the planners and the public. Because fewer people are interested in the intricacies and details of planning, the target audience for involvement will usually be smaller than for public meetings--interest groups, government organizations and directly affected citizens. While the general nature of the public involvement program is the same during each planning stage, dialogue among participants, there will be differences in the forums for involvement and the intensity of interaction with the public as the plan moves through successive stages. This is due both to the "cumulative curve" of involvement and to the different decisions that must be made at each stage.

a. Stage One -- Plan of Study.

Plans of study have traditionally served primarily as internal management documents--plans which specify the study's intended scope and direction, budgets and work schedules. They now have a broader purpose--to provide for initial interactions of the four functional planning tasks to obtain a preliminary view of what the overall study will involve. This requires that public involvement be an important part of the first stage of planning.

Important characteristics of the Plan of Study stage are that it is exploratory in nature and that it aims for comprehensiveness with regard to identification and definition of public concerns, issues, problems and constraints. With the emphasis on identification and definition, rather than resolution, it follows that public involvement should be directed toward insuring the articulation of a wide variety of viewpoints so that they can be considered in the planning process. There is no need to resolve any conflicting views or preferences.

Because of the short time frame for completing the Plan of Study and the abstract nature of some of the major concerns of the planner during this stage, such as community goals and planning objectives, it is difficult to achieve effective broad scale participation. Only a small number of people want to commit time to broad issues and concepts. For these reasons, the public involvement objectives during the Plan of Study stage are relatively modest, the target public is limited, and the range of effective forums for participation is narrow.

(1) Involvement objectives. There are three - The first is to obtain information which is useful in directing the study: e.g., identification of problems which should be addressed, issues to be considered, objectives and goals which are important, alternatives which should be investigated. The second is to obtain information about the political, social and economic setting of the area (including how citizens organize to influence public issues) which will be useful in designing and implementing a public involvement program for succeeding stages. The third is to begin to prepare both the public and the agency for more intensive involvement which will follow.

(2) Target public. There is the "participating public" and the "information audience." The participating public is that relatively small number of people, from different interests, who will be directly contacted for information. These people are normally those who have had a continuing interest in water or related matters, such as agencies, special interest groups or those who have a problem or need orientation such as residents of a flood plain. The information audience is the general or mass public, and information programs must be started early to make people aware of the study, to facilitate their self-determination of study interest, to provide awareness of opportunities for involvement, and to begin to prepare people for participation in the broader public review at the end of this stage.

(3) Available forums for involvement. Since the major objectives are to obtain information rather than to seek an issue resolution, small meetings or interviews with individual interests would seem most appropriate. Planners should be looking for indepth discussions. Larger meetings may not be so appropriate, because they probably would not provide adequate opportunity for each individual to express himself fully. Other potential forums to obtain information include such techniques as questionnaires. However, they have usually not been useful at the early stages of planning because the value of the information obtained depends on the knowledge of the respondents, and in the early study stages, the level of knowledge is usually low.

b. Stage Two: Development of Intermediate Plans.

During this second planning stage, the focus begins to shift from problem identification to the formulation and preliminary testing of alternative solutions. The focus of the public involvement program likewise shifts from collecting information on problems and issues to working with agencies, interest groups and affected publics to insure that the range of alternatives being considered adequately respond to the problems, address all the significant issues, explore the ways in which the alternatives affect the various interests, and try to reduce the number of alternatives which will be carried forward into the third planning stage. While conflicts are likely to emerge during this stage, their resolution is not as critical as it will be during the final stage of planning. Indeed, the balancing

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

of interests, compromises and potential trade-offs are usually not possible until the planners begin detailed assessments.

More people are likely to become interested as they see their concerns addressed. The potentially interested and affected publics can be more clearly defined, and they can be specifically invited to participate.

At this stage, the planner will be trying to develop a range of alternative solutions which address the identified problems and issues, and he will be trying to assess the soundness of each alternative. To do this, he needs comments from the public on the extent to which the range of alternatives address the significant issues and concerns, the acceptability of the predicted impacts of each alternative, suggestions that would lead to modification of alternatives to increase their acceptability, and whether any alternative might be so generally unacceptable to the community that it should now be dropped from further consideration. To supply these comments, the public needs information from the planner on how the alternatives were developed, what each is intended to do, generally who will benefit and how, who and what might be adversely affected and how, what might be done to mitigate some of these adverse effects, and some presentation of the key Corps planning criteria.

(1) Involvement objectives. The district's purpose during this stage is to provide forums in which interested and affected people can explore the implications of each alternative in terms of their major concerns; become aware of the various trade-offs and compromises which are implicit in the selection of one alternative over another; express their views as to whether the range of alternatives is adequate; provide suggestions concerning modifications which might improve an alternative's desirability; and indicate which alternatives are clearly unacceptable.

(2) Target public. The target broadens. Rather than relying on selected groups and individuals in any interest area (as in planning stage one), all identifiable groups in each interest area should be directly encouraged to participate. Emphasis should be given to identifying and encouraging the participation of potentially affected publics, such as residents of an area where a reservoir might be constructed.

(3) Available forums. Involvement in planning stage two requires interaction among various interests as well as between the public and the planner. If people are going to work effectively together in stage three, understanding each other's positions and interests must be built in stage two. This type of dialogue is usually best achieved in the moderate size meetings such as workshops.

### c. Stage Three. Development of Final Plans.

This final planning stage is concerned with the detailed development of a small number of alternative plans, their assessment, modification and evaluation--leading to the recommendation of one plan. The focus of the planning effort shifts from alternative formulation (although alternatives are continually

being modified) to impact assessment and evaluation. Likewise, the nature of the public involvement effort changes. This is the most intensive period for involvement, because each alternative can be described in very real terms as to how it might specifically affect various interests. As a result, interest heightens and conflicts among interests increase. Because of the smaller number of alternatives under consideration as a result of screening out unpromising or unacceptable alternatives, and the fact that the decisions to be made at the end of the stage are more immediate and easier to understand, the nature of the planning process itself should be more easily understood by the public.

It should then be easier to obtain public involvement: the participants will almost "selfselect." In any event, with the impacts of the various alternatives reasonably known, the planner will find it much easier to identify potentially interested and affected publics. It follows that the public involvement program, measured in terms of numbers of participants and diversity of interest groups, will be greatest and broadest during this final stage of planning.

The planner should be trying to develop detailed information on the nature, magnitude and incidence of the effects of the alternatives and to assess and put into perspective the public's evaluation of those effects. The planner will attempt to modify alternatives to eliminate or mitigate adverse effects and attempt to negotiate compromises and trade-offs in order to develop support for the decisions to be made. To accomplish this, he needs information from the public on remaining issues that have not been fully addressed, on effects which the public perceives might have been overlooked, on the adequacy of the assessment of effects, on the acceptability of certain effects, on the potential compromises and trade-offs that might be acceptable, and on indications of preferences for various alternatives. To supply this information, the public will need from the planner detailed descriptions of each alternative, of the nature, magnitude and incidence of the effects, on the feasible modifications which are available to eliminate or mitigate adverse effects, and on the principal criteria that will be used to select the preferred plan for recommendation.

(1) Involvement Objectives. The district's purpose is to provide forums in which interested and affected publics can obtain detailed information concerning the implications of each alternative in terms of their major interests, can contribute information useful in determining the short- and long-term consequences and incidence of effects, can suggest mitigation measures and modifications which would increase the acceptability of alternatives, might negotiate interinterest group compromises and trade-offs, and can express preferences with regard to different alternatives.

(2) Target Publics. The relevant publics are the broadest of any planning stage. All directly affected individuals and concerned interest groups should be specifically invited to participate. Emphasis should be given to those segments of the public who are likely to bear significant costs such as, potential relocatees and to those individuals and interest groups who are perceived to be sufficiently interested in the final recommendations to use other means to influence decisions.

(3) Available Forums. Involvement requires intensive and regular interaction among various interests as well as between the public and the Corps. There are several appropriate forums. Early in Stage Three, moderate size meetings such as workshops would be effective. During

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

the latter phases of the stage, when the impact assessment is substantially completed and when the major conflicting interests can be identified, small meetings for the purpose of negotiation could be critical. Citizen committees are also useful forums during Stage Three.

3. Public Involvement at the End of the Planning Stages. The major objective of public involvement activities at the end of each stage of planning is to provide the public with an opportunity to review the results of planning up to this point and to provide the planner and other decision makers with information which will be useful in making the decisions necessary before proceeding to the next planning stage (or, in the case of the end of the planning process, for making the final recommendation). In some sense, public involvement at each of these three points becomes a "public checkpoint"--citizen input into interagency and intraagency.

If these public checkpoints are to be viewed by the public as providing real opportunity to influence decisions, it is essential that the tendency to make binding decisions be avoided in Corps checkpoint conferences (which occur prior to public meetings). While it is true that the active involvement of citizens during the planning prior to checkpoint conferences will provide decision makers with a feel for public views and preferences, decisions should be regarded as tentative, subject to revision as a result of input received during public checkpoint meetings. Public review prior to major decision points introduces an important degree of accountability to the public into the planning process, helping insure that public involvement is both integrated into and has influence on that process.

These public review checkpoints require forums that provide the opportunity for participation by fairly large numbers of people representing diverse public interests--in short, a large meeting of publics. These forums can take many possible forms, including traditional public meetings, informal group meetings, or even locally sponsored meetings. The key criteria are that they be widely publicized, open to everyone, in adequate facilities in easily accessible locations, and providing the opportunity for everyone to make statements.

Given the major objective of public involvement at the end of each stage (public review and comment before decisions are made which will guide the next stage of planning), there are several factors to be considered in designing this part of the public involvement program.

First, these public checkpoints are to provide opportunity for every interested citizen to participate, whether or not he has joined in early working sessions with other citizens. Thus, some broad scale dissemination of information is required.

Second, substantive information describing the results of planning should be distributed by direct mailings to identified groups or individuals who are interested or affected, and made available in readily accessible locations. Inasmuch as the public checkpoints are to focus on the decisions or recommendations that are to be made, the substantive information should clearly state the decisions that are to be considered and the district's tentative position with regard to those decisions. It has been argued that the district should not state its position, however tentative, at such meetings lest the



public feel that it is merely being asked to give its stamp of approval. However, if it is accepted that public checkpoint meetings are not the sum total of the district's public involvement program and that other forums for involvement are provided during each planning phase, then it should be clear to the public that the district's tentative position was developed with citizen input--and the checkpoint meetings assume a function of broader public validation of citizen input previously obtained. Indeed, the combination of citizen involvement during the planning stages and public checkpoint meetings at the end should contribute to the effectiveness of the latter.

Third, the public checkpoint must be closely related to the interagency coordination effort.

The information obtained through interagency coordination is important to the decision making process. The public has a right to be informed of other public agency positions on the study. Indeed, the Corps' definition of publics includes other agencies. Thus, it would appear desirable to bring the interagency coordination activities to a focal point near the end of each planning stage and to summarize the results of these activities for public distribution prior to the public checkpoint meetings.

Fourth, the above discussion leads to the requirement for three public checkpoint meetings: one at the end of each planning stage.

Some districts feel the need to hold another meeting at the beginning of the study--to announce formally what is about to take place. It puts everyone on notice. The problem is that it is generally agreed that these initial meetings fail to produce much useful information. Study announcement and solicitation of information on problems and needs can be more effectively accomplished through other forums.

Fifth, successful public checkpoint meetings must be convenient with respect to both time and place for the participants. In almost all cases they should be held in the evening to insure maximum opportunity to attend. Two meeting sessions (i.e., one in the afternoon, one in the evening) are generally not desirable because they do not enable everyone to hear all points of view. Frequently, daytime sessions are attended by public agency officials, and evening meetings are attended principally by citizens and their organizations. It is important that each hear what the other has to say. Depending on the size of the population and the geographical area, it may be desirable to hold more than one public checkpoint meeting at each stage.

#### B. GENERAL COMMENTS: DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

The suggested approach to developing public involvement programs in Corps planning studies relies on several key concepts. First, although districts may plan somewhat differently, the Corps' planning process is divided into three stages, each of which has a definable output. Second, public involvement program development can and should be approached on a stage-by-stage basis. Third, there should be public checkpoints at the end of each stage to provide the planner and the reviewing bodies of the Corps with citizen input as to the adequacy and responsiveness of the planning to date.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

Fourth, these three public checkpoints are not in themselves adequate, but are only the culmination of active participation during each planning stage by limited segments of the public. Fifth, decision making responsive to public concerns requires the explicit consideration of public inputs before key decisions are made at each stage. This means that binding decisions should be avoided during agency checkpoint conferences. Rather, tentative positions should be developed for presentation at the public checkpoint meetings.

In laying out this approach to the development of public involvement programs, an attempt has been made to describe the public involvement objectives which seem appropriate at each stage, and to describe the information exchange. The foregoing description of the planning process may not be totally accurate for all studies. If some planning studies follow substantially different processes, the basic concepts of public involvement program development described above are valid, whether the planning process involves one or even ten stages. In any situation the planner should try to adapt, expand and refine the proposed approach so that it fully supports the planning process.

A "THOUGHT PROCESS" FOR DESIGNING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
IN PLANNING

by James L. Creighton

Public involvement is effective when it is an integral part of the planning process, designed to provide appropriate information to the public and receive appropriate information from the public at those points in the planning process where this information will most assist in making better decisions. If public participation is integral to the planning process then it will be similar to certain technical studies which must be completed as part of the planning process not because they are required by law, but because without the information derived from these studies decisions cannot be made. As the guidelines of one agency state: "The planning process should be designed so progression from one stage to another cannot take place without certain well-defined inputs from the public."<sup>1</sup>

A "Thought Process"

This suggests an important thought process for designing public involvement programs. This thought process consists of asking four basic questions for each major planning task. These questions are:

1. What is the "product" which will result from this planning task?

Each planning stage produces some sort of product whether it be an understanding of the problems, a "shopping list" of possible actions, a range of alternative plans, or a final plan. Since the public participation is integral to the planning process, the public participation should also be structured toward producing this product.

2. What is the information exchange required to complete this task?

In order to structure our public participation program so it is integral to the planning process we will need to conduct a two-step analysis which works backwards from the product:

- a) What information does the agency need from the public to produce that product?

---

<sup>1</sup>Draft Guidelines for State and Areawide Water Quality Management Program Development, Environmental Protection Agency, February 1976.

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Executive Seminar: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1976.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- b) What information will the public need to give the agency the information the agency needs (as described in 2a)?
  
- 4. What public participation techniques (and in what sequence and timing) will obtain the needed information from the identified publics?

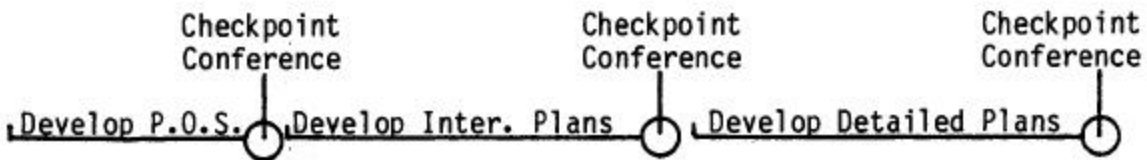
If we know the information which must be exchanged (from #2), and if we know the publics targeted for this planning stage (from #3), then we can select the appropriate public participation techniques -- whether workshops, questionnaires, field offices, etc. -- to communicate the needed information.

The Corps Planning Process

In order to relate this thought process to the Corps of Engineers' planning process, a short summary of the Corps' preauthorization planning process is shown below.

The Stages of the Planning Process:

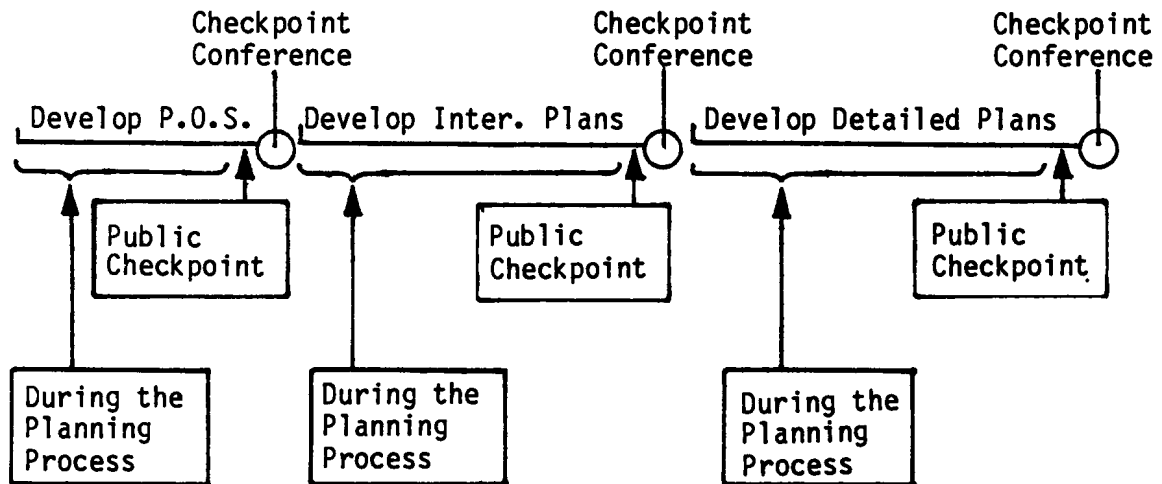
The Corps' preauthorization planning process is divided into three stages: 1) the Development of a Plan of Study; 2) the Development of Intermediate Plans; and, 3) The Development of Detailed Plans. Each stage results in a specific "product" which serves as a basis for a concluding checkpoint conference about the nature, scope and direction of the study effort. If the project is authorized then there are two advanced



planning phases involving reformulation of the plans and detailed design; however, the materials in this article apply primarily to preauthorization planning. The preauthorization planning process is shown in the diagram below:

Stage-by-Stage Public Involvement: Since both the "product" and the decisions to be made are different for each stage, the public involvement can be planned on a stage-by-stage basis. The form of the public involvement as well as the targeted publics can change for each stage.

The Public Checkpoint: The conclusion of each stage also provides the public with an opportunity for reviewing the results of the planning up to this point and providing guidance to the next stage (or to the final decision). In this way there is a "public checkpoint" which precedes the formal



interagency and intraagency review which concludes in the Checkpoint Conference, as illustrated below.

The "public checkpoints" provide milestones which serve as a structure of the public involvement program. However, involving the public in a review of the planning is not enough; the public must also be involved during each planning stage.

### Two Types of Public Involvement

As a result different kinds of public involvement take place at different times in the planning process.

**DURING THE PLANNING** the public involvement is likely to be aimed more at "influentials" -- leaders of organized groups or interests, identifiable community leaders, or representatives of other governmental agencies -- since involving the public in the actual development of alternatives usually requires a degree of continuity and understanding of the problem which can't be obtained with the general public. This kind of public involvement is more likely to be accomplished through interviews, advisory committees, task forces, or workshops. One very important point, though: Any public involvement which primarily involves "influentials" rather than the general public must meet two criteria: 1) The "influentials" involved must be representative of the full range of values, interests and concerns held by the general public, 2) Each stage of "influentials" involvement must be followed by some method of review by a broader public.

**AT THE PUBLIC CHECKPOINTS** there is a need for broad involvement of the general public, if possible. This would be the natural point for larger meetings coupled with full use of the media. This could also involve a wide range of informational techniques such as brochures, news stories, exhibits, telethons, etc. While interested groups or individuals are eager to be involved early in the planning process, the general public typically needs something specific to react to before they can participate effectively.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

The Functional Planning Tasks Within Each Planning Stage:

As indicated above, there are at least two different kinds of public involvement: 1) Public involvement during the planning process; 2) Periodic public review of planning efforts. But the choice of public involvement techniques to be used at a particular point in the planning process is also shaped by the functional tasks which are predominant for particular stages of the planning process.

During each of the three stages of planning there are four functional planning tasks which are performed: 1) Problem Identification; 2) Formulation of Alternatives; 3) Impact Assessment; and, 4) Evaluation.

Within each of the four main planning tasks there are a number of specific tasks. These include:

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

- a) Identify public concerns
- b) Analyze resource management problems
- c) Define the study area
- d) Project future conditions
- e) Establish planning conditions

FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES

- a) Identify measures
- b) Categorize applicable management measures
- c) Develop plans
- d) Consider plans of others

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

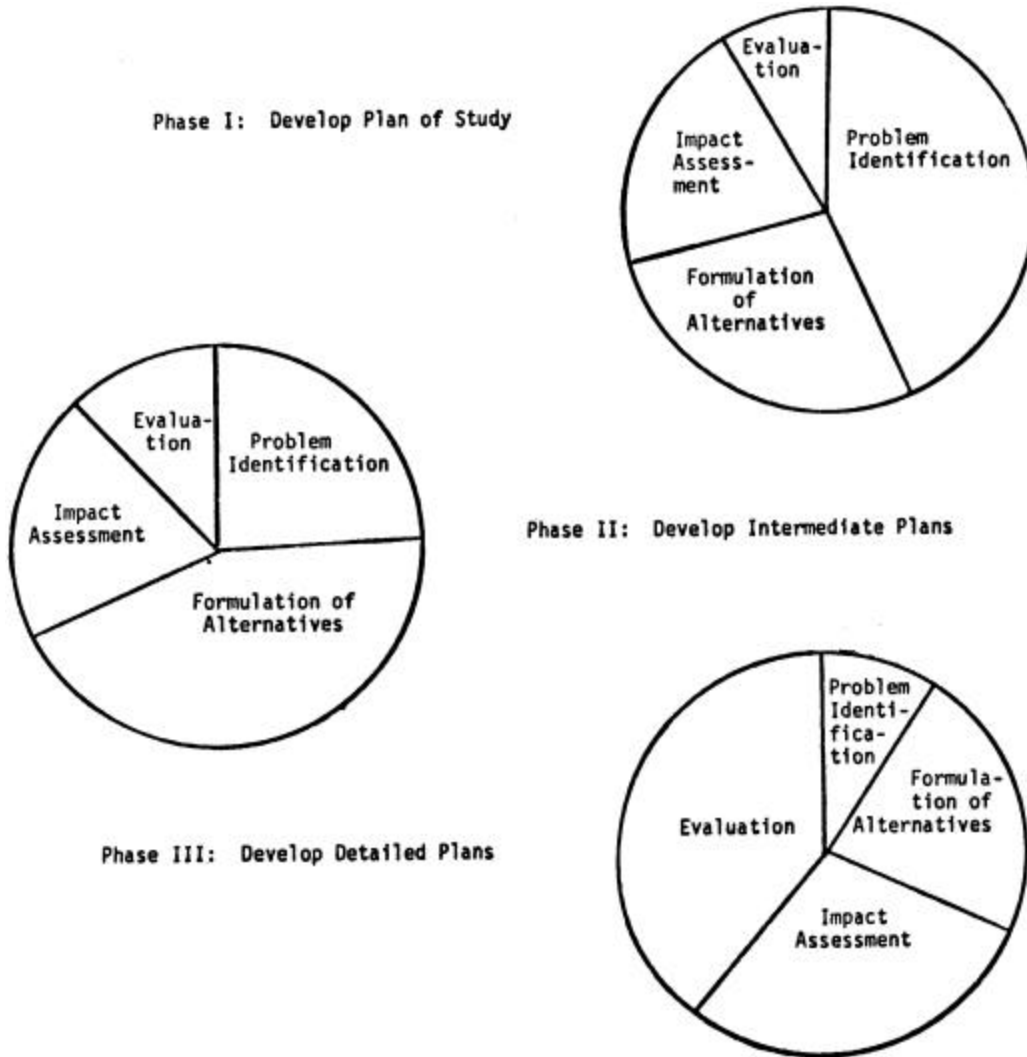
- a) Determine sources of impacts
- b) Identify and trace impacts
- c) Specify incidence of impacts
- d) Measure impacts

EVALUATION

- a) Appraise planning objective
- b) Appraise System of Accounts contribution [See the next section]
- c) Apply specified evaluation criteria
- d) Perform trade-off analysis
- e) Designate NED and EQ Plans [See the next section]

then... DETERMINE IF REPEATING THE PLANNING TASKS IS NECESSARY!

While each of these tasks are performed during each stage of planning, they are performed with different amounts of emphasis. During the early portions of a study there is likely to be an emphasis on Problem Identification and Formulation of Alternatives, with a much lesser emphasis on Impact Assessment and Evaluation. In later portions of the study the emphasis will shift so that Impact Assessment and Evaluation are more dominant. This difference in emphasis is shown below (but keep in mind that the emphasis will vary from project-to-project, so these are illustrative only):



The difference as to which functional planning tasks are emphasized from one planning phase to the next will be used as a guide in recognizing which involvement objectives must be accomplished at each stage as well as

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

a criterion for selection of particular public involvement techniques, e.g.: Which techniques are most suitable for Problem Identification? Impact Assessment? etc.

Principles and Standards

The Corps planning process must also conform to the Principles and Standards developed by the U.S. Water Resources Council.

A major purpose of the Principles and Standards is to ensure that economic development and environmental quality be given equal value in the planning process. To accomplish this the Principles and Standards require that a National Economic Development (NED) plan and an Environmental Quality (EQ) plan be developed for each study. The NED plan will be the optimal plan for "increasing the nation's output of goods." The EQ plan will be the optimal plan for protection or enhancement of the natural and cultural environment. Either plan may contain elements of the other, i.e., the NED plan may include EQ elements.

In addition, one or more other plans will be developed which display different combinations of planning elements. When recommendations are made for plan selection the recommended plan can be the NED plan, the EQ plan, or one of the "other plans."

A statement must also be prepared which indicates the impacts that would occur if no plan is implemented. In Corps' planning terminology this is referred to as the "without condition."

To make the impacts of the plans visible to the public, the Principles and Standards require that all plans and the "without condition" be compared as to their contribution to four accounts: the NED Account, the EQ account, the Regional Development (RD) Account, and the Social Well-Being (SWB) Account.

The Regional Development (RD) Account shows a proposal's effect on a region's income, employment, population, economic base, environment and social development.

The Social Well-Being (SWB) Account shows a proposal's effect on real income, security of life, health and safety, education, cultural and recreational opportunities, emergency preparedness, etc.

The Statement of Accounts can be shown graphically as follows:

	NED ACCOUNT	EQ ACCOUNT	RD ACCOUNT	SWB ACCOUNT
NED Plan	impacts	impacts	impacts	impacts
Other Plan	impacts	impacts	impacts	impacts
EQ Plan	impacts	impacts	impacts	impacts
Without Condition	impacts	impacts	impacts	impacts



The important thing which the Statement of Accounts accomplishes for public involvement is that it provides a mechanism by which publics can evaluate plans from several different values perspectives.

Applying the "Thought Process"

The form shown on the next page is designed to assist in applying the "thought process" to the Corps of Engineers planning process.

A copy of this form would be required for each of the three major planning stages: 1) Develop Plan of Study; 2) Develop Intermediate Plans; and, 3) Develop Detailed Plans. In the column on the left are shown the major functional planning tasks, which will be performed in each planning stage. The specific planning tasks are shown as well, as they will assist in identifying the specific information needed from the public.

**INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC** - The next column provides space to indicate what information will be needed from the public in order to complete the planning task.

Example:

If the major functional planning task was "Problem Identification" and the specific planning task was "Project Future Conditions,"

Then the information you need from the public might be:

- a) Public attitudes about the desirability of further growth,
- b) Any anticipated major developments,
- c) Planning policies, zoning laws, etc., of local agencies or groups which may affect growth patterns.

**INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC** - The next column provides space to indicate what information the Agency must provide to the public in order for the public to supply the information and judgments indicated in the previous column.

Example:

If the information needed from the public is "public attitudes" about the desirability of "further growth,"

then the information you need to supply to the public could include:

- 1) The range of possible actions that can be contemplated.
- 2) Some of the possible effects these actions could have on growth.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

PLANNING STAGE	INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC	INFORMATION TO PUBLIC	SCOPE OF PUBLICS	LIKELY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES
<b>PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION</b> a) Identify public concerns b) Analyze resource management problems c) Define the study area d) Project future conditions e) Establish planning conditions			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
<b>FORMULATION OF ALTERNATIVES</b> a) Identify measures b) Categorize applicable management measures c) Develop plans d) Consider plans of others			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> a) Determine sources of impacts b) Identify and trace impacts c) Specify incidence of impacts d) Measure impacts			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
<b>EVALUATION</b> a) Appraise planning objective fulfillment b) Appraise System of Accounts contributions c) Apply specified evaluation Criteria d) Perform trade-off analysis e) Designate NED and EQ Plans			Publics To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	
<b>CHECKPOINT PROCESS</b>			Public To Be Informed:	
			Publics From Which Information Obtained:	

SCOPE OF PUBLICS: The next column provides space to indicate which publics must be provided with the information and from which publics information is mostly likely to be received.

Example:

If the information you needed from the public was "public attitudes" about the desirability of "further growth,"

then the publics from which this information can be obtained would be a broad general public.

but if the information you needed from the public was "planning policies, zoning laws, etc., of agencies or groups which may affect growth patterns,"

then the publics from which this information could be obtained would probably be other government agencies, elected officials and possibly leaders or organized interests.

MOST LIKELY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES:

Now that you have identified the Information Exchange that must take place, and the publics with whom this information exchange must take place, you can then begin to determine the public participation techniques which are most likely to be useful. These likely public participation techniques can be indicated in the right hand column.

Example:

If you wanted to reach a broad general public with information about "the range of possible actions which could be taken."

then the likely public participation techniques would be: brochures, news releases, TV and radio talk shows, paid advertising,

but if you wanted to obtain detailed information about planning laws, zoning laws, etc., of local agencies or groups which may affect growth patterns,

then the most probable technique would be: 1-1 interviews, mailings or questionnaires, technical advisory groups, small meetings, etc.

#### Designing the Public Participation Program

This analysis will lead to an identification of the critical information needed to design a public participation program which is integral to the planning process. The only remaining tasks in designing the public participation program are:

- 1) Evaluate the appropriateness of the public participation techniques for a particular community and for the level of public interest (and the budget available) for the particular planning project.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

- 2) Select the techniques you will use and arrange them in sequence and timing appropriate to the specific planning project.

Introduction to Section III:

INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

One of IWR's important roles has been as a change agent within the Corps. Barney Dodge, then a key official in IWR, gives us a reading of the state of things within the agency several years after General Clarke's speech (p. 11). He acknowledges that preliminary appraisals from the field indicate that there were numerous organizational constraints, and describes the Corps' efforts to come to grips with this.

James Ragan's article goes well as a companion piece with General Clarke's address and Dodge's article. This is a writeup of a field technical assistance effort by a group of consultants. This chapter, taken from the full report, gives the consultant's appraisal of the actual level of effort within the Corps in the early 1970's.

A second chapter by Ragan explicitly identifies organizational constraints that can block effective public involvement.

The final two articles reflect thinking about organizational issues approximately five years later. Jerry Delli Priscoli describes some of the actions an agency can take to ensure implementation of public involvement, but also indicates the pitfalls and counter-reactions these actions can set off. Creighton's article returns to the theme that a program to implement public involvement in an agency is a program of fundamental organizational change, and describes some of the organizational ramifications of effective public involvement programs.

ACHIEVING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, WATER RESOURCES PLANNING

by B. H. Dodge

In recent years, there has developed a vastly increased public interest and concern in all public agency planning and decision-making, leading to a demand by the public for a greater voice and influence in the process. These demands have resulted in a reexamination of planning styles and have caused much consternation as professional planners were required to confront the difficult question of the relative rights and responsibilities of the public versus the planner. This reexamination has largely resulted in a determination that the elitist style of planning, with the planner proposing and the public simply accepting or rejecting, was no longer appropriate. This is clear from the proliferation in the literature of many terms describing a new and more democratic style of planning--participatory planning, open planning, fish-bowl planning, or simply public participation in planning. All of these terms are relatively synonymous. They all describe a planning process which emphasizes a continuous two-way flow of information between the planner and the public which he serves. Within the Corps this subject has been given major attention for the past several years.

Public involvement in Corps of Engineers' water resource planning activities is not an entirely new concept. For several decades the Corps has worked closely with the official representatives of the public during planning and has sought the views of the general public at selected points during the planning process, usually at the beginning and end of a study. In recent years, however, it has become clear that this level of public input to planning is not sufficient. During the past two years the Corps has been attempting to incorporate into its planning a greater level of public involvement. This paper describes the efforts to achieve this goal and relates some of the successes which have been realized, as well as some of the problems and issues which have resulted.

A concerted effort to actually get new emphasis on public involvement into the Corps' planning began, insofar as its district offices are concerned, with a week-long conference in February 1971. This conference, attended by all Corps' planning chiefs and public affairs officers, was to discuss the changing requirements for public participation and how best to respond to them. General Clarke, the Chief of Engineers, summarized the situation this way:

*In the past we have conducted our planning activities with a relatively small percentage of the people who have actually been concerned, primarily federal, state and local government officials of one kind or another. Today there are, in addition, vast numbers of private citizens who, individually, or in groups and organizations and through their chosen representatives, are not only keenly interested in what we are doing with the Nation's water resources but who want to have a voice and influence in*

---

This paper was prepared while the author was the Director of the Center for Advanced Planning, Institute for Water Resources. It was first published in the Water Resources Bulletin, Vol. 9., No. 3, June 1973, p 448.

*the planning and management of those resources ... we cannot and must not ignore [these] other voices ...*

Still quoting General Clarke:

*I consider public participation of critical importance to the Corps' effectiveness as a public servant. It is ... an area I won't be satisfied with until we can truly say that the Corps is doing a superb job.*

During this conference more questions and problems were posed than answers or solutions were offered. But it was a beginning.

Shortly after the conference, a new Corps planning regulation, "Public Participation in Water Resources Planning," was issued. The regulation reiterated the need for an importance of public participation in Corps planning and defined public participation as follows:

*Public Participation is a continuous, two-way communication process which involves: (1) promoting full public understanding of the processes and mechanisms through which water resources problems and needs are investigated and solved by the Corps; (2) keeping the public fully informed about the status and progress of studies and the findings and implications of plan formulation and evaluation activities; and, (3) actively soliciting from all concerned citizens their opinions and perceptions of objectives and needs, and their preferences regarding resource use and alternative development or management strategies, and any other information and assistance relevant to plan formulation and evaluation.*

The regulation also defined a number of explicit program objectives and policies, all of which stress the need for the Corps to "take the initiative" in encouraging, promoting and even assisting the public to participate in Corps planning. Also, the regulation required that public participation be an integral part of each Corps study, including ongoing studies.

Finally, the regulation, after recognizing that "there is no single best approach to public participation," suggested a basic three-step process to be followed in developing public participation plans.

First: To define as clearly as possible at each step in the planning process what information the public needs from the Corps and what information the Corps needs from the public.

Second: To identify the various publics, or interests, which should be involved in the study.

Third: To consider different approaches which can be used to establish communication and dialogue, e.g., hearings, use of media, newsletters, workshops, etc.

Obviously this process must be both continuing and reiterative throughout the planning process and it is not as simple and unidirectional as described.

In addition to the regulation, a number of actions have been and are being taken by the Office of the Chief of Engineers and the Corps Institute for Water Resources to assist field offices in implementing the program:

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- C Issued a number of publications on the subject, and several studies are currently underway in a continuing effort which are exploring various aspects.
- C Distributed a programmed course of instruction to assist planners in thinking about and dealing with their public participation problems in terms of their local situations.
- C Established a Technical Assistance Program through which public participation consultants are being made available to 14 Corps districts to assist them in the development and implementation of public participation programs. We are now beginning an evaluation of this effort in order to make the experiences of the consultants and the district planners useful to all Corps offices.
- C Planning for a "Citizen Participation Manual" which will be distributed widely by the Corps to explain to the public, in clear terms, what we do, how we do it, and how citizens can participate most effectively in our planning process.
- C The Chief of Engineers has sent letters and information to over 60 national organizations with widely ranging interests, informing them of the Corps public participation policies and asking them to encourage their members to get involved in Corps planning. The Chief has also asked all field offices to send similar letters to organizations within their own areas of jurisdiction.
- C Finally, after a year of experience in implementing the Chief's policy and guidance, we are assessing the results and, from that, determining future action priorities with respect to providing further assistance.

In the final analysis, however, public involvement cannot be judged on the basis of actions taken at the Washington level, but by the extent to which the Corps district offices are successful in making their planning more responsive and sensitive to public needs and desires. One district's program developed during the recent Technical Assistance Program may be helpful in illustrating typical problems and effects of such efforts. This district was typical of most Corps districts--the normal level of public involvement in studies consisted of two or three public meetings during the study, supplemented by periodic announcements, notices and press releases. The district also recently had one of its major projects halted by court injunction. Early discussion with the district planning staff identified several problems which they recognized as being crucial:

1. The planners were convinced that the public meetings that they had been holding were not adequate to obtain the input needed from the public. Usually the attendance consisted of Federal agencies, public officials, and proponents of a Corps project. Some way to achieve a more balanced perspective in reading the public mind had to be found.
2. There had been very little success in interesting the public in water resources planning. The usual news releases and public notices had either not reached a significant segment of the public or had failed to convey to them the significance of the study being undertaken.



3. There had been very little debate over study problems and issues during the study. Opposition to plans was only surfaced at the completion of the study effort when changes to proposed solutions were difficult to make.

In short, the district recognized that it had problems but was not sure how to proceed in solving them.

In order to avoid the problems associated with attempting to design a public involvement program in general terms, the district was requested to select an ongoing study for which a program could be developed and implemented. The study selected involved a problem which is common to many urban areas--a small stream flowing through the city, with development pressures being exerted on flood plain lands and corresponding deterioration of stream quality, diminishing of aesthetic values and frequent flooding. It was decided that any approach to public involvement should include at least three objectives: 1) to inform the public about the role of the Corps in the study, and to stimulate the public to participate actively; 2) to obtain from the public its views on the problems and issues which should be addressed during the study and later to obtain preferences from diverse segments of the public concerning alternative strategies for dealing with the problems and issues; and, 3) to coordinate the views of the public with their official representatives who ultimately would be responsible for implementing any solution.

The first phase of the program consisted of education stimulation activities. Contacts were made with representatives of the major media in the area--radio, television and newspapers. An early meeting was held with media representatives to make contact and to initiate a continuing relationship which was hoped would result in more extensive and better informed coverage of the study effort. This meeting was only moderately successful. The news media were distrustful of the Corps--they didn't really believe the Corps was interested in local views and preferred to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. One useful outcome of the meeting, however, was the realization that the media was not well informed about the Corps, about the study, or even concerning the problems associated with the creek. Following this meeting, an effort was made to furnish information on study progress to the media on a regular basis. This has not resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of news coverage, but the coverage has tended to be much more informing than is usually the case.

Early meetings were also held with governmental officials--Federal, state and local. These meetings were held for the purpose of briefing these officials on the study, to obtain information on related programs administered by these officials, and to explain the proposed public participation program. Some reluctance on the part of local officials to giving the public a greater role in the study had been expected. However, the converse proved to be true. Elected city officials were not anxious to take an active part in the public involvement program. They preferred that the Corps deal directly with citizen groups while coordinating with local staff agencies. The elected officials indicated that they would monitor the program and expected that they would be able to make better decisions at the appropriate points in the study as a result of the citizen involvement. While these meetings were going on, the planners were making a concerted effort to identify the various interests who should be actively consulted during the study. For purposes of identification the public was subdivided into two major groups--region-wide interests and neighborhood groups. At this point, the district decided to organize a citizens advisory committee as a means of maintaining regular contact with local interests. This was important as the district office is located approximately 175 miles from the city for which the study was being conducted.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Specific individuals and interest groups were identified through a process of interviewing and search of records such as tax rolls, newspaper files, and local agency mailing lists. Interviews were conducted with selected groups representing a wide range of potential interests for the purpose of supplementing lists. Each property owner in the flood plain was contacted by letter in order to obtain his views on use of creek-side land and to learn what organizations existed locally that represented the interests of property owners.

Finally, the citizens advisory committee was established. The Corps planners selected certain organizations which they felt represented the full range of interests impacted by the study. These organizations were contacted and invited to select an individual who would represent the organization on the committee. Almost all organizations who were invited responded favorably and are now represented. It is important to note that the committee is advisory in nature--the members are not asked to vote as a body. The purpose of the committee is to bring diverse and often conflicting interests together to discuss issues, problems and solutions. The members of the committee are asked to attempt to speak for their respective organizations. It is hoped that this will encourage discussions regarding the study at regular organizational meetings. The members are also asked to assume several responsibilities such as assembling information for distribution to a broader public; the neighborhood groups are asked to serve as the focal point for the collection and dissemination of information to citizens residing in their neighborhoods; and the committee is asked to assist with such jobs as addressing mailings, updated mailing lists, telephoning and writing meeting summaries. The committee will meet every six to eight weeks throughout the study.

It is important to note that the committee operates below the political level. No governmental representatives are on the committee, although they are invited to attend committee meetings as observers and are encouraged to respond to committee members' questions when appropriate. Summaries of committee meetings are regularly furnished to elected officials and to all Federal, state and local agencies concerned with the study.

In addition to the citizens advisory committee, several open public meetings will be held. Information resulting from the study is being regularly furnished to the local news media as well as directly to a large list of individuals in the area. The advisory committee is expected to take a lead role in organizing and conducting the public meetings, hopefully increasing its sense of representing local interests.

The program just described is getting underway. The response to the formation and functioning of the committee has been good. At this point the members are enthusiastic and are taking their responsibilities seriously. Their actions generated considerable publicity in the local news media. More important, the direction and scope of the study has been modified. Initially the study, as envisioned by Corps planners, was to determine whether flood control measures could be economically justified. After the interviews with local citizens and the initial meetings of the advisory committee, it has been determined that this is not the singular problem which should be addressed. Such issues as land use, regional recreation, neighborhood amenities and desirable community growth patterns have been recognized as being central to any decision concerning the creek. These issues are being discussed and will influence the result of the planning effort.

This is only one example among public involvement programs being implemented by Corps district offices. Other districts have approached the problem differently. It is difficult at this point to judge which approaches

will be most successful, if indeed any can be so judged. But we have learned that there are several basic problems which must be solved if any program is to be successful.

Resources for public involvement are time and money and most planners already feel that they are short of both. Today, in the Corps, most new studies are concerned with large urban areas where many of the problems are severe and require a solution in much less time than the average six to seven years usually spent on a major study. The goal is to complete each urban water study in a period not to exceed 30 months. This compresses many study activities in a much shorter time and leaves the planner much less time to spend on public involvement activities. Public participation also costs money, some estimates are now ranging from 10-25 percent of study funds.

Changing nature of public values. Consider a typical river study begun in 1958, completed in 1964, with construction (if this be the case) completed in 1972. During this period public values are likely to change significantly. It is unlikely, for example, that the planner would have been able to successfully anticipate the increased interest in the environment, even had there been a great amount of public involvement in the planning effort. In fact, during this period, the concerned public itself would have shifted to another generation.

Uncontrollable planning agenda. One of the realities of public participation is that the engagement process cannot be neatly confined to an agenda of pure water resources issues. Once engaged, the public will not be patient with procedural niceties and organizational delays. The scope of concern may well be broadened to include issues for which the planning agency has no direct responsibility. This indicates that the planning process must be flexible and also argues for early involvement so that the scope of the study can be determined early enough to allow some allocation of study resources to all issues of concern. This problem comes up in almost all studies.

Evaluating and using public feedback. How does one take public preferences into account during decision making? On almost every issue there are bound to be those who are unalterably for or against something, with all shades of opinion in between. There are also likely to be differences between local views and regional or even national views. How does one weigh the preferences of those living in an area where a water supply reservoir might be built vs. those in the cities who need the water? We have no answers to this problem. At the present time it comes down to this--someone finally has to make some decisions--the Corps, a state governor, the Congress and the President. One can only say that these decision makers should be able to make better decisions with the information provided through a public involvement program than had they only the information provide by the professional planner.

Skills. In concluding this paper, it is important to give considerable emphasis to one final problem. Although it is under the heading of "skills," it goes much deeper than that simple word. It is a difficult problem today. It will become increasingly difficult as the focus of water resources activity continues to shift toward larger urban areas.

The burden of achieving public involvement falls principally upon the planner. This is true in large measure because he has the most direct and intimate control over the planning procedure and has the choice of including or failing to include the input from the community at various stages of planning, as well as the choice over the method of the input from the community. He is also the one who has the technical

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

information or can develop the information necessary for serious discussion and choice of alternative solutions to a problem. Planners are an elitist group who often prefer to make decisions without full input from those being affected by the project. This is largely true of all planners and derives from traditional concepts of "professionalism." I am confident it is true of most public works planners, even after recognizing that there is a minority of mavericks who are an exception to any generalization like this. Taking the Corps planners as an example, there are about 2,000 scattered throughout the Nation in over 50 offices. Eight percent are college graduates; nine percent have masters degrees; one percent have Ph.D.'s; and eight percent have had some college. That accounts for 98 percent. Their economic status is one of comfortable or modest affluence. They are well educated professionals and quite naturally hold to particular sets of values, moral and ethical codes and judgments on the good and bad features of our society.

These are some of the elements that, taken collectively, comprise what a sociologist might call a subculture. The members of any single subculture tend to consider any other subculture to be inferior. It is extremely difficult to accept and honestly believe that any other subculture could be as good, let alone superior, to one's own. Although most are broadminded enough to suspect that the extremely affluent just might have something better.

What has all this to do with the planner and his efforts to involve the public in his planning? He has enough of a challenge in trying to involve those who are largely at his own general social level. He finds it only a little more difficult to involve those who are above him in the social hierarchy. As he begins to look to large urban areas, he faces a large and important part of urban populations who are culturally or economically different. These are the people that we call disadvantaged, under privileged, and many other euphemisms to avoid saying the poor. There are also minority groups who are not necessarily poor cling to ethnic heritages. Some of these people have cultures which they regard as equal to or superior to ours. If the planner approaches the task with any semblance of patronizing condescension, he is going to find himself helpless to understand, let alone communicate effectively with those sectors of our urban populations. Yet it is essential that he does communicate.

I would like to suggest two things that might make a beginning on this problem. First, the planner should try to free himself from that pervasive and fallacious myth most of us have that there is a strong correlation between economic and social status, racial and ethnic background on the one and, and basic intelligence on the other. One eminent sociologist insists, on the basis of an indepth study, that it takes more brains to make a living and survive as a hustler or finagler in a ghetto than it does to be a planner. Second, it would help to quit thinking of our total society as a vertical hierarchy with its implicit evaluation that up is better than down. We ought to begin to visualize our society horizontally with all its subcultures standing side by side as neighbors. I doubt if any mortal is really qualified to judge their relative merits and, for the planner, such judgments must be regarded as completely irrelevant.

In summary, the Corps has recognized the need for a greater degree of public involvement in its planning and is making efforts to achieve this goal. There are no easy handbook answers--much of the success of any public participation program depends on the planner's own attitudes, his sensitivity to human concerns, and a relationship of mutual trust, respect and cooperation between the planner and the public. These elements are

not easy to bring all together--they can't be achieved by directives or regulations alone. The planner must experience public participation and the public must experience a situation where its views are sincerely solicited and taken into account in the decision-making process. The Corps is trying to provide this experience.

LITERATURE CITED

- Mogulof, Mervin B. 1970. Citizen Participation: A Review and Commentary on Federal Policies and Practices. Urban Institute Paper 102-1.
- Environmental Guidelines for the Civil Works Program of the Corps of Engineers. Nov., 1970. Institute for Water Resources Report 70-5 (AD716770)\*
- Bishop, A. B. 1970. Public Participation in Water Resources Planning, Institute for Water Resources, Report 70-7 (AD717022)\*
- Warner, K. P. 1971. Public Participation in Water Resources Planning, National Water Commission.
- Widditsch, Ann, 1972. Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study: An Evaluation (with Appendices). (AD747787)\*
- Borton, Thomas E., K. P. Warner and J. Wm. Wenrich. December, 1970. The Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study: Selected Approaches to Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning. Institute for Water Resources. Report 70-6 (AD717023)\*

\*These publications are available (by the above AD numbers) from: The National Technical Information Service, Department of Commerce, Springfield, Virginia, 22151.

AN EVALUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
IN CORPS OF ENGINEERS FIELD OFFICES

by James F. Ragan

In the fall of 1971, the Institute for Water Resources initiated a Technical Assistance Program (TAP) to provide 13 districts and 2 Corps divisions with consultants to assist in expanding and improving public participation activities. In addition, IWR contracted for research to assess the effectiveness of district programs in order to determine the following:

- C Where problems exist;
- C What modified or additional guidance is needed;
- C What successful public participation experiences might be applied more broadly.

This report is a result of that research.

The overall objective of this research is to evaluate the current public participation practices in selected Corps field offices and to provide planners in all field offices with specific experiential guidance on how to integrate increased public participation into their planning.

The field offices selected for this evaluation were as follows:

- C The 13 districts and 2 divisions provided with assistance under the TAP consultant program: the districts of Detroit, Honolulu, Kansas City, Mobile, New Orleans, New York, Omaha, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, St. Louis, Tulsa, Walla Walla and Wilmington (NC); and the North Pacific and North Central Divisions.
- C The Seattle and Rock Island Districts.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The evaluation portion of this report encompasses only the activities of these 17 field offices; other Corps districts and divisions must assess the evaluation's applicability to their own programs.

Reprinted from: IWR Report 75-6, James F. Ragan, Jr., "Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: An Evaluation of the Programs of 15 Corps of Engineers Districts." U.S. Army Engineer Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Nov 1975.

This research is based on the following evidence:

1. Written evaluations from and interviews with each of the TAP consultants: David J. Allee, Bruce A. Bishop, Thomas E. Borton, Donald G. Butcher, James F. Ragan, Katherine P. Warner, J. William Wenrich, Ann Widditsch and Robert D. Woff.
2. Material used by the field offices in designing and implementing their programs.
3. Field office interviews and responses to written questions.

The public participation programs of the 13 TAP-assisted districts are discussed in terms of (1) how they plan for such participation; (2) what the district purposes for public participation are; (3) how they decide what publics should be involved; (4) what techniques they have employed; and, (5) how they review, monitor and evaluate their public participation efforts.

A. PLANNING FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

None of the 13 districts regularly and systematically plans for public participation in its studies. No district has formally articulated the essential elements of such study planning:

- C What the district wants--and doesn't want--from the public;
- C How concerned publics should be identified;
- C The appropriate level of study effort that should be assigned to public involvement;
- C Who within the district is primarily responsible for designing and implementing a public participation effort;
- C The information desired from the public at various study stages;
- C The optional ways that information might be obtained;
- C How the information will be used in study analysis.

As a result, most districts begin their studies with only a general concept of how the public can contribute to their work.

As evidence of this deficiency in public participation planning, the Plan of Survey (also referred to as the Plan of Study or the Plan of Investigation) is cited. A Plan of Survey, which details the study work to be accomplished, must contain a section describing the proposed public participation. In this section describing the proposed public hearings, talk about getting the views of "local interests," and perhaps mention a number of potential techniques for more intensive public involvement (e.g., workshops, citizens advisory committees). The Plan of Survey does not commit them. It decidedly does not contain a public participated plan. Most studies are initiated and study budgets set before the districts have seriously reflected on how to involve the public.

The above observations apply, for the most part, to multipurpose preauthorization studies. On some priority studies (e.g., the Columbia River and Tributaries Study [CRT], some urban studies), the Corps has strongly emphasized public involvement and has provided sufficient funds for its realization. Plans for public participation have been designed for these studies--at least through the studies' initial phases.

B. PURPOSES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

While districts have not formally articulated their purpose for public participation, during the course of this research they were asked what they want from the public on a water resources study. All 13 districts responded that they want: (1) problem and need identification; and, (2) preferences for alternative solutions. Many districts said, however, that the public cannot adequately identify problems and needs and that districts have difficulty weighing the conflicting preferences from different sectors of the public.

Some districts added to the above "wants" from the public:

- C Identification of impacts of potential alternatives;
- C Opponent confrontation;
- C Identification of alternative solutions;
- C Public acceptance (as opposed to preferences) of the recommended solution;
- C Public objections to alternatives under study;
- C Technical data (e.g., flood damage data).

These purposes are consistent with OCE guidances. However, they are presented from the Corps' perspective: i.e., the districts want technical information, identification of needs and problems, and indication of solution preferences leading to the best solution to a water resources problem. None of the 13 districts answered the question from the public's perspective; i.e., the Corps wants to develop problem solutions that are compatible with broader community goals and values. Perhaps this is a subtle distinction, but it could indicate why districts occasionally get into difficulty proposing solutions for which there is significant opposition. Two examples illustrate this point:

- C One district wanted to find out whether a local community desired recreational opportunities around a proposed dam; the district discovered that many in the community questioned the dam itself.



- C Another district wanted community recommendations as to where not to dump the spoils from a dredging operation; it might have questioned whether the community wanted the dredging project in the first place.

Sections C through E describe what the 13 districts are doing to achieve the above purposes for public participation.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF PUBLICS

In designing a public participation component for a study, once the district decides what it wants from the public, the next step is to decide who the public is.

All 13 districts use a district mailing list as the basis for identifying the publics who might be interested in a specific study. The mailing list is a compilation of governmental and private organizations and individuals who, by virtue of their position or indication of interest, need or want to be apprised of district planning activities. The mailing list's primary purpose is to identify parties for notification of forthcoming public meetings. Thus, most lists are categorized by:

- C Members of Congress
- C Federal officials and agencies
- C State legislators
- C State officials and agencies
- C Regional officials and agencies
- C Local officials and agencies
- C Special local districts
- C Postmasters
- C Media
- C Organizations and individuals (sometimes subcategorized as to type--e.g., industry and commerce, environment)

There are some people (notably congressmen and governors) who must be notified, and it is assumed that notice distribution to the media and postmasters (who post meeting notices) will reach the broader public.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

The emphasis of most district mailing lists is on governmental officials and agencies; as many as 45 percent of the names are Federal officials and agencies, with another 35 percent made up from other public bodies.

No district regularly categorizes its mailing list according to "interest" (e.g., fish and wildlife, recreational boating, land development, economic development, ecological preservation). Inasmuch as the principal purpose of the mailing list is to identify people for public meetings, and not to identify interests that should be contacted, this "interest" categorization has not been deemed necessary.

Mailing list maintenance (i.e., updating) by districts is not systematic. Most try to update the public official portion of the list at each election, but some districts continue to send notices to former officials until they are notified of office changes. Most districts avoid this problem by sending notices to the office, rather than the specific officeholder, at the official place of business. The problem is more acute with private organizations for which the official place of business changes with the election of new officers (e.g., the League of Women Voters, the Sierra Club). Notices sent to executives of these organizations may only belatedly find their way to the new officeholders. Thus, mailing list maintenance is normally done on the basis of returned notices (indicating a person's change of address or demise) and of letters sent to the Corps advising of change of address, change of office, or wish to be included or deleted from the list.

On a specific study, the study manager normally compiles his study mailing list by:

- C Starting from the district list;
- C Adding to it from other agency mailing lists;
- C Asking contacted individuals to add to it;
- C Adding the names of persons who attend public meetings or other study sessions.

Thus, a study mailing list grows throughout the course of the study.

While the mailing lists may be adequate to notify parties of public meetings, there are problems in using them as the primary basis for identifying people for more intensive public participation. First, because public meetings are "official" sessions, fully 75 to 80 percent of most mailing lists comprise public officials and agencies (as many as 45 percent are Federal, with many of these in national or regional offices). Private organizations and individuals are not more strongly represented on the lists simply because they are much harder to identify. Second, mailing lists are hard to maintain; a study manager just doesn't have the time. Third, many districts have several district lists; one for planning, one for design and construction, and one for each of the district operational functions. In some cases, the environmental and recreation sections may have separate lists. Some districts have tried to consolidate and even computerize all district lists, but the practice is not uniform. Fourth, mailing lists categorized

by public organization, media, and all others make it difficult to identify potential interests to be contacted for special sessions. The study manager has no easy way to identify such interests; he must peruse the list and try to associate interests with organizational titles. This may be possible for organizations, but it is impossible for individuals--unless they and their interests are well-known. Moreover, if study managers change during the course of a study, the new study manager must start again.

Most districts indicated their dissatisfaction with the way they identify publics, but they seem to accept their dissatisfaction as something that will always be present ("We could always do more, if we had the staff").

#### D. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Each of the 13 districts has employed at least 5 of 14 different techniques to inform and educate the public and/or obtain information on an individual study. The types of techniques, and the percentages of the 13 districts that have used them, are listed on the following page. As shown in the table, the techniques used most frequently by the 13 districts are public meetings, informational brochures, advisory committees, media content analysis, public speeches and newsletters.

##### 1. Public Meetings

Public Meetings are the cornerstone of the public participation programs for all 13 districts. Other techniques for public involvement are added as the situations demand.

On preauthorization studies, the districts generally adhere to the requirement for three public meetings; the first to announce the initiation of the study and seek public identification of problems; the second to present the array of feasible alternatives; and the third--at the study's conclusion--to present the District Engineer's tentative recommendation of the "best" alternative.

To announce the public meetings, many of the 13 districts continue to prepare and distribute a one-to-two page, formal, legalistic document setting forth the study's authorization, the geographical area, and the problems to be studied. Some districts, however, have experimented with changes in format and supplementary documents to interest more people. For example, some districts have experimented with more graphic announcements (utilizing maps, stylistic drawings, pamphlets, and/or more public-relations-oriented type faces).<sup>2</sup> Others have couched their announcements in popular language. Some districts have expanded their announcements to

---

<sup>2</sup>Pittsburgh District, public meeting on Muddy Creek Dam Project; New Orleans District, public meeting on Wallace Lake Flood Control Project; North Pacific Division, public meeting on CRT.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

include statements of problems under investigation, ask for problem identification, and, at a later stage, summarize the alternatives under study.<sup>3</sup> A few districts have supplemented the announcements with press releases that might be used verbatim by

TABLE 1

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED

	Obtain Information (Percent of Districts)	Inform and Educate (Percent of Districts)
Public Meetings	100	100
Informational Brochures	38	92
Advisory Committees	77	62
Media Content Analysis	77	15
Public Speeches	15	77
Newsletters	15	54
Community Surveys	46	15
Workshops	38	38
Public Forums	38	38
Study Task Forces	38	23
Informal Meetings	31	23
Public Inquiries	31	8
Seattle-Type Brochures	23	38
Briefing Sessions	--	8

---

<sup>3</sup>Pittsburgh District, problem meeting on the Monongahela River Basin Study; Seattle District, all public meeting announcements.

newspapers. A few districts send two press releases: the first, two weeks before a public meeting; and the second, a reminder, one week before the meeting

No districts indicated that public meeting attendance has increased because of these innovations, although the assumption is that people are better prepared to speak on the issues at the meeting.

Most public meetings follow a similar format:

- C The district engineer presides.
- C The district engineer explains the Corps' role, places it in historical perspective, and describes the study's authorization.
- C A district staff member (normally the chief of planning or the study manager) explains what has been done to date on the study.
- C Public testimony is invited.

Most districts continue to follow protocol in taking testimony (i.e., congressional representatives first, then Federal officials, state officials, local officials and the general public), although a few have begun to take testimony at random--after congressional representatives have spoken.

Normally, the public meeting is a one-way communication device; the Corps staff makes its presentation, the public provides its testimony, and there is no discussion. No statement by any party, no matter how erroneous it may seem, is challenged.

All testimony is recorded, people are invited to submit written statements for the record, and all such testimony is made a part of the report submitted to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors.

In one or two of the 13 districts, a district staff member (normally the study manager) has remained in the community the day following the public meeting to obtain additional comments.

One district has experienced considerable difficulty with the public meeting because one local group, strongly antagonistic toward the Corps, has used the meetings as a platform to attack the Corps. Other citizens have approached the district after the meetings to say that they would have spoken, but felt intimidated. The one-way communication method, where anyone can say anything, facilitates such attacks. The press can then be expected to highlight the public "opposition" to the Corps and not to highlight the issues that the Corps is seeking to resolve. All 13 districts questioned the value of the first public meeting; they have nothing to tell the public, and it is unlikely that the public has anything to tell them. Public statements generally center on support for--or opposition to--the study. Nevertheless, districts interpret Corps regulations as requiring such a meeting to "kick off" the study, and they continue to hold them.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Districts do not get the needed citizen involvement through public meetings. They ascertain official positions, but they usually obtain only negative public response to alternatives; if significant opposition to one or more of the alternatives develops, the districts will reevaluate those alternatives and, perhaps, focus on others. Proponents of alternatives are less likely to attend and speak, feeling that they have made their positions clear to the Corps by other means. Public meetings do not currently permit dialogue among opposing forces that might lead to acceptable compromises.

2. Informational Brochures

All but one of the 13 district have used informational brochures, principally to inform and educate the public on a study. They have been used in one of the following ways:

- a. On large studies, at the outset of the study, to describe what the study is to do.<sup>4</sup>
- b. To describe pertinent study facts as background to public meetings, workshops, or other methods for obtaining public comments.<sup>5</sup>
- c. To present, in laymen's terms, the district findings and recommendations on a study prior to or following the final public meeting.<sup>6</sup>

Only one district uses the informational brochure on every study. The others have used it on an ad hoc basis.

3. Advisory Committees

---

<sup>4</sup>North Pacific Division, The Columbia River and Its Tributaries; Tulsa District, The Mid-Arkansas River Basin.

<sup>5</sup>Walla Walla District, Big Wood River and Tributaries; St. Louis District, East St. Louis Flood Control Project.

<sup>6</sup>Detroit District, Grand River Basin; Omaha District, Perry Creek Basin and Sand Creek and Toll Gate Creek Basin; New York District, Passaic River Basin.

Ten of the 13 districts indicated that they have used advisory committees, principally to obtain information. Most of the committees have been established by the districts to provide them with a regular forum for district testing of problems and potential solutions. These districts want to listen to the discourse among committee members to get a broader sense of public opinion, and they have not asked the committees for advice or for a formal position.

A few districts have used existing community organizations as "advisory committees" on specific studies. One example is a locally established community flood-control committee, which is used by the district to test problem solutions; no recommendations from the committee are sought. Another example is a community organization that invited the district to attend a series of meetings in order for the committee to provide some clarifying information on a study.

One district has, until recently, used district-established static environmental committees to review the environmental aspects of all district studies in the state. These committees have taken formal positions on various alternatives.

Finally, many districts undertaking urban studies are considering citizen committees to advise and assist the districts in implementing a public participation component in the studies. Their role will be to identify who should be involved, to suggest how they should be involved, and to assist in implementing the various public participation techniques.

Except for the already established organizations, committee membership is determined by the district. Most committees have both public and private representatives. One district has restricted committee membership to private representatives, believing that public representatives are less likely to speak freely until their official agency position has been articulated.

Most of the districts have sought organizational representation because their representatives have access to more people. A few districts have selected individuals, rather than organizations, in an attempt to reach people who represent different interests in the community; the latter approach places a burden on the district to identify all relevant interests--and on the individuals to speak only for their interests.

Six of the districts said that the advisory committee is one of the most effective techniques they have used to obtain information. Such committees provide continuity of participation, and, as the representatives gain greater understanding of the study and come to know the other members and their positions, dialogue among the members is professional and valuable. One district dissented, feeling that citizen advisory committees are not valuable because they cannot mirror the population, but are only a group of people with diverse interests talking about study issues, and there is no way of knowing how strongly and broadly the feelings of the individual members are held.

4. Media Content Analysis

Most of the districts indicated that they use media content analysis to obtain information from the public. However, the input for such analysis is usually restricted to newspaper clipping

services (undertaken by either the public affairs officer (PAO) or local news services), focusing on articles about the Corps and its specific studies. Many of the articles clipped are press impressions and reporting of public meetings. The primary benefits of this type of media content analysis are that: (1) the district learns how the Corps is regarded, at least by the press in the community; and, (2) the district finds out how its meetings are being reported in the press: what the general public is hearing and not hearing. There is little indication, however, that the district's study conduct has changed because of media content analysis.

5. Public Speeches

All the districts indicated the use of public speeches to inform and educate the public. All speeches are given at the initiation of other organizations (e.g., engineering societies, service clubs); no circumstance was found in which a district sought out an organization. This suggests that most speeches are made to friendly forums (because few opposing groups seem to want to give the Corps a "soapbox") and that the primary value (not to be minimized) of public speeches lies in improving the Corps' image.

The district engineer is the most frequent public speaker, but he usually confines himself to important organizations and to broad Corps policies and issues. The chiefs of engineering and planning also make many speeches; their topics are more study-oriented. In some districts the study manager also makes such speeches, but this is rare. Study-oriented speeches generally stay at a high level of generality, presenting the background of a study, progress, and some of the alternatives under consideration, illustrated with slides of successful Corps projects.

6. Newsletters

Seven of the 13 districts have used newsletters to keep the general public informed of study progress. These have been used almost exclusively on large studies in a large geographical area; they are not distributed regularly (i.e., monthly, quarterly), but only when the Corps feels it has something new to say. One of the best is the "Studygram" distributed as part of the Columbia River and Tributaries Study in the Pacific Northwest. The two issues distributed thus far have highlighted study progress, the use of public input to this point, and forthcoming events for public participation.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, no district judged the newsletter to be one of the most effective means for informing and educating.

---

<sup>7</sup>North Pacific Division, Columbia River and Tributaries Studygrams.



With the exception of the citizen advisory committees, all of the above most-used techniques (public meetings, informational brochures, media content analysis, public speeches, newsletters) are directed to the general public rather than to specific interests.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, only the public meetings and the citizen committees (and, to a limited extent, media content analysis) are used to obtain information. The important point of these observations is that they are consistent with district emphasis on the public meeting as the principal technique for public involvement. The audience for public meetings is the general public, so it seems consistent for districts to place great emphasis on informing and educating the public for participation at these public meetings.

7. Community Surveys

Six of the districts have used community surveys to obtain information from the public. This is the one technique that districts have employed to try to identify community attitudes, interests, goals and viewpoints against which the district can assess how various alternatives might be received by the community. In most cases the surveys have been conducted by outside organizations, and the districts have been unhappy with the results; the surveys did not tell them what they needed to know. In one case, the district piggybacked on a broader survey to ask a series of water-resource related questions. The district did not use the community responses to the other questions to gauge community attitudes toward water problems in relation to other problems.

8. Workshops

Probably the most frequently suggested technique for public involvement is the workshop, and yet only 5 of the 13 districts have used it--both to obtain information and to inform and educate.

Workshops have been used to encourage citizens to ask questions about the study and to discuss the various alternatives under study. On the Columbia River and Tributaries Study, workshops are also being used for problem identification. Most districts have treated workshops as informal public meetings; they are an open forum for an interchange of ideas, unconstrained by protocol matters such as who speaks first and the need for a verbatim public record. Normally, the district engineers do not attend such sessions, believing that their presence might make the sessions more official and formal. All districts try to obtain local sponsorship for the session.

Most workshops are open to the general public, and few districts attempt to ensure that certain critical interests will be represented. As a result, attendance often jumps to 35 or more people. Such group sizes and time constraints (normally two hours maximum for discussion) prevent an in-depth interchange of points of view. No district has held more than one workshop on the same topic for the same group of people (except on the Columbia River and Tributaries Study),

---

<sup>8</sup>While public speeches are given to specific groups, the fact that they are initiated by the groups themselves indicates that the districts do not use them to reach specific interests.

meaning that in a single evening session, the attendees must both understand the study and make thoughtful comments. Time and numbers of participants restrict understanding and thoughtful comments, for everyone wants to speak.

Workshop format normally follows that of the public meeting:

- C Introduction and description of the study
- C Description of the alternatives
- C Discussion of the alternatives (frequently in subgroups)
- C Summary of the discussion

Some districts have provided participants with a questionnaire in which to comment on the alternatives, but they have found that the usefulness of the public comments has been limited because the people had too little time to comment adequately.

9. Public Forums

Five of the 13 districts said they have tried public forums, both to obtain information and to inform and educate. However the public forum technique means different things to different districts. One has used it with technical organizations to discuss study problems and answer questions. Another cited district engineer participation on television panel discussions as use of the public forum. Another mentioned the forum as meetings with other agencies to discuss study coordination and problems.

10. Study Task Forces

Five of the districts have used study task forces. For the most part, these have been composed of public agency professionals, and their task has been operational. Some have been used to coordinate a series of interrelated studies, of which the district had only a part. One district tried to use the task force approach with other public agencies to resolve study methodology (e.g., how economic projections are made); it discovered, however, that compromises in methodology were not possible, and it abandoned the task force.

Another district set up an interagency task force to share in study decision making (i.e., agreement on study emphases). The district stressed, however, that the study continued over a number of years and required considerable education of the other task force members before they could make such decisions.

One district as a result of TAP consultant intervention, used a citizen task force (called an ad hoc committee) to identify and try to resolve a number of controversial issues that were impeding study progress.

11. Informal Meetings

While only four of the districts indicated that they use informal meetings to obtain information and to inform and educate, it seems safe to assume that all do so. Districts are in frequent contact with other agencies to obtain information, and several make certain that they contact environmental groups to tell them what is going on and to invite their participation. There does not, however, appear to be any systematic approach to these informal meetings. The districts tend to contact people from whom they need information and do not necessarily contact groups who might want to participate.

12. Public Inquiries

Four of the districts said they had tried public inquiries to obtain information. However, district interpretation of the public inquiry technique was either to write letters to specific individuals requesting information (which all districts do) or to go into communities to ask specific questions. Open public-inquiry sessions have not been held.

13. Seattle-Type Brochure

The Seattle District's Public Brochure has two characteristics that three districts have tried to use on three studies.<sup>9</sup>

- C The brochure informs the public of study progress and describes the alternatives (and potential effects).
- C The brochure invites and records public comment on alternatives.

Thus, the Seattle-type brochure has the dual purpose of informing and educating and obtaining information, as distinct from the informational brochure which primarily informs.

However, to date, the other district public brochures may have been prepared for special events (such as workshops and citizen advisory committee meetings), and they have not been used to provide a running commentary on study progress and public comments (by preparing and distributing successive drafts) as the Seattle District has done.

14. Briefing Sessions

---

<sup>9</sup>Walla Walla, Sacramento, Wilmington.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

One district, as a result of TAP consultant intervention, used a public briefing session with community leaders preceding a public meeting. The purpose was to encourage questions on the study in order to provide the leaders with common data for the public meeting. The session was also to identify for the district the questions it needed to answer before the public meeting. The district felt that the experiment was unsuccessful; they expected some searching questions, but they obtained only an affirmation that everything the district was doing was right.

E. REVIEW AND MONITORING

To the extent that districts have modified their public announcements and meetings and experimented with new techniques in public involvement, they have assessed what they are doing and, where deficient, have experimented with ways to correct the problems. In this way, they are reviewing and monitoring their public participation efforts. However, successful public participation is still largely measured in numbers. Over 100 people attending a public meeting is regarded as good, as are 25 to 35 at a workshop session and over 1,000 people on a mailing list. In almost all cases, these numbers represent but a minute percentage of the affected public.<sup>10</sup> Quantity of attendance is an adequate measure of public participation success only when the numbers constitute a high percentage of the population, and this is clearly unrealistic.

A few districts have recently contracted with outside consultants to observe, summarize and evaluate the conduct of workshops on selected studies. Some districts, for their recently initiated urban studies, are considering the establishment of citizen committees to advise them on public participation activities. However, none of the 13 districts regularly and systematically reviews and monitors public participation efforts on all studies to assess whether they are:

- C Contacting the "right" publics;
- C Getting from them what the districts need and want;
- C Getting the information in the manner and within the time desired by the districts.

In a sense, districts try to obtain the necessary participation, and, if it is inadequate, they go with what they have.

---

<sup>10</sup>One case was found where over 80 percent of a small community's adult population (200) attended a public meeting.

F. SUMMARY

Many of the 13 districts are experimenting, on selected studies, with more intensive public participation programs. It is probable that, over time, these efforts will lead to more intensive efforts on all studies. At the moment, however, district public participation programs can be described as:

- C Including little forward planning;
- C Using the district mailing lists as the principal resource for identifying publics;
- C Concentrating public involvement on government agencies and the general public;
- C Using the public meetings as the most important technique for involvement;
- C Evaluating public participation principally by counting heads.

CONSTRAINTS ON EFFECTIVE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

by James F. Ragan, Jr.

Effective district public participation requires:

- C Well-developed objectives and policies
- C Committed district personnel
- C Facilitative organization
- C Clear assignment of responsibilities
- C Adequate resources
- C Well-developed public participation plans for each study
- C Regular and systematic program review and monitoring

There are, however, externally imposed constraints on the development and implementation of effective programs. Some exist because of Corps practices; others are imposed by the public. The purpose of this chapter is to identify those constraints and describe how they adversely affect district efforts in public participation.

A. Corps-Imposed Constraints

While all of the constraints discussed here hinder effective public participation, it should be strongly emphasized that they are discussed only from the public participation point of view. Public participation is only one of many considerations which go into policies creating these constraints. It is fully recognized that the Corps may not be able to remove or ease any of these constraints because of higher priority considerations. They are identified and described here only to suggest why districts may not be able to develop optimal public participation programs.

First, most districts handle too many studies at one time to involve the public effectively on any of them. Most study managers are responsible for several studies at one time. When each manager is required to coordinate each study's technical analyses, obtain technical information from other agencies, attend other

---

Reprinted from: IWR Report 75-6, James F. Ragan, Jr., "Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: An Evaluation of the Programs of 15 Corps of Engineers Districts," U.S. Army Engineer Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1975.

agency meetings that affect his studies, conduct some analyses himself, and try to involve the public in planning, he doesn't have the time to do all of these tasks efficiently. More often than not, public involvement gets the time that is left over. The study manager's major objective is to complete his study. Meeting with groups and individual citizens is time-consuming and frequently results in minimal information that the study manager can use. Thus, if the study manager is to make efficient use of his time, he will minimize those tasks which are inherently inefficient. Both the 13 districts and consultant reports indicate that time pressure on the staff is the major constraint in implementing effective public participation programs. It prevents many study managers from making as many field visits as they should--which is particularly important in studies where the geographical area is a great distance from the district office.

Second, many studies are strung out over long periods of time, with concomitant "dribbling" of study funds. If a district receives only \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year for a study, it feels that it can use only a small portion of that for public participation--so small a portion that it cannot afford brochures, citizen committees, workshops, etc. Moreover, districts do not normally budget for specific public participation activities, so the money for them cannot be found in a limited budget. Often, the requirements for more intensive involvement come up rather suddenly and were not foreseen. In the face of other study requirements, many districts feel constrained to reallocate the funds they do have to permit greater public involvement.

Another problem with the "dribbling" of study funds is that when a study continues with minimal activity over a long period of time, it is almost impossible to sustain public interest. If people are "turned on" to participating in a study at its initiation, they completely forget about it if their next contact is 2 or 3 years later at the second public meeting. The 13 districts cited this inability to sustain public interest as one of their most significant problems.

Third, the allocation of funds for public participation does not adequately take into account differences in study magnitude and study requirements. On the one hand, large studies, notably basin and urban studies, have relatively large allocations for public participation (frequently 10 to 20 percent of the budget). However, inasmuch as large studies have proportionally fewer district staff people available to contact and interact with the public, the districts are forced to use outside consultants for much of their public participation activity. While consultants can be of significant value, they cannot be the only people who interact with the public. Although consultants can conduct community surveys, district representatives must participate in interviews, workshops, citizen advisory committees and other meetings. One of the primary uses of consultants in public participation is to generate and stimulate public input through the above means.

In the larger studies, the substantial funds for public participation, without adequate staff resources, may overcommit the district to public involvement; in the smaller studies, the staff may be spread too thinly over several studies, and the funds in any given year may be too meager to mount effective programs.

Some district planners feel that they could undertake more effective public involvement efforts within existing budgets if some of the specifications for technical studies in the planning phase were deferred until preparation of the General Design Memorandum after authorization. This argument was not explored, but it may be worth examining.

Fourth, too much time elapses between study completion and project authorization and construction. At many initial public meetings, the district engineer explains the Corps planning process and says that it may

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

be 15 to 20 years before any resultant project is built. While accurate, it is not a statement which invites intensive public interest. Considering the study and review process, it is easy to see why it takes such a long time:

1. The district submits its draft report to the division.
2. The division reviews, comments, and sends it back to the district for revision.
3. The district revises and resubmits it to the division.
4. The division forwards it to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors and the Chief of Engineers.
5. The Board reviews it, issues a public notice of the conclusions and recommendations of the division, receives public comments, and makes its recommendation to the Chief of Engineers.
6. Concurrent with Board review, the Office of the Chief of Engineers reviews it and furnishes appropriate guidance to the Board.
7. The Chief of Engineers prepares his report and, together with the reports of the district, the division, and the Board, submits it to state governors and interested Federal agencies for comment.
8. All reports and comments are forward to the Secretary of the Army, who reviews them and submits the project to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for consideration as part of the President's program.
9. If OMB accepts the project, the Secretary of the Army submits the proposed project to the Congress for authorization.
10. Congress holds hearings and authorizes the project.
11. OMB places the authorized project in the President's budget.
12. Congress holds hearings and appropriates money for the project.
13. OMB releases money for the authorized project.
14. The district begins postauthorization planning in two phases--a design memorandum and a functional design document.
15. Construction begins.



After step 1 in the above process, the public does not hear about the project--except for some who may receive the public notice at Step 5--until step 14, when the district begins postauthorization planning. Inasmuch as this takes many years, by the time postauthorization planning begins, the composition of the public and the nature of their values may have changed. In many cases, public participation in postauthorization planning may have to be as intensive as in the initial planning phase.

Fifth, the physical setting under which most planners operate is deficient. Offices are cramped, with desks right next to each other. Privacy is nonexistent, and telephone calls, visitors and small staff discussions adversely affect the concentration of everyone in the office. Under such conditions, planners are reluctant to invite citizens in for meetings unless, of course, they can arrange for conference room space. More important, with such strains on the staff's concentration, they have to be functioning at less than 75 percent capacity. Better and more private working conditions could result in all tasks being performed more efficiently. Time might even be freed for more intensive public involvement.

#### B. Public Constraints

The public itself imposes constraints on how districts want to involve citizens in planning. First, the general public even though it may be affected by the study, delays its active participation until the district has developed firm proposals. Attendance at the first two public meetings may be relatively light, but when the district engineer is tentatively recommending an alternative at the final public meeting, those who support and oppose it will usually attend. Attendance at public meetings during the postauthorization planning is likely to be high, since the district now has an authorized project to which people can react.

Second, some organizations that are extremely antagonistic to the Corps have refused to participate in study planning--except to attack the Corps at public meetings. While these groups are aggressive enough for districts to find out their positions even if they don't participate, the districts may not always discover the reasons for their positions--which could be helpful in planning.

Third, some districts have found that when private volunteer organizations agree to provide data or analysis, sometimes their commitments are not kept. When this happens, the planner is likely to question the need to continue to try to involve them. In one case, the district asked for data, private groups committed themselves to provide it, but they did not. The planner's response was, "We didn't really expect it, but we had to go through the motions."

Finally, some local agencies and sponsors have not been enthusiastic toward the Corps' attempts to increase its public involvement. In Seattle, some public agencies do not like to have their arguments recorded in the public brochure along with the arguments of nonprofessionals. While some have threatened to stop contributing, none has yet carried through the threat. In another district, a local agency has stated that if the district intends to involve the public more intensively, it will refuse to participate; it represents the public!

None of the above constraints is debilitating since the public has generally responded well to district attempts to intensify public involvement. The constraints do suggest, however, that districts may not always be able to involve the public in the way or to the extent they desire.



IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
IN FEDERAL AGENCIES

by Jerry Delli Priscoli

How does an agency of the Federal Government effectively implement a citizen-involvement program? As a social scientist with responsibilities for citizen-involvement programs in a Federal agency, this is a continuing live question for me. In seeking to answer the questions, I have found that it is particularly helpful to be aware of three elements: (1) the inherent problems that are common in all attempts to implement citizen involvement; (2) the most common pitfalls of agencies in the implementation process and how they can be avoided or managed; and, (3) practical guidelines and questions that make it easier to plan and implement citizen involvement. This essay reflects my personal perspectives concerning these three elements as a result of efforts to learn how an effective citizen-involvement program can be implemented by an agency.

SOME INHERENT PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING CITIZEN-INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Although there are innumerable problems in implementing citizen-involvement programs, I have found that four overriding ones continually surface: coordination, control, representativeness, and dissonance. Although these problems are never "solved," they can and should be creatively managed.

Coordination: One of the most critical problems for government today is the relationship between different governmental units and levels. Often policies and/or plans of one agency are implemented by another. Projects or facilities of one agency may even be operated or maintained by a second, third or fourth. Furthermore, actions are rarely limited to Federal agencies. State, local, and private actors are also involved, and each agency may embody different missions and purposes. As a consequence of this mix of purposes and actors, different citizen-involvement programs frequently are developed. In some cases, these programs ameliorate inter-agency and citizen-government conflict; in others, they generate such conflict.

Control: When a Federal agency deals with a public issue, its responsibility is to find and assure the Federal interest. Such interest frequently takes the form of centralized control through regulation, licensing, funding, and the like. Citizen involvement, however, is by nature a decentralizing concept. Therefore, a tension always exists between the centralized needs of the agency and the decentralized interests of citizens. Every citizen-involvement program consequently must confront the question: How much centralized control should the agency apply to assure sufficiently responsive, decentralized citizen involvement?

Representativeness: One of the most frequent criticisms of citizen-involvement programs is that the citizens who become involved don't represent the majority, but rather are a "citizen elite" that represents special interests. This is a very serious problem for agencies that make use of citizen involvement to develop

---

This article first appeared in Citizen Participation in America, edited by Stuart Langton, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1978.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

consensus and support for a policy or program. For this reason, agencies must develop multiple links in the citizen involvement process. In so doing, however, it is doubtful that conflict can be avoided. To most agencies with established clients and constituencies and traditional methods of relating to them, a more representative involvement process may be painful, and the process may be aborted to avoid conflict. Unfortunately, this frequently leads to problems of public opposition at a later date.

Dissonance: One of the facts of life for government agencies is the conflict between political interests and technical interests in decision making. The excessive practice of using technical justifications to rationalize controversial political discussions is undoubtedly one of the factors that has led to greater demands for citizen involvement. As a result, government agencies should expect that citizen involvement will increase the tension between technical and political considerations. They cannot avoid the question: To what extent is an agency plan or regulation technically objective or purely political? Since finding workable solutions to blending technical and political dimensions is a critical, internal agency task, citizen involvement will force this issue to the surface and encourage meaningful resolution.

### TWO COMMON PITFALLS IN IMPLEMENTING CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

As government agencies seek to cope with the problems inherent in implementing citizen-involvement programs, their efforts frequently falter because of two common pitfalls. The first arises at the stage of writing citizen-involvement regulations, and the second arises in relation to agency routines. In the following pages, I should like to describe the situations in which these pitfalls arise and discuss alternative ways of coping with them.

#### Writing Citizen-Involvement Regulations: Curing the Disease with More of the Disease

When faced with a mandate, government agencies predictably turn to writing regulations. This is true, too, with citizen involvement. To date, most Federal agencies have written specific citizen-involvement regulations. Such agency regulations are useful in many ways. For example, they legitimize discussion of citizen involvement. Professionals at all levels throughout the agency can openly debate the merits and shortcomings of involvement. Managers often are enabled to budget funds and hire new people. Questions of effectiveness and evaluation are raised as programs are designed. In short, a new program basis with which to link agency services to public clients is produced. So the traditional model of writing regulations can be beneficial in one respect. But when applied to citizen-involvement programs, the situation can all too easily be perceived as regulating and coopting opposition.

More fundamentally, regulations often encourage more administrative bureaucracy. Since citizen involvement is, in part, a reaction to a large centralized bureaucracy, writing regulations is like trying to cure the disease with more of the same. Writing regulations to deal with this centralization-decentralization control problem is not easy. Not all parts of the country view citizen participation similarly--even on similar issues. Those who write national regulations usually respond to pressures from national interest groups and to national issues, and thus produce nationally oriented policy. When agency field personnel perceive that such policy conflicts

with local needs, regulations can become either limiting or expanding. In short, the purpose of regulations can be subverted.

A good example of this is the recently enacted Citizen Advisory Committee Act, adopted by Congress, which requires formal approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) before an agency employs a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The Act seeks to overcome the problem of unrepresentative advisory committees that are self-perpetuating and unnecessary.

How does an agency respond to this Act? Most CACs are established by agencies at the regional, state or local levels to gain representative input or support for agency decisions that will be implemented at those levels. Should all such CACs be approved by OMB? If not, what are the rules for exceptions?

The idea that OMB should be the arbiter of such local efforts at responsive bureaucracy contradicts the decentralized nature of citizen involvement. An agency can choose to ignore the law on the grounds that local CAC efforts meet the responsive spirit of the law, or, as generally is the case, they write regulations.

In writing regulations, the agency first must decide on the CAC technique's appropriateness to a citizen-involvement program. Depending on the various field personnel, this easily can be interpreted as subverting and distrusting field professionals' judgment. On the other hand, the agency has a responsibility to assume that the national interest is met, and it should not encourage disregard for national laws.

Assuming that the agency moves beyond this debate and writes regulations on CACs, what do they say? Most likely, the regulations will be filled with caveats about not using CACs and with careful procedures for approval. If, as is often the case, the agency has only general citizen-involvement regulations, such specific procedural guidelines easily can be used to justify very narrow interpretations of citizen involvement--despite national policy. Thus, a regulation necessitated by a national law that encourages responsive and representative government can be used by field personnel as an argument that the agency doesn't really desire citizen involvement. The norm becomes: Do only the minimum. Consequently, agency application of the regulation might do little to manage the problem of representativeness because of a myriad of control problems saddling its attempts at regulation.

There is another sense in which writing citizen-involvement regulations looks like curing the disease with more of the same. Frequently, regulations are written by lawyers or in legal terminology. They have a paralegal flavor to them. The formality and the strategies of conflict resolution encouraged by legalistic regulations can inhibit broad citizen-involvement efforts. Let me illustrate.

The injunction, which escalates project stoppage and litigation costs, is a very familiar syndrome. As a people, our willingness to go to court is testimony to our faith in the legal system. However, legal conflict resolution assumes two positions: for and against. Most of the players' energy goes to articulating positions for and against the issue. Those in the middle either move to the extreme or drop out, not to be heard. Writing legalistic regulations for citizen involvement can have the effect of building in this paradigm of conflict resolution before there is any conflict. Representation of mediating issues and values is decreased, and opportunities for middle-ground mediation are lost. Citizen-involvement goals of isolating extremes of conflicts and building the middle ground are lost.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Regulations concerning public hearings frequently fit this scenario. An air of formal legalisms such as "testimony" and "cross-examination" procedures abound. Such regulations can do more to solidify the extremes than to create options for negotiations. Rarely do they encourage dialogue beyond stating positions. Most information flows one way.

Although they are sometimes necessary, such hearings are more often misapplied citizen-involvement efforts. Even when formal public hearing regulations are only part of a set of citizen-involvement regulations, they communicate this formalistic approach to conflict resolution. They may encourage staff who so desire to confirm the "us" and "them" syndrome. They may encourage closed management styles that result in loss of middle-ground negotiation points. Agency tendencies to control information flow selectively might be encouraged rather than reduced. Representativeness would then suffer.

Thus, regulation writing, however well motivated, can easily be counter-productive. Regulations frequently exacerbate representativeness problems by decreasing agency responsiveness. A key to avoiding this possibility is finding a balance between a level of abstraction and concrete specificity. That balance will be struck differently for different agencies, in part because they are organized differently. Whatever the balance, regulations should avoid excessive legalism and dogmatism. Options and regional innovations in application of technique need to be encouraged.

### Disrupting the Agency Routine

Rarely does an agency's time frame for decision making fit that demanded by citizen involvement. Short-term agency decisions often require consensus, which takes too long to build. On the other hand, consensus built in through planning often deteriorates by the time specific implementation actions are taken by the agency. Does the agency change to fit citizen-involvement requirements, or does the agency try to make citizen involvement fit agency requirements? In either case, routine ways of doing agency business will be disrupted.

But the search for some synthesis of these two questions is a major source of impact on the agency as it attempts to meet mandated requirements for citizen participation.

A first attempt to implement citizen involvement usually consists of hiring some new staff or consultants and establishing or assigning a branch or unit of the agency to carry out the citizen-participation requirement. Organizationally creating a separate citizen-involvement branch or specialist does legitimize the activity. It also facilitates management's perception that the activity can be controlled. Whether or not this is true, conflict is likely between this new, vaguely defined activity called citizen involvement and the established traditional public affairs office. After all, what has the public affairs office been doing if not facilitating agency-public contact?

Although it is often bitter, this conflict can be useful; that is, it forces further refinement in the agency's citizen-involvement definition and policy. This refinement also breeds new conflict. Some of those newly recruited experts begin operating more closely with line professionals. Indeed, the distinction between technical expert and citizen-involvement specialist blurs. Consequently, fresh perspectives subtly work their

way into line operations. Citizen-involvement activities move closer to line-operation responsibilities; that is, the study manager or facilities operator is less able to segment these activities.

As citizen-involvement activities increase, so, too, does the perceived direct stake of such people. In short, citizen-involvement activities become part of operating job responsibilities rather than just an externally managed, mysterious "black box." This shift in perception is painful and is not always accomplished. It is the point at which many agency personnel find themselves today.

A similar syndrome usually unfolds in early agency attempts to contract out citizen involvement. Putting the citizen-involvement package under a contract assumes a "black box" approach. In other words, segment the citizen-involvement program and let the experts handle the analysis. However, if the citizen-involvement process questions the validity of assumptions, alternatives, or even the agency purpose, a monkey wrench is thrown into the decision gears. If the agency believes it should go back to reanalyze, it faces contractual problems in doing so. Is another contract written? Did the contractor fulfill the obligations of the first? In short, more administrative problems surface to confound the agency's attempts at responsiveness. Basically, there is an inherent problem of coordination when citizen involvement moves away from those vested with decisive authority. That is true with the public affairs office in the conflict as well as with citizen involvement contractors.

Given the agency problem of adjustment and unfamiliarity with citizen involvement and associated analysis, what should be the policy? Outside consulting is useful and necessary, but such citizen-involvement consulting works best when experienced contractors act as consultants to agency staff. They can provide support, insight and critique, but they cannot substitute for responsible decision makers. Once the decision-making authority and citizen-involvement responsibility are separated, the effectiveness of the citizen-involvement program is weakened. But is it possible to sensitize various levels of agency decision makers to citizen-involvement techniques and programs?

After years of their developing managerial and technical expertise, the demand for citizen involvement can be a hard pill for agency officials to swallow. After all, should not the public affairs experts take care of it? When agency expertise becomes too routinized, it can subtly cross the line from expanding public options to limiting options. Expertise begins to look more like solutions seeking applications than like problem-solving capability. At this point, citizen involvement seriously impinges upon professional self-images and generates considerable dissonance among personnel.

Agencies frequently adopt new training and recruitment strategies to meet this dissonance. Realistically, an agency can neither retrain all old employees nor recruit all new ones; it usually develops some strategy between these extremes. Training for citizen involvement presents numerous problems as well as opportunities. Any concerted training/recruitment strategy to meet the dissonance problem assumes support strategies by the general management.

Obviously, training should be geared to target audiences. Middle-level managers make different decisions and have different needs than executive-level or line professionals. A training program must consider first the essential citizen-involvement message to be communicated across decision-making levels within the agency. This message can then be packaged to fit the specific needs of different decision makers.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

More fundamentally, does the training proceed from the top down or the bottom up? Equipping line operators with citizen-involvement skills and encouraging their use is one thing. But to do this without management support will increase frustration and could alienate the personnel from the management. By the same token, sensitizing management to public-involvement needs and carrot stick tools is useless without an implementation capability. So three critical training questions emerge: (1) How do I package the message for varying decision makers? (2) How do I phase the "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches? and, (3) Can I monitor my training impact?

One of the best approaches to citizen-involvement training is an interactive, learn-by-doing model. Such a hands-on approach builds confidence and experience. More than this, an interactive approach offers fascinating joint training opportunities; agency personnel can interact with state, local, and public-interest groups within the training format. Not only do such trainees develop public-involvement skills, but they build a basis for continued dialogue. Also, complex agency rules and limitations, often so hard to communicate publicly, become quickly understood within the interactive working environment. In effect, the joint citizen-involvement training itself becomes an effective public-involvement tool. The few agency attempts at this approach look promising.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING CITIZEN-INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS**

The preceding discussion has identified four general approaches to implementing citizen-involvement programs: (1) writing regulations; (2) developing a training strategy; (3) developing an overall management strategy; and, (4) hiring consultants. Obviously, these are not mutually exclusive, and it is likely that an agency will create a mix of these approaches as part of an overall strategy. In so doing, six major points are important to consider in creating an effective citizen-involvement strategy.

First, implementation of citizen-involvement programs must start by realizing that initial dissonance will arise. The roots of that dissonance and its likely effects must be understood and anticipated. Initial conflicts, such as between public affairs offices and public-involvement staff, should be usefully managed. Overall management rewards should be commensurate with the way the staff actually allocates time. For example, if planners spend increasing time in coordination with local officials, are they still being rewarded only for quantity of computer output?

Second, decisions must be made about how much sharing of decision should be done and can be done. The "should" versus "can" distinction of these decisions is critical. Often staff analysis of the "can" in sharing comes packaged to executives as the "should" of decision sharing.

Third, citizen-involvement programs must be closely related to actual decision making. Either managers get into citizen-involvement programs or line-staff are given more decision authority. Agencies will find some point in between these extremes. At any rate, consultants should be used only as resources to consult. When outside consultants are given the responsibility for citizen involvement, decision makers become further isolated from the effects of their decisions. Consultants can provide critical staff support, training, evaluation



and critiques. But insofar as the success of citizen involvement depends on getting close to decisions, they should not replace decision makers.

Fourth, understanding and managing the decentralization-centralization conflict is extremely important. This is particularly true when writing regulations. Think about the counterintuitive or unexpected results of regulations. Avoid blind faith in regulations--but use them wisely.

Fifth, training is one of the best long-range techniques in implementing citizen-involvement programs. Training should be coupled to strategies of recruiting new personnel. It must also be keyed to varying audiences within the agency. Effective training programs require enough flexibility to change as the agency and issues change in the process. Interactive training models offer even further citizen-involvement opportunities. Joint training programs themselves can become citizen-involvement techniques.

Sixth, citizen-involvement techniques must be appropriate--in time and money--to the type of decision being made. As such, funding can become a major consideration in the successful citizen-involvement program. Citizen involvement techniques must be clearly linked to the decision-making process. There is, of course, budgeting for line decision-making activities, such as interviews, advertising press releases, hearings, large and small meetings, workshops, surveys and reports but something called citizen involvement funding is difficult to conceptualize. It is more difficult to trace professional staff time in design, concern and interaction for citizen involvement, because these attitudinal orientations should become part of the larger professional job definition.

Debates over percentage funding, such as 10 percent, or 20 percent, or 30 percent of program funds, are most relevant in initial implementation stages, as opposed to mature citizen-involvement programs. The goal is to move away from such program-level debate to specific cost discussion of line items to be used by agency professionals. Indeed, funding levels for specific techniques can change dramatically, depending on the specific context. For example, it is more expensive to bilingual or multilingual workshops than workshops in English. Despite variance, it is possible to develop some general approximation of costs and techniques, as illustrated in Table I.

#### SOME NORMATIVE GUIDELINES

In addition to considering the six general points just identified, I have found a number of normative guidelines to be helpful in planning and implementing citizen-involvement programs:

1. Citizen involvement is not a technique; rather, it is a strategy, an approach, a philosophy. There is no one way to handle citizen involvement. Avoid the syndrome of a technique looking for an application; what works in one place will not always work in some other place. It is not the technique that is important so much as the people who employ the technique and their attitude.
2. Citizen involvement is not a substitute for the representative political process. In fact, it cannot be useful without complementing that process, but it will have an impact on that political process.

Table I

ROUGH COST GUIDE TO MOST FREQUENTLY USED  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

Technique	Cost (\$)
Interviews (per 20-min interview)	15-30
Newspaper advertising	250-750
Radio advertising	250-750
Press release	100-500
Public hearing	2,500-6,500*
Large public meeting	2,500-6,500*
Small meeting or workshop	2,000-4,000*
Publicity on radio or TV	250-500
50-page report	5,000-10,000
200-page report	10,000-50,000
Information bulletins (4-8 pages)	500-1,500
Conducting a survey:	
Per mailed questionnaire	3-5
Per telephone interview	10-15
Per personal interview	15-30

\*May be reduced if a series of identical workshops or meetings is held.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Executive Seminar, Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA, and Synergy Consultation Services, Cupertino, Calif., March 1978.

3. No one citizen-involvement program can claim to have "represented" the people. No planner should allow a citizen-involvement program exclusive sovereignty over his or her interpretation of the public will, but the program can be used to show competing views of that will.
4. Citizen involvement is not a panacea. More conflict will be generated, new time allocations and resource commitment will be required. But remember, the question is not how much citizen involvement will cost, but, more relevant, whether we can do anything at all without it.
5. Think of the positive contributions of citizen involvement--how it can supplement and improve other technical efforts. How will it make better decisions?
6. The goals of a citizen-involvement program and the roles of participants must be clearly defined.
7. Once started, be honest. Citizen involvement based on false assumptions and expectations of clever co-optation will be disastrous. Whether your efforts are honest can only be judged by you and your participants.
8. Be prepared to accept and implement decisions of the participants. Just be clear concerning what types of decisions both you and the participants in the citizen-involvement program should be making.

#### A CHECK LIST OF QUESTIONS

In answering the question of how an agency of the Federal Government can effectively implement a citizen-involvement program, this essay has raised a number of other related questions. Because no simple and universally applicable answers can be applied to every situation, the questions themselves take on an even more important significance. Accordingly, in closing, I should like to offer a checklist of questions that I have found helpful to consider in planning and implementing citizen-involvement programs:

1. What are the agency's management goals and objectives for citizen involvement? What are your citizen-involvement objectives?
2. What evaluation devices will be used to determine the success of your citizen-involvement program?
3. Is there some visible way to gauge the ongoing progress of the program?
4. Has the history or background of the program been investigated? Who has been involved in the past? Have they been contacted?
5. Are there mechanisms within the program to deal with groups who will be significantly affected but are unlikely or unable to articulate concerns?
6. What resources other than immediate colleagues are available to assist in planning, implementing and evaluating the program?

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

7. Who are the participating publics? Is a clear distinction made between the "information audience" and the "participating public"?
8. As the program progresses, is information published from time to time for responses to be effective?
9. What methods will be used to keep the public informed throughout the process?
10. Who is responsible for implementing the citizen-involvement plan? Do they know it? Are tasks specifically assigned?
11. Has the plan been reviewed with section chief, project manager, agency director? Were they included in the design, or did they review the draft only?
12. Does the plan reach out to a broad range of nontraditional publics, such as users, the affected, past problem groups, other technical help?
13. Do the techniques (or meeting formats) match your purposes at various program stages?
14. Does the program involve citizens on their own turf?
15. In reviewing your citizen-involvement plan, do all the activities actually deliver the goals and objectives you assigned them at various program stages?
16. Who are the new publics at each stage? Why? How will they be integrated into the program?
17. How will the effect of citizen comment on the program be demonstrated?
18. What funds and personnel are available to implement the program?
19. How will the plan account for the advice you will not be able to use and the concerns and value system you will not be able to protect?
20. How are public views being recorded and interpreted?

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Much of the material discussed in this essay reflects the author's public involvement training and program experience in the Army Corps of Engineers and other Federal agencies. The ideas are a collective product of numerous people, not the least of whom have been trainers. Specific note is due to Mr. James Creighton, formerly of Synergy Consultation Services of Saratoga, California; Mr. W. A. Wiedman of Synergy Consultation Services, San Diego, California; Mr. James Ragan, of Ragan Associates; Mr. James R. Hanchey

of the Institute for Water Resources; Dr. Robert Wolfe, Office of Chief of Engineers; and the numerous Federal agency employees and members of the Federal Interagency Council on Citizen Participation. Obviously, the essay views are mine alone. They do not necessarily represent agency policy.

Specific documents used as source material for the essay are the following:

Creighton, James, Citizen Participation/Public Involvement Staff Workbook, (Cupertino, California: Synergy Consultation Services, Feb 1972).

Delli Priscoli, Jerry, Why the Federal and Regional Interest in Public Involvement in Water Resources Development, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources Development, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Working Paper 78-1, Jan 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_, Public Involvement and Social Impact Analysis: Union Looking for Marriage, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA, Working Paper 78-2, January 1978.

Federal Interagency Council on Citizen Participation, Proceedings of the Conference on Citizen Participation in Government Decision Making, Washington, DC, Dec 1976.

Lasswell, Harold, Politics: Who Gets What, When and How, (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1951).

Ragan, James R., The Nuts and Bolts of Public Participation in Water Quality Planning: Skills Workbook, (Pacific Palisades, California: James Ragan Associates, Feb. 1978).

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Executive Seminar: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning Workbook, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA, and Synergy Consultation Services, Cupertino, California.

U.S. Federal Regional Councils and Community Services Administration, Citizen Participation, (Washington: Government Printing Office, Jan. 1978).

CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATES  
FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

by James L. Creighton

Historically, citizen participation has been mandated upon organizations by legislation, by court decision, or in some cases by an executive of the agency. In very few cases has citizen participation begun or been sustained solely by the deep-seated commitment of those parts of the organization required to implement it. As a result, citizen participation has been "added on" (some would even say "piled on") to existing procedures, policies and values which may at times be in complete contradiction with the basic principles and practices of citizen participation. The result can be either that citizen participation changes the organization, or the organization can mobilize its "immune system" to repel the threat of citizen participation genuinely having an impact on organizational decision making or operations.

Experience suggests that successfully introducing citizen participation in an organization produces a number of far-reaching organizational effects, many of them unanticipated. Often the introduction of citizen participation in an organization initially produces a time of considerable turmoil and controversy. But a great deal of lost energy and resources caused by this turmoil could be saved if it was recognized that introducing citizen participation to an organization is a major organizational intervention and worthy of a carefully designed strategy of organizational change.

This article will identify some of the most common organizational problems created by introducing citizen participation in organizations in the hope of encouraging people to look at their total organization when they initiate citizen participation efforts.

Why the Need to Look at the Total Organization

Most organizations that have developed effective citizen participation discovered that citizen participation is not just a set of procedures that are followed, or a series of operations, but is really "a way of doing business." In those agencies where citizen participation is reduced to a few pro forma public hearings, etc., participation is usually worthless and a source of frustration both to the public and the agency itself. If it is to be effective, the introduction of citizen participation will represent a major organizational change requiring significant changes in how decisions are made, how performance is measured, the management style of the organization, and the relationships between functions within the organization. As a result, citizen participation cannot be implemented simply by issuing a policy that it will be done, and providing a budget to see that it

---

This article has previously been published [Stuart Langton (ed.)] in Citizen Participation Perspectives: Proceedings of the National Conference on Citizen Participation, Medford, Massachusetts, Lincoln Filene Center, 1979.

occurs. Organizational changes do not take place in isolation, rather they are imbedded in the context of other organizational policies, values and relationships on which citizen participation impacts, and is in turn impacted. Two concepts discussed by organizational theorists help explain this phenomenon. The first, taken from Operations Research, emphasizes that an organization is a "system" with all parts of the system inter-related. Change made in one part of the system, without supportive or reinforcing changes made in other parts of the system, will usually result in the extinction of that change. In an organizational system, just as in an ecological system, you can "never do just one thing." The result of introducing citizen participation into an organization will produce many impacts on other parts of the system, and the ability to implement citizen participation will be greatly influenced by the degree to which other parts of the system are either reinforcing and supportive of citizen participation, or see it as a threat or a danger to the system.

A similar concept is taken from anthropology to describe the unique "culture" of an organization. By "culture" theorists are emphasizing less the formal policies and procedures, and placing greater emphasis on organizational values, philosophy, life style, informal social system, roles, history, etc. As the result of the preexisting culture some organizations may be relatively receptive to citizen participation, while others will be antagonistic.

Both concepts are important, because the problems of implementing citizen participation within an organization are both formal systemic problems, and problems of preexisting values, philosophy and roles which, by their very nature, are somewhat difficult to articulate or to alter.

#### Examples of Organizational Problems in the Implementation of Citizen Participation

Some examples of the problems which occur when citizen participation is introduced into an organization are indicated below. This list is by no means exhaustive--undoubtedly additional problems will be identified during the workshop--but should demonstrate the interconnectedness between citizen participation and other organizational issues:

1. Lack of Integration in Planning Process: One of the most frequent problems of citizen participation is that the citizen participation activities are tacked into an existing planning process--typically at the end--in such a way that they are almost totally unrelated to the existing planning process. The result typically, is that citizen participation is meaningless, or major delays or other organizational costs are incurred trying to modify the planning process to fit the citizen participation. Certainly one major step in preparing the organization for citizen participation is to insure that the planning for other decision-making process and citizen participation process are completely integrated.
2. Lack of Impact: Another frequent problem is that while the procedures or practices of citizen participation are observed, it is equally observable to the public that nothing changes as a result of citizen participation. This can be the result either of the lack of integration between citizen participation and the decision-making processes, because agency values are resistant to the ideas expressed by the public, or the agency feels so constrained by legal or political requirements that it is unable to respond.

3. Acceptance of Overall Policy: One problem facing the on-the-ground planner is attempting to conduct a citizen participation program within the confines of the existing national policy of an agency. In many cases, there is considerably better citizen participation in the local implementation decisions (where to build a dam, how to manage a forest, whether or not a road should be built) than on national policy issues. Clearly the local decisions have to be related to national policy, yet at the same time, no one can design a citizen program to get consensus at a local level if there is no agreement nor sense of participation in national policy.
4. Contradiction Between Democracy and Authoritarian Management: There is a fundamental values conflict between classic organizational values of efficiency, economy and control, and the fundamental egalitarian premise of democracy, which in turn produces assumptions of equal participation in decision making, equal access to information, etc. The reality is that very few of our bureaucracies make any pretense of being run on democratic principles; yet at the same time, members of the bureaucracy are being asked to go out and deal with the public in a democratic way. Not only does this anomaly make the job of the person who is running the program particularly difficult, but it often results in major problems in attempting to arrive at any consensus with the public when the decisions in the organization are being made in such a way that the information provided by the public is either ignored by the management, or so filtered as it passes through the bureaucratic layers that it reaches the management in a watered down form which has little impact. The result is that the citizen participation professional is often caught in a position of being "unable to deliver" because of his/her lack of influence within his/her own organization.
5. Location of Citizen Participation Within the Organization: The point above is intimately tied in with where in the organization responsibility for citizen participation is located. A number of organizations have located citizen participation responsibility well below the level at which most major decisions are made. The result is that the citizen participation professional becomes simply a messenger between management and public, and is often far better informed of public feelings about issues than he or she is about management positions. Related to this issue is the whole problem of decentralization of decision making. The logic of citizen participation tends to strengthen the idea of decentralized decision making, so that the person dealing with the public is also the person responsible for the decision. The logic of large bureaucracies frequently runs quite counter to this, constantly encouraging greater and greater centralization of decision making in order to insure control over an unwieldy bureaucracy. One problem, if decision making is located too many organizational layers away from public contact, is that the decision maker really doesn't deal with the emotional reality of the public sentiment. A part of the public's message is always the intensity with which it feels certain things. When reading a digest or abstract of a number of highly controversial meetings, it is easy for this intensity to become distant and easy to dismiss. It is my bias that every decision maker should periodically have the experience of sitting across the table from a group of real live publics, in order to understand what citizen participation is all about.



6. Isolation of Related Processes: Since public involvement is frequently seen as an "add-on" to the normal decision-making or planning process, it is often organizationally isolated from other processes such as the environmental impact statement or social impact assessment. These three processes are, in fact, intimately related, and can be integrated in a manner which can lead to economies in all three processes if they are treated as part and parcel and the same process. Frequently, however, citizen participation is located in one part of the organization, the EIS process in another, and social impact assessment is frequently not even done by the organization, but is contracted out to a private consultant. The result is that these three related processes of impact assessment do not sufficiently impact on each other, and there is a repetitious and wasteful overlap between the three processes.
  
7. Measuring Performance/Accountability: Almost invariably performance in a large organization is measured by a program's "going smoothly." It is also measured by the fact that the project was completed on budget within schedule. The fact that this was accomplished at the expense of ignoring or minimizing public concern about the project frequently does not emerge for several years until the project approaches the construction stage long after the efficient project manager is promoted far away from the project. Qualities which make an individual successful in the noisy, smelly, emotionally-laden world of citizen participation are often not adequately measured by organizations, so that the person responsible for citizen participation has few rewards for doing a good job.
  
8. Time Lag Between Planning and Implementation: One problem with a project of large magnitude is that there is often a considerable time lag between planning, in which the public has been involved, and the implementation or construction phase. The result is that public sentiment or values have changed, conditions have changed on the ground, new publics have become a part of the political equation, etc. The result can be that while there may have been a high level of consensus obtained in support of the project, by the time it is built, or implemented, that consensus may have broken down. From the agency's point of view, this makes the process messy, irrational and often quite "unfair." The only solution that has been generated so far is to have some kind of continuing citizen participation program, or at least a continuing information program, during the interim between the initial decision and implementation or construction. The problem is that organizationally this kind of continuing relationship to the public usually falls between the cracks of any organizational unit. One unit is responsible for getting the decision made, another is responsible for getting it implemented, but the organizational unit which carries between one and the other is typically a headquarters unit, which has no mandate to form continuing contact with the public during the interim stage.
  
9. Interdisciplinary Approach: Relating to the public almost invariably requires a combination of disciplines or a "team approach." Yet people do not become a team simply by designing them as such. Effective teams are "built." Most effective teams have worked together for a number of years and their effectiveness is a result of trust and confidence in each other which is the result of that prolonged period of working together. But in the modern organization, teams are thrown together quickly and are expected to act like a team despite the fact that members of the team have no history with each other. Not only do they not have a history with each other, but typically they are representatives of different disciplines, with different data bases and values assumptions which produce different ways of approaching problems. Expertise in "team building" has been developed, but is rarely employed with temporary teams.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

10. Misperception of the Organization's Commitment to Citizen Participation: Citizen participation represents such a departure in the normal way of doing business for most agencies, that it usually takes several years for people responsible for implementing it to really believe that the organization is committed to it. Typically, the head administrator expresses a commitment to citizen participation and then moves on to other problems within the organization. Frequently in dealing with these other problems, the administrator makes decisions or announces policies which are seen by on-the-ground agency staff as contradicting citizen participation, and therefore indicating a lack of "real" support for citizen participation. An effort to speed up planning time or reduce staff may be perceived as "proof" that the head of the agency is not really committed to citizen participation.

Conclusion

By recognizing that citizen participation represents a considerable change in both the "system" and "culture" of an organization, it is possible to systematically plan for the introduction of citizen participation in such a way that changes made in various parts of the organization can be reinforcing. A carefully designed program for the introduction of citizen participation into an organization must consider such issues as:

- C Integration of citizen participation in the decision-making or planning process
- C Where citizen participation is located in the organization
- C Identifying people who are effective in conducting citizen participation
- C Building interdisciplinary teams
- C Processes for budgeting and scheduling citizen participation
- C Insuring reinforced commitment to citizen participation

By considering these issues we may be better able to ensure that our exertions with citizen participation produce organizational change that is both responsive to the public, and lasting.

Introduction to Section IV:

WHO IS THE PUBLIC

It should seem elementary that if we are going to conduct public involvement, we should have a clear picture of who the public is we have to involve. As this section will indicate, the simple question, "Who is the public?" is not so simple to answer. The one basic observation which runs through all the articles is that the public is not a simple monolithic entity. There is no single public, but a number of publics.

Lorenz Aggens attacks the problem by describing the public in terms of levels of interest and involvement in decision making. He also stresses the importance of designing public involvement programs so that they appeal to levels of interest beyond decision makers alone.

James L. Creighton expands on the theme of multiple publics, and describes resources and techniques which planners can use to identify publics which may have an interest in a study.

Inn one of the earliest IWR studies, Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner, and J. William Wenrich examine the sociological literature and come up with a strategy for identifying "influentials"--those people whose attitudes are most significant in shaping a community decision.

A decade later, James L. Creighton provides specific instructions for planners in how to identify influentials and ensure their participation in public involvement efforts. Creighton also outlines some of the research findings concerning the preconditions for controversy in a community.

William D. Coplin, Donald J. McMaster, and Michael K. O'Leary discuss the value of analyzing not only who the key actors are, but their position and relative power in the situation. By developing a policy profile on a possible decision it is possible to foresee difficulties, and often design programs that can contribute to the development of a consensus.



IDENTIFYING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC  
INTEREST IN PARTICIPATION

by Lorenz Aggens

Most government agencies, when they are confronted with the requirements, or understand the advantages of public involvement in their work, think first of forming an advisory committee or holding a public hearing. Many agencies think only of forming an advisory committee, or only of holding a hearing.

The tendency to utilize only these techniques reflects a failure to clarify who is "the public" that needs to be involved. There is no single public, but different levels of the public based on differing levels of interest and ability. The design of public involvement programs must take into account levels of the public other than the socioeconomic elite who can take the time to participate on an advisory committee, or those who will stand up and make a speech at a large public hearing. This paper will identify--based on practical working experience--all the levels which need to be considered.

The factor that distinguishes one level of participation from another is the amount of interest and time the public has to give to this activity, and the amount of commitment and staff resources the agency sponsoring the participation has to offer to facilitate it. In the ideal condition, the agency will have time, money and dedication that will match each level of public interest, knowledge and availability. Opportunities for participation would span the range from disinterest in the project, to control of the project's outcome.

LEVELS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY

Six levels of public participation activity seem apparent when these are defined by the human energy needed to sustain them. In describing these levels of activity, it may be useful to borrow from astrophysics and think of each level as an "orbit" of activity around the project nucleus--the decision-making process. The closer an orbit of activity is to this decision-making center, the greater opportunity there is for public influence in that decision. But gaining the inner orbits of influence requires the application of greater amounts of human energy by the participating public, and offering these inner-orbit opportunities requires increased effort by the staff of the agency that is the object of this public participation.

The diagram on the next page shows these six orbits of public participation activity. It may look like a target, and there is some analogy between the decreasing amount of area in each ring and the decrease in the number of participants that are usually found as the decision-making center of the project is approached. The concept behind the image of orbits of participation is that both the participant and the sponsoring agency must expend more energy to achieve and maintain the more active orbits. The allocation of human energy is a critical factor in everyone's mind as decisions are made about offering public involvement opportunities, and accepting them.

---

This is an original article describing material used in IWR training programs by the author.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

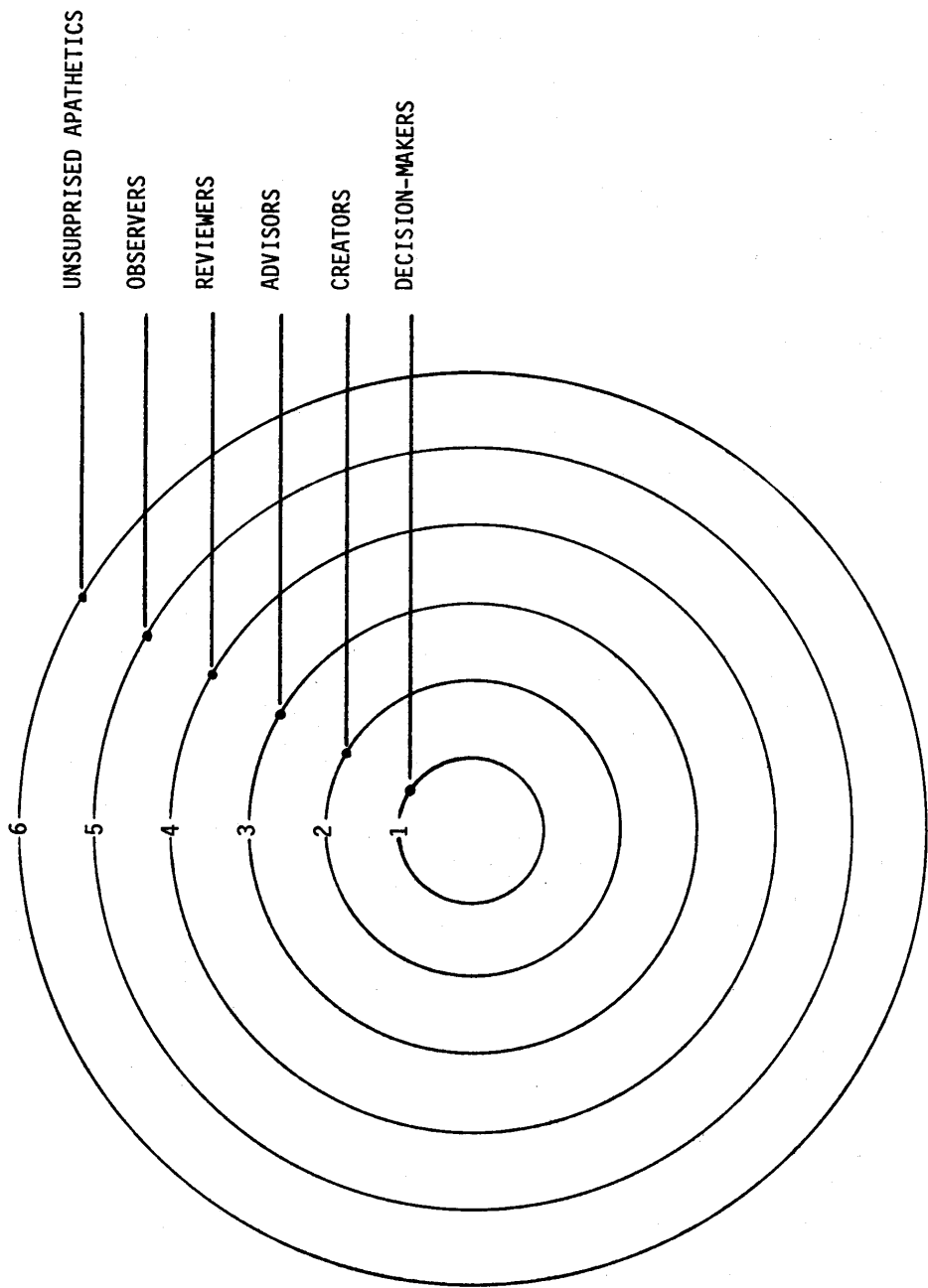
ORBIT #6--The Unsurprised Apathetics:

The outermost orbit of public involvement in a project or proposal is that of disinterest. Disinterest is very much different from ignorance. It requires that information about the project has been made available by the project agency, and that it has been evaluated by some people as having no particular impact on them. They are, therefore, disinterested. The term "unsurprised apathetics" has been used to describe people in this orbit, not to depreciate their level of interest, but to call attention to two important characteristics of it: (1) they are not ignorant of what is going on--they are not necessarily well-informed about the project, but they are not surprised by its existence; and, (2) they have chosen not to become involved--which is, in fact, a distinct form of involvement. In projects involving large populations, the choice of apathy by large numbers of people is critical to the progress of the project. Unsurprised apathy can be taken as "permission to proceed" when two conditions have been met: (1) the public information program has been adequate in presenting the project's purpose and likely effects insofar as the general public is concerned; and, (2) there are opportunities for greater involvement in the project by those of the public who find that their interests and concerns warrant more than apathy. The disinterest and inactivity of an unsurprised apathetic can and will be revoked instantly when any one of these participants finds his or her interests suddenly affected by a project finding, conclusion or recommendation. The energy available for more extensive participation will rise dramatically if an unsurprised apathetic learns of this change in his or her interest by accident and surprise, rather than by deliberate action of the sponsoring agency.

ORBIT #5--The Observers:

They are out there, watching. It is hard to know who they are, or how many of them there are. The observers say little or nothing to the project staff. They save their energies for reports on their observations to other units of government, to public interest groups, and to special interest organizations. It is frustrating to the agency's public information staff to work without feedback from this largely anonymous audience. The tendency by project managers to cut down on the size of a mailing list--to "weed out" those who do not seem to be interested, demolishes this orbit of participation. When observers report to their constituencies on the progress of the project, they need detailed and up-to-date information on project findings, conclusions, and likely recommendations or actual proposals. If they say that ". . . everything is OK . . .," they achieve something that the agency cannot get for itself. It is the trust in the evaluation of how things are going that comes from the trusted observer's assessment of what is happening. Unsurprised apathetics can safely continue in their disinterest. On the other hand, the call to action of an observer can result in an upwelling of interest in involvement in the project by individuals and organizations that were previously unknown or counted as disinterested.

ORBITS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITY



## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Some people participate as observers in their own self-interest alone. They are not observers for any group. Their motives and methods are the same, however. They watch, listen and read. They may become more active if easy opportunities for participation are offered. They will become more active if access to information is restricted or cut off, if they are taken by surprise by project events, or if decision making in the project loses its transparency and becomes technically mysterious or politically suspicious.

### ORBIT #4--The Reviewers:

When interest, or concern, or knowledge about the project increases, so too does the energy available for involvement in influencing the way the project turns out. But for many people, there still may be too little time available for intensive service such as on an advisory committee. Freedom from other responsibilities of life is a luxury afforded to limited numbers of people, and this has a direct affect upon the composition of public participation groups that must actually hold meetings to accomplish involvement activities. The reviewers occupy the orbit of participation in which interested people can react to project questions and proposals at times of their own convenience. The work of reviewers can be done by mail or telephone. The opportunity to participate might include all of the people on the project mailing list. The reviewer list is typically large and inclusive. There are a variety of methods for reaching reviewers: Clip-out coupons have been printed in newspapers and thousands of responses have been received on issues of widespread public interest. Workbooks have been used in planning projects to survey several thousand people who returned a postcard saying "YES," they were interested in the project. In these workbooks, participants were asked to indicate whether they "agreed" or "disagreed" with a list of project proposals, and why. If agencies want to tap the orbit of the reviewers, it is necessary that the agency increase its efforts enough to formulate questions and a response format which allowa reviewers to participate at their own convenience. In response, these participants also increase the energy commitment enough to record their opinion on the questions presented. In effect, the opportunity for unsurprised apathetics and observers to change orbits and become reviewers is made easy.

### ORBIT #3--The Advisors:

Energy requirements increase sharply in this orbit of participation. The project agency organizes committees, calls meetings, arranges space and perhaps food service, prepares special materials and presentations, keeps records of the meetings, and generally interacts with participants in ways that encourage their further involvement. The participants increase their energy output in a comparable manner. They give up time from other activities to attend meetings; they prepare for involvement by studying and consulting others whose interests they may represent; they offer opinions, ask questions, debate with others, invent, innovate, and evaluate. Advisors are often the salaried staff of public and private agencies whose work on advisory committees is in the line of normal duty. If they are not compensated for advisory committee work, they often are officials of the organizations whose interests they represent.

Ideally, room on advisory committees should be left for individuals who are not representatives of organized interests--people who are directly affected by the project either in terms of benefits or costs. The important characteristic of advisors is their very high interest or concern that must be matched by equally high levels of



commitment and effort by the project agency to encourage, facilitate, and account for the participation of advisors. If the design of public participation programs begins and ends at the advisor orbit, the needs of the reviewers, observers, and unsurprised apathetics are overlooked or discounted; and the benefits of involvement with people of even greater interest and knowledge are lost.

ORBIT#2--The Creators (Plan-Makers):

There are some people for whom the subject in which participation is sought is so important that their orbit of involvement goes beyond giving advice on the product under development. For them, interest and knowledge make their direct involvement in the creation of ideas and proposals a reality. Many agencies are unprepared to accommodate this orbit of participation. Product development is considered to be the job of the professional staff--influenced by public input in the identification of problems, needs, goals, objectives, and in the assessment of alternatives and their impacts. It is a major step in the direction of participatory decision making for agency staff to create environments in which they are reacting to and advising citizens in the creation of proposals for public decision-making, or working shoulder-to-shoulder with people compensated only by their interest and concern. The energy needed at this orbit of participation involves large quantities of time and effort for the participants, and, what may be even harder to find, large amounts of commitment by agency staff and decision-makers to sharing historically given or hard-won agency influence and power.

ORBIT#1--The Decision Makers:

It is surprisingly easy to recall public involvement in the actual control of decisions. The referendum on whether to build a new school, or purchase the open space, or build the sewage treatment plant are participation experiences in which most people have had the opportunity to be involved. They are often evidence of general public disinterest in which the majority of eligible participants have chosen to give "permission to proceed" (or maintain the status quo) by their unsurprised apathy. More subtle forms of participation at the decision maker orbit can be found. Some people, for whom the impacts of a decision are very great, are occasionally given what amounts to a veto over agency proposals. "If the people in this neighborhood don't like the solution we come up with, then we will not use that solution!" This is the kind of promise of decision-maker participation that might be offered in a politically sensitive environment--or offered as a creative opportunity: "This agency will adopt and implement the plan that the citizen task force recommends!" The important characteristic of participation in this most influential orbit is that at least a vote in the final decision, if not actual control over that decision, is given to those participating. Obviously, energy requirements are very high for both the agency and the participant.

SUMMARY

This description of six levels or "orbits" of public participation in the public decision-making process has attempted to expand the range of what might be considered in the design of public involvement programs. Some observers and theorists of public participation processes have cautioned that ideas about the public's role in public decision-making range from meaningful involvement (often defined as "control" of the process), downward through programs of public information, education, and salesmanship, to programs that are designed to co-opt the public and provide "social therapy" to activists. Certainly there have been many public participation programs that have done little more than try to make the public feel good for long enough to get an engineered consent to preconceived agency plans.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

Care must be taken not to throw the public out along with the participation programs that have little or no commitment to honoring the public's right to know what is going on, and their right to try to influence its outcome. Public participation programs that offer only the chance for a limited public to serve in advisory orbits of involvement activity eliminate the chance for each member of a larger and more representative public to recognize his or her own level of self-interest and decide at what level of human energy to participate in advancing or protecting that interest.

IDENTIFYING PUBLICS/STAFF IDENTIFICATION TECHNIQUES

by James L. Creighton

THE CONCEPT OF PUBLICS

One of the most important principles in designing a public involvement program with representative participation from the public is that "the public" is a mythical beast roughly akin to the average family with 2.1 children. The term "the public" is a useful theoretical concept but in fact no such thing as a monolithic single body which can be called "the public" actually exists, just as no family of 2.1 children actually exists. In fact, all of us belong to many publics. These publics may be economic, professional, geographical, social, or political, but we all tend to join together with others of like interests either for pleasure or when we wish to accomplish something. Some of these publics may be relatively well organized such as a political party, a professional association, or a social group. Others are relatively unorganized and become noticeable only when they are strongly affected by a particular issue, e.g., residents who live on a particular street when there is a proposal to put a freeway nearby. As a result, it is far more useful to talk in terms of publics rather than "the public" to remind ourselves that we are in fact dealing with many interests and groups rather than a single monolithic body.

It is an observable phenomenon that most political decisions are made by a minority of actively involved and interested citizens. This has led to the notion that the remainder of the public is "the silent majority." Usually the concept *the silent majority* is used as a justification for contradicting the apparent demands of the active minority, thus a politician, an agency or an interest group may claim, "If we could just hear from the silent majority...then it would be clear that our policies have the support of the people." The advantage, of course, of claiming the silent majority support is that as long as they remain silent nobody will contradict. In fact, the minute someone contradicts they have clearly become a part of the active minority and can make no further claim to represent the silent majority. In fact, "the silent majority" is another mythical beast which does not in fact exist and rests on the assumption that somehow the silent majority is totally in agreement (despite the fact that all of the active minorities are in dispute over almost every issue). In reality, it is far safer to assume that the silent majority contains just as many diverse opinions as does the active minority, but that the silent majority has chosen not to participate either because they do not see the issue as having much impact on them or they do not believe that they can affect the outcome. In addition "the silent majority" is not a fixed class of people: Someone who may be very active on one issue may be silent on another. People move in and out of the active minority on particular issues depending upon their perception of how much of a stake they have in the issue.

There has been considerable research on the reasons that people remain in the silent majority and the three reasons most frequently given are:

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

1. They feel adequately represented by someone in the active minority -- Leaders of visible interest groups often serve as "surrogates" for a much larger group of people who feel represented by the activities of their surrogates. Most of us belong to some group in which we do little more than send our annual dues in order that the group will represent our particular interests. A case in point might be a professional group such as the American Society of Civil Engineers or the American Institute of Planners. This means that "special interest groups" play a surrogate role that makes them an integral and necessary part of an effective operating democracy.
2. People are unaware that they have a stake in a particular decision -- Everyone makes choices as to which activities they will involve themselves in when their life is often already hurried and pressured. We tend to involve ourselves in those issues which we see could result in major impact on our personal lives. As a result every citizen has the right to choose not to participate in decisions that they perceive as of lower value than earning a living, spending time with their family, or some other civic issue in which they are involved.
3. People don't believe they can influence the decision -- One cause of "apathy" is people's belief that no matter what they do they will have no impact on the outcome. Without well-defined methods by which people can have a reasonable hope of influencing things, few but the best organized interests are likely to participate.

Our obligations in public involvement are:

1. To inform as broad a segment of the public as we possibly can of the stake they may have in the issue under study.
2. To clearly inform the public how they can have an impact on the outcomes of the study and provide them with well-publicized access to the decision-making process through meetings or other public participation activities.
3. To systematically target the publics to insure the representativeness of the active minority with which we are most likely to be working.

These first two obligations -- informing the public of their stake in the study and providing well-publicized activities by which the public can gain access to the study's decision-making process -- are met with a well-designed information program coupled with a well-designed public participation program. However, the third obligation -- targeting the publics -- requires some systematic thought which is the subject of this article.

**THE AFFECTED PUBLICS**

In targeting publics we are attempting to identify those persons who believe themselves to be affected by the study outcome. The difficulty is that the degree to which people feel affected by a study is a result of their subjective perception; people the agency feels are most directly impacted may not be as concerned as someone that the agency perceives as only peripherally involved. However, the starting point always remains

some effort to objectively analyze the likelihood that someone will feel affected by the study. Some of the bases on which people are most likely to feel affected are:

1. Proximity: People who live in the immediate area of a project and are likely to be affected by noise, odors, dust, or possibly even threat of dislocation, are the most obvious publics to be included in the study.
2. Economic: Groups that have jobs to gain or competitive advantages to win, e.g., bargemen vs. truckers, are again an obvious starting point in any analysis of possible publics.
3. Use: Those people whose use of the area is likely to be affected in any way by the outcome of the study are also likely to be interested in participating. These include recreationists, hikers, fishermen, hunters, etc. In some cases these users, such as whitewater rafters, are among the most vocal participants in a study.
4. Social: Increasingly people who see projects as a threat to the tradition and culture of the local community are likely to be interested in projects. They may perceive that a large influx of construction workers into an area may produce either a positive or negative effect on the community. Or they may perceive that the project will allow for a substantial population growth in the area which they may again view either positively or negatively.
5. Values: Some groups may be only peripherally affected by the first four criteria but find that some of the issues raised in the study directly affect their values, their "sense of the way things ought to be." Any time a study touches on such issues as free enterprise vs. government control, or jobs vs. environmental enhancement, there may be a number of individuals who participate primarily because of the values issues involved.

#### MAJOR APPROACHES TO TARGETING THE PUBLIC

A recent study of mailing lists developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated that 70 percent of the mailing lists consisted of governmental interests. This indicates a clear need to target participation from a much wider range of interests and publics. The three broad categories of approach to targeting the public are:

1. Self-identification
2. Third party identification
3. Staff identification

SELF-IDENTIFICATION: Self-identification simply means that individuals or groups step forward and indicate an interest in participating in the study. The use of the news media, the preparation of brochures and newsletters, and holding of well-publicized public meetings are all means of encouraging self-identification. Anyone who participates by attending a meeting or writing a letter or phoning on a hot line has clearly indicated an interest in being an active public in the study. As a result it is critical that anyone who expresses

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

an interest in the study in any way quickly is placed on the mailing list and is continually informed of the study progress.

THIRD PARTY IDENTIFICATION: One of the best ways to obtain information about other interests or individuals which should be included in the study is to ask an existing advisory committee, or representatives of known interests, who else should be involved. One variation on this theme is to enclose a response form in any mailings inviting people to suggest other groups that should be included. These simple techniques of consulting with known representatives to recommend others who should be involved often prove to be one of the most effective means of targeting the public.

STAFF IDENTIFICATION: There is a wide range of techniques by which internal staff can systematically approach targeting the public. These include:

1. Intuitive/experiential information: Most planning staff that have worked in an area for some period of time can, if asked, immediately begin to identify individuals and groups that are likely to be involved in any new study. One of the richest sources of information for possible individuals or interests to be involved would be internal staff who have worked in the area for some period of time.
2. Lists of groups or individuals: There are numerous lists available which can assist in targeting the publics. Among these lists are included:
  - c Yellow Pages
  - c Chamber of commerce lists
  - c City and county directories
  - c Direct mailing lists of groups of various types (these must be purchased)
  - c Lists maintained by sociology and political science departments
3. Geographic Analysis: In many cases just by looking at a map it is possible to identify publics who reside in a flood plain or downstream from a sewer treatment plant or within the possible "take-line" of a reservoir, etc.
4. Demographic Analysis: The U.S. Census Bureau maintains considerable information on demographics, e.g., age, earnings, race, etc. Those that are most likely to be usable in targeting publics would be statistics concerning the elderly or nonwhite.
5. Historical Analysis: In many cases there is considerable information in old files. This includes:

- C Lists of previous participants in earlier studies included in reports.
  - C Correspondence files.
  - C Newspaper clippings regarding similar studies.
  - C Library files on past projects.
6. Consultation with other agencies: Since numerous agencies have held public involvement programs on issues that may be similar it can often be useful to explore their files or consult with them concerning possible publics. Examples of this approach might include:
- C Examination of Housing and Urban Development 701 Program Files.
  - C Consultation with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, State Fish and Game Departments, etc.
  - C Consultation with local planning staff concerning participation in land-use planning studies.
  - C Direct interviews with study managers of previous studies for other agencies who may be able to provide substantial information about the total political climate in which the study will be conducted.
7. User Survey: When an area is heavily used by recreationists there frequently are records kept, such as permits issued or some other form of registration at the recreation site, which can identify many of the user publics.

#### IDENTIFYING PUBLICS AT EACH STAGE OF PLANNING

Our experience suggests that the same publics are not necessarily involved in each stage of planning. Some stages of planning require public review from the broadest range of publics attainable. Other stages require a degree of continuity and an understanding of the technical data base which tends to limit participation to a "leadership" group.

By "leadership" we mean those individuals who are perceived by others as having knowledge in the field. Typically they will be in the leadership roles with environmental, business or civic groups. Some are seen as leaders precisely because they are not identified with a particular point of view, but are seen as "objective" and "reasonable."

While there is no attempt to exclude broader publics during those planning stages which are focused primarily at "leadership" publics, the public participation techniques used tend to be aimed at smaller numbers of people.

One method of analysis which may be useful is to identify these different levels of "publics":

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

1. Staff of other Federal, state and local governmental agencies;
2. Elected officials at all levels of government;
3. Highly visible leaders of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., leaders of Sierra Club, chamber of commerce;
4. Membership of organized groups or identifiable interests, e.g., members of Audobon Society, farmers, or recreation home owners; and,
5. "General public" not identified with organized groups.

At different stages of the planning process all five groups may need to be involved, at other stages only a few of these levels will be targeted.

Some of the issues to be considered in identifying which publics should be targeted for each planning stage are:

1. Which publics are capable of providing you with the information you need at this planning stage?

If the information you need is general values reactions, then you may want to aim for the broadest range of publics. If the information you need is relatively specific or technical, then you may wish to seek out a leadership group.

2. Which publics will be able to understand the information you will be providing at this planning stage?

If you are expecting the public to absorb highly detailed and complex information, then you may need to aim at leadership publics. If you have organized the materials into a "digestible" form, then you may be able to draw on the participation of a more general public.

3. How much time will be involved in participating?

Typically, only the "leadership" publics are able to make any extensive time commitment.

4. How much continuity is required?

If the participation at this planning stage requires some form of continuing participation, e.g., attending a series of meetings, then participation is typically limited to leadership publics.

5. Whose participation is required either for "visibility" or "political acceptability"?



Again, the notion that at some stages of planning you may be dealing primarily with leadership publics is not intended to be exclusionary, but rather a realistic expectation of the level of participation you can expect even though broader publics are invited to participate.

To avoid the dangers of producing an "elitist" public participation program, we follow the general rule: Any planning stage during which we have worked primarily with "leadership" publics will be followed by a more general review by broader publics.

Or to put it another way: You may be limited to "leadership" publics when developing a product such as sets of alternatives; but both for visibility and political acceptability that product must be reviewed by a broader public.

REFERENCE:

A major reference in the field of identifying the publics is:

Willeke, Gene E., Identification of Publics in Water Resources Planning, OWRR Project, B-095-GA. Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia 30332, Sept. 1974.

"INFLUENTIAL" IDENTIFICATION: RESEARCH METHODS  
AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

by Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner  
and J. William Wenrich

Purpose

The purpose of the Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study was to develop new ways of informing influential segments of the public about the problems and issues in water resource development in their own region, as well as about the process of water resource planning in general. Also, the study was aimed at developing more meaningful mechanisms of public participation in the planning process. The purpose of this paper is to explain the method by which key local individuals were identified and to describe some of the more salient characteristics of these influentials.

Introduction

For over 15 years social scientists have studied actions by local leaders trying to ascertain who, in fact, are the people who really make the decisions about key issues in given communities. For convenience, the various research methods used can be grouped in four main categories:

- 1) Positional.<sup>1</sup> Using this approach, the researcher assumes that the individuals occupying positions of formal authority and prestige have the primary influence upon major community decisions.
- 2) Reputational. This approach assumes that there is "power behind the scenes," that there are people who persuade, advise, or strongly influence the positional authorities, and that this group can be identified by asking informed local people who they think has this influence, i.e., who has the reputation for being influential.
- 3) Decisional.<sup>2</sup> Using this method, the researcher assumes that the power structure can best be identified by analyzing which people have been influential in past key decisions. The presumption is that they will continue to exercise influence in similar decisions in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup>See Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1953.

Reprinted from: IWR Report 70-6. Borton, Thomas E., Warner, Katherine P., and Wenrich, J. William. "The Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study: Selected Approaches to Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Dec 1970.

<sup>2</sup>See Robert Dahl, Who Governs?, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.

- 4) Verstehen.<sup>3</sup> This method incorporates elements of the first three along with a subjective interpretation by the research team of the meaning of the various statements and events. Use of this technique contrasts with a rigorous application of a single empirical approach.

Whatever method is used, valid results may have the following significant implication. Local people with influence may not have access to the technical knowledge they need for decisions. If indeed the people who make or influence major community decisions can be identified, they can also be provided with technical and social knowledge which may help make the decisions and planning process itself more rational, democratic and productive. This is particularly important with respect to the problems which transcend the local community, involving state, regional and Federal agencies. When key people lack issue and process knowledge in technically complex areas, such as water resource planning and development, local interests and preferences may be preempted by state and Federal agencies. This is, in fact, what frequently happens in water resource development since many of the policy decisions are made on the basis of Federal or state laws, regulations and standards. Identifying and informing local influentials can have significant potential for increasing local participation in planning and decision making in issue areas which extend beyond the community. Increasing local water influentials' store of knowledge and their ability to use it could thus significantly alter both their relationship with state and Federal authorities and the process by which water resource decisions are made.

#### Definition of Community Water Influentials

For the purposes of this study, influence was examined in terms of one area: Water resource planning and development. Even with respect to this one issue area, influentials can be characterized in terms of several dimensions. First, their influence may be prescribed or attributed; that is, they may exercise it by virtue of their formal position or by virtue of the fact that other people look to them for guidance and decisions. Secondly, such individuals may actually exercise influence (in observable situations) or they may merely have the potential to exercise influence if they wish. Thirdly, their influence may be positive in the sense of initiating action, or negative, in terms of stopping or vetoing action initiated by others.

---

<sup>3</sup>See T. Abel, "The Operation Called Verstehen," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 54, Nov. 1948, pp 211-218.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

In this study, "community water influentials" are defined as those people who have the greatest demonstrated or perceived ability to make or affect policy decisions about water resources in their area of the Susquehanna River Basin.<sup>4</sup>

### Research Methods

The following method was employed by the University of Michigan research team to secure information about individuals who are influential in one problem field (water resource planning), in one geographical area (five counties in the Susquehanna Basin). Simultaneously, it was also aimed at establishing a rapport with and active concern on the part of such persons for public participation in water resource decision making. In some cases, the data acquired in the interviews and questionnaires were viewed as somewhat less important than the personal involvement obtained.

The approach used in this study for identifying influentials is best classified as Verstehen. (In many respects it resembles the "Community Social Profile" technique developed by Irwin T. Sanders.<sup>5</sup> A team of five research interviewers was formed. The team first compiled available published data on the five designated counties and their major cities with particular regard to local water resource problems and issues. Newspaper files in the area were reviewed regarding such issues and names of key individuals involved in local water problem decisions over the past 20 years were noted. In addition, discussions were held with state and Federal officials involved in water resource planning and management for the respective areas. Finally, a list of potential community water influentials was compiled. The list included: nominations from national organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, and AFL-CIO, the National Association of County Organizations, and the National League of Cities; names of individuals who had participated in public meetings held by the Susquehanna River Basin Coordinating Committee; and individuals whose names were mentioned in newspaper articles as having been active in water resource projects or decisions in the past.

Following Sanders' method, the research team operated as a group. At least three members of the team actively interviewed to acquire data in each county. Sanders pointed out that "this builds more cross-checking into the operation because more trained people are reacting to the community and interacting with each other."<sup>6</sup> The interview team met nightly to compare notes and to prepare a written summary of the day's events and interview results.

---

<sup>4</sup>This definition derives in part from a prior study by Spenser W. Havlick in the Milwaukee River Basin. Spenser W. Havlick, Attitudes Held by Water Influentials about Major Obstacles in Establishing Institutional Arrangements in an Urban River Basin, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967.

<sup>5</sup>Irwin T. Sanders, "The Community Social Profile," American Sociological Review, XXC, No. 1, Feb, 1960, pp 75-77.

<sup>6</sup>Sanders, op.cit., p 76.

The purpose of the interviews was not only to collect data on the respondent's perceptions, preferences and knowledge about water resource problems--it was also designed to add to the list of names of water influentials. In the course of the interview, each respondent was asked to name other community people whom he felt were water influentials. Specifically, he was asked, "Suppose a major problem in water resource development was before the community--one that required a decision by a group of leaders who nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group--regardless of whether or not you knew them personally? Why would you choose them?" This technique of identifying more influentials on the basis of nominations by those interviewed--the "snowball" technique--brought to light a number of names not originally listed.

The interview also included other questions regarding what major disagreements, if any, had occurred in the community over the use of water resources; which people the respondents felt were technically knowledgeable; and which organizations were actively concerned with aspects of water resource development. Answers to these questions provided additional insights about which persons exercise influence in dealing with community water problems. For example, when discussing issues or organizations, the interviewer would ask the respondent who were the key people involved, and if the respondent himself was one of them.

Most of the respondents had some influence in one or several areas of water resource development since, in fact, the initial list was designed to include most of the individuals who had prescribed influence based on their formal positions. Because the public-at-large does not generally involve itself in water problems until there is a crisis, the initial list concentrated on identifying relevant governmental officials, representatives of various interest groupings in the community (such as farmers, industrialists, sportsmen, conservationists, etc.) and general civic and private organizational leaders. Reputational or attributed influentials were then identified and in each community, the interviewers attempted to contact any individual named at least twice by other respondents. On the average, this resulted in doubling the number of people to be interviewed. The final influential list for the water resource area was probably smaller than a list intended to reflect general community influentials over a whole range of public issues.

### Findings

For purposes of analysis, the research team differentiated between reputational and prescribed community water influentials. A reputational influential was defined for study purposes as an individual who was mentioned as being influential five or more times by other respondents.<sup>7</sup>

On this basis, in the whole five-county study area there were 64 reputational influentials interviewed. Fourteen additional reputational water influentials were identified but not interviewed due to time limitations. The remaining respondents were classified as prescribed influentials since their inclusion in the study list was based on either their organizational position or on actions they had taken in regard to various community

---

<sup>7</sup>The number of nominations was reduced to three for Broome and Tioga counties (N.Y.) because of the larger population in relation to the number of people interviewed in Broome County and because of the smaller number of interviews done in Tioga County.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

water issues. The following table shows the number of reputational and prescribed influentials identified for each county.

County	Total Influentials Identified	Reputational Influentials Identified	Prescribed Influentials Identified
Broome County, New York	45	12	33
Tioga County, New York	20	8	12
Chemung County, New York	45	16	29
Steuben County, New York	39	10	29
Tioga County, Pennsylvania	35	18	17
Outside 5 County Area	5	0	5
Totals	189	64	125

Characteristics of Respondents

The 64 reputational influentials interviewed can be compared with the prescribed influentials in terms of various characteristics such as: position, amount of education, age, time in county, perceived influence on the planning process and knowledge about water problems.

Proportionally, more reputational influentials were either heads of private enterprises or elected officials. All those in appointed public offices who were classified in the reputational category were heads of agencies rather than line staff members. The following table summarizes the positional differences between the reputational and prescribed influential groups.

The predominance of private enterprise chief executives and elected officials among reputational influentials coincides with findings of other studies.<sup>8</sup> A more striking finding was the complete absence of second level public agency people in the reputational grouping. Typically, individuals interviewed in this category were environmental health engineers, public health and pollution officials, and others directly concerned with water resource problems. Many of them were named, however, as technical people to whom the reputational influentials turned for reliable information.

---

<sup>8</sup>See Kent Jennings, Community Influentials (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964.) pp 44-48 and Robert Presthus, Men At the Top, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.) p 178, and Havlick, Op. Cit., pp 60-61.

POSITIONS OF REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED WATER INFLUENTIALS

Positions	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private Industry-Head	25	39%	40	32	65	34
Private Industry-Nonhead	4	6	11	9	15	8
Elected Official	21	33	12	9	33	17
Public Agency-Head	10	16	25	20	35	19
Public Agency-Nonhead	0	B	13	10	13	7
Other (education, philanthropy, housewife, etc.)	4	6	24	20	28	15
TOTAL	64	100%	125	100%	189	100%

Reputational influentials did not differ appreciably from prescribed influentials with respect to the amount of formal education they had obtained. The level was generally high for all those interviewed: nearly 60% had college degrees and over one-fourth had taken some graduate work. Overall, the level of education of community water influentials was quite a bit higher than that of the 1960 general adult population of the five-county study area. The following table compares the educational levels of reputational and prescribed influentials and the area's adult population.

Community power studies have generally shown that influentials have lived the majority of their adult lives in the community being studied.<sup>9</sup> Community water influentials in this study are no different. All but three of the 64 reputational influentials interviewed had lived 10 years or more in the present county, while 63 percent of the prescribed influentials were also 10-year or longer residents. Overall, only 26 percent of those interviewed had lived in their present county less than 10 years.

<sup>9</sup>See Kent Jennings, *Community Influentials*, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), and Robert Presthus, *Men at the Top*, (New York; Oxford University Press, 1964).

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Reputational community water influentials on the average tended to be older than prescribed influentials. The following table shows the two groups' age distribution as well as that of the 1960 general adult population of the five-county study area.

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS: REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED  
INFLUENTIALS AND 1960 ADULT POPULATION

Education Level	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		1960 Adult Population <sup>10</sup>
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Less than HS degree	2	3%	5	4%	58
High school degree	10	16	20	16	28
Some college	12	19	16	13	8
College degree	20	31	41	33	} 7% <sup>11</sup>
Graduate work	5	8	11	9	
Graduate degree	9	14	24	20	
No response	6	9	8	6	
TOTALS:	64	100%	125	100%	100%

---

<sup>10</sup>Those 25 years and over.

<sup>11</sup>The equivalent percentages for an educational level of a college degree or more are: reputational influentials--53 percent and prescribed influentials--62 percent.



AGE LEVELS: REPUTATIONAL AND PRESCRIBED  
INFLUENTIALS AND 1960 ADULT POPULATION

Age Levels	Reputational Influentials		Prescribed Influentials		1960 Adult Population <sup>12</sup>
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Under 40 years	7	11%	27	22%	40
40-49 years	16	25	40	32	19
Over 50 years	37	58	54	43	41
No response	4	6	4	3	--
TOTALS:	64	100%	125	100%	100%

The researchers were interested in learning whether reputational and prescribed water influentials could be differentiated in terms of the influence they felt they had had on local water resources planning development. The reputational influentials were more likely to feel they had personally exercised some influence on water resource development in their area. Nearly 30 percent said they had a good or great deal of influence, compared to 14 percent of the prescribed influentials. The next question then becomes, why do they think they have more influence and on what factors are their opinions based? The reputational influentials felt their power was based somewhat more than did the prescribed influentials on actions they had taken and on the fact that they represented an organization. The major difference between the two groups was the extent to which they perceived their influence to be based on knowledge. Less than 12 percent of the reputational community water influentials felt that their influence was based to a good or great extent on their technical knowledge, according to their questionnaire responses. On the other hand, 28 percent of the prescribed influentials who answered the questionnaire felt that whatever influence they had had was based to a good or great extent on their technical knowledge.

Summary

This paper has described the method by which community water influentials in five counties of the Susquehanna River Basin were identified and studied. The method was eclectic, using certain aspects of positional, decisional and reputational approaches. Influentials were then described in terms of selected sociodemographic characteristics.

There is no "typical" community water influential. However, to summarize, a community water influential in the study area could generally be characterized as: the head of a business organization or a public agency, over 50 years of age, college educated, a county resident for most of his life, and a man who generally perceives his influence in water resources planning to be based on his organizational position rather than on his technical knowledge of water resources.

Further References on Community Power Structure Analysis

---

<sup>12</sup>Those 20 years and over.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

- Bonjean, Charles M. and Olson, David M. "Community Leadership: Directions of Research," Administrative Science Quarterly, IX, No. 3 (Dec 1964), pp 278-95.
- Dahl, Robert A. Who Governs? New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961.
- Form, William H. and Miller, Delbert C. Industry, Labor and Community. New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1960.
- French, John R. P., Jr., and Raven, Bertram. "The Bases of Social Power," in Studies in Social Power (ed.) Dorwin Cartwright, pp 150-167, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1959.
- Gamson, William A. "Reputation and Resources in Community Politics," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 72, Sept 1966, pp 121-31.
- Hawley, Amos H. "Community Power and Urban Renewal Success," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 68, Jan 1963, pp 422-31.
- Hunter, Floyd. Community Power Structure. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1953.
- Jennings, M. Kent. Community Influentials. New York: The Free Press, 1964.
- Martin, Roscoe C., et al. Decisions in Syracuse. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965.
- Polsby, Nelson W. Community Power and Political Theory. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Presthus, Robert. Men at the Top. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1964.
- Sanders, Irwin T. "The Community Social Profile," American Sociological Review, XXV, No. 1, Feb 1960, pp 75-77.

IDENTIFYING INFLUENTIALS  
IN THE COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE

by James. L. Creighton

A major task in designing a public involvement program is to identify the publics--the groups and individuals--who are impacted by a decision or will be influential in making a decision. Sociologists and social psychologists have wrestled with this problem of identifying influentials in the community power structure for a number of years. This paper will deal with how their findings and methodologies might be used in identifying publics as part of the public involvement program.

DEFINING THE COMMUNITY

The first problem in defining the community power structure is to define the community being studied. While on the surface this might appear to be a rather simple issue, the academic literature displays numerous approaches in defining the community, each of which stresses one aspect of community life as being the most significant criterion of what constitutes a community. The simplest of definitions is that a community is simply an aggregate of people living in a geographic area, but such a definition does not deal with the fact that many communities have a strong sense of cohesiveness and identity which is not explained by the mere fact of where people live. The second major consideration in defining a community is the economic purpose served by the community. Theorists who stress the economic basis of the community point out that most communities began as the marketplace at which agricultural products produced in surrounding areas were sold or exchanged. Using such a definition it was possible to define a community by defining an economic "sphere of influence," the furthest geographical limits at which farmers traded with one community instead of going to another.

People's identification with a community is not based solely on their economic interests, but often is based on a sense of shared experience. Many smaller communities have historically provided people with a sense of "connectedness" through common values, shared history, or simply the fact that others around knew who you were, knew your family, and knew your own personal history. It is this feeling of "connectedness" or "belongingness" which has caused some theorists to comment that modern society does not provide us with a "sense of community," meaning a sense of connectedness or belongingness or common shared identity with other people.

Other theorists have defined community in terms of political and social life of the community. Still other ways of defining the community emphasize a social and economic ecology which establishes the outside limits of the community.

All of these definitions of community, however, have suffered substantially during the last 25 years because of major social changes. All of these definitions imply the ability to establish some kind of boundary, whether

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

it was a geographic and economic or "shared experience" boundary which allowed you to identify the outer limits of the community. Many social trends of the last 25 years make these boundaries increasingly abstract and arbitrary. One major factor in reducing the geographical boundary as a criterion for community has been that as population has rapidly increased, once discrete communities have now become simply a part of the urban complex and can be distinguished from other parts of the urban complex only through some purely legal boundary such as the city limit. Major changes in processing and transportation of agricultural goods have also frequently reduced reliance on local markets for the sale of agricultural products. Substantially increased mobility of the population has reduced the degree to which people living in the same area have shared experiences, common values, or a knowledge of each other's personal histories. Political control is now shared through an incredible array of overlapping local, regional, state and Federal authorities so that the amount of control that is left at the local community level is now substantially reduced. Finally, and this may be the most significant of all, there has been a substantial change in the number of people who identify themselves with their local community versus those who identify themselves either with the total urban area to which their community relates, or even relate primarily to the country as a whole through professional interests or employment with a national concern.

### HORIZONTAL VERSUS VERTICAL LINKING

The increasing tendency for people to identify with a broader regional or national interest rather than with their local community has caused sociologists to come up with the notion of horizontal versus vertical linking. Horizontal linking is the term used by sociologists to describe relationships between groups in the same community. When people and groups within the same community primarily relate to other people and groups in that community, then the horizontal linking is very strong. Vertical linking is the relationship of individuals and groups primarily to the outside society. This is particularly likely to occur when the individual identifies with others of a similar profession (lawyers, doctors, manufacturers) or is employed by a regional or a national agency or company so that both his economics and status are more linked to how people in the outside society feel about him than how they are viewed by the immediate community in which they live.

These differences in horizontal versus vertical links can be most dramatically seen in upper middle class suburban communities where one neighbor may be a successful local druggist who has spent his entire life in that community and is well known and respected within the community, but has travelled little and defines himself primarily in relationship to that community; while his next door neighbor may be an executive in a multinational corporation and regularly conducts business in Europe and Asia and vacations with friends in South America or Hawaii. While the executive of the multinational corporation may well have greater status in the society at large, the local druggist may, in fact, occupy a much greater power role when it comes to making decisions that affect the local community. Sociologists have discovered this phenomenon and have come up with the distinction between "locals" versus "cosmopolitans." The "locals" have power in the community based on their relationships with others in the community. In academic terms the "locals" have an extensive network of horizontal links. The "cosmopolitans," on the other hand, tend to have vertical links based on their professional knowledge and expertise, so that whatever power they have in the community is based not on who they know but on what they know. In addition, it appears that when "cosmopolitans"

attempt to influence local issues, they are more likely to work through existing organizations than through personal contacts. As a rule, "cosmopolitans" are interested more in a field or an issue rather than in a permanent position of leadership. One way to contrast the two groups is to say that the "cosmopolitans" possess expertise or knowledge that may allow a community to solve a problem, while the "locals" possess an understanding of local needs, desires and feelings which causes others in the community to trust them. By and large, the studies indicate that the influence of "cosmopolitans" is usually limited to those specific fields in which they have expertise and they have little or no influence in more general social issues. The "local" on the other hand, is likely to have influence in a large range of issues independent of their expertise in any particular field.

#### THE CONDITIONS FOR CONTROVERSY

The importance of the social phenomenon of vertical linking can be illustrated by studies of the conditions under which controversy occurs which indicate that controversy is less likely to occur unless there are vertical links in the community. Coleman has identified three criteria which are necessary for major conflict in a community:

1. There is a small group of local activists who gain moral support and often information from national groups.
2. There is a national climate of concern about issues similar to that being faced in the local community.
3. There is a lack of close and continued contact between public officials and the concerned public.

One way of viewing these criteria is to say that without the absence of vertical links the "locals" would be able to control decision making with little or no challenge. It appears that without the moral support and occasional technical assistance from national interests, that the "cosmopolitans" are unable to challenge the power base of the "locals."

Even if these three conditions exist, not all events in a community will lead to controversy. A major flood in a community, for example, rather than breeding conflict usually brings a community together in a shared experience. Coleman has again identified three factors which seem to be critical for an event to trigger controversy or conflict in a community:

1. The event must touch an important aspect of people's lives.
2. The event affects lives of different community members differently.
3. Community members must feel that they are capable of taking some action regarding this event or circumstance.

Probably the most critical one of these three elements is the degree to which an event affects the lives of different community members differently. Those issues around which conflict is most likely to occur are: 1)

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

economics, 2) power or authority, and 3) cultural values or beliefs. A controversial issue creates cleavages between one economic interest and another, between one source of power or authority and another, or between cultural values. Many times the controversy will affect lives of different community members along an existing cleavage line. For example: the outcome of a decision might favor one existing economic group over another, one political figure over another, or the cultural beliefs of the "old-timers" versus the "newcomers." Any issue that breaks along cleavage lines that are already existing in the community will become much more exaggerated, for that issue becomes a battleground for preexisting conflicts between groups in the community.

### **THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURE**

Early sociological studies emphasize the notion of a "power elite," a small group of individuals who were able to make most of the important decisions affecting a community. These studies describe the number of communities in which as few as 10 or 15 individuals seem to make all the important decisions for the community. More recent literature, however, has been dominated by the "pluralists." The pluralists have presented numerous case studies in which either there were competing power sources, so that there were several "elites" competing for political dominance, or people exerted power only within limited spheres of influence, so that decisions were made by fluid coalitions of interested parties. Competing "elites" might occur if there was a split in the community between the "oldtimers" and the "newcomers" or when there was a clear economic conflict between downtown business interests and suburban business interests. When decision making occurs within spheres of influence, an individual may have a considerable degree of power within one field such as water resources but have little or no influence on taxes, housing, welfare or medical care. In these communities there may still be an "elite" but it is a rapidly changing "elite" and the power of that "elite" is limited to only one sphere of influence.

There is considerable evidence that the degree of pluralism increases with the size of the community. It also increases with the amount of vertical linking to the outside society as there is considerably more competition for power within communities with substantial vertical links. It would appear in communities of considerable size and complexity, that the ability of any individual to influence more than a few spheres of influence becomes increasingly difficult.

Several theorists have argued that the important issue was not who was making the decision, but how well communities were able to adapt when they faced a problem. Thus, the emphasis would be shifted from how the decisions were made to the ability of the community to produce effective solutions to their problems. In addition, studies were conducted to see whether communities where the decision-making power was concentrated in the hands of a limited number of people were more effective in coping with community problems than communities in which the decision-making power was highly dispersed. Preliminary studies produced highly contradictory results. However, recent literature suggests the following general premises:

1. When decisions impact an entire community, as they would on a tax issue, then the community may be able to respond more effectively with concentrated decision-making authority.

2. If decisions affect different people differently, as they would on welfare or housing issues, then dispersed decision-making seems to be more effective in solving community problems.

### IDENTIFYING LEADERS

The early studies into "power elites" indicated that the members of the "power elite" did not necessarily hold their power by virtue of a recognized leadership position such as elective office or presidency of a bank, as much as by personal reputation. As a result there is general acceptance that it is not possible to assume that you have identified community leadership merely by identifying all the organized groups and their leaders within a community. In fact, it appears there are many different kinds of leadership which can be studied and analyzed using different methodologies. Like the controversy between the "pluralists" and those who believe in a monolithic power elite, there are considerable theoretical differences when it comes to the argument of what constitutes leadership. Generally, however, the arguments fall into four categories as indicated below:

Leadership Position - An individual may exert leadership in the community by virtue of their position or rank within a powerful organization. Such a position might include political office, the head of a large bank, the president of a local university, etc. The perceived power of this individual is not always directly related to the degree to which they personally participate in decision making, but may be a result of the influence of the organization they head. The president of a local university, for example, may be personally involved only in a limited number of issues, but if the university itself participates in a substantial number of issues then his influence is perceived as substantially greater than his individual participation.

Reputation of Leadership - These are the individuals who are believed to be "the big men in town." They are reputed to have the ability to affect a wide range of decisions whether or not they choose to exert this power. If this reputation for leadership is not based on a visible leadership position within the community as indicated above, then it is highly probable that this individual is a "local" who exerts power through an extensive network of relationships with others in the local community and is seen as having power by virtue of their personal contacts with everyone within the community.

Participation in Prior Decisions - Both of the categories above may indicate only the individual's potential for power rather than their actual assertion of power within the community. One way to determine who actually exerts power is to see who, in fact, did participate in prior decisions. One way to forecast who is likely to have an influence on a water resource issue, for example, is to analyze who in fact did participate in previous water resources issues within the community.

Participation in Community Activities - Another way to measure a person's leadership within the community is that they are actively involved in a wide range of community activities, political, social, cultural and charitable. Their power comes by virtue of their personal contacts in several spheres as well as their ability to influence through a variety of organizational relationships.

### METHODOLOGIES

---

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

For each of the forms of leadership indicated above, sociologists have developed a methodology for identifying people in these leadership positions. The literature strongly suggests that there are advantages to utilizing several of these methodologies as cross-checks to insure the adequacy of the study. However, it should be pointed out that the objectives of someone using these methods in public involvement may be somewhat different than a person conducting an extensive research study. In public involvement our major objective is to do a reasonable job of identifying all the decision makers so that they can be informed and provided opportunities to participate in the decision. A formal sociological study, on the other hand, is held up to rigorous examination by the academic community which goes beyond immediate effectiveness in identifying influentials for a particular study. As a result, it may be desirable to employ simplified and more modest variations of these methodologies for the purposes of public involvement.

### Identifying Individuals in Leadership Positions

This is by far the simplest approach to identifying leadership within a community in that you start by first identifying visible groups that may have an impact on a decision and then identifying their leaders. In many ways this is identical to the staff identification techniques described in another workshop. Studies have indicated that the most critical categories which must be reached in order to have a reasonable range of influentials are: 1) business, 2) government, 3) professions (doctors, lawyers, etc.), 4) education, 5) communications (News media, TV, etc.), 6) labor, and, 7) religion. Most studies do indicate that leaders of such organizations exert considerably more influence on a decision than middle level staff people within their organizations. One study, for example, distinguished three levels of leadership: 1) institutional leaders, 2) effectors--staff people within those institutions who were able to exert power by virtue of their access to the individual leaders, and, 3) activists who possess little or no organizational power base within the community, but were able to exert some influence on decisions by virtue of their constant participation and their links to national organizations. One measure, however, of whether middle level staff people of an institution may be important in decision making would be if these individuals show up as influential using methodologies to identify their participation in prior decisions or their involvement in a wide range of community activities.

### Reputation of Leadership

Most efforts to identify the "reputed" leaders are some variation of the procedures described below:

1. Develop a list of readily identifiable leadership within the community based on available published literature, newspaper stories, or discussions with other state and Federal officials involved in water resources planning and management.
2. Conduct a series of interviews with these identified influentials. During these interviews they would be asked to identify which individuals they thought would be most influential in making decisions. In the Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study conducted for the Institute of Water Resources, the question asked of each interviewee was: "Suppose a major problem in water resources development was before the community, one that required



a decision by a group of leaders who nearly everyone would accept. Which people would you choose to make up this group, regardless of whether or not you knew them personally? Why would you choose them?"

3. After several interviews have been conducted it is usually possible to begin to develop a list of names which are frequently mentioned, and it is then possible in subsequent interviews to use the list either as a score sheet for the interviewer or actually have the person being interviewed review the names on the list, indicating those which he thinks are influential and adding additional names if desired.
4. Interviews are continued then with all of those people identified on the list of influentials. In effect, this technique is a "snow ball" approach in which you ask visible leaders who they consider to be influential, then interview the people they've identified to ask who they consider to be influential, etc.

Clearly such a technique can reach a point of diminishing returns and several studies have indicated that, beyond a certain point, the frequently mentioned individuals on the list did not change regardless of the number of interviews conducted.

#### Participation in Prior Decisions

The methodology used in identifying those who have participated in prior decisions is essentially similar to that used in identifying "reputed" leadership. The procedure:

1. Develop a list of prior decisions affecting similar issues within the community.
2. Develop a list of visible leaders who are likely to have participated in some of these decisions.
3. Conduct a series of interviews with these influential people and ask them to identify in which of the past decisions they did or did not participate.
4. For all of these decisions in which they did participate, ask them to indicate who else participated in the decision making.
5. When a name has been mentioned by several individuals, then conduct an interview with this individual and continue as needed using the "snow ball" approach.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Participation in Community Activities

The methodology for this form of leadership assumes the development of a rather large list of community leaders utilizing any of the three methodologies described above. Then a questionnaire is sent to all the identified influentials asking them to identify their affiliations with a wide number of social, political, cultural and charitable organizations. The results are tallied based on the total number of organizations to which an individual indicates an affiliation, on the assumption that the more organizations to which an individual belongs the more likely he is to exert a broad range of influence within the community. Thus, using this methodology an individual who belongs to 20 organizations is considered to be more influential than an individual who belongs to 2 or 3.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE METHODS

As indicated previously, these methods are designed for extensive sociological investigations and so may have a purpose broader than their application in the public involvement field. As a result, it is necessary to carefully evaluate the appropriateness of these methodologies for your study. A few guidelines are provided below which may be of assistance:

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of the technique in your community. Many people are very sensitive to surveys, questionnaires, and other "sophisticated" techniques and so may react unfavorably to the use of techniques if they are unable to see a clear connection between the technique and the purposes of the study. Individuals may well wonder, for example, what a questionnaire asking them to identify all of their organizational affiliations has to do with whether or not you're going to build a dam. Such approaches also begin to raise questions of invasion of privacy by governmental agencies.
2. Relate the techniques specifically to water resources planning. While the techniques for identifying "reputational" leadership usually ask a broad decision as to who is influential in making decisions, there is no reason why you cannot ask much more specific questions related to people's influence in the field of water resources planning. The only danger would be to ask the question in so limited a way that it excludes groups that may have an active interest in your proposed project, such as environmentalists who have not been specifically involved in water resources planning in the past but may be very concerned with such issues as growth inducement, environmental impact, etc. Relating questions specifically to areas of the study makes particular sense in larger communities where decision making is much more likely to be concentrated within "spheres of influence." Thus, there may be a constellation of individuals who are influential in making decisions in water resources planning who may have little or no influence when it comes to making decisions about health services within the community. It is also possible, of course, to ask more specific questions which will allow you to identify leadership within different interests within the community. Rather than ask who is influential in making decisions generally, you might instead ask who in business is

influential when it comes to water resources issues, or which environmentalists are influential in the water resources field, or who in agriculture is influential in making decisions on water resources planning.

3. Combine the techniques or use more than one technique. As indicated in the descriptions of methodology above, the techniques used for identifying people in leadership positions are essentially similar to staff identification techniques which are normally already used in public involvement programs. In addition, the methodologies used for identifying "reputed" leaders and those who have participated in past decisions are essentially similar in that they involve interviews with key individuals who identify other individuals who should be interviewed, who in turn identify other individuals, etc. It would, of course, be very simple in the same interview to ask not only who was influential in making decisions, but who had participated in past decisions. Both of these questions can be asked in such a way that they are relatively unobtrusive so that the person being interviewed does not have the feeling of being "studied."
4. Use the examination of community leadership as an opportunity to gain understanding of the total context in which water issues will be considered. When you find out who participates in water decisions, you also find out a great deal about how important water issues are in the community. If water issues are not major political issues within the community, for example, then they are far more likely to be left to a small group of leaders with a special interest or expertise in the water field. If water issues are major issues in the community, then there may be a much broader base of political participation. An examination of the context in which water issues are considered would also consider how water issues relate to other issues in the community. For example, a water supply issue may be one element in an ongoing community conflict between community factions which favor development or favor limited growth. A flood control project which protects downtown businessmen may be caught between competing downtown and suburban commercial interests. Finding out who participates in a decision will tell you something about the total context; finding out how water issues relate to overall community issues will tell you something about who will participate.

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

Much of the literature on community power is highly technical and abstract, and as a result, is not of general interest. There are, however, two sources which provide more background on the material described in this paper in a manner readable by the general public. The first is a paper titled, "Influential Identification: Research Methods and Socio-Economic Characteristics" contained in the Susquehanna Basin Communication-Participation Study, Institute of Water Resources Report, 70-60, December 1970. A readable first-hand exposure to the academic literature is provided in Hawley and Wirt, The Search for Community Power, Prentiss Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968.



CREATING A POLICY PROFILE

by William D. Coplin  
Donald J. McMaster  
Michael K. O'Leary

Policy profiling is a technique for assessing the impact of various individuals, groups and organizations on governmental agency decisions. The basic assumptions behind policy profiling are that in order to assess the impact of relevant individuals, groups and organizations on any possible decision or course of action, it is necessary to do the following:

- C Identify the individuals, groups and organizations (the "actors") that are likely to have a direct or indirect impact on the course of action. This means including those who have a formal role in the making or blocking of the decision; it also means including those who have an indirect impact, such as those who will make it either easier or harder to carry out a decision after it is made.
- C Determine whether each actor supports, opposes, or is neutral toward the decision.
- C Determine how powerful each actor is in blocking the decision, helping make it happen, or effecting the implementation of a decision.
- C Determine how important the decision is to each actor.

Whether we are talking about the President of the United States, a district engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a business executive, a school superintendent, or the head of the household, effective decision makers always do this kind of thing, if only informally. The purpose of policy profiling is to provide a systematic framework and checklist which decision makers can use to make sure they carry out the kind of analysis required to assess the consequences of a decision. Policy profiling also aids decision makers in organizing their staffs and making use of other knowledgeable observers.

STEPS IN CREATING A POLICY PROFILE

The basic steps which are followed in creating a policy profile are shown below:

---

This article is adapted from a "learning module" on Policy Profiling developed for the Institute for Water Resources by the authors.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Step 1: Issue Definition

An issue is a decision or action which is likely to generate controversy. Policy profiling can be applied only if the proposed decision is clearly defined in specific terms. If an issue is defined as "protecting the interior wetlands of the area" or "improving the efficiency of the Corps' permitting procedure", it would not be possible to complete a policy profile. But profiling can be done on a specific issue such as "issue a general permit controlling the landfill activities of private landowners."

The key is found in the verb used to phrase the decision. Verbs such as "protect" or "improve" are undesirable because they do not adequately specify the required action. Verbs like "restrict," "permit" or "build" are much more useful.

While decisions or actions need to be specifically defined in order to conduct analysis, trying to guess at the exact detail of the final formulation is not required. One of the main characteristics of reaching decisions affecting many actors is that the action is frequently redefined and modified as a result of the process of reaching a decision. The decision may begin as "issue a general permit that governs landfill activities of private landowners" and become modified to "issue a general permit that governs landfill activities of private landowners and commercial property under a certain acreage." Such a change may be required to obtain the support of important groups or to solve technical problems in administering the permit. The policy profiling technique can be applied to any number of proposed decisions (including redefinitions and modifications) as long as it is clear what specific action is involved at each step along the way.

Another important consideration in determining the decision to which to apply the technique is to make sure that there is both significant support and opposition. It is pointless to policy profile a decision that is either so well accepted or so widely opposed that the outcome is obvious. Of course, few decisions affecting the public result in overwhelming support or opposition. However, when they do come up, they do not need to be policy profiled.

### Step 2: Identify Actors

An actor is any individual, group or organization that ought to be considered in making the decision. Reasons for consideration include the following: The actor has substantial legal authority; the actor has political influence to promote or obstruct the decision; or the actor will be seriously effected by the decision and may either help or hinder its implementation, even though it may not have much of a say in the actual making of the decision.

Identifying the actors to be considered is one of the most important steps in Policy Profiling. An important actor who is omitted or the improper grouping of actors can distort the analysis so much that it becomes useless.

Compiling a Complete List of Actors. Four types of actors should be considered in compiling your list. Figure 1 identifies the four types and gives examples.

Figure 1

CLASSIFICATION OF ACTORS

<u>Type</u>	<u>Principal Location</u>	
	Local to the Area of the Decision	External to the Area of the Decision
Governmental	City Government	State Departments
	County Government	(Natural Resources and Environmental Regulations)
		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Nongovernmental	Developers	Environmental Groups
	Influential Citizens	

For the governmental category, the inclusion of an actor depends on whether the agency has clear direct or indirect legal authority over the question.

For the nongovernmental category, the guidelines for inclusion are not so clear-cut. Actors should be included who will be directly affected by the decision or who for one reason or another are considered to have influence on governmental agencies or on legislative representatives who might influence the agencies. Since we are dealing with judgments on who has influence, some well-established techniques of identifying influential actors can be used. You can review newspaper accounts; you can consult public documents on similar decisions in the past; and you can ask known influentials to identify others who are influential. Brainstorming among members of the staff about possible actors frequently helps identify individuals and groups that ought to be considered. External nongovernmental actors ought to be discounted unless there is evidence of direct contact and there is a local organization representing the national organization.

In order to keep the analysis within feasible bounds, limit the number of actors to 20 or even less, if possible. In situations where time is short, try to limit the number of actors to 10 or less. The reason for limiting the number of actors is to limit the time required for the listing and calculations required for policy profiling. Of course, if you have easy access to a computer, you could enter many more actors and get the calculation done very quickly (assuming the computer does not break down). Even if you have a computer to work with, you would still have to stop listing actors sometime, since most public decisions affect hundreds, even thousands, of people. Besides, if you

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

pick carefully, the estimates you make with a few actors will be as accurate as estimates made with many actors.

The principal way to limit the number of actors is to group individuals and organizations into collective actors for the purpose of analysis. The process of grouping frequently appears arbitrary and, as mentioned earlier, can seriously bias your results if it is not done carefully. However, there are some guidelines that will assist you in grouping actors to help improve the accuracy of your analysis:

1. Group actors together who have the same identifiable economic interests. In the earlier example, all the private developers were grouped together for this reason.
2. Do not group together actors that have veto power. This especially holds for governmental actors. In the example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was kept separate from the Environmental Protection Agency, but the two state departments (natural resources and environmental regulation) were combined.
3. Do not group together actors if there is disagreement between them or if their components have widely unequal power. In the example, the city government was kept as a single actor because there was general agreement among all members of the government concerning the issuance of a general permit. Furthermore, each person in the governing unit had about equal power. If there were disagreements, or if some members were much more powerful than others, it would have been preferable to divide them into two (or more) groups.
4. Select a configuration of actors that taken together constitute a reasonable picture of the overall power distribution. Do not include an excess of actors that gives one side an unrealistic weighting. If there is one actor with an immense amount of power, that actor should be divided into enough smaller actors that the total power configuration is accurately reflected.

These guidelines are admittedly very general. The designation of the actors in the policy profiling technique is at least as much an art as a science. Your judgment in conducting the analysis is vital at every step. In one sense, this might be viewed as a weakness in the technique. But this is not the case. Policy profiling is a way of organizing and guiding judgment, not eliminating it. It would be foolish to ignore the importance of judgment and balanced insight (even if it were possible to do so) in the selection of actors as well as in the other aspects of policy profiling.

Step 3: Estimate Issue Position, Power, and Salience for Each Actor (see Figure 2)

Issue Position is expressed as a number ranging from +3 to -3 to indicate whether or not the actor supports (+3, +2, or +1), is neutral toward (0), or opposes (-1, -2, or -3) the decision. A "+3" is



assigned if the actor is firmly in favor of the issue and is unlikely to change; "+2" or "+1" indicates reduced levels of firmness of the actor's support. Similarly, a "-3" indicates firm opposition while a "-2" or "-1" indicates there is some softness in the opposition.

Power is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 3. A "0" is assigned if the actor has no power or influence. A "1" is assigned if the actor has some power and a "2" if the actor has moderate power. A "3" is assigned if an actor has substantial influence, especially if the actor can veto or prevent the implementation of the decision.

Salience is expressed as a number ranging from 0 to 3. A "0" indicates no interest or concern for the issue regardless of the issue position or power. A "1" or "2" is assigned for those actors that have slight or moderate concern. A "3" is reserved for those actors that assign the highest priority to the issue.

The task of estimating each actor's issue position, power and salience can be done by an individual, but most frequently is completed by a small group familiar with the situation. It is possible to use a survey instrument when it seems necessary. The kinds of factors that should be considered in each category are as follows:

- C Read and listen to what the actor says about the issue.
- C Deduce from the actor's economic, social or political standing what its position is likely to be on the basis of self-interest.
- C Weigh the implications of concrete interests against what it has said. When in doubt, use concrete interests for your estimate over mere verbalization.
- C Look for differences among individuals and factions within an actor (or even inconsistencies in statements by an individual actor). If the contrasting positions seem evenly balanced, assign a "0" (neutral) issue position. If there seems a slight positive or negative balance toward the issue, assign a "+1" or "-1" for the actor's issue position.

When estimating an actor's power:

- C Ask if the actor has the resources either to block a decision or to make one occur.

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

---

Figure 2: POLICY PROFILING QUESTIONNAIRE

ISSUE: \_\_\_\_\_

In the spaces below, summarize the relationships of each actor to the issues.

1. Circle the A-3", A-2", or A-1" to indicate the extent to which the actor opposes, A0" to indicate the actor is neutral toward, or A+1", A+2", or A+3" to indicate the extent to which the actor supports the issue. (ISSUE POSITION)
2. Circle the A0", A1", A2", or A3" to indicate the degree to which the actor can exert influence, directly or indirectly, in support or in opposition to the issue, relative to all other actors. (POWER).
3. Circle A0", A1", A2", or A3" to indicate the importance of the issue to the actor, relative to all other issues in the general subject area. (SALIENCE)

	Issue Position							Power				Salience			
	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
2. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
3. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
4. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
5. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
6. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
7. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
8. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
9. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
10. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
11. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
12. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
13. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
14. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
15. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
16. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
17. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
18. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
19. _____	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3

20. \_\_\_\_\_ -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- C Determine if legal authority is a consideration and if the actor possesses a large share of the authority.
- C Determine, if wealth is a consideration, how much wealth the actor has in effecting the decision.
- C Do not assume that an actor powerful on one set of issues in a community is necessarily powerful on all issues. It is true that an actor's high power on one issue means it may have power on other issues, but it does not assure high power.
- C Consider the allies and enemies of the actor: Powerful allies make the actor powerful; powerful enemies diminish the actor's power.

When estimating saliency:

- C Determine the frequency and intensity with which the actor makes public statements about the decision.
- C Deduce from the actor's social, political, and economic interests the importance it is likely to attach to the decision.
- C Watch out for the fact that saliency can be rapidly and substantially altered by external events and the intrusion of other issues.
- C Remember that other decisions and factors compete for the actor's attention and, hence, saliency.

Like selecting actors, the assignment of issue position, power and saliency is something of an art. Systematic research can play an important role, but the importance of the skillful assessment of existing conditions by knowledgeable and sensible observers is absolutely essential. Therefore, it is important that those completing the charts be thoroughly familiar with the situation. They should converse with other knowledgeable people and gather all available information on the reactions of individuals, groups, and organizations to the proposed decision.

**Step 4: Calculate the Weights for Each Actor and the Whole System**

After the estimates are made for each actor, the next step is to calculate the weights each actor contributes in the decision. This is done by multiplying issue position times power times saliency for each actor. Since issue position (alone of the three variables) may be either positive or negative, the sign of issue position will be the weight for each actor.

After each actor's weight is calculated, the positive and negative scores are totaled separately.

Step 5: Calculate the Policy Profile Ratio

The Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) is the net weight between those supporting and those opposing the decision being analyzed. The ratio may be viewed as a measure of the "political benefit and cost" of the decision. A value greater than 1.00 indicates a net benefit from a political and social point of view, and a value less than 1.00 indicates a net cost. A value of 1.00 indicates that the estimate of the benefits and costs is equal.

AN EXAMPLE OF POLICY PROFILING

The use of policy profiling can be illustrated with the Sanibel Island General Permit Case (see Lefkoff, Rosener, Munch).

In this case, the district engineer wanted to issue a general permit covering landfill operations within a particular five square mile area of land in his district. The purpose of the permit was to allow citizens of that area to fill in small areas of their own lands without having to go through the tedious individual permitting procedure. The district engineer wanted to protect the interior wetlands and develop a framework through which landfill requests by individual landowners could be efficiently handled.

The district engineer conducted a policy profiling analysis of the general permit decision to determine the reaction of the political and social environment, which in this case included the local residents, local governments, environmental groups and Federal government agencies. The analysis was conducted in about one hour by a group of his staff knowledgeable about the area. They completed the following steps:

Step 1: Issue Definition

The issue was defined as "establish a general permit controlling the landfill activities of private landowners with respect to the interior wetlands of a specified five square mile area."

Step 2: Identify Actors

The following actors were identified: the city government, the county government, the state departments of natural resources and environmental regulation, several environmental groups, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, land developers, and several private citizens who were influential in land development questions.

Step 3: Estimate Issue Position, Power, and Salience for Each Actor

The following table was constructed to record the values assigned by the district engineer and his staff.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

<u>ACTORS</u>	<u>ISSUE POSITION</u>	<u>POWER</u>	<u>SALIENCE</u>
City Government	+3	2	3
County Government	+3	1	1
State Departements of Natural Resources and Environmental Regulation	+1	2	1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	-2	3	2
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	-2	3	2
Land Developers	+3	1	2
Environmental Groups	+1	1	3
Influential Citizens	+1	3	3

Step 4: Calculate the Weights for Each Actor and the Whole System

The computation of weights for each actor and the whole system is shown as Figure 3.

Step 5: Calculate the Policy Profile Ratio

As shown in Figure 3, a Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) of 1.71 was computed. This indicates substantial support for the general permits. Figure 3 also shows that the only serious opposition comes from Federal agencies. However, the support for the decision from the state agencies, local environmental groups and influential citizens is not very firm; therefore, their continued support is essential to a positive decision.

Subsequently, the district engineer held a series of informal meetings at which spokespersons representing the various actors were encouraged to state their views. The representatives voiced their interests in specific details concerning the permit, coupled with high praise for the district engineer's openness in decision making. This served to strengthen the support of those groups whose initial support was estimated to be somewhat weak. After a formal public notice, the general permit was established

Figure 3

EXAMPLE: ISSUE A GENERAL PERMIT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL LANDFILL OPERATIONS

<u>Actors</u>	<u>ISSUE POSITION</u>		<u>POWER</u>		<u>SALIENCE</u>	=	<u>POSITIVE SCORES</u>	<u>ZERO SCORES</u>	<u>NEGATIVE SCORES</u>
1. City Government	+3	x	2	x	3	=	+18		
2. County Government	+3	x	1	x	1	=	+3		
3. State Departments	+1	x	2	x	1	=	+2		
4. U.S. Fish and Wildlife	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
5. U.S. EPA	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
6. Land Developers	+3	x	1	x	2	=	+6		
7. Environmental Groups	+1	x	1	x	3	=	+3		
8. Influential Citizens	+1	x	3	x	3	=	+9		
9.									
10.									
11.									
							+41		-24
							TOTAL POSITIVE SCORES		TOTAL NEGATIVE SCORES

$$\text{POLICY PROFILE RATIO (PPR)} = \frac{\text{POSITIVE SCORES}}{\text{NEGATIVE SCORES}} = \frac{41}{24} = 1.71$$

with no noticeable opposition, consistent with the positive PPR score of 1.71. (Through the whole process, the other Federal agencies expressed their opposition--ineffective as it turned out--with glum silence.)

THE VALUE OF POLICY PROFILING

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

There are several valuable uses of policy profiling. These include: (1) Focusing different perceptions of the political situation; (2) Forecasting an outcome; (3) Monitoring changes in position; (4) Identifying the potential for consensus.

Focusing Different Perceptions: Even within an agency, or among knowledgeable people, there are different perceptions of the political circumstances surrounding a decision which affect support for that decision. In the process of developing a policy profile, these different perceptions can either come closer together, or a procedure identified for resolving the disagreement. Usually, individuals in a group may initially disagree upon estimates, but after a period of discussion, the differences are likely to be resolved. If a basic disagreement does exist over a given estimate, a second figure can be placed in parentheses and alternative calculations can be conducted using the second set of figures. It may turn out that the differences are not that significant in arriving at the final estimates. If they are significant, additional research should be conducted to find out the reason for the discrepancies and how to resolve them.

By going through this kind of analysis, situations are avoided where a decision is made based on an incomplete or inaccurate assessment of the political situation, or where different parts of the agency have different perceptions that lead to differing levels of support for the decision within the agency.

Forecasting An Outcome: The Policy Profile Ratio (PPR) can serve as a kind of political benefit/cost ratio. In effect, it is an estimate of whether praise or blame is likely to predominate for a particular decision. Just as in an economic benefit cost ratio, the ratio must be above unity (1.0) to be positive, and the more above 1.0 it is, the more positive it is. However, these figures should be used with some caution. While the Sanibel Island example showed a ratio of 1.71, careful analysis showed that this figure included rather shaky support of some powerful actors. A change in their position could have substantially changed the ratio.

It is also possible to develop a probability figure or index of the likelihood of resolution of the issue. This index ranges from +1.00 to -1.00. If it is close to +1.00, it indicates that it is highly likely that the decision will be made. If it is close to -1.00, there is a high probability that the decision will be dropped from consideration. If the index is close to 0.00, the issue is likely to continue to remain unresolved one way or the other.

The calculation of the index is as follows:

$$IR = \frac{SPS - SNS}{TOTS}$$

Where IR is the index of resolution, ranging from +1.00 to -1.00, and SPS is the sum of each actor's positive scores from the policy profile chart SNS is the absolute value of the sum of each actor's negative scores from the policy profile chart; and TOTS is the sum of SPS and SNS. (If your analysis contains actors with "0" issue position, power or salience, the calculation becomes a trifle more complicated. We will deal with that variation shortly.) The calculation of IR for the earlier example is shown in Figure 4. It results in an IR of



+0.26, indicating a moderately strong forecast that the general permit would be issued (which, in fact, it was).

Monitoring Changes in Position: Policy profiling provides an insight into the forces surrounding a specific decision based on the information available. It is very much like a snapshot--bound by the time and perspective of the photographer. By developing a policy profile at the beginning of a decision making process, then monitoring changes, it is possible to develop a system for evaluating changing levels of political support. Experience indicates that the following factors should be monitored very closely:

- C Disagreement among observers over the issue position, power or salience of a particular actor. When your data collection has revealed conflicting estimates on where particular actors stand, it is imperative that additional research be undertaken. It is also a good idea to closely monitor those actors, because disagreement among observers may be symptomatic of the changeability of the actors themselves.
- C Low issue position. When actors have an issue position of "+1" or "-1", a change to neutral or a change of sides is always possible. These actors should be monitored closely to anticipate shifts.
- C Salience frequently varies. Outside events can alter salience and cause major shifts. This is why timing is so important and why proposals that stimulate little or no controversy at one time can create a great deal of controversy at another time.
- C Power changes slowly. In contrast to salience, the power of most actors remains relatively constant over time. Power usually evolves from institutional authority, wealth, longstanding relationships with other actors, and formal authoritative position. Major elections or changes in leadership can represent a major shift in power, but the reality of wealth and longstanding relationships may counter even these apparent shifts.
- C Spill-over events from other arenas can also greatly alter the issue position, power, and salience of actors. National or even international events can have a local or regional impact. Similarly, local or regional events can influence the configuration of forces in other arenas.

Figure 4

EXAMPLE: ISSUE A GENERAL PERMIT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL LANDFILL OPERATIONS

			ISSUE POSITION		POWER		SALIENCE		=	POSITIVE SCORES	ZERO SCORES	NEGATIVE SCORES
9.	City Government		+3	x	2	x	3	=		+18		
10.	County Government		+3	x	1	x	1	=		+3		

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

11.	State Departments	+1	x	2	x	1	=	+2		
12.	U.S. Fish and Wildlife	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
13.	U.S. EPA	-2	x	3	x	2	=			-12
14.	Land Developers	+3	x	1	x	2	=	+6		
15.	Environmental Groups	+1	x	1	x	3	=	+3		
16.	Influential Citizens	+1	x	3	x	3	=	+9		
9.										
10.										
11.										
								+41		-24
								TOTAL POSITIVE SCORES		TOTAL NEGATIVE SCORES

$$\text{INDEX OF RESOLUTION (IR)} = \frac{\text{SPS} - \text{SNS}}{\text{TOTS}} = \frac{41 - 24}{41 + 24} = \frac{17}{65} = +0.26$$

Identifying the Potential for Consensus: In many situations, the goal of the decision maker is to develop a consensus in support of a preferred position. Even after all technical criteria are satisfied, there may be five or six different options. Under these conditions, the job of the decision maker was to help the major actors agree on a decision that will most clearly satisfy those most affected and most influential.

In the Sanibel Island case, policy profiling showed that there were several key actors who did not have strongly committed positions. By utilizing the public involvement workshops, the district engineer was able to achieve a high level of agreement on the details of the permit. This was perfectly compatible with the Corps' interest in seeing a general permit developed and protecting the land. All parties met their needs by the Corps helping the actors more specifically define the policy so that they were fully satisfied with the final decision.

In some cases, however, there may be groups with high conflictual interests. In this case, the policy profiling charts can be used to identify those actors with the greatest disagreement and to help identify issues over which the actors agree. The end result might be to develop a compromise proposal that both sides can live with.

Introduction to Section V:

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

Throughout the decade, public meetings of one sort or another, have been a staple of public involvement. However there has been a dramatic shift from the early 70s when the public hearing was a central fixture in the public involvement constellation, to the articles in this section which describe a wide variety of formats, with the public hearing simply being one possible format (and a rather specialized one at that).

James L. Creighton's article begins the section by describing the kind of thought process by which a meeting format is selected, and then describes other issues, such as room arrangements, which are crucial to the success of meetings.

Along with the shift from the formal public hearing or meeting has come an increased interest in workshops and small group processes. Two articles by Creighton describe how to actually design a workshop, and summarize some small group processes which can either be used in workshops, or incorporated into the format of larger public meetings.

Finally, Lorenz Aggens, a seasoned veteran of literally hundreds of public meetings, describes a meeting format--the Samoan Circle--which he has found particularly helpful in discussing controversial subjects.



SELECTING A MEETING FORMAT

by James L. Creighton

The term "meeting format" refers to a number of meeting elements including meeting type, e.g., hearing or workshop, meeting size, meeting agenda, room arrangements, and leadership style. In this paper we will be discussing the major issues that should be considered in selecting a meeting format.

FORMAT FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The guiding principle of meeting design is that "format follows function," meaning that the design of the meeting should reflect the purpose of the meeting. The single most important thing to consider in designing a meeting is what you wish to accomplish by holding the meeting. There are five basic functions which meetings serve. These functions may be fulfilled each in a separate meeting or several functions may be fulfilled in a single meeting. The five basic functions are:

1. INFORMATION-GIVING:

In this function the agency is communicating information to the public. This information could include the nature of the study, the issues which have been identified by the agency, the available alternatives or the plan selected by the agency. The agency possesses the information and must communicate it in some manner to the public.

2. INFORMATION-RECEIVING:

In this case the public possesses the information, which could include public perceptions of needs, problems, values, impacts, or reactions to alternatives. This function stresses the need of the agency to acquire information held by the public.

3. INTERACTION:

While interaction clearly involves both information-giving and information-receiving, it also serves the additional purpose of allowing people to test their ideas on the agency or other publics and possibly come to modify their viewpoint as a result of the interaction. With this function it is not the initial information given or received which is critical as much as the process of testing, validating and changing one's ideas as a result of interaction with other people.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

4. CONSENSUS-FORMING/NEGOTIATION:

A step beyond interaction is to begin to move toward common agreements. Interaction alone may not assure any form of agreement, but in consensus-forming/negotiation the interaction is directed toward agreement on a single plan by all of the critical publics.

5. SUMMARIZING:

This is the need at the end of a long process to publicly acknowledge the agreements that have been reached and reiterate the positions of the different groups toward these agreements. This function is required both to give visibility to the entire decision-making process which has taken place, and also to form a kind of closure now that the process is ending.

Each of these functions in turn establishes limitations on the kind of meeting format that is possible if the function is to be served. A few of these limitations and implications are shown below.

Information-giving: Since the information-giving function means that information must flow from the agency to all the various publics, then it is appropriate to have a meeting format which primarily allows for presentations from the agency with questions or responses related to clarifications of that information or requests for additional information. This means that the classic meeting with one person at the front of the room making a presentation to an audience in rows--which is a suitable and efficient method for communicating information--may be a suitable format for this function.

Information-receiving: When the function is reversed and the need is to obtain information from the public, then having one person stand up at the front of the room addressing an entire audience is an extremely inefficient and uneconomical means of obtaining information. In this case the function would require that opportunities be provided for the maximum number of people to provide information to the agency. This criteria is not met when only one person can speak at a time addressing the entire audience. As a result there may be a need to consider breaking the audience into smaller groups so that comments may be collected on flip charts, or utilize techniques in which each participant can provide information on 3 X 5 cards (such as the Nominal Group Process Technique), or any other method that allows for the maximum number of people to be providing information at the same time. To serve this function it is not absolutely necessary that opportunities be provided for discussion or interaction unless that discussion and interaction is necessary to generate new information.

Interaction: Interaction by its very nature requires that an audience be broken down into groups small enough so that there is time and opportunity for individuals to exchange information and ideas and discuss them all thoroughly. This usually means either that meetings are limited in size such as a coffee klatch or advisory committee meeting, or that any larger meeting is broken down into a small group during the period in which this

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

function is being met. There is no way that a large public meeting will provide anything more than minimal opportunities for interaction.

Consensus-forming/negotiation: Like interaction, consensus-forming/negotiation also requires intense interaction and therefore must be accomplished in some form of small group. In addition, the requirement for consensus formation usually means that some procedure is utilized which assists the group in working toward a single agreed-upon plan rather than allowing for simply an open discussion with no specific product.

Summarizing: Since the function of summarizing is to provide visibility to the entire process which has taken place, it may again be suitable to use large public meetings as a means to serve the summarizing function. In this way individuals and groups can be seen taking positions and describing their involvement in the planning process which has preceded this meeting. This does not, however, automatically mean that a public hearing is the appropriate form of meeting to serve this function as there are many creative and less formal means by which a visible summary may occur without the legalistic procedures of a formal hearing.

### **PUBLICS TARGET/ANTICIPATED AUDIENCE**

Once the function of the meeting has been determined, it is also necessary to take into consideration the particular audience that you are attempting to reach in the meeting. If, for example, you are seeking the active participation of a small group of individuals representing the range of public interests, then you will undoubtedly want a highly interactive meeting format. If, on the other hand, you are expecting a very large audience but many of the participants will not be highly sophisticated as far as technical background, then you may want a meeting function which allows an information-giving function as well.

Clearly audience size is also a major issue in meeting design. A workshop format, for example, is limited to approximately 20 persons; although many of the advantages of a workshop can be obtained if a larger audience is broken down into smaller work groups for a specific assignment. The large group/small group format, though, is limited by the facilities which you have available. If, as occurs in some communities, the only available meeting facility is an auditorium with seats fastened to the floor in mixed rows, then your meeting format becomes more limited unless you are able to break the audience into small classrooms or other rooms near the main auditorium.

### **POLITICAL CLIMATE**

Another major consideration in meeting design is the political climate in which the meeting will be held. An analysis of the political climate should include such issues as the attitude of the public toward the agency, the attitude of the public toward the information that will be reviewed in the meeting, as well as the attitude of either cooperation or competitiveness between the various publics. The political climate may have a strong impact on format selection. For example, while the large group/small group format is usually a highly effective meeting format, there have been instances in communities in which there was considerable

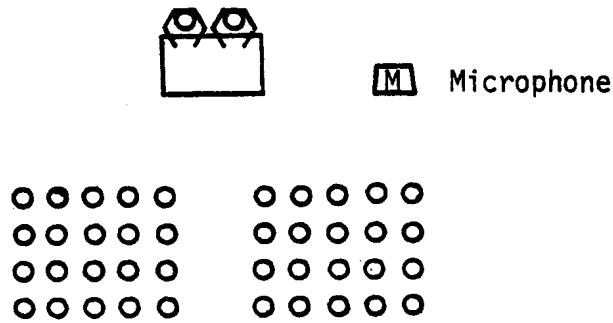


antagonism toward either the agency or the project where the public resisted being broken down into small groups, feeling that it was an attempt on the part of the agency to manipulate by "dividing and conquering." In these cases the public may insist that all spokesmen have an opportunity to be heard by all people in attendance at the meeting. This situation is, however, the exception and there has been little resistance and much support for the large group/small group format in those situations where substantial antagonism did not already exist prior to the meeting. If there are strong factions or strongly opposing interests within the community then the meeting format should do nothing to enhance or reinforce these groups in their opposition to each other. For example, meetings should not be designed in which "all environmentalists" or "all people interested in development" are broken into small groups for further discussion. This has a tendency to reinforce the antagonism between the groups and further polarize positions leaving the agency in the untenable position of attempting to negotiate between antagonistic and hostile groups.

A final factor to be considered in the political climate is the intensity of interest. One very obvious impact that very high community interest will have on a program is an increase in attendance at any meetings. There are several current public participation programs nationwide at this time which average 500 to 2,000 participants per meeting. Clearly such an audience has a substantial impact on the formats that are available to the meeting designer. Another impact that high interest in the study will have is a willingness of participants to come into relatively long and intense public participation activities, such as an 8-hour workshop, a charrette, or a periodic meeting of a task force or advisory committee. Without this intense interest these activities which require a greater sacrifice of time and emotional energy are less likely to have enthusiastic participation. Finally, when there is extremely high intensity of interest and a potential for large audiences it may be desirable to consider the possibility of multiple meetings so that the audience is broken down into more manageable size. The greater the interest the more likely it is that those who attend the meeting wish to participate, and as a result, it is necessary that the meetings covering issues with intense interest provide increased opportunities for participation. The energy and enthusiasm which comes from intense interest can be turned into intense opposition and frustration if full opportunities are not allowed for that interest to be expressed.

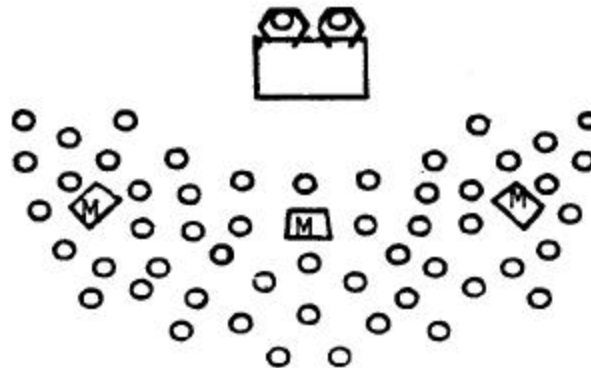
#### ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

After determination of the meeting type, based on the issues addressed above, the second most important issue which faces a meeting designer is the room arrangement, including the arrangement of tables, chairs, flip charts, etc. In the same way that the type of meeting selected reflects the function of the meeting, the room arrangements also reflect the relationships between the participants. For example, Figure A shows the most typical meeting format.



**Figure A**

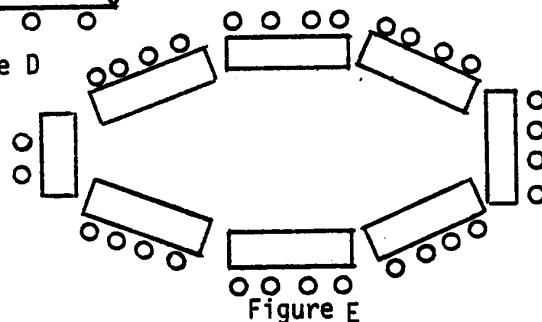
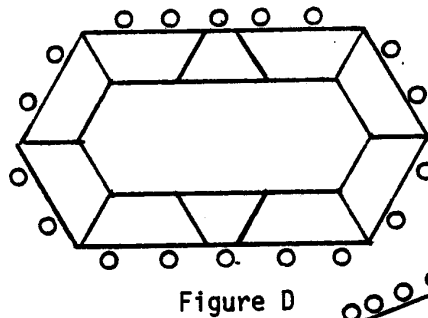
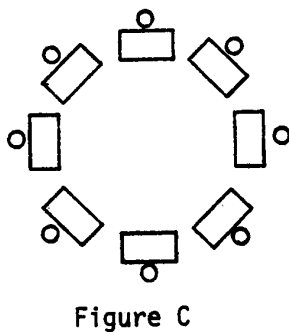
As one can quickly see by glancing at the drawing, the source of all information and wisdom clearly proceeds from the front of the room. In addition, this seating arrangement establishes a relationship in which all participants talk to the agency representative at the front of the room rather than to each other. As a result, this seating arrangement may be useful and appropriate in a situation where the major function of the meeting is information-giving--when it is appropriate that the seats reflect that the source of information is the front of the room where the agency representatives are seated. If, however, you would like to encourage at least some minimal interaction between participants in the audience and also break up the we/they separation implicit in the seating arrangement in Figure A, then you might want to consider placing the chairs in a semicircle so that at least portions of the audience can see the faces of other participants and talk to each other as well as the agency representative, as shown in Figure B.



**Figure B**

In this arrangement the microphones are also placed so that the participants do not have to come to the front of the room in order to participate and so may participate in a manner which is more comfortable to them rather than participate on "the agency's terms." The seating arrangements shown in Figures A and B are both suitable arrangements for large audiences and are particularly suited for information-giving. They may also be suitable for information-receiving or the summarizing functions, although there are alternative formats for those two functions which may even be more useful.

The optimal seating arrangement for interaction and for consensus-forming negotiation is the circular arrangement shown in Figure C. Since it is usually difficult to obtain individualized tables and desks, the next most frequent seating arrangement that is still appropriate for interaction and consensus formation, is the seating arrangement shown in Figure D. The critical feature of these two seating arrangements is that eye contact can be established and maintained by all participants with each other, and the physical distance between the participants is not too great. Since it is also not always possible to get the trapezoid tables shown in Figure D, an alternative seating arrangement which accomplishes the same purpose although leaving some gaps between participants is the configure shown in Figure E using rectangular tables.



***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Any of these configurations (which are essentially variations on a circle) have an upper limit of approximately 25 to 30 participants before the physical distance from one end of the circle to the other is so great that communication becomes constrained and unnatural. There are, however, seating arrangements which will allow for up to 100 participants in a seating configuration that still clearly communicates that the purpose of the meeting is for interaction between the participants. In Figure F is shown a seating arrangement used by the Committee for Economic Development.

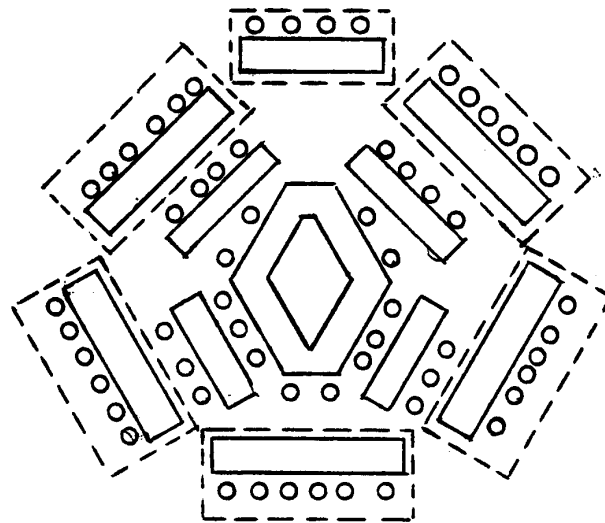


Figure F

This arrangement permits 100 or more persons to work on important worldwide economic issues. While the number of participants is greatly increased by this room arrangement it remains clear that the purpose of the arrangement is to encourage communication between the participants rather than simply between the participants and the agency leaders.

When an agency wishes to combine both an information-giving function and an interaction function, then the room arrangement shown in Figure G may be suitable.

In this arrangement the information giving will be accomplished in the semicircle tables in the remainder of the room. If the facility in which you are meeting does not permit for both functions in the same room, then it might be worthwhile to consider holding meetings in schools where it is possible to hold the main session in the auditorium and break the participants into small discussion groups to be held in individual classrooms.

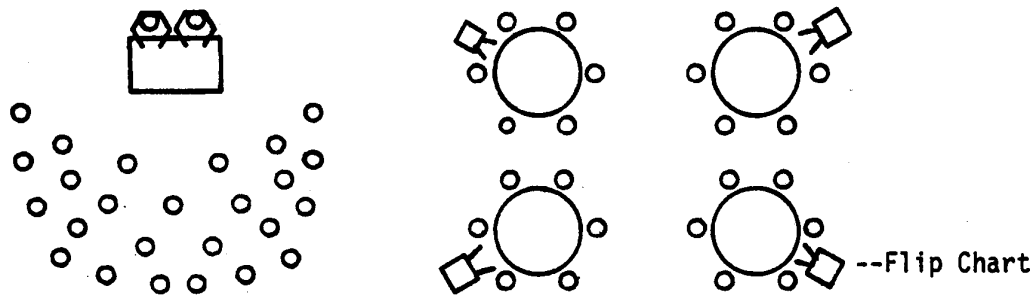


Figure G

An alternative format, which can be used when participants will be working in small discussion groups but there is still some need for the agency to supply information to all the participants, is to use the banquet format used in Figure H.

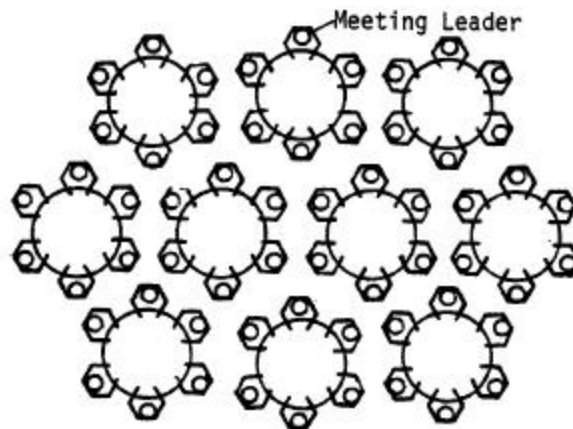


Figure H

In this configuration the meeting leader may make a short presentation while standing at one of the tables, but the major focus of the meeting is clearly the small group interaction. This format might be particularly suitable for a relatively large workshop in which the initial presentation is limited primarily to instructions, and the bulk of the meeting will be spent in the small discussion groups.

Naturally there are numerous variations on all the configurations shown above. These examples should serve to illustrate that seating arrangements are a significant part of the maxim "format follows function," and

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

hopefully will encourage meeting designers to consider the most appropriate seating arrangements for the type of meeting they wish to hold rather than adopting the traditional meeting format only because it is habitual.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

The leadership style the agency representatives use to conduct meetings is also a major component in the overall effectiveness of the meeting. Even if great care has been made to design the meeting format most appropriate for the interaction, with a seating arrangement that tends to encourage interaction; if the meeting itself is led in a rigid, authoritarian manner the public reaction to the agency may still be negative. Typically, people leading meetings in an authoritarian manner do so because they have never seen good models or more informal and consultative styles, or they believe they must act in an authoritarian manner in order to exercise adequate control. Yet, historically it has been precisely those meetings which have been run in an arbitrary and authoritarian manner which have been most likely to get out of control or become disorderly. If the style of meeting leadership is such that participants feel consulted and believe the meeting is being run on behalf of everybody, then the participants have a substantial stake in maintaining order and supporting any procedural suggestions of the leader. If the meeting is run in a highly authoritarian manner, then the public has little stake in maintaining order--their needs may be best met by disorder--so that the heavy-handed approach in fact runs closer to losing control of the meeting than the more consultative informal style. The critical element in effective meeting leadership appears to be that the audience feel that the meeting is "theirs" rather than just the agency's. When participants believe that the meeting is everybody's meeting they are likely to observe ground rules and even assist the meeting leader in maintaining order.



### DESIGNING WORKSHOPS

by James L. Creighton

The term "workshops" is used for a wide variety of small meetings including small informal discussions, training sessions, and highly structured activities such as participation in simulation games. For the purposes of this article we will be concentrating on workshops which 1) are working sessions rather than simply discussions; and, 2) have a specific product in mind which it is the objective of the worker to complete. Examples of products which might be produced in workshops include:

- C Lists of problems perceived by the public that should be addressed by the study. These lists might also be prioritized in a workshop.
- C Broad conceptual alternatives which are seen by the public as possible ways to solve and identify problems.
- C Evaluation of a set of alternatives.
- C Lists of the critical impacts to be analyzed as part of the environmental and social impact analysis.
- C A single agreed-upon plan resulting from negotiations and evaluation of a range of alternatives.

### WORKSHOP SIZE

Because the purpose of the workshop is to be a working session and provide maximum opportunities for interaction and negotiation, it is necessary to limit workshop size. The ideal workshop size is limited to approximately 12 to 15 participants. However, the need for workshop participation to be representative of the entire community usually creates pressures to enlarge participation resulting in a workshop size of 20 to 25 participants. Once the workshop size has reached 20 to 25 participants it is necessary that some of the activities be conducted in smaller discussion groups which report back to the larger group.

### SELECTION OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Since the number of participants in a workshop must be limited this immediately poses problems of representativeness as typically there are more than 25 to 30 individuals or interests that would like to be represented in a workshop. As a result, workshops can run the risk of appearing to leave some individuals or

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Course, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.



interests out unless a great deal of effort is exerted to select a representative group. Some of the methods which may be used to reduce the risk of people feeling excluded are:

- a. Repeated workshops: A workshop format can be designed which can be repeated as often as necessary allowing opportunities for everyone who wishes to participate to go through the same workshop experience.
- b. Daytime workshop/evening meeting: One approach to the problem of people feeling excluded is to conduct a daytime workshop, selecting representatives as carefully as possible to insure that the full range of values within the community is represented. Then the products produced during the daytime workshop are shared in an evening session to which everyone in the community is invited. In effect the workshop prepares a report which is then reviewed by everyone who wishes to participate, thus reducing the dangers that the workshop will be seen as consultation only with an elite group.
- c. Interest group selection: An alternative method is for the agency to conduct a careful analysis and try to describe the interests that it feels need to be represented in the workshop without selecting the particular individuals to represent that interest. Through consultation with the interests the agency then learns which individual the interests would like to have represent them. This reduces the risk that the agency may be seen as "stacking the deck" by selecting workshop participation only of individuals who support agency policies; but it will still not completely eliminate the dangers that some groups will feel unrepresented.

#### DURATION OF A WORKSHOP

Workshops can be run during a three-hour evening meeting, or on other occasions may run for six to eight hours during the day. The most intense form of workshop is, of course, the charrette which may run for many hours. Any workshop which is long enough that it cannot be held in evening hours runs greater risk of being perceived as nonrepresentative and limited to an elite group, since longer workshops immediately create problems of obtaining babysitters or getting off work for the period of time involved in the workshop.

#### TYPICAL WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The typical workshop structure consists of three basic phases:

Orientation: During the orientation period the agency describes the purposes of the workshop, the structure of the workshop, and provides the public with sufficient information so that the public can complete the group activity which is to follow. This phase is usually as brief and succinct as possible.

Group Activity: This is the actual work period of the workshop during which the participants are broken into small groups to perform an assignment or participate in a simulation game or some other structured activity which will result in the desired product. The use of flip charts and selection of spokespersons and recorders by teams is a frequently used technique in conducting workshops.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Group Discussion: Once the group activity has been completed and a product has been produced (although frequently in a raw, undigested form), a period follows during which the group can discuss the product it has produced, evaluate it, and possibly place some priority on which items they consider to be most important.

**STEPS IN DESIGNING A WORKSHOP**

The follow steps are useful in designing a workshop:

1. Identify the desired product: In this step you identify precisely what the product is that should result from the workshop, such as a set of alternatives, a ranking of alternatives, a list of impacts which should be evaluated as part of the environmental and social impact analysis.
2. Identify the resource information the public will need: If citizens are to help you in developing alternatives, evaluating alternatives, or identifying impacts, there is certain basic information they will need in order to give you their responses. This information should be prepared in a simple understandable format, written in layman's language so that the least amount of workshop time will be spent by the participants in locating the information that they need. Frequently this material is included in a small workbook which also contains team assignments, exercise instructions, and other background material on the study. Careful preparation of this resource material is one of the most important tasks in workshop design prior to conducting the workshop itself. If this material is presented in confusing, complex, or over-detailed form it will substantially impede the workshop itself.
3. Select or design a series of activities which will result in the desired product. In some cases there may be previously used workshop formats which will result in the desired product. If not, it will be necessary for you to design a set of activities which will produce the needed materials. The usual technique is to write simple clear instructions for group activities and give the groups substantial responsibility, both in how the activity is completed and the product which is produced. A case history showing the complete design of a workshop is provided below to provide further guidance which will assist you in designing activities.
4. Design simple mechanisms for evaluating workshop product. Once participants have worked together to develop long lists of possible problems or alternative solutions or probable impacts, there is a final need for participants to evaluate the products that have been produced or to place some priority as to which are most significant. Without an opportunity to evaluate, participants may feel restricted by the workshop format or feel that all the points in the workshop are receiving equal value regardless of relative merit. This evaluation could include completion of a written response form, ranking items in a priority list, utilizing a straw vote, or utilizing a weighted voting system based on the highest priorities (as is used in the nominal group process). Without some opportunities for evaluation, citizens are likely to

feel incomplete at the end of the workshop and may be concerned that all the evaluation is left to the discretion of agency staff, with the risk that some of their deepest concerns and priorities may not receive the same value that they would have assigned to them.

### A WORKSHOP CASE STUDY

The case study presented here is a description of a series of workshops conducted by a regional office of the U.S. Water & Power Resources Service on a study of future water supply needs for four counties.

The desired product to result from the workshops was a set of scenarios--short word-pictures of possible futures which could occur in the study area. Because of the large geographical area covered by the study, it was entirely possible that the futures foreseen in one county would be different than the futures foreseen in the adjoining county.

Prior to the workshops a series of meetings was held in each county with representatives of local city and county agencies as well as identifiable leaders of organized groups. One of the items covered in these meetings was to solicit recommendations as to the individuals who would participate in the first round of workshops. In seeking these recommendations the agency clearly established that it was mandatory that the workshop participation be balanced among the various interests within the community and that a full range of values be included. Based on these recommendations invitations were sent to the recommended individuals with the provision that the individual invited could select someone else to attend in their place if they did not wish to participate. In addition, it was publicly announced both that the workshops were going on and that there would be a second round of workshops which would be open to anybody who wished to participate, as well as a series of evening meetings for those who were unable to participate in the workshops.

Prior to the workshop a "dry run" workshop was conducted with internal planning staff. This workshop served to clarify those portions of the workshop design which were particularly effective and those portions which required further work before they could be used with the general public.

A short workbook was prepared with information on the study, the planning process which was to be used in the study, the workshop agenda including all assignments, and basic data such as existing population projections, estimates of land under irrigation, water required for fish and wildlife, and industrial usage for each major new factory or power plant. These workbooks were sent out several weeks in advance along with the initial invitation inviting participation in the workshop. In addition, graphics were prepared which displayed the planning procedures to be used in the study as well as the public participation activities anticipated for the entire study.

The workshop itself was designed as an entire day's activity, beginning at nine in the morning and ending at four in the afternoon. In the first round of workshops, one workshop was conducted in the County Seat of each of the four counties in the study. The workshop was conducted in meeting facilities which allowed participants to gather around tables for general sessions and break into small discussion groups for the team assignments. A flip chart was provided for each of the teams. Teams were assigned on a purely random basis using a simple counting-off system to insure that all participants of a single interest would not gather together in a single team.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

An opening orientation session was held in which the study was described, planning procedures detailed, future public involvement activities discussed, and the procedure for the workshop outlined. The teams were then established and assigned each to a corner of the room where they could gather around the flip charts. The team was assigned both of the tasks indicated below and asked to select a spokesperson who would then prepare a report of the team's results for the total group.

The two first team activities (as described in the workbook given to the participants) are shown below:

**TEAM ACTIVITY: Identifying Factors Which Affect Development**

Instructions: As a team make a list of those factors which will affect development in either your county or other counties in the four-county study area. These may be factors that either encourage or inhibit development. While we naturally want to identify the important factors, you need not worry about whether or not a particular factor is important enough to be included on the list--your team will assign priorities to these factors in a subsequent activity. Record your team list of factors on the form on the next page.

Time: 30 minutes

**TEAM ACTIVITY: Evaluating the Importance of Each Factor**

Instructions: As a team select the three factors you believe will be most significant in affecting development in the four-county region. Two criteria you may want to consider are: (1) Amount of impact--how much impact this factor will have if it changes or remains the same; (2) Likelihood--the probability that this impact will occur. Indicate your selection on the form on the next page. Then review the remaining factors, and assign them to the three categories: High Impact, Middle Impact, Low Impact. You will find yourself under time pressure, so regulate your time accordingly. At the end of the time, select a spokesperson who will present a report of your team's results to the total team.

Time: 45 minutes

The timing of the workshop was such that the team reports were presented shortly before the lunch period. During the luncheon period the teams' reports were consolidated and a proposal prepared for the group as to which themes would be developed further in the afternoon session. Immediately upon returning from lunch this proposal was discussed with the group, and in several occasions additions or changes were made. Once the themes had been selected the teams were then each assigned one of the themes and given the two team assignments indicated below.

**TEAM ACTIVITY: Developing an Alternative Futures Scenario**

**THEME ASSIGNED TO TEAM:** \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: Develop a scenario--a little "scene"--describing the future development in your county based on the theme assigned your team. To do this you may wish to review the other factors which affect development in light of your theme. Or you may wish to develop your scenario intuitively. It should be sufficiently detailed in terms of population centers and industry that water demands can be developed from it.

Time: 1 hour

TEAM ACTIVITY: Estimating Water Needs

Instructions: As a team, develop your best guess of the amounts, quality, and location of water needs in your county in the year 1990 based on the scenario developed by your team. Potential water supply sources are listed on the following page.

Time: 30 minutes

Again reports were given by each of the teams on the scenarios they had developed and their estimates of water needs for their scenario. During this period it was possible for members in other teams to ask questions, point out assumptions that may not have been valid, or propose additional items that should have been included in the scenario.

In addition to receiving the workbook described above, each participant also received a "Hand-In Workbook" which allowed them to make comments on the materials developed by any of the teams. This "Hand-In Workbook" consisted of several mimeographed sheets containing such questions as:

- C "Were there factors which your team left out which you consider important?"
- C "Were there factors which you consider to be of significantly greater or lesser importance than did your team?"
- C "For what reasons?"
- C "Were there other themes you would like to have seen used as the basis for developing scenarios?"
- C "For what reasons?"
- C "Do you believe the scenarios developed accurately reflected the themes on which they were based?"
- C "What changes would you suggest?"
- C "In your opinion did the water demands developed for each scenario seem to make sense?"
- C "What changes would you make?"

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

C "Are there any other water needs we did not identify today?"

C "Are there any other items you would particularly like us to examine as part of the study?"

In addition, the "Hand-In-Workbook" contained two simple scales which allowed participants to rate each of the scenarios which had been developed. These scales allowed participants to react both to the likelihood that a particular scenario would occur, but also express the degree to which they would be pleased or unhappy were that scenario to actually occur. These scales are shown on the next page. (The use of scales such as these by Federal agencies is subject to approval requirements from the Office of Management and Budget).

Finally, the workbook contained an evaluation form which allowed the participants to evaluate the workshop itself and also permitted them to give us suggestions as to individuals who might serve effectively on an advisory committee for their county.

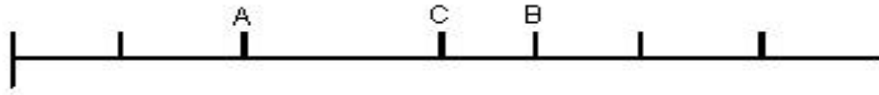
REACTIONS TO ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

We are interested in your personal reactions to each of the alternative futures developed in the workshop. We would like you to react quickly to each of them on the simple scales below.

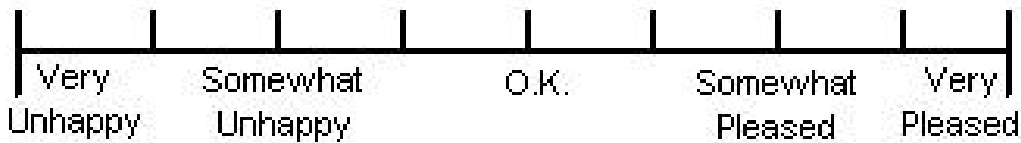
-----

DIRECTIONS: Several scenarios were developed in this workshop based on the themes selected by the participants, and each was assigned a letter (Theme A, Theme B, etc.). On each of the scales below write in the letter which corresponds to your evaluation of that scenario.

For example



1. If this----- alternative future occurred I would feel:



2. I believe the likelihood of this alternative future actually occurring is:







SMALL GROUP PROCESSES  
FOR IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

by James L. Creighton

Traditionally, the emphasis in public involvement has been on large public meetings. Yet this tradition flies in the face of a considerable body of research evidence that suggests that small groups work far more effectively than large groups. The ideal group size is usually defined as in the range from five to nine persons. As the number increases in a group, some participants will "drop out" and participate minimally. This increases the likelihood that the group will be dominated by the stronger personalities. The group begins to break into "leaders" and "followers" and the chances of polarization increase. When group size is much below five, there is less likelihood of getting a stimulating interaction of different viewpoints.

The importance of this research for public involvement is that it points out the need to utilize small group techniques as a means of increasing program effectiveness. This chapter will describe two of the small group techniques that have proved highly successful in working with the public. [For another, see L. Aggens, "The Samoan Circle," p. 259.] Both of these techniques have the advantage of small group interaction, but can be readily used with a large group which is broken down into smaller worker groups. The two techniques are particularly usable for identifying problems and possible solutions. Neither technique is designed for decision making.

THE NEED FOR TECHNIQUES

The obvious question is: "Why the need for special techniques? Can't a group of people just sit around and talk?" Of course they can, particularly if they are friends who share a somewhat similar perspective on an issue. But if the participants are strangers, or if they take opposing sides on an issue, then more may be accomplished if some simple techniques are employed.

Some people are very slow to participate with strangers or with people they believe will be very critical of their comments. In addition, this climate of discomfort runs counter to the climate of psychological security that is necessary for creativity. Creativity, by its very nature, means trying out new ideas. This requires taking a risk that others may disapprove of the ideas. This is possible for many people only in a group where "permission" is granted to consider new and different ideas. Most people must be comfortable before they will really open up in a group. Since this is difficult to achieve in a group of strangers, or a group with strongly opposing viewpoints, small group techniques are designed to create the "permission" for people to participate openly and share their creative ideas. These techniques can reduce the period of discomfort and move the group quickly into productive work. In fact, work teams and groups of friends which are

---

Reprinted from: Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning, U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

supposedly comfortable in working together will often find their effectiveness increased by utilizing these techniques.

The two techniques which we will concentrate on here--Nominal Group Process and Brainstorming--solve the problem of creating a climate of psychological safety, but in two different ways.

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

The Nominal Group Process was designed based on research which suggests that individuals generate more creative ideas and information when they work in the presence of each other but do not interact. According to this research, when people interact in groups, they are more likely to react to each other's ideas rather than come up with new ideas, or consider new dimensions of the problem.

The procedure for Nominal Group Process is as follows:

1. OPENING PRESENTATION:

After an initial presentation explaining the Nominal Group Process, the audience is broken into small groups of six to nine participants.

2. STAFF AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

Each group is assigned a discussion leader and recorder. Prior to the meeting, these staff persons will put up four sheets of newsprint, and also have felt-tipped pens, scratch paper, pencils and 3 x 5 cards ready.

3. INTRODUCTIONS:

The discussion leader will introduce himself/herself and invite everyone in the group to do the same.

4. POSING THE QUESTION:

The discussion leader will then present the group with a predeveloped question such as: "What are the water problems in the James River study area which affect you?" The discussion leader will write the question at the top of one of the flip chart sheets.

5. GENERATING IDEAS:

Participants are provided with paper or file cards and asked to write on the paper all the answers they can think of to the question posted. Their notes will not be collected, but will be for their own use.

Time: 5-10 minutes.

6. RECORDING IDEAS:

Each person, in turn, is then asked for one idea to be recorded on the newsprint. The idea will be summarized by the recorder on the newsprint as accurately as possible. No discussion is permitted. Participants are not limited to the ideas they have written down, but can share new ideas that have been triggered by others' ideas. Anyone can say "PASS" without giving up their turn on the next round. The process continues until everyone is "passing." Alphabetize the ideas on the list: A-Z, AA-ZZ, etc.

7. DISCUSSION:

Time is then allowed for discussion of each item, beginning at the top of the list. The discussion should be aimed toward understanding each idea, its importance, or its weaknesses. While people can criticize an idea, it is preferable that they simply make their points and not get into an extended argument. Move rapidly through the list as there is always a tendency to take too long on the first half of the list and then not be able to do justice to the second half.

Time: 40-60 minutes.

8. SELECTING FAVORED IDEAS:

Each person then picks the ideas that he/she thinks are the most important or best. Instructions should be given to pick a specific number, such as the best five, or the best eight. These ideas should be written on a slip of paper or 3 x 5 card, one idea per card. They may just want to record the letter of the item on the list (A, F, BB, etc.) or a brief summary, so that they don't have to write out the entire idea.

Time: 5 minutes.

9. RANKING FAVORED IDEAS:

Participants then arrange their cards in preferential order, with the ones they like the most at the top. If they have been asked to select eight ideas, then have them put an "8" on the most favored and number on down to a "1" on the least favored (the number will change with the number of ideas selected). A score sheet should then be posted which contains all the alphabet letters used in the listing. Then the participants read their ratings ("... R-6, P-2, BB-8, ...") which are then recorded on the score sheet. When all the scores have been shared, then tally the score for each letter of the alphabet. The highest scoring item can be shown as #1, etc. Post the rankings for the top 5-7 items, depending on where a natural break occurs between high scores and low scores.

Time: 5 minutes.

10. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS:

The participants may then want to discuss the results. Someone may point out what two very similar items "split the vote" and were they to be combined they would constitute a single priority item. If the group as a whole wants to combine them this is acceptable. It should be pointed out, though, that an analysis will be made of all the results, not just the priority items.

Time: 5 minutes.

TOTAL PROCESS TIME: 1 1/2-2 hours, plus time for opening presentation.

USES OF NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

If the full Nominal Group Process is utilized as indicated above, the cumulative time of opening presentation, Nominal Group Process, and reports back to the total group (assuming a larger audience has been broken into small groups) would probably mean a total time of 2 1/2-3 hours. This would be the equivalent of an entire evening meeting. It is possible, however, to utilize portions of the process. For example:

Everyone in an audience can be asked to generate ideas on 3 X 5 cards. The ideas can then be given an initial ranking by the number of times an idea occurs (although this may not be a measure that an idea is good, but simply that a number of people are aware of it).

After a series of alternatives has been presented (along with some time for discussion) the participants can rank the alternatives on 3 X 5 cards and a tally developed for the group. This runs the danger of appearing to be a vote which may be misleading unless the audience is very representative; but the same danger is inherent any time a ranking process is used.

Nominal Group Process can be utilized for problem identification, for generating solution elements, and also for identifying impacts of alternatives. It must be understood--and this should be stressed to the participants--that all the ideas generated require subsequent detailed staff analysis. It is also important that this analysis be communicated to participants as soon as it is available, with opportunities provided for them to respond to the analysis.

One danger of Nominal Group Process--or any complicated small group technique--is that the public may feel "processed" rather than included. If, for example, there was a great deal of animosity toward the study, then it might be wise to allow this feeling to be "ventilated" to the total audience so that the breakdown into small groups and use of Nominal Group Process is not seen as an effort to control, manipulate, or "divide and conquer."

## BRAINSTORMING

While there is research evidence that suggests that group effectiveness may be superior using Nominal Group Process compared to Brainstorming, Brainstorming is such a simple, easy-to-use technique that it is much more frequently used as a participatory technique.

Brainstorming strives to solve three problems:

1. The need for a climate of psychological safety for creativity to be encouraged.
2. The need for people to suspend evaluation in order to be creative.
3. The tendency to approach problems in a fixed, limited way.

The procedures of Brainstorming are quite simple:

1. ALL EVALUATION SUSPENDED:

Participants are encouraged to generate as many ideas as possible in response to a question or problem statement with no evaluation allowed. All ideas, regardless of their apparent validity, are written down on a flip chart (or better yet, pre-hung flip chart paper). A discussion leader will gently, but firmly, remind all participants to stop any evaluation that occurs, including hoots or laughter.

2. "WAY-OUT" IDEAS ENCOURAGED:

Since there is a tendency to approach problems in a rigid, fixed manner, only those ideas which fit this limited approach appear "sensible." To break out of a single approach to the problem, participants are encouraged to generate all kinds of ideas, including "way-out" ideas. This has caused the technique to be called "Blue-skying" based on the notion that "the sky's the limit." While a particular "way-out" idea may not itself be useful, it may contribute to a new way of thinking about a problem and be a path to other ideas which are extremely productive or creative.

3. GROUP SELECTS EVALUATION PROCESS:

Brainstorming by itself does not result in any evaluation but produces an "undigested" list of ideas. As a result it is necessary for the group to utilize some means of evaluation to narrow down the list, unless this narrowing will be done by a subsequent staff evaluation. Some of the methods which can be employed include:

- a. Discuss Each Item: If there is ample time then it is ideal to be able to discuss each item, as after discussion ideas that initially seemed improbable may seem quite productive. This can, however, be extremely time-consuming.

- b. Brief Discussion - Individual Rating: An alternative would be to utilize the evaluation system from the Nominal Group Process discussed above. In this approach there is a brief discussion of each idea, usually focused around clarification of the idea more than debate, followed by a ranking of ideas using 3 X 5 cards. This saves time, but there is greater risk that some idea, the value of which is not as immediately apparent, will not receive adequate attention since only a limited number of ideas are selected for priority.
- c. Straw Vote: Another method is the straw vote. In the straw vote a question is agreed upon such as, "Which ideas do you feel are worth further consideration?" Then each participant is allowed to vote for as many ideas as they wish. Theoretically, a participant could vote for all the ideas; but, in fact, some ideas will receive votes from all participants, some will receive none, and most will receive a few. One important thing about straw votes is that the results are advisory. The group may choose to accept the outcome of the straw vote, or it may choose to alter it or simply use it as the starting point for further evaluation.
- d. Eliminate the Useless Ideas: Some groups find that they can take the time to discuss every idea once they have weeded out those ideas that are obviously useless. One way this is done is to quickly move through the list, and participants can state which ideas they believe are useless. Unless someone else is willing to make a defense of an idea, it is eliminated. If someone does seriously defend the idea, then the idea usually is left in by the group for further evaluation.

#### VARIATIONS ON BRAINSTORMING

Other brainstorming skills: Groups that do a lot of brainstorming usually acquire some "advanced skills" at brainstorming. Three of the most frequently used techniques are:

Piggy-Backing: This is the skill of taking the idea of someone else in the group and expanding or enlarging it to produce other solutions. To do this, you must be able to fully understand the significance of a concept and extrapolate the concept beyond the implication expressed by the first person.

Combination: This is the skill of taking other ideas which have been proposed and combining them in some way which maximizes their strengths or eliminates their weaknesses.

Fantasy Analogy: One way to break down old ways of thinking about the problem is to project a fantasy of the most desirable of all possible solutions. This form of analogy might begin: "In my wildest fantasies, I would like to ...." (This technique is taken from William J. J. Gordon's book Synectics, which contains a number of techniques for increasing creativity with a variety of analogy techniques.)

## USES OF BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is equally useful in problem identification, generation of possible solutions, or identification of possible impacts of alternatives. Brainstorming will typically generate an extremely large quantity of ideas which must somehow be evaluated in ways acceptable to the group. Brainstorming is a particularly good beginning activity for a small group, as it always produces results and usually generates a high level of energy and enthusiasm. The difficulty is to maintain this same energy and enthusiasm during the evaluation period. Because of its simplicity and the short period of time required for brainstorming, it can be effectively combined with numerous other workshop activities.

## REFERENCES:

### Nominal Group Process:

Delbecq, A. and Van de Ven, A., "A Group Process Model for Problem Identification and Program Planning," Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 7, No. 4, Center for Study of Program Administration, Middleton, Wisconsin.

Van de Ven, A. and Delbecq, A., Guidelines for Leaders in Conducting Nominal Group Meetings, Center for the Study of Program Administration, Middleton, Wisconsin.

### Brainstorming:

Osborn, Alex F., Applied Imagination, Charles Scribner & Sons, 1953.

Gordon, William J. J., Synectics, Collier Books, 1961.





THE SAMOAN CIRCLE: A SMALL GROUP PROCESS FOR  
DISCUSSING CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS

by Lorenz Aggens

Public officials or agency staff often need to hear from concerned publics about their problems, needs, fears and values before a decision is made on an issue of controversy in the community. People with opposing views will often fill a large meeting room, their mood charged with emotion. Many people in the room may hope to influence the decision by their cheers, or booing. Because each person is likely to get only one chance to speak, statements may have been written out for reading, or some especially articulate person will have been chosen to speak for a group of citizens. That responsibility, and the size and temperament of the audience, promotes oration by speakers and the use of words more designed to stir emotions than to share personal opinions and feelings about the subject at issue.

The person responsible for conducting such a meeting usually feels great personal stress over the need to "control" the meeting and insure that the discussion is equitable and moderate. In attempting to be "in charge" while being fair and neutral, the person presiding over the meeting will often use tactics that will be seen as capricious or arbitrary by those vying for special recognition and influence. If the Chairman of the meeting is from the staff or policy board that will be making a decision on the issue under discussion, he or she is likely to become the target for stern admonitions, emotional appeals, and even threats. The people running, or the panel of decision makers sitting in the front of the room "hearing" from their publics, often feel that THEY have become the subject of the meeting. Instead of being able to listen carefully to what is being said, the chairman or meeting sponsors find themselves in the position of having to answer (or decline to answer) rhetorical questions and challenges.

It was after just such a meeting that the idea of the Samoan Circle was born. The staff of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (the regional planning agency for the Chicago metropolitan area) were "debriefing"--otherwise known as licking your wounds--after a particularly abusive "meeting" between war parties in a land use dispute. Our discussions quickly turned to whether there was a better way to hear from both sides of an argument without being accused of being the "other side" by both sides.

One of the staff reported that, in some Pacific island communities he had read about (and Samoa might not be one of them), issues were debated, in years gone by, by calling together all interested parties to share their views in an open and equitable discussion format. After several days of feasting and drinking together, those who still felt there was an issue gathered in a circle to discuss the matter. No one was in charge of the meeting. Anyone spoke out who was stirred by the discussion. The more interested participants moved closer to the center of the discussion circle. The less interested remained on the fringe of the circle, or drifted away. The discussion went on and on until those most concerned in the outcome of the matter could arrive at some agreement. Then they all had a final drink together and went home.

---

This is an original article describing material used by the author in IWR training programs.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

With little to lose, the staff agreed that something like this should be tried, although we agreed that--despite their similarities to extracurricular activities at national political conventions--some features of the meeting process would have to be omitted.

Something like the process described in the accompanying article was tried, first on a group of about 30 people, and then with larger groups. At one of these meetings, someone asked for the name of the meeting process. The meeting facilitator, in a momentary flash of alliteration said, "Call it the Samoan Circle!" Efforts to retract that christening have failed. Most people who have used the Samoan Circle process more than once have called it something like a "discussion circle", or omitted any title, as a means of saving a lot of time explaining something that may be anthropological baloney. [Although the process may not have its origins in Samoa, it has now been used there. However, a report by a government agency staff member notes that after the elders gather to discuss proposals by his agency, a drink is passed around among participants, the effect of which is to paralyze the vocal cords of all "off-islanders."]

A description of the Samoan Circle, in the state to which it has currently evolved, is provided below--dedicated to all who have found themselves the "target" rather than the leader of the meeting.

### **THE SAMOAN CIRCLE**

The "Samoan Circle" meeting process is designed to facilitate the discussion of controversial issues when there is a large group of people interested in the topic. Its principal value is in the opportunity it affords for an exploration and exchange of knowledge and opinion where the large size of the group, or an environment of controversy, might disable other kinds of meetings. This meeting process is also useful when the possibility exists that no one person could be accepted as a fair moderator by all who might seek to be involved in the discussion.

In a "Samoan Circle" meeting, individuals can speak out on the issue without the need for oratorical skills, or the ability to put all their thoughts together into the one, short, cogent statement so often required by the dynamics of involvement in large group meetings. In this process, no one needs to be burdened with the responsibility of being the moderator of equitable participation, a judge of fairness, or the controller of other people's behavior. The advantages of small group discussion are afforded in the midst of a large group. The need and the opportunity for participants to use dramatics, "us/them" name-calling, and "cheerleading" in efforts to make their points are lessened.

The process does not resolve conflict. It is intended for the fullest possible exchange of information about an issue in anticipation of other group processes better designed for decision making or conflict management. However, some users of the "Samoan Circle" have experienced the spontaneous resolution of conflicting views and agreement on actions required--apparently as a result of the contestants in a controversy having heard one another for the first time. It is not recommended that users of this process anticipate this result.

Other types of meetings should be used when the organization that has called the meeting wants to present information to those in attendance, or when the sponsoring organization is likely to be required to answer a lot

of questions or defend itself or its propositions to all others present at the meeting. The "Samoan Circle" has been used successfully in meetings with as many as 400 persons in attendance, and as few as a dozen. The meeting process works best when there is controversy. It does not fail in the absence of controversy, but the mechanics will seem less needed and may become an irritant when other, more traditional, meeting processes would work just as well.

A prerequisite for using the "Samoan Circle" is faith in democratic methods and their valuing of opposing and minority points of view. It requires belief that any group's decisions will benefit from the collision of truth and error, and that strongly held and represented opinions are as valuable to the decision-making process as are open and analytical minds. This kind of meeting also requires participants who are of goodwill in spite of disagreement. Any group process can be destroyed by persons bent upon disruption as a means of achieving their objectives.

The most notable characteristic of the "Samoan Circle" is that there is no one who is the chairman, or moderator, or facilitator. It is a leaderless meeting. Responsibility for discipline in this kind of meeting is vested in everyone, rather than in meeting leaders. Everyone has, and will quickly see that he or she has, a clear stake and part in maintaining an orderly environment for discussion.

Room Arrangements: As many chairs as seem needed for the meeting should be set up on concentric circles, with the inner circle big enough in diameter to allow for a round table with five chairs.<sup>1</sup> There should be enough space around the central table and five chairs for people to walk around it without having to climb over the legs of those sitting in the first circle of seats. Four or more aisles should be left open to permit people to move easily from seats in the concentric circles to seats at the center table. For large groups, a microphone should be placed on the center table to insure that discussion across this table can be heard easily by everyone in the room--but it is destructive to the group dynamic intended if this microphone is handed around the table as each person takes a turn talking. People at the center table should be talking to one another, personally, at close range. They should not be coming to the center table only to gain access to the microphone in order to whip up enthusiasm among allies in the audience. An omnidirectional microphone (taped down, if necessary) in the center of the table should be used--but only when this is absolutely necessary because of the size of the group.

Starting the Meeting: After the group has been called to order by the person who will begin and end the meeting, it should be stated that the purpose of the meeting is to learn from one another as much as is possible about the topic that is at issue in the community--including facts, problems, obstacles, needs, values, solution ingredients, suggestions for improvement and new ideas. Representatives of the two or three sides that may be contesting over the issue could share in this introduction in an effort to strengthen the realization

---

<sup>1</sup>The 60" round table commonly used in hotel banquets is ideal. Five chairs provide space for what many researchers feel is the optimum size group for discussions.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

that the meeting process is not a contrivance or manipulation of one side by the other. Here is a sample of the words used on one occasion to launch this kind of meeting:

(After statement of purpose). . . "We hope that we can learn from one another by sharing our views--freely, openly and candidly. To make this possible in a short period of time, we would like to use a meeting process that overcomes a number of the problems you may have experienced in having a productive and orderly discussion in a large group. This meeting process may be new to you, but it is easy to understand. It is designed to run on the energy of your knowledge and opinions. It will be guided by your interests, and moderated or disciplined by your commitment to democratic principles. The success of this meeting will not depend upon the parliamentary skills or leadership of a chairman or moderator--it will depend upon your willingness to participate, to share, and to use differences of opinion as stepping stones to new ideas and solutions, rather than as stumbling blocks to progress. All meetings have rules. Here are the rules for this one:

1. Anyone may participate by making a statement, asking a question, answering a question, taking exception to or confirming another person's opinion, making a rebuttal, and so on. But to do any of these things, the person who wants to say something must come to this center table and take a seat. Once there, he or she may interrupt, or wait for an opening in any discussion that is going on. The person taking a seat can join in the discussion or try to change its direction, or raise a new topic.
2. The discussion at any one time is limited to the five people who can be seated at this table. If you come to the table, you may stay as long as you feel you have a contribution to make to the discussion. You may leave and return again as often as you wish. If there are no vacant seats at the table and you want to get in on the discussion, stand near the table until someone gives up a seat. The more people there are standing near the table waiting for seats, the more this should signal those sitting in the discussion to evaluate their own need to continue to participate. If you want to talk to one of the people at the table, stand directly behind that person's chair as a signal to the others at the table that you want one of their seats.
3. If you want to cheer, or groan, or make any other noises to represent your opinion, please come to the table, take a seat here, and then do it. Once I leave this table, I will be bound by these same rules. The discussion will go on until there is no one left at the table, or until the time for adjournment arrives.

If there are no questions, we can begin the discussion."

It is helpful, after the instructions are given, to have one or two people who have previously agreed to "break the ice" come to the center table and begin the discussion. The first person at the table, or anyone who is left alone at the table, is in fact talking to everyone in the room, and this may be a bit awkward for some people.

Once a second person comes to the table, the discussion becomes a more personal conversation, and the theater-in-the-round condition disappears.

People from the organization that called the meeting should not assume any privilege in communications that is not afforded to other participants. If a question is asked that the organization should answer, a representative of the organization should move to the table and respond from there. When the answer has been delivered, the representative should move back to the audience seats. If the meeting needs some redirection or the process needs clarification, the person "in charge"--the one who made the opening comments--should seek a seat at the table to make this statement.

Meeting Dynamics: Once there are two or more people involved in the discussion, the talk takes on the "you-and-I" character of communication at short range. The oratory and belligerence that are common when "discussion" is taking place across the width of a 30-foot room lessens when people of different persuasions close the physical distance between them. Discussion across the round table is usually (but not always) more relaxed, temperate, conversant and instructive. If people feel the need to assault one another over their convictions, oceans of space will not prevent this.

When all the seats at the table are filled and a person comes to the center to wait for a vacancy to develop, it is not uncommon for everyone at the table to stand up and leave. The sense of self-discipline invoked by this unchaired meeting process is very strong in most groups. On the other hand, when no one comes to the center table to wait for a vacancy, those sitting at the table feel free to expand their discussion and register their opinions and feelings several times. Sponsors of this meeting process usually have to suppress the inclination to rush into such situations and shut off a talkative person, or suggest, in the name of equity, that others might want to be heard. If and when such actions are needed, plenty of time should be given for the group to make its own interruption of a monologue, or to show its need for more participant involvement by individual actions to accomplish this. Any guidance needed from meeting sponsors should be given by someone who takes a seat at the table to express that need as a personal opinion.

Meeting Records and Evaluations: A number of things can be added to the meeting process to make a record of transactions and to achieve some degree of "closure" that points at further action. Comments can be transcribed and the process used as a form of public hearing. (However, this meeting format seems inappropriate when formal, written statements are being read into the record.) Minutes can be kept. Decision makers can be identified as auditors scattered throughout the audience. Comments can be written on newsprint on a wall. This can be done as a sequential list of opinions stated, or as a series of categorized lists--such as: "advantages" and "disadvantages;" or "strengths of the proposal" and "suggestions for improvement in the proposal."

At the end of the meeting, time might be left for everyone in attendance to scan the newsprint listing of comments and to leave behind some kind of ballot that would give the sponsoring organization some indication of how people felt who did not participate in the discussion. Those present might be asked to turn in sheets of paper or file cards on which they indicated the points they "strongly agreed" with and those they "strongly disagreed" with. They might pick the five or ten items that they felt were the most important statements of the problem, need, objective, or other answer to the question that had been discussed--and even rank these in order of importance.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Ending the Meeting: Discussion can be allowed to run its course if there is no time required for adjournment. The meeting room will gradually empty until there may be no more people left except for an intensely interested group at the center table. If time limits, or the need to move on to another agenda topic require the ending of the discussion before everyone has left the center table, a number of things can be done. Someone who is responsible for the time limits can take a seat at the table and call attention to the disappearing time and remind the group of the agreed-upon time for ending the meeting. This often causes a flurry of activity by people who have been holding back, but who are still intent upon getting their point of view heard. An announcement of the need to close the discussion should be made early enough to accommodate this last-minute rush.

When the time to end the meeting is about five to ten minutes away, the person who started the meeting can move to the table, wait for a seat to be vacated if none is already empty, and withdraw that chair. Continuing to stand near the table, the "meeting-ender" can withdraw each chair as it is vacated. This action is frequently acknowledged by the audience with understanding chuckles and, sometimes, by a last-minute rush. The message: "I need to end this meeting," is clear and nonthreatening; but the person ending the meeting should avoid cutting off last-minute participants from at least some chance at expression unless this is absolutely necessary and the need is obvious to all concerned. If any concluding comments are needed, these can be made when the person ending the meeting takes possession of the last chair.

The "Samoan Circle" has been used successfully by a variety of public agencies and private organizations. Satisfaction with the meeting process seems to be related to a recognition by meeting sponsors and participants that it provided an environment for discussion of a controversial subject where other, more conventional, meeting processes had failed them in the past. In using this process, sponsors have modified it to fit peculiar circumstances, or to make it "feel" better to the personalities involved. Reports of these organizations on their use of the "Samoan Circle" have contributed to a better understanding of the process and to its description for others' use. Reports on your use of this meeting technique would be greatly appreciated.

---

Reports should be sent to L. Aggens, 1915 Highland Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091.

---

Introduction to Section VI:

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES AND METHODS  
(NONMEETING)

Along with movement away from formalized meetings has come an increased awareness of alternatives to meetings. This section describes a variety of nonmeeting public involvement techniques which can be essential elements in effective public involvement programs.

James L. Creighton starts out the section with a short catalogue, including advantages and disadvantages, of a large number of public involvement techniques.

If there is a rival of the public meeting as the leading public involvement technique it is the citizens' committee. By whatever name it is known--advisory committee, task force, work group, etc.--the citizens' committee can play a number of vital functions. But there are also a number of pitfalls. In their article, Creighton and Delli Priscoli summarize practical experiences working with citizens' committees, and describe how to maximize the benefits, and avoid some of the problems.

The next three articles deal with the relationship of public involvement and the media. The media can serve as an important element in a public involvement effort. Or it can respond either with yawning indifference or a deep-seated suspicion of the agencies' motives. The article by Jerry Schmunk and David Hewitt, both Corps Public Affairs Officers, describes the stance that agencies should take toward the media. Paul Edwards describes how to plan and develop a strategy for utilizing the media as part of a public involvement effort. James Creighton describes the actual mechanics of working with the media: writing a press release, obtaining public service announcements, etc.

Most public involvement techniques lend themselves to participation by only the actively interested citizens. This often leads to complaints that public involvement is controlled by special interests, and therefore greater emphasis should be placed on surveys and questionnaires, which can provide an assessment of overall community attitudes. Jerry Delli Priscoli provides guidance for use of these techniques, discussing the appropriate and inappropriate uses, and describing the problems of obtaining Federal clearances to use these techniques.

There is growing recognition that just hearing the public's concerns may not lead to resolution of issues. James L. Creighton describes techniques which go further in actively seeking conflict resolution.

With the advent of large-scale public involvement efforts, storing and analyzing public comment has become a major problem. Creighton and C. Mark Dunning describe specific methods for storing and analyzing large quantities of public comment.





A SHORT CATALOGUE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

by James L. Creighton

There are a large number of public involvement techniques available, and because public involvement is a relatively new field, there are many new techniques being developed constantly.

This article contains a short catalogue of 16 frequently used public involvement techniques. A short description is provided for each technique, plus a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the techniques. An index of the techniques is provided below:

<u>Technique</u>	<u>Page</u>
Interviews	287
Field Offices	288
Hotline	289
Displays, Exhibits	290
Newspaper Inserts	291
Reports, Brochures, Information Bulletins	292
Surveys, Questionnaires	293
Participatory Television	294
Cumulative Brochure	295
Conduct a Contest or Event	296
Mediation	296
Charrette	297
Delph	298
Simulation Games	300
Technical Assistance to Citizens	302
Training Programs for Citizens	303

INTERVIEWS:

Description of the Technique: One technique for quickly assessing public sentiment is to conduct a series of interviews with key individuals representing the range of publics most likely to be interested or affected by the study. The kinds of information which might be discussed in an interview would include the amount of interest in the study, the goals and values of the interest group the individual represents, the manner in which the interest group would like to participate in the study, political climate and relationship between the various interest groups. Interviews can either be nonstructured, or the interviewer can prepare a list of questions or topics to be discussed in each interview, so that responses can be easily compared and summarized. Since there are skills involved in effective

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

interviewing, interviews should be conducted by somebody with experience or training in interviewing.

Federal agencies are required to get approval from the Office of Management and Budget for all surveys and questionnaires. Structured interviews may fall under these approval requirements, so Federal agencies may find it preferable to stay with unstructured interviews.

### Advantages of Interviews:

Interviews can provide a quick picture of the political situation in which a study will be conducted.

- C Interviews can provide important information about how various interests wish to participate.
- C Personal relationships can be built with key individuals and more direct communication links established with the publics. Once communication has been established through an interview, individuals and groups are more likely to participate.

### Disadvantages:

- C Poor interviewing can create a negative impression of the individual.
- C Interviews may not be entirely representative of public sentiment.

## FIELD OFFICES

Description of the Technique: Field offices are local offices of the sponsoring agency established in the community where water resource problems or construction impacts are occurring. Typically, a field office is placed in a highly visible part of the community--such as downtown storefront or shopping center--so that the largest number of people will know of its existence. The field office's staff are able to answer questions and solicit opinions from the local community. A field office is designed to encourage "drop-ins" and other informal interactions with the community, with exhibits, charts, maps, brochures and other materials on display. Field office staff are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the local community. Field offices can also be the meeting place for workshops, task force meetings, open houses or other events. This reinforces the field office as the focal point for participation in the study.

### Advantages of Field Offices:

- C Field offices provide a means of informal interaction with the local community at the convenience of the residents.

- C Field offices communicate the value the agency places upon community feelings.
- C Staff occupying field offices often obtain a better understanding of community needs and desires.

Disadvantages of Field Offices:

- C Field offices can be costly to staff and operate.
- C Field office staff often experience torn loyalties between their commitments to the sponsoring agency and the concerns of the local public.

HOTLINE:

Description of the Technique: A hotline is an "easy to remember" telephone number which is publicized through repetition in brochures, reports, news stores, paid advertising, etc., as a single telephone number that citizens can call to ask questions or make comments about aviation issues. If the public which the agency wishes to reach is large geographically, the hotline is usually established so that the call is toll free to the public regardless of where the call is placed. The hotline is manned with staff who will take responsibility for finding answers to questions from the public, or for relaying comments or complaints from the public to appropriate staff persons. Hotlines have been used as a method of handling public complaints, and as coordination points for individuals requiring information about the progress of a study. Comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as part of the record of a public meeting or hearing.

The communication skills of the staff operating the hotline are very important, as defensive or insensitive responses to public comment may produce negative effects.

Advantages of the Hotline:

- C The hotline provides a convenient means by which citizens can participate in the study.
- C The hotline assists citizens in locating the staff most likely to be able to answer their questions or receive their comments.
- C The hotline may be a useful means of providing information about meetings or other public involvement activities.
- C A hotline is a communication to the public of the sponsoring agency's interest in their comments or questions.

Disadvantages of the Hotline:

- C Defensive or insensitive comments may produce a negative reaction from the public.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- C The hotline must be staffed by people able and willing to deal with public comment effectively.

**DISPLAYS/EXHIBITS:**

Description of the Technique: One technique which has been used to inform the broad public of public involvement programs, or to obtain comment from the public, is to set up displays or exhibits in places such as shopping centers, or state fairs where there are a number of individuals passing by. These range from fixed displays which provide general information to the public, to booths which are manned by public involvement specialists who are able to answer questions from the public, or solicit public comment. Even when fixed displays are used, it is possible to have response forms available so that the public can respond to the display. Displays and exhibits may be particularly useful in identifying publics that had not been previously identified as interested in water resources issues. They also provide general information to the public about water resources problems, even if people choose not to participate. Exhibits or displays should be coordinated with other public involvement activities, so that people displaying an interest as a result of an exhibit can be directed into other public involvement activities.

Advantages of Exhibits or Displays:

- C Provide information to the general public about water resources issues.
- C Help identify individuals and groups with an interest in water resources issues.

Disadvantages of Displays or Exhibits:

- C If exhibits or booths are staffed, they involve a major commitment of staff time.
- C Must be coordinated with other public involvement techniques so that interest developed through the exhibit can be directed into other public involvement activities.

**NEWSPAPER INSERTS:**

Description of the Technique: One technique which has been used to provide information to the broad general public and, at the same time solicit comment back from the public, is a newspaper insert including a response form distributed through the local newspaper. Most newspapers are able to handle the distribution of inserts for a modest cost, and are often able to print the insert at considerably less cost than other commercial printers. The newspaper insert can describe the study or decision-making process and the various means by which the public can be involved, and also

include a response form which will allow people to express opinions or indicate their willingness to be involved in other public involvement techniques.

Most urban newspapers are able to distribute inserts to selected geographical areas, rather than their entire readership, so that it is possible to target the insert at those areas which will have the highest interest in the study. On a percentage basis, the return of response forms is not likely to be very high, although on a total quantity basis, it may provide a means of participation for the largest number of citizens compared with other public involvement techniques. Because respondents are self-selecting, a statistical bias is introduced into the responses, so that they cannot be represented as statistically valid like a survey.

Advantages of a Newspaper Insert:

- C Newspaper inserts reach a much greater percentage of the population than most other public information techniques.
- C Newspaper inserts provide an opportunity for a large number of citizens to participate.
- C Newspaper insert response forms provide a means for identifying other individuals and groups interested in participating in public involvement activities.

Disadvantages of Newspaper Inserts:

- C Newspaper inserts are relatively expensive to produce and distribute in large numbers.
- C The response rate from newspaper inserts is relatively low, and it cannot be represented as statistically valid.

REPORTS, BROCHURES, INFORMATION BULLETINS:

Description of the Technique: Reports, brochures and information bulletins are an essential part of every public involvement effort. They are an essential vehicle for informing the public of the opportunities for participation, the progress of the study to date, and any decisions that have been made.

There are three times at which reports are typically published in a public involvement program. These include:

- a. After problem definition, including initial data collection.
- b. Upon identification of a set of broad general alternatives.
- c. Upon identification of specific detailed alternatives and their environmental impacts.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Because reports contain technical information, one key requirement is to write reports in a manner which provides needed technical information, yet is understandable to the general public. It is sometimes useful to have reports reviewed by an advisory committee who can point out confusing, biased, or unnecessary material in the report.

Brochures are usually brief (up to 16 pages) and contain a description of the study, the issues involved in the study, and a summary of the opportunities for the public to participate in the study. Typically, brochures are used to reach new publics or inform known publics of the initiation of the study. The usefulness of a brochure is almost entirely dependent on its visual attractiveness and the skill with which it is written.

Information bulletins or newsletters are periodic reports to the public published as a means of maintaining a continuing interest in the study as well as documenting the progress in the study in a highly visible manner for the public. Information bulletins or newsletters are particularly important during portions of the study which are relatively technical in nature. During these periods, the general public is less likely to be involved, but should be kept informed of what is occurring through these media. The value of an information bulletin or newsletter rests almost entirely upon its ability to stir interest and encourage interaction. A drab, boring, bureaucratic sounding newsletter will usually not be worth the effort.

Some suggestions for all publications are shown below:

- a. Strive for simplicity.
- b. Use the public's language.
- c. Make the message relevant to the reader.
- d. Use graphics and avoid overly bureaucratic layouts.
- e. Don't make commitments that cannot be fulfilled.
- f. Provide clear instructions for how the public can interact with you.
- g. Get help from the public in preparing and reviewing the materials.

### Advantages of Publications:

- C Publications are direct means of providing a substantial amount of information to a large number of people in a relatively economic manner.

- C Publications are able to communicate a greater amount of information than almost any other form of communication.
- C Publications serve as a permanent record of what has transpired in the public involvement program.

Disadvantages of Publications:

- C Preparation of attractive publications requires definite skills which are not available in all organizations, so may have to be purchased outside the organization.
- C Because of cost factors publications still reach only a limited audience and cannot be considered the only means by which to inform and involve the general public.

CONDUCT A SURVEY:

Description of the Technique: Surveys are an effort to determine public attitudes, values, perceptions on various issues employing a rigorous methodology to insure that the findings of the survey in fact represent the sentiment of the community being sampled. Surveys can be conducted by phone, by mail, by individual interviews, or in small group interviews. Firms that design surveys spend many hours and utilize complex procedures to insure that the survey does not contain bias and that the "sample" of people interviewed is in fact representative. As a result, surveys must be designed and conducted by somebody who is experienced in survey design. Normally this means that someone outside the planning organization must be retained to design and conduct the survey.

The steps you would need to follow in conducting a survey are:

1. Determine specifically what it is your agency or organization wants to find out.
2. Determine how the information would be used once it is obtained, so that you know the results are related to your planning or decision-making process.
3. Check to be sure whether other organizations already collect the information that would answer your questions.
4. Unless you have an experienced survey person in your own organization, contact a reputable survey research firm.

Federal regulations require OMB approval of all surveys or formal questionnaires conducted by Federal agencies or with Federal funds. These approvals are very difficult and time-consuming to obtain, virtually ruling this technique out for most Federal agencies.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Advantages of a Survey:

- C Surveys can provide an expression of feeling from the total public, not just those publics which are most directly affected.
- C Surveys can provide an indication of whether or not the active participants in your public involvement program are in fact representative of the broader public .

Disadvantages of the Survey:

- C Unless surveys are carefully designed, they do not produce reliable and meaningful data.
- C The cost of developing statistically reliable surveys is high.
- C Surveys cannot substitute for political negotiation between significant interests.
- C If the issue is not of broad public interest, then a substantial number of survey respondents will be uninformed about the issues covered by the survey. (If you need to know that people are poorly informed, then this can itself be important information.)
- C Requirements for OMB approval eliminate this technique for most Federal agencies.

PARTICIPATORY TELEVISION:

Description of the Technique: Because of the number of people reached by television, it holds considerable potential as a tool for both informing the public and soliciting participation. Some experts see cable television as holding the answer to participation, since eventually cable television may be utilized in such a way that it allows for two-way communication. In the meantime, there have been several major uses of television programs. These include:

- a. Preparation of a half-hour or a one-hour television program describing alternative courses of action in a major study. Participants are asked to express their preference by mail or by a ballot that has been distributed in advance of the television program. In some cases discussion groups have been organized so that people watch the television program as a group, and discuss the program as a group, before marking the ballots.
- b. The agency could also obtain a block of time and conduct a call-in show on issues. One planning agency conducted a television program much like a telethon, with banks of telephone operators to receive calls from the public and have them answered by a panel of elected officials.



- c. Another agency obtained a regular block of free time from the local channel, and used this as a forum for continuing the discussion in the public involvement program. The television program served as a channel of communication about upcoming events, and also provided a forum for people with different points of view to come on the show and present their viewpoints.

Although television reaches large numbers of people, it is unusual to be able to obtain sufficiently large blocks of time for a participatory television program on commercial television, although this has been accomplished in a few cases where the study was extremely controversial. The audience on educational, university or cable television is much smaller and something of an educational and social economic elite. This creates problems of representation. Any poll which is taken accompanying such a program would share these problems of representation.

Advantages of Participatory Television:

- C Participatory television reaches the largest audience of any community involvement technique.
- C This technique is most convenient for the participants, because they do not have to leave their own home.
- C Even if people do not participate by filling out a ballot or phoning in, there is a definite education function to participatory television.

Disadvantages of Participatory Television:

- C The audience viewing the program may not be representative, and any votes or tallies taken as a result of the program may also be unrepresentative.
- C Unless some participation occurs in designing the program, the public may not feel that the agency accurately or objectively described the issues.
- C This kind of participation gives equal value to somebody who lives immediately near a problem as somebody who lives 50 miles away and is only peripherally affected.

CUMULATIVE BROCHURE:

Description of the Technique: The cumulative brochure is a document which keeps a visible record of a series of repetitive public meetings, public brochures, workshops and citizen committee meetings. At the beginning of the process, a brochure is prepared presenting various study alternatives along with the pros and cons for each of the alternatives. In a series of public meetings and workshops, individuals, agencies and organizations are invited to submit their own alternatives which are then included in the brochure along with their descriptions of pros, cons, and a no-action alternative. The brochure is then republished with space provided in the brochure for individuals to react to the various alternatives by writing their own pros and cons. These comments then become a

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

part of the new brochure. With each round of meetings or other forums for public comment, the brochure grows by the addition of the public comment and technical response. As used by the developer of the cumulative brochure, the process calls for a series of four public meetings, seven versions of the brochure, three workshops and as many citizens committee meetings as may be necessary. The final document is quite thick, but does provide a visible record of the entire process.

Advantages of a Cumulative Brochure:

- C The process is very visible and allows the public to see how a decision was reached.
- C The process encourages open communication between the various publics as well as between the public and the sponsoring agency.
- C No special status is granted to any one individual or group over another.

Disadvantages of the Cumulative Brochure:

- C The final brochure is a large, cumbersome document and the many editions of the brochure can be expensive to produce.
- C The effectiveness of the brochure depends on the ability of the sponsoring agency to address the issues in nonbureaucratic language.
- C The format of the brochure forces public reaction into a pro or con response when there may be other positions as well.
- C Since the sponsoring agency prepares the brochure, groups which are suspicious of that agency may question whether the brochure is biased.

CONDUCT A CONTEST OR EVENT:

Description of the Technique: One way to obtain publicity for your community involvement program is to stage a contest or event as a means of stimulating interest and gaining newspaper or television coverage. Examples of the use of this technique might include:

- C An essay contest in the public schools regarding water resources.
- C A photo contest for the best photo of water recreation.
- C Tours of storage facilities.

The idea is to stage a newsworthy event, related to the theme of the public involvement study. The idea is to not only publicize the public involvement program, but also to get people involved who will then continue to participate in subsequent public involvement efforts. Contests of events might be planned, for example, to precede workshops, meetings, or other public involvement programs in which people could participate.

Advantages of a Contest or Event:

- C May generate substantial interest and publicity.
- C Will help to identify individuals interested in the kinds of issues addressed by the study.

Disadvantages of Contest or Events

- C Typically does not produce public comment directly applicable to the study.
- C Expectations may be established for continuing participation which, if not fulfilled, may lead to resentment or cynicism.

MEDIATION:

Description of the Technique: Mediation is the application of principles of labor/management mediation to environmental or political issues. In mediation a group is established which represents all major interests which will be affected by a decision. Members of the mediation panel are all "official" representatives of the interests, and are appointed with the understanding that the organizations they represent will have the opportunity to approve or disapprove any agreements which result from the mediation. The basic ground rule which is established is that all agreements will be made by unanimity.

A key element in mediation is the appointment of a third party mediator--someone skilled in mediation, who is not seen as an interested party to the negotiations. The mediator not only structures the deliberations, but often serves as a conduit for negotiations between the various parties.

Mediation is only possible when the various interests in a conflict believe they can accomplish more by negotiation than by continuing to fight.

Advantages of Mediation:

- C Mediation can result in an agreement which is supported by all parties to the conflict.
- C Mediation may lead to quick resolution of issues which might otherwise be dragged out through litigation or other political processes.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Disadvantages of Mediation:

- C Mediation is an entirely voluntary process, so it will work only when all parties are willing to negotiate.
- C Mediation requires a highly skilled third party mediator.

CHARRETTE:

A charrette is similar to mediation in that it attempts to bring together all the critical agencies or individuals in an attempt to achieve mutual agreement on an overall plan. The difference is that a charrette is designed for a very concentrated block of time such as an entire weekend or a series of nightly meetings for a week, or a series of once-a-week or weekend meetings. The primary characteristic of a charrette is an effort to reach an agreement in a relatively short time by bringing all the critical decision-makers together under one roof until an agreement is reached. Critical elements in a charrette are:

- a. All major publics must be present so that decisions once reached constitute a consensus.
- b. All participants must agree to participate the entire time of the charrette in an effort to resolve differences and arrive at a plan.
- c. Everybody coming to the charrette does so with the understanding that the purpose is to develop an agreement that all participants can live with.

A charrette would be a particularly useful technique in a crisis situation, or as a means of resolving an impasse reached between various groups. It could also be used as a means of shortening the time required to make a decision in a planning study once the basic data collection had been completed.

Normally there is extensive publicity surrounding the charrette so that a larger public is aware of and supportive of the efforts to reach a mutual agreement.

Advantages of a Charrette:

- C Useful as a means of achieving consensus and--since all critical interests are involved--can result in a commitment by all significant groups to support any plan coming out of the charrette.
- C The intense nature of the charrette can lead to a deeper understanding of the positions and motivations of other individuals and groups.

- C By working together in an intense manner, previously conflicting interests may develop a feeling of teamwork and cooperation which may extend long beyond this particular study.

Disadvantages of a Charrette:

- C Charrettes are effective only when all interested parties are willing to enthusiastically participate, and are willing to accept a negotiated decision.
- C Charrettes are very time-consuming, and it is difficult to get key decision makers to make the commitment to participate for the length of time required.
- C Charrettes require substantial staff preparation, and can be quite expensive.

DELPHI:

Description of the Technique: The Delphi process is a method for obtaining consensus on forecasts by a group of experts. It might be useful, for example, as a means of estimating future airport use by a group of experts with different philosophies and viewpoints. It can also be used as a technique for estimating possible environmental effects of various actions.

The basic procedure is as follows: A questionnaire is submitted individually to each participant requesting them to indicate their forecasts concerning the topic. The responses to the questionnaire are consolidated and resubmitted to the participants with a request that they make an estimate of the probable occurrence of each event. The participants' responses are again collected and a statistical summary is prepared. The statistical summary is distributed to all participants and the participants are asked to give a new estimate now that they have seen the response of the total group. Participants whose answers differ substantially from the rest of the group are asked to state the reasons behind their answers. The new responses are then summarized statistically and redistributed to the participants who are asked to prepare a final estimate. A final statistical summary is then prepared based on participants' comments.

Delphi can be combined with other public involvement techniques. One agency, for example, carried out the Delphi process by distributing the original questionnaire to several thousand people. Even though only a few responded to the first questionnaire, the results were summarized and redistributed back to the original mailing list. With each redistribution of results, more and more individuals joined in the process. In place of the final summary, a large public meeting was held at which the results of the process were discussed. In this case the Delphi process served to generate considerable public interest, and the agency felt that the final public meeting was much better attended than it would have been without the Delphi process.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Advantages of a Delphi Process:

- C The Delphi process is an effective tool for achieving a consensus on forecasts among groups of experts.
- C Delphi minimizes the disadvantages of group dynamics such as overdominance by a single personality or positions taken to obtain status or acceptance from the group.

Disadvantages of a Delphi Process:

- C Delphi may have a tendency to homogenize points of view.
- C The process of mailing questionnaires and redistributing summaries can be a time-consuming and cumbersome process.
- C The public may be no more willing to accept the findings of an expert panel than it would of a single technical expert.
- C The experts still may not be right.

SIMULATION GAMES

There have been a number of simulation games which have been designed to allow people to simulate the effects of making particular policy choices and decisions, and in that process learn more about the impact of decisions and the interrelatedness of various features of an environmental or economic system. Simulation gaming provides an opportunity for people to try out their positions, and see what the consequences would be and how other groups react to them. Simulation games vary greatly in their complexity and length of time required to play them. Unfortunately, the closer the game resembles "reality," the more lengthy and complex it usually becomes.

While simulation games can serve as an effective educational device--as a method for informing the public of the consequences of various choices--they typically do not provide opportunities for the public to provide comment specifically on study issues. As a result, simulation games could be used to educate an advisory group or leadership group of some sort, but must be used in conjunction with other public involvement techniques.

Advantages of a Simulation Game:

- C Simulation games can provide the public with information about the consequences of various policy positions or decisions.

- C Simulation games can provide the public with an understanding of the dynamics of an economic or environmental system.
- C Participation in a simulation game is usually fun, and participants develop a rapport and communication which can be maintained throughout the entire study.

Disadvantages of a Simulation Game

- C There are a number of simulation games on the market which are confusing, overtechnical or misleading. You will have to exercise great care in selecting a simulation game appropriate for your particular study.
- C While simulation games can be educational, they typically don't provide opportunities for direct public comment on your study.
- C Since few games have a perfect fit with reality, citizens may apply the game rules inappropriately to the actual situation.
- C People may become so engrossed in the game that they forget about the actual issues at hand.

PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CITIZENS:

Description of the Technique: The public often feels intimidated by professional staff, and feel that agencies are able to present their points of view in well-argued technical studies, while the public does not have these resources available. Several agencies have provided technical assistance to citizens by providing staff or consultants to help various interests or individuals in developing their own alternatives, or helping them analyze issues or evaluate the impacts of various alternatives. Whether or not this assistance can be provided by internal staff, or must be "independent" consultants, depends on the relationship that exists between the planning agency and the community. The purpose in providing this technical assistance is to insure that citizens who have different values and orientations than the agency's are able to develop their ideas using the same kind of technical expertise as that possessed by the agency itself. In highly controversial situations, the "facts" generated by independent technical assistance may be accepted more readily than "facts" generated by the agency's professional staff.

If the sponsoring agency is already committed to a particular alternative, then the agency's staff assigned to provide technical assistance will find themselves in the awkward position of having to "serve two masters."

Advantages of Technical Assistance:

- C Technical assistance can reduce the likelihood that citizens will feel intimidated by the expertise of professional staff.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

- C Ideas from the public can be developed to the same level of expertise as ideas generated by the agency.
- C Information generated by "independent" sources may be more acceptable to the public than those generated by the agency's staff in controversial situations.

Disadvantages of Technical Assistance

- C If the agency is not open to all alternatives, then agency staff may be placed in the position of divided loyalties. It is difficult to provide technical assistance to all groups, instead of simply the most active.
- C The public can still fear that technical assistance will be used to mislead them or manipulate them to accept the agency's viewpoint.

TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR CITIZENS:

Description of the Technique: Training programs are usually conducted to improve citizens' understanding of how studies are conducted, to inform them of technical information necessary to understand the study, or to improve communication between citizens and staff. Those training programs for citizens which have been used in public involvement have typically been in these three areas:

- a. Training about the planning and decision-making process.
- b. Training on substantive content such as planning, environment impact assessment, etc.
- c. Skills of working together as a team or skills of meeting leadership.

This training might be accomplished formally through seminars, workshops and lectures, or it may be conducted more informally through simulation games, informal round-table discussions, brown-bag lunches, or through publications or audiovisual material.

The intent of providing training to citizens is to insure they have sufficient background to participate effectively in the public involvement program, and also to provide citizens a more equal footing with professionals, so they can work with professionals without intimidation by the professionals' expertise. Training in group dynamics or meeting leadership can be effective when there are



problems in working together effectively, or when citizens will be assisting in conducting meetings or workshops.

Advantages of a Citizen Training Program:

- C Training may increase the effectiveness or impact the public has upon the study.
- C When fully informed citizens may feel less intimidated by professionals and will be more likely to express differing viewpoints.
- C When properly trained, citizens can make a valuable contribution to conducting the community involvement program.

Disadvantages of a Citizen Training Program:

- C Some citizens may resent the suggestion that they need training or may question the "objectivity" of a training program conducted by a planning agency.
- C Training is usually limited to a small group, and therefore, there are problems of who is included and who is excluded.
- C Conducting an effective training program requires special training skills, and therefore may require the additional cost of an outside consultant.
- C The training must be integral to the planning or decision-making process or citizens will view the training as wasted time and effort.

ESTABLISHING CITIZENS' COMMITTEES

by James L. Creighton and  
Jerry Delli Priscoli

One of the most frequently utilized techniques of public involvement is to establish a citizens' committee. These committees are known by a variety of names: advisory committees, work groups, task forces, public involvement committees, etc. These groups can serve a variety of roles in relationship to the public, such as:

- C A citizens' committee can serve as a sounding board, allowing the agency to test out its ideas before making final decisions.
- C A citizens' committee can serve as a guidance group monitoring the progress of the planning process and the public involvement program.
- C Citizens' committees serve as a channel of communication to and from other individuals and interest groups.

SOME COMMON PITFALLS OF ADVISORY GROUPS

Although advisory groups can be instrumental in realizing public involvement goals, experience has also shown their pitfalls. Some of the more common advisory group problems are discussed below:

Use of Citizens' Committees as a Surrogate Public

Over the duration of a study that may last two to three years, planners often come to view citizens' committees as a surrogate public. Although the membership of a citizens' committee usually represents a cross-section of values, and citizens' committee members may, in fact, "lead" various constituencies in the community, citizens' committees can rarely represent all the publics. Consequently, it is necessary to provide alternative forms of participation such as workshops, meetings, polls, etc., to provide opportunities for participation of all publics. Relying on citizens' committees in the absence of other such links to the public can give planners a false sense of confidence.

---

The is an expanded version of an article first published in: IWR Training Program, Creighton et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1977.

### Excessive Formalism

Often citizens' committees become excessively formal, expending tremendous amounts of energy to develop consensus decisions on procedures for attendance, voting, alternates, etc. Obviously, some such procedures are necessary, but experience suggests that it is not uncommon for citizens' committees to spend more time on structural arrangements than the actual content which the citizens' committee was established to consider.

Since part of the demand for public involvement stems from the public's feelings of frustration dealing with the bureaucratic "maze," establishing the citizens' committee which quickly creates a multiplicity of committees, subcommittees, leaders, and substitute leaders compounds, rather than allays, such frustration. As a result, citizens' committees can themselves add another bureaucratic layer between the public and decision makers.

The problem with formalism is not just that it is bureaucratic, but that with the formalism comes a "lowest common denominator" kind of thinking among the citizens' committee members. Earlier studies by Delli Priscoli have indicated that formalism reduces both the range and quality of alternatives considered by the citizens' committee. So one of the problems in managing a citizens' committee is how to reduce the amount of formalistic tendencies so as to increase the range of alternatives considered. When formalism occurs, it can convince significant representatives of "extreme" positions to go outside the citizens' committee process to get their viewpoints heard.

### Reinforcing Negative Expectations

One of the purposes of establishing a citizens' committee is to build trust and confidence between planners and citizens' committee members. However, a citizens' committee can degenerate into a downward spiral of negative expectations. When such a spiral occurs, the only cohesive element within the citizens' committee is a shared experience of being negative. This cycle can be initiated if planners' perception of the usefulness of citizens' committees is low, while the expectations of the citizens' committee members themselves is high. In the inevitable adjustment of expectations, the planners' perception may be on the upswing as the citizens' committee members' expectations are going down. The result can be continued miscommunication throughout the duration of the study. Thus, it is essential that initial citizen expectations be realistically decreased through clearly defining their roles, while internal management commitment to the success of the citizens' committee should be clearly established with the planners before a citizens' committee is ever established.

### Federal Limitations

There have been a number of advisory committees formally established at the national level which have persisted for years with both their functions and lines of accountability increasingly blurred. As a result, Congress and the Office of Management and Budget have sought, both through legislation and regulations, to reduce the number of advisory groups. Currently OMB clearance is required for the establishment of a formal citizen advisory group. Obtaining this clearance may result in time delays which limit the committees' usefulness.

The laws and regulations are focused, however, primarily on national level advisory groups which have the purpose of providing accountability and representativeness on national policy. It is far less clear how the law

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

applies to regional and subregional advisory committees such as those which might consult on a water resource planning study. At the present time, it is probably best that working groups of citizens be called "citizens' committees," "citizens' groups," or "work groups," rather than "advisory groups." In addition, meetings of advisory groups should be well publicized and open. In studies that are highly visible and of national significance, OMB clearance is advisable before establishing an advisory committee.

**SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS OF A CITIZENS' COMMITTEE**

A citizens' committee can provide a number of helpful functions in a planning task. These include:

- C Help set planning priorities.
- C Review technical data and make recommendations on its adequacy.
- C Help resolve conflicts among various interests.
- C Help in the design and evaluation of the public involvement program.
- C Serve as a communication link to other groups and agencies and bring reactions back to the agency.
- C Review and make recommendations on the planning process.
- C Assist in developing and evaluating alternatives.
- C Help select consultants and review contracts.
- C Review and make recommendations on the program budget.
- C Review written material prior to release to the general public.
- C Help host and participate in public meetings.
- C Assist in educating the public about the project and the planning process.

**ESTABLISHING "OWNERSHIP" IN THE PROJECT**

Because citizens' committees can be such an integral part of the study, they soon come to have a sense of "ownership" or a vested interest in the study and its outcome. But because they have participated in so many ways, it is also possible for their role to become so broad that it becomes ill-defined. Experience suggests

that it is particularly critical to clarify whether citizens' committees have any decision-making authority in the planning process, as unrealistic expectations are a major source of conflict and frustration within citizens' committees.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN ESTABLISHING CITIZENS' COMMITTEES

1. Clearly define the limits of authority of the citizens' committee. It is extremely important that the authority of the citizens' committee be defined as there is frequent confusion as to the difference between a group that is an advisory and a decision making body. It is easier for a citizens' committee to cope with limits to their authorities if they are clearly defined at the beginning of the study. If expectations are created of greater authority than actually exist, the sense of betrayal is often greater than if there had been clearly defined limits in the first place.
2. Citizens' committees must be representative of the full range of values within the community. A citizens' committee that represents only a few limited viewpoints may mislead the agency and embitter those publics who are not included in the committee. Typically, citizens' committees are large enough so that it's possible to have direct representation for all the different viewpoints. Every effort must be made to insure that the citizens' committee represents the full spectrum of values within the community.
3. The life of the committee should be limited. The longer that a committee is in existence, the more likely it is that the members of the committee become unrepresentative of their constituencies and instead become a new kind of elite. As a result, it is important to establish from the beginning what the life of the committee will be. Typically, the life of the committee coincides with some major planning function such as the duration of the preauthorization study.
4. Efforts should be made to insure that members of citizens' committees maintain regular communication with the constituencies they are supposed to represent. As suggested above, citizens' committees tend over time to become a new kind of elite, and unless the expectation is established from the beginning that one of the duties of citizen committee members is to maintain communication with their constituencies, then the membership may become increasingly unrepresentative of the public at large. This communication with their constituencies could take the form of briefings of the groups they represent on study progress, informing their constituencies through their own organizational newsletters, or occasional interviews with other leaders from their constituencies.

#### TYPES OF COMMITTEES

There are several different kinds of committees that can be established in addition to the citizens' committee. The two most frequently utilized are:

Task Force - Whereas a citizens' committee is usually established for the life of the study, and meets periodically through the study, a task force is organized to work on a specific problem or single

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

objective and exists only for the period of time necessary to complete the task. A task force may be a subgroup or subcommittee of a larger citizens' committee, or it may be established on an ad hoc basis. Typically, a task force is organized with the smaller number of participants than a citizens' committee, with an upper limit of approximately 15 members.

Technical Committees - Some agencies establish technical committees consisting of representatives of other involved governmental agencies as well as technical experts from outside groups or interests. The function of the technical committee is to evaluate the technical adequacy of the program and review the progress of the technical portions of the study. The advantage of the technical committee is that, because the level of expertise is nearly equal in the group, it is possible to cope with highly technical problems without some group members operating at a disadvantage. In addition, it is often possible to resolve technical conflicts between agencies informally rather than through the critique of the Environmental Impact Statements. The disadvantage of the technical committee is that it often becomes more like a governing board that is increasingly isolated from the public. Technical committees are often seen by the public as an elite which makes the real decisions relegating the citizens' committee to second-class citizenship. As a result, it is extremely important to define the relationship between the technical committee and the citizens' committee, and possibly have citizens who have joint membership on both whose role it is to insure that the two committees do not operate in isolation from each other.

### ORGANIZING THE COMMITTEE

As indicated above, it is extremely important that a citizens' committee be representative of the full range of values within the community. This requirement is, however, often in conflict with limiting the group to a small enough size that it can be an effective working body. Once a group exceeds 12 to 15 members in size, it becomes increasingly difficult for that group to be an effective working body. A larger group can discuss issues or react to materials, but it can rarely work out detailed programs or engage in effective mutual problem solving. Very often the need to insure that the citizens' committee be representative outweighs the problem of insuring that the group be an effective working size, so that citizens' committees have been known to be as large as 200 members. Whenever citizens' committees get above 25 members, it is typical that they have a structure of subcommittees or task forces which are used to accomplish specific work tasks. Frequently a large citizens' committee will also elect some kind of steering committee or executive group which can be consulted by the agency on a more regular basis than the entire committee.

There are several types of members that can serve on citizens' committees:

- C Organizational representatives. Organizational representatives should, theoretically, be able to speak for their group and insure that the agency is familiar with the views of its membership. As a result, however, many organizations are unwilling to have their membership serve on citizens' committees as they are afraid that it compromises their independence and commits them to an outcome which they might find unacceptable. In addition, experience has shown

that the fact that somebody is appointed a representative does not guarantee that they are speaking for their full membership.

- C Interest representation. Even when organizations do not want to send official representatives, it is possible to have interests represented. For example, one individual or several might speak on behalf of "environmental interests" even though they would be unwilling to speak on behalf of specific groups such as the Sierra Club, Isaac Walton League, etc. In this case they are not speaking on behalf of their organization, but are simply sharing the values and concerns that are typical of people who are members in those groups. Again, there is no guarantee that they will, in fact, be representative of the membership of the organizations when a final decision is reached. As indicated above, after they have served as part of the committee for some time, citizens' committee members are likely to become increasingly unrepresentative of their constituencies. So it is extremely important that links be built and maintained back to their constituencies to insure that in fact they are representing this particular interest.

Self-Selected. An alternative method is simply to allow the membership of the committee to be determined by those who are willing to volunteer and spend time on the committee. This has the advantage that in no way has the agency shaped the membership of the committee, but has the distinct disadvantage and probability that the committee will not be representative of the full range of interests within the community.

One of the critical issues in determining committee membership is the role that the committee will play. If the committee will be a voting group, taking formal stands on various policy issues, then the composition of the group becomes extremely critical. If the committee simply serves as a sounding board, verbally reacting to materials and ideas presented by the agency to arrive at a consensus or simply to provide the agency with different points of view, then the composition becomes less critical. It still remains important, however, that the agency hear the points of view of all interests.

#### METHODS OF SELECTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The biggest single problem in establishing a citizens' committee is to select members in such a way that the public believes the committee represents the community. Because an attitude of suspicion often exists toward the agency, there are frequent accusations that agencies have established citizens' committees in such a way that they were "stacked" toward the desired ends of the agency. There are six basic strategies by which members of a citizens' committee can be selected:

- a. Members are selected by the agency with an effort to balance the different interests. As mentioned above, this runs the risk of the public believing that the agency has established the committee to serve the agency's purposes. This danger can be reduced somewhat if the agency has consulted thoroughly with various other governmental agencies and interest groups prior to making these selections and the selections clearly encompass many of these recommendations.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- b. The agency may turn over the selection of the citizens' committee to some third party or group. One approach is to have some local elected body such as a city council or board of supervisors select the membership. An alternative approach is for the agency to select a small committee and permit the committee to select a predetermined number of additional members. In either of these cases, it is extremely important that the agency communicate its expectations that the membership of the committee should reflect the entire range of values within the community.
- c. An alternative method is for the agency to identify the interests it wishes to have represented and allow the various groups within those interests to select their own representatives. This can create administrative problems as volunteer groups sometimes have difficulty coordinating between themselves to select a representative, but it does eliminate the risk that the agency will be seen as "stacking the deck."
- d. It is also possible to use any of the three methods above and then augment the membership with the addition of volunteers. This in effect allows the different interests to adjust the membership of the group by obtaining volunteers from their own ranks. But if votes are being taken, it does lead to the risk that various groups will "stack the decks" by trying to add a large number of additional volunteers.
- e. In a few cases, membership on a citizens' committee has been determined by popular election. This last technique has been utilized only on projects where the target publics are clearly identified and limited, such as in a model cities program.

**ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES AND RULES WITHIN THE CITIZENS' COMMITTEE**

If a citizens' committee is going to be extremely active, then it may wish to establish a set of rules and procedures by which to govern itself. While experience suggests that it is important to get these rules and procedures established early in the planning process, there is also a considerable amount of experience which indicates that citizens' committees chew up incredible quantities of time on rules and procedures to the point that they themselves become extremely frustrated. As a result, it is probably best to not become too formalized or too elaborate. Areas in which citizens' committees will occasionally establish ground rules are:

- C Attendance. Some committees wish to establish minimum attendance requirements so that if a member is absent more than a certain number of times, they are dropped from the committee. Another attendance issue is whether or not committees can send alternates to participate in the committee.
- C Participation of observers. If the committee has a regularly established membership, then are observers welcomed at committee meetings and may observers speak at committee meetings?



- C Voting. The most critical issue is to define whether or not the citizens' committee will be taking votes on issues. If things are resolved by consensus or the committee is satisfied with simply presenting alternative points of view to the agency, then a number of these other issues become much less significant.
  
- C Subcommittees. It may be necessary to establish subcommittees to accomplish specific work tasks and, if so, then the responsibilities and authorities of the subcommittee should be clearly defined.
  
- C Confidentiality of materials. In some cases a committee will be reviewing written materials that are not yet ready for release to the public and may undergo substantial modification before being made available. Whenever such materials are reviewed in the committee, there may need to be some ground rules established to govern the confidentiality of the materials.
  
- C Constituencies. As indicated several times above, it is extremely important for citizens' committee members to maintain communication links with the constituencies they are supposed to represent. It may be useful to establish specific procedures, such as regular reports to the total committee from the constituencies, to insure that these communication links are being maintained.
  
- C Parliamentary Procedures: The committee may wish to agree on parliamentary procedures such as Robert's Rules of Order. It may be, however, that parliamentary procedures become awkward and confining and cause the group to spend more time on procedures than on substance. In particular, Robert's Rules of Order assumes a voting group and so should not be adopted unless the committee is going to be voting on issues.
  
- C Committee Member Expenses. It should be clearly established from the beginning whether travel expenses and other costs related to participation in the committee are going to be borne by the agency or are to be borne by the individual. In the event that they are to be borne by the agency, then the ground rules for expense reimbursement should be very clearly defined.

#### MEETING ATTENDANCE

One of the issues which haunts every citizens' committee is whether or not to have regular citizens' meetings so that everybody can come to expect the meeting, or to have meetings as needed. The dilemma is that if meetings are called only when needed, then it is difficult to notify the members of the meeting and there are often conflicts because their schedules are already filled. On the other hand, there is no surer way to lose interest and participation in a committee than to hold meetings that do not have a substantial productive purpose. This is a problem that should be discussed early on with the citizens' committee and every effort should be made to insure that committee meetings are as productive and significant as possible.

Many committees also establish a phone network so that if additional meetings are called, or if meetings are on an "as needed" basis, that the agency need only call two or three committee members, who in turn call other committee members, who in turn call other committee members, etc. While formal notification of a

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

meeting by mail is important, there is considerable evidence that personal phone calls are the most effective method to insure attendance at meetings.

ADDITIONAL POINTERS ON WORKING WITH CITIZENS' COMMITTEES

There are several other major principles which should be observed in working with citizens' committees:

1. Agency participation with the citizens' committees should not be limited to public involvement or PAO staff. It is extremely important that decision-making-level staff participate with the citizens' committee, both so the committee feels that they are being heard by people who have genuine authority, and so that the decision makers hear public sentiment firsthand. When public involvement or PAO staff alone work with the citizens' committee this puts them in the awkward position of trying to explain to the agency what the public feelings are, and is usually unworkable.
2. If you are going to establish a citizens' committee, then you are going to have to be responsive to its requests for information. Nothing can lead to more dissatisfaction and frustration than to create high expectations in a citizens' committee and then be unwilling or unable to work with them closely and provide them with the information they request. Inadequate preparation and follow-through will destroy the good will that could otherwise result from a citizens' committee. This means that if a citizens' committee is to be established, adequate staff resources must be committed to insure success.
3. Agency representatives must speak the public's language when working with citizens' groups. Citizens will not understand all the professional language and governmental jargon which will frequently be used by planners. So staff working with the citizens' committee will have to modify their vocabulary so that they can communicate more effectively. This is no simple task as it often requires the ability to simplify without appearing in any way to be patronizing or talking down to the public.

REFERENCES

A guide on the establishment and utilization of citizens' committees has been developed for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by Ann Widditsch of James Ragan Associates. This report is entitled, "The Birth, Care, and Feeding of Advisory Committees on Water Quality Planning."

GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA RELATIONS

by Jerry W. Schmunk and David W. Hewitt

There's no need to shudder when a reporter calls. If Corps' engineers, planners and other specialists learn reporters' needs and techniques, they gain considerable benefit from working with the media. It is true that today the Corps is under closer scrutiny by the press and the public than at any time before. Actually this is a tremendous opportunity. The Corps' heritage and service are worthy of positive coverage, and while the public wants to know what we are doing, we should use every means to communicate what we're doing and why.

There are a number of reasons for working closely with the media including:

1. We have everything to gain. We have a distinguished record, and few organizations should be better able to stand up to criticism as the Corps.
2. We should never forget that we are public servants, and that the viability of our democratic form of government depends on an informed electorate. No matter how technically competent we are, we will fail in performing our mission if we do not have public support.
3. The majority of the public learns of our activities through the news media--newspapers, magazines, television and radio.

Our work in the Corps of Engineers is highly visible, touches the lives of many people, and is of interest and importance to them as individual citizens and to the public at large. Our activities often have direct impact upon individuals and groups. Because of this it is extremely important that our attitude in dealing with the public be one of sensitivity and honest concern.

Most people who fail at public relations are trying to use it to persuade and manipulate the public instead of using it to facilitate the correlation of our interests and goals with the public interest and society's goals.

The Public Affairs Officer

The public affairs officer plays an important role in working with the media. Some general principles you should observe are:

1. All organizational elements should keep their public affairs office informed of activities with public information potential or public relations impact. But more than simply informing, it's important to bring the public affairs officer into the decision-making process rather than expecting him/her to rationalize an after-the-fact decision with an adverse public impact.

---

This is an original article describing material used in IWR training courses.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

2. What a good public affairs officer has to offer is an extensive infrastructure of personal contacts with reporters, editors and news directors. He/she can often ensure more adequate coverage because of these contacts, but when the public affairs officer is bypassed, it undercuts future work with those media contacts.
3. Because of his/her contacts, the public affairs officer is usually in a better position to deal with a publication or broadcast that contains errors or misleading statements. These situations require great tact, and are inevitably easier if some previous relationship exists with the reporter or media person. Bear in mind that the public affairs officer will pursue the Corps' real interest, which is to have the facts presented accurately, and not to nitpick or slap the hands of those who err in reporting our actions. Sometimes it is not in the Corps' best interest to respond, especially when such a response might fan controversy.
4. One reason to notify the public affairs officer of inquiries from the news media is that the PAO is responsible for monitoring all communications with the press and keeping the district or division engineer apprised of their nature, when appropriate.

General Principles for Working with the Media

There are certain general principles that should be observed when working with the press:

1. The information we provide to the news media and public must be accurate and consistent with the Corps' overall policy. For this reason it is imperative--as well as good common sense--that only those who are conversant with a subject should discuss it for publication or broadcast.
2. Talk from the viewpoint of the public's interest, not the Corps'. Don't say "we can't allow this because it's prohibited by our regulations." Say "it's prohibited because it infringes on other people's enjoyment of the lake." When there is evident self-interest, admit it. Whatever you do, speak in terms of the average citizen understands.
3. If we want our side of a story presented to the public fairly, we must be responsive to requests from the news media. We cannot depend upon the newsman to print our point of view if he does not know it. You can be sure that the opposing side--if there is one--will be sure to see he gets its side. As one newsman once said, "It isn't our job to tell your story."
4. Newspapers, radio and television news programs operate on strict deadlines; they need the facts of a story quickly. Tomorrow is often too late for the newsman. He has to write his story now. Seldom does he have the luxury of taking several days. For this reason, it's important that we provide him as much information as we can as soon as possible. We have the most to gain if we do.

5. If he asks a question you can't answer, tell him so. Don't lead him down the garden path with misleading information, however accurate. He realizes that we must safeguard some of our information. If someone else could answer a question better, refer the reporter to that person. When you do, make it clear that you aren't just "passing the buck."
6. Be positive and helpful. We are a highly competent, professional organization that accomplishes good, worthwhile work. There is no reason to be apologetic or evasive. That indicates to the reporter that you must be doing something wrong, or that you are trying to hide something, even if you are not.
7. A very important point is to not just answer the reporter's questions. Offer more information on positive aspects that are to the Corps' advantage for him to know. If there is some facet of the subject you think he should stress, tell him so. Often he isn't aware of it. Of course, this doesn't guarantee that he will write the story as you wish, but there is a greater chance that our side will be presented accurately.
8. In some cases it is effective to volunteer the "other side" of the story. It is better if he hears it from you first. You can explain and qualify, when appropriate, where another source might not. There is a bonus in revealing the opposition point of view. It shows the newsman that you know and have considered all the arguments and that you are confident that your position will stand up in comparison.
9. When asked to comment on something concerning another public agency, remember that they have their laws and their public trust to look out for, too.

#### Organizational Orientation

The Corps suffers from a credibility problem (How many times have you heard that?) as does any huge organization that makes decisions that affect the public. Many people consider us guilty until proven innocent. Because of this we should be extremely careful that our actions "appear" as honest and reasonable as we believe they are. It's long been a public relations tenet that "What the public thinks is real will probably determine the result, not the merits of the actual conditions." This distinction, unfortunately, is often lost in Corps dealings with the public.

One way people can get an unfortunate impression of the Corps is if our people do not consider public opinion when they decide "what to say," then call the public affairs officer in to decide "how to say it." Good public relations dictates considering public opinion at the "what to say" point.

We also lose credibility when we assume that all problems may be kept "in-house" and that the press and the public should only be talked to when we are reporting good news praising the Corps. This attitude shows up when we call any complimentary article "good," but any uncomplimentary article is "slanted."

There are several recent examples where potentially very explosive issues for the Corps were handled with far less criticism of the Corps than could have resulted because: a) through years of dealing with the press we

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

have established a reputation for being honest and not weasel-wording, and b) the district engineer and deputy district engineer didn't act as if they had something to hide, and were very open and willing to comment on our problems. The best way to get a reputation for credibility is to be credible.

In the same way, the public's attitude toward the Corps is shaped by all the different ways we interact with the public. If we want public support, some of the things we have to do are:

1. In dealing with people, put yourself in their shoes. Are you treating him or her as you would want to be treated? To them you represent a large powerful Federal agency. Put them at ease, show them you care. BE RESPONSIVE.
2. It's important to demonstrate empathy with the local citizen who's affected by a Corps project. Even more, where a policy exception may be warranted, submit a request when the landowner/public body has a point. This is particularly pertinent where a hardship exists. Nothing sounds more bureaucratic than to tell someone that the Corps can't help them or change a plan of action because it's against regulations.
3. Respond quickly, including interim replies, when inquiries are received. Callous delay in answering a letter is aggravating to the person making the inquiry.
4. When our action directly affects the ability of another person or organization to act--such as in permit applications--expedite the response. An individual (or a business entity) has a right to know quickly if he can build his boat dock (or whatever) and not be kept waiting for every bureaucratic agency to dot their "i's" and cross their "t's."
5. Know what is a statutory requirement vs. a regulatory one. There have been cases when we have told people it's the law and we then learn that instead it is a matter of regulations where exceptions could be made more easily.
6. Keep negotiating, don't be too hasty to wash hands and fall back on the awesome power of the Federal Government. This applies to both the individual groups, other agencies or governmental bodies.

When problem areas do occur, it's essential that the individuals on the firing line provide an alert to particularly knotty problems, so there aren't delays which allow the problem to intensify. Then, too, it is essential that everybody in the organization keep the man on the firing line informed, and provide assistance in difficult technical areas when needed.

Finally, remember: We exist to serve.



HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE THE MEDIA

by Paul Robert Edwards

Public participation programs inevitably embrace considering the media. Sometimes those thoughts may be like those of Princess Grace of Monaco when she said, "The freedom of the press works in such a way that there is not much freedom from it." But, as Katherine Graham, publisher of the Washington Post has stated, "Democracy depends on information circulating freely in society."

Media in its broadest sense includes vehicles of transmitting information ranging from newspapers, radio and television to magazines, mail, films, books, records and tapes.

Another way of thinking about communication media is in three general groups: print, electronic and face-to-face. Face-to-face is usually the most effective; electronic, the most expensive; print, the most common.

In the interest of reaching the public "wholesale" rather than "retail," this presentation is mostly concerned with the common and the expensive: choosing and using the "mass media."

Choosing is a decision-making process. Therefore, the material that follows is organized in a manner not unlike the way one might go about making decisions in general. The steps for choosing media are:

- C Determining your outcomes
- C Generating possibilities for accomplishing the outcomes
- C Ascertaining the problems and constraints limiting the possibilities as solutions
- C Checking that the solution(s) chosen fit the outcomes.

Once you've chosen the media you will employ, you will need some specific tips on implementing your plan for using the media. But first, let's begin by developing a media plan.

CHOOSING THE MEDIA

Step One: Determine the outcome you want to accomplish. Is your outcome to get people out to public meetings? Is it to educate the public on flood control techniques? Is it to get a plan adopted?

---

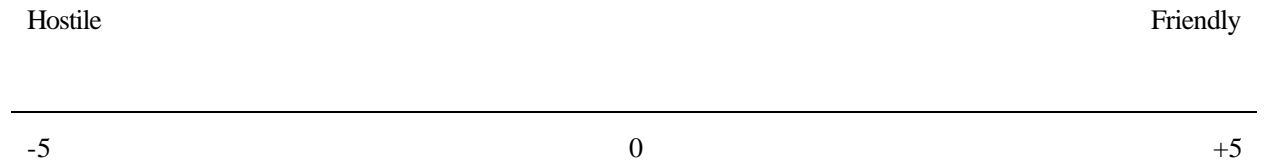
This is an original article describing material used in IWR training courses.



Once you've decided upon the outcome, break it down into specific chunks: 500 people to four meetings? Specific people by interest group or geography? Endorsement of a plan by the Chamber of Commerce, environmental groups? What specific people do you mean when you say "public"? How will you know when you have achieved your outcome? How will you measure it?

Entering into your choice of outcomes is the community in which you are working. What is the community's attitude toward the agency? the project? Are the community attitudes latent or expressed openly?

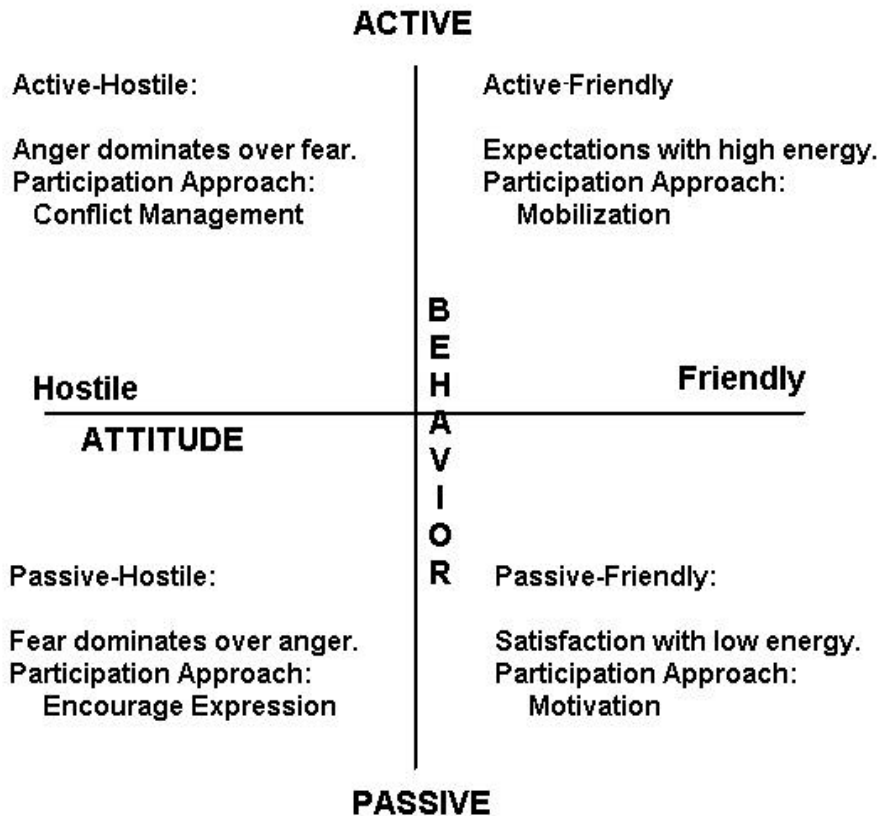
A tool you can use to capture a good deal of information about a community is a "community profile." The community profile is based on two scales, one of which indicates the community's attitude toward the agency or program, the other shows the behavior exhibited toward the agency or program. The attitude scale relates to community feelings toward the issue and the agency, i.e., anger, fear, satisfaction, enthusiastic anticipation. For simplicity this is captured on a scale showing hostility as -5, and friendly as +5.



The behavior scale reflects the culture and traditions of the community and the urban/rural character of the population, as they relate to how much people participate in community life. The behavior scale displays the dimension of passive to assertive:



The reason for using both scales is that you have a different kind of public information problem if people are friendly and passive, or hostile and passive, than you do if people actively support or oppose your program or agency. So the two scales are combined into a complete profile shown below:



Our suggestion is that when you are planning a media program, sit down with a team of co-workers familiar with the community, and as a team analyze the community in terms of this profile. It frequently assists in clarifying what must be accomplished in this community. Usually the intuitive perceptions of the team will lead to proposed actions, but in general the strategies associated with each quadrant are:

**ACTIVE-FRIENDLY:** Here the job is simply to mobilize the existing base of enthusiasm, and find channels for its active expression.

**PASSIVE-FRIENDLY:** The task here is to find some way of motivating people, so that their basic friendly attitude is expressed in participation.

**PASSIVE-HOSTILE:** Our experience suggests that for much to happen in a situation like this, some means must be created for getting the hostility expressed openly. Until it starts being expressed, nothing much will change.

ACTIVE-HOSTILE: This is not an easy situation, but it can often be channeled into a conflict management program.

Step Two: Generate possible ways for accomplishing the outcomes you've established.

There are several ways you can do this. You can proceed by determining: Has this been done before? How have others done it? What if we did something else? What would it be? What if we increased it? Decreased it? Streamlined it? Combine with it? Add to it?

You may wish to create an entirely new solution. You may not wish to consider the way things have been done in the past until you've adopted a tentative approach. You may choose any one or several techniques such as brainstorming, Kepner-Tregoe problem-solving approaches, etc., to develop your new solution.

In choosing among possible media approaches, you will want to take into account some of the strengths and limitations of various media channels summarized here:

More than half the population of the United States was born after the advent of television in 1947. With 99 percent of the households in the United States having one or more television sets and the average American watching TV more than five hours a day, we can understand the pervasive effect television has had on our culture.

The majority of the population that has been reared on television company is more visually oriented and less verbally oriented than the pre-TV generations. The post-TV generations have a shorter attention span and traditional publications have less impact on them; indeed, many publications, like "Harper's" have difficulty surviving.

If the printed word is to be used in communicating with the post-TV majority, the print material needs to be low in text and high in interesting photographs and illustrations. A tabloid format, for example, lends itself to this approach. Now let's consider various media.

### Television

Strengths:

- C Most powerful medium, allowing pictures in motion, color, use of the printed and spoken word, music, animation and sound effects.
- C The #1 source of news for most Americans.
- C The most "believed" medium - in the event of conflicting or different reports of the same news story, TV would be believed 2:1 over newspapers, 5:1 over radio or magazines.
- C Integral part of most Americans' lives - 99% of households; watched an average of more than five hours a day.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

- C Excellent for conveying messages with emotional impact: a powerful tool for persuasion.

Limitations:

- C Getting on the news is difficult, particularly as "talking heads" are anathema to "action news."
- C Production of Public service announcements (PSA's) is expensive (\$3,000 to \$6,000 minimally) and will be used for only a limited period of time.

Newspapers

Strengths:

- C Indigenous to the local community
- C A newspaper is purchased as a wanted item and is read by about two out of three adults. The highest concentration of readership is among higher-income, better educated adults in professional, managerial, technical and administrative jobs. Eighty-two percent of college graduates "read a newspaper yesterday."
- C Space allows for transmitting more information than is possible on radio or television.
- C Useful in communicating factual information.

Limitations:

- C The average reader reads only a portion of his/her daily newspaper, typically 30 minutes, reading only one-fifth to one-fourth of the editorial content. This means that unless your story is noteworthy enough to make either the page or three of the main section or page one of a special section, it is likely to be unread.
- C Newspapers are generally not read by men under age 28, women under age 34, nor by low income and minority groups.
- C Of the approximately two out of three adults who read the newspaper, only 29 percent of women and 25 percent of men note the average advertisement.

Radio

Strengths:

- C Radio is a mobile medium used in the home, car, at the beach, and virtually everywhere.
- C Radio reaches 95 percent of the population over age 12, including people newspapers do not--the young, the poor, and minorities. Even late-night radio is listened to by more than one out of three Americans in a typical week (between 12 a.m. and 6 a.m.).
- C Radio has great flexibility in production and is much less expensive than television.
- C Radio audiences are highly fragmented and therefore readily identifiable and therefore targetable; i.e., FM listeners tend to be more affluent and better educated; rock listeners, younger; folk music listeners, rural. Demographics vary by program types.
- C Radio is good for conveying emotional content and is a tool for persuasion.

Limitations:

- C Though less expensive than television, production and time costs are relatively expensive.
- C Information that can be conveyed is limited.

Given the relative infrequency with which an agency can get coverage from the electronic media for hard news or public service announcements (which will be discussed later) and the more limited usefulness of print media, face-to-face communication remains the most effective means of transmitting information. It is personal, three dimensional and can be highly credible. One need only think of the potency of the "rumor mill."

Displays at Shopping Malls

One medium of communication which is frequently discounted is displays at shopping centers. There are several reasons this is worthy of consideration.

- C Shopping mall development has paralleled the urbanization pattern in the United States since World War II. Americans on the average spend more time in shopping malls than they do anywhere except work and home. Malls represent an opportunity for face-to-face communication.
- C Generally most customers of malls come from within 15 minutes' driving distance. In increasing ways, shopping centers play the role of the old town square.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Other Media Opportunities

Regionalized sections of metropolitan newspapers and city magazines have become popular and are possible resources. The proliferation of specialized newsletters may provide an avenue of reaching a particular public or you may publish your own newsletter. Direct mail, leaflets distributed in the neighborhoods, transit advertising (\$40 puts a poster on the back of a bus) are other means of reaching the public.

What Do People Remember?

Getting into the news or onto a medium is not the same as getting into people's memories. In 1971, it was estimated that the average American was bombarded by 1,600 commercial messages a day. Of these, 80 were noticed with only 12 of these producing a reaction. Some say that as survivors in our electronic villages, we've managed to put much of the media hype into the background of our consciousness, much like Muzak. This provides us with more justification for face-to-face communication.

Step Three: Ascertain the problems and constraints. Now that you have defined your outcomes, identified some possible ways of accomplishing your outcomes, and in the process, thought about which media will reach the parts of the public you need to involve in order to achieve your outcome, you are ready to evaluate.

We shall offer you tools for evaluating two sets of data: (1) the media in relation to one another and (2) the constraints operating within and on your agency.

What is News?

Not everything you might like the public to know is newsworthy. It might be good for the public to know, but if it doesn't interest them, they won't buy newspapers; television and radio ratings will drop, etc. The media are motivated to stay in business, so they provide news that interests the public--controversy, competition, the out-of-the-ordinary, "firsts."

Two out of three news releases are rejected daily by daily newspapers, and the inflationary cost of newsprint is pushing the rejection rate up. About one in ten news (not press) releases are aired on radio.

When newspaper publishers were surveyed, they named these items as having a 50 percent or better chance of making the news:

- C Annual reports of funding
- C Research and development breakthrough
- C Major local construction
- C Changes in local executives

- C Wage hikes.

If the information you have to transmit is not at least as important as these subjects, you will need to be creative in how you present your material if you expect coverage. (Jack Fox, a veteran UPI reporter has said that he always found that if he got food, sex, money and dogs into the lead of a story, he got front page play everywhere.)

The Media Evaluation Matrix

In using the Media Evaluation Matrix, (Figure 1) there are some general principles to keep in mind:

- C You have more than one public (as indicated on the matrix by showing elected officials, appointed officials, organized interest groups, and general public in separate categories).
- C A medium that will reach one of these publics effectively, may not reach another. Before you choose one medium over another, you need to be clear about whom you want to reach.
- C Just because a medium exists, such as television, doesn't mean you will get adequate coverage unless your story is newsworthy. Be sure you realistically evaluate your chances of getting coverage.
- C People react to various media differently. Be sure to think through whether people will both notice and remember your message if they receive it from your planned medium.
- C The costs of a program are not just in cash outlay, but also in the amount of staff time and work necessary. Be sure you are realistic about both types of costs.

Identifying Constraints

Another evaluation task that is useful to consider after you've had your opportunity for creativity is examining the constraints that are operating. To evaluate before you've opened the windows of possible opportunities for achieving your outcomes is to box in what's possible and perhaps miss some innovative solutions.

The Constraint Assessment Worksheet (Figure 2) allows you to assess constraints both internal to the agency as well as those reflected in the community profile.

Step Four: Will the media that are available within the constraints operating on your program allow you to achieve the outcome you've determined? If not, perhaps you need to adjust the outcome you're seeking. Or perhaps you need to negotiate for added resources--time and/or money. Or perhaps you need to think about other approaches. Like other planning, plans to use the media are iterative, which is both a source of frustration and opportunity.

MEDIA EVALUATION MATRIX

	COMMUNICATION		TYPE OF	LIKELIHOOD OF	LIKELIHOOD OF	LIKELIHOOD OF	COSTS
--	---------------	--	---------	---------------	---------------	---------------	-------

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

AUDIENCE	OBJECTIVE (Inform, Persuade, etc.)	MEDIUM	COVERAGE (News, Ad)	COVERAGE	AUDIENCE NOTICING	AUDIENCE REMEMBERING	Time	Money
ELECTED OFFICIALS								
APPOINTED OFFICIALS								
ORGANIZED INTERESTS GROUPS								
GENERAL PUBLIC								

**CONSTRAINT ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

CONSTRAINTS	SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSTRAINT			
	No Constraint	Minimal	Moderate	High
Time				



*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

Money				
Staff Expertise				
Internal Organization's Commitment				
Public Apathy				
Public Hostility				
Institutional Apathy				
Institutional Hostility				

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Using the Media

Getting results from the media involves understanding their role as they perceive it and their needs. The first step in working with the media is to understand that your role and theirs are sometimes supportive and other times contradictory. The agency person usually has two obligations: to inform and, on occasion, to advocate. The agency's "inform" role often coincides with one of the reporter's roles, which is to "report" the news to the public. The only area of likely conflict is that the reporter may have a different sense of what is newsworthy than does the agency. But when the agency is in an advocacy role, then the reporter is likely to assume his/her adversary role. The adversary role is based on the assumption that the truth is most likely to come out if reporters push, probe, challenge, investigate. Usually media people assume the adversary role when they sense you in an advocacy role, or believe that you have a self-interest in how the news is communicated.

It is essential that you understand that in a free society it is essential that the media play both reporting and adversarial roles. Without the adversarial roles, abuses of power would often go undetected.

It is also important to understand that your behavior may influence whether the media stays in its reporting role, or assumes an adversarial role. The critical element is whether you provide them with the kind of information they need to educate the public and evaluate the importance of a story. Some of the things the media needs from you are:

- C Providing a free flow of honest information in good times or bad
- C Making top officials available to the media
- C Providing competent staff for the media to relate to
- C Using judgment about what is newsworthy and what is not
- C Being prompt so that the media can meet their deadlines.

In dealing with the media, problems occur. Mistakes are made. If you're dealing with a new reporter, he may not know anything about the subject; if you're dealing with a beat reporter, he may only know one side. A general principle is don't fight--find other ways to deal with problems. A newspaper is printed 365 days a year--they always have the last word. Much valuable advice and assistance can be had from public affairs. Public affairs is also a source of media lists and contacts.

### Tips on Getting on TV:

- C News--events such as field trips with high visual impact have more possibility of being used than interviews. Newsclips of 30 to 90 seconds have more possibilities than interviews, but are expensive and usable only one day.

- C Photographs provided television need to be in a television format--four units of width to three units of height.
- C Public Service Announcements--even though PSA's are usually not aired in prime-time, early morning and television viewing are up and reach a considerable audience. Production is expensive and needs to be of professional quality. If reusing a PSA, change the sound track rather than the visuals. It costs less and disrupts the viewer's identity of your message less. Thirty- or sixty-second spots are preferable to ten- second spots, which are useful as memory joggers, but are hard to place on the air.
- C Other opportunities for television--interview shows, station editorials, special programs.
- C Cable Television--consider cable possibilities. Viewers of cable television are highly pinpointable geographically and may coincide with a "target" public. Advertising on cable is also underpriced in terms of its value.

Tips on Getting on Radio:

- C News releases need to be prepared for radio--informal, conversational and brief. Difficult names and words need to be phoneticized. A good idea is to tape record interviews and events for use by radio.
- C Public Service Announcements--PSA's are free air time. Most stations air 100 or more in a week. What makes a PSA usable? Written and produced in accord with professional standards, simple, direct, upbeat, with a local tie-in, delivered in person by a local person, having a "sound" background such as music.  
  
Reasons for rejection of PSA's are: dull, sounding like a newspaper release, poorly written, inappropriate format.
- C Other opportunities for radio--talk shows, station editorials, special programs based on interviews and group discussions.

Tips on Getting into Print:

- C As much as 60 percent of news releases received by the media come from government agencies. Reasons for rejection are lack of news value to readers, no local angle and poor writing.
- C Photographs will often get a story in when straight copy won't be accepted. Glossy prints for metropolitan papers; check suburban papers for their needs. Usually a 5" X 7" glossy is desired. Tape a piece of paper to back of photograph with a caption explaining the photo. Don't write on the photograph itself, either front or back.
- C The best times for getting news releases printed are:

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Saturday before noon if there's going to be a big Sunday edition, particularly if you have photographs.

February, because it's a slow news month.

August, because much of the news staff is on vacation.

Holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, for features.

- C The worse times are the month before a contested local election, and near local government tax and budget-setting deadlines.
- C For editors, providing background papers in a question and answer format may get your point of view before them when they write an editorial.
- C It may be effective to visit and background the editor and/or publisher as to your program. Let the reporter know, mindful of your tone of voice, that you have done so. The reporter in turn may let the rewrite editor and headline writer know.

Special Considerations for Metropolitan and Suburban Papers:

Metros print controversy; suburbans are more service-oriented. For metros, provide fact sheets; for suburban papers, prepare complete stories with photographs.

Special Considerations for Small Town and Farm Weeklies:

Small town and farm weeklies are thoroughly read by loyal readers. These weeklies have greater impact on the attitudes and opinions of their readers than the metropolitan dailies do on theirs. Getting into print anywhere in a weekly is valuable, and special attention needs to be given to a local angle. One survey showed weeklies printing only 3 out of 113 releases.

Tips on Getting Access to Shopping Malls:

- C To get acceptance of your displays by shopping center management, they will need to be visually attractive and interesting. Shopping centers want displays that attract people.
- C The most popular times for shopping malls are: (1) weekends, (2) evenings, (3) lunchtime.

Some other Tips:

- C A campaign needs to have every visual element supporting every other element with common logo, styles, colors. Use common logos and colors on all materials, media, publications, films, etc. A common identity is key to accessing people's memories of what came before and thereby maximizing your efforts.
  
- C In planning to implement your media plan, it may be useful to establish precedence networks by planning backwards from the outcome you want and then forwards on how to achieve it.
  
- C Establish milestones in the process of reaching your outcome. After you've implemented a media plan, evaluate the results in terms of the outcomes you established.

Finally

Working with the media means having them neither at your feet nor at your neck. Good luck!

## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

By James L. Creighton

Newspapers, radio and television are all major communication vehicles for reaching a broad general public. As a result, a well-designed public information program for reaching the public through the media is an essential element in any public involvement program. Public information programs differ from public involvement in that they are targeted primarily at communicating to the public, while public involvement programs provide for communication from the public in a way which insures the public an opportunity to impact on final decisions. Individuals and groups must be informed of possible actions or policies, and their consequences, before they can participate effectively in a decision-making process, so public involvement programs are designed to include a public information program as an integral element of the program. Over and beyond providing information needed for the public to participate, public information activities contribute significantly to public involvement by maintaining a general level of public awareness about agency issues.

Many government agencies already have public information or public affairs officers who are able to provide guidance to you in designing a public information program. These individuals can be extremely helpful to you because of their skills in working with the media, and also because they already have established contacts or relationships with members of the media in your community. If you have such staff assistance available to you, any public information program should be designed in coordination with them. In addition, most agencies have established procedures for approval of press releases and other communications to the media, and your public information officer can advise you of these procedures.

Because there are some differences between working with newspapers and working with the electronic media, the guidance below is in two sections: 1) Working with Newspapers, and 2) Working with TV and Radio.

### WORKING WITH NEWSPAPERS

#### Competition for Coverage:

The first thing that you must remember in working with newspapers is that you are in competition with all other newsworthy events in your community for coverage in the local newspaper. If you are a major agency located in a relatively rural or suburban area, then anything you do may be extremely newsworthy. Most agencies will find they are competing for coverage of their public involvement programs. In fact, the more urban the area in which you are working, the more difficult you will find it to get full and complete coverage from the major metropolitan dailies.

---

Reprinted from the Community Involvement Manual, prepared for the Federal Aviation Administration. Subsequently it was included in "Public Involvement in Regulatory Functions," published by IWR.

Establishing Yourself with the Press:

The first step in working with the press is to identify those newspapers you believe are good vehicles for stories about your public involvement program. As indicated above, if you are located in a metropolitan area, you may find the competition for coverage is particularly intense. If this is true you may wish to identify weekly newspapers or suburban newspapers that are widely read in the communities immediately adjoining any proposed project. If you do want coverage from a major metropolitan newspaper, it is also helpful if you identify those sections of the newspaper in which coverage of your story is most likely. Depending on the nature of the study or decision being reached, your story may be of interest to the business or financial editor, a transportation editor, an environmental editor, or reporters at the city desk who cover activities of local governmental agencies. If you target your approach toward editors or reporters in these particular sections, you are much more likely to get the coverage that you wish. In the smaller newspaper you may be dealing directly with the editor or city editor of the newspaper, but even then there may be reporters who have particular interest in stories about planning issues.

Once you have identified the newspapers which are the most likely candidates for providing information about your public involvement program, it is perfectly legitimate--in fact strongly recommended--for you to make a personal visit to the editor or appropriate reporters from whom you seek coverage. The primary purpose of this visit is simply to get to know this individual, and provide them background information on the issues that are likely to emerge during the public involvement program. It is helpful if you have news releases, summaries of technical background for the study, or brochures which you can leave with the reporter or editor. If you have an advisory committee, it often provides added weight to your visit if a citizen member of the advisory committee accompanies you in calling on the press.

Types of Coverage from the Press

In your public information planning, and in your visits with the press, there are a number of different types of coverage which may be arranged. These include:

1. News stories describing meetings or events, or reporting speeches made by agency leaders.
2. Announcements of meetings or other public involvement activities.
3. Feature stories about the issues being addressed in the study.
4. Editorial support for the public involvement effort.
5. Coverage of press conferences when there are major announcements or events that cannot be covered adequately in the press releases.
6. If a newspaper is particularly interested in your issue, they may be willing to not only print feature stories, but also provide coverage of reader responses to that story.

Attitudes Toward the Press:

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

While it is perfectly legitimate to establish personal relationships with members of the press, you must constantly remember that it is appropriate for you to provide news to the press, but you cannot dictate how it is used. Newspaper people take great professional pride in their work, and can easily become defensive or insulted if you attempt to do their job. If you do have a disagreement with how a reporter has covered a story, this should be discussed privately and rationally with the reporter--or simply ignored. Efforts to go over the reporter's head to the editor will usually backfire. If you have serious problems with the newspaper, it might be more effective for members of the advisory committee, if there is one, to write letters to the editor for publication.

The most critical thing you can do in relationship to the press is to establish and maintain your own credibility. Above all this means that you must be honest and not evasive. Don't dodge controversy; it is the lifeblood of the newspaper business, and if you attempt to downplay controversy too much, you will begin to lose your credibility. Avoid "no comment" responses, and return phone calls to the press promptly. If a newspaper reporter is not able to reach you before his/her deadline, he will likely indicate that you were "not available," which looks to the public as if you are avoiding the press. If you are taken by surprise by a reporter's question or a public statement by an individual or group, it is better to say that you have just heard about the statement and will have a response as soon as you have had an opportunity to study it. Then be sure you do get your answer out quickly, after appropriate agency coordination.

### Press Releases:

Press releases will be your major vehicle for informing the press, and notifying them of newsworthy stories. Be certain that you do not flood the press with press releases with no newsworthiness, as this will begin to undermine your credibility. Normally press releases should be sent to the press two to three days before you expect the story to run. If the story is particularly newsworthy, it may be picked up the next day; but if it is not of as high interest, the story may be held a day or two. If you are dealing with weekly newspapers, it is particularly important to observe their closing deadlines, which are often several days before the newspaper actually reaches the street. Out of your earlier visits to the newspapers you will have identified reporters that have an interest in your proposed project, and it is entirely appropriate to send press releases directly to them. If there are several reporters that may want to cover the same story from different angles, it is a good idea to send copies of the press release to all of them, although there should be some indication of the distribution so they are aware that other reporters have also received the story.

### Writing a Press Release

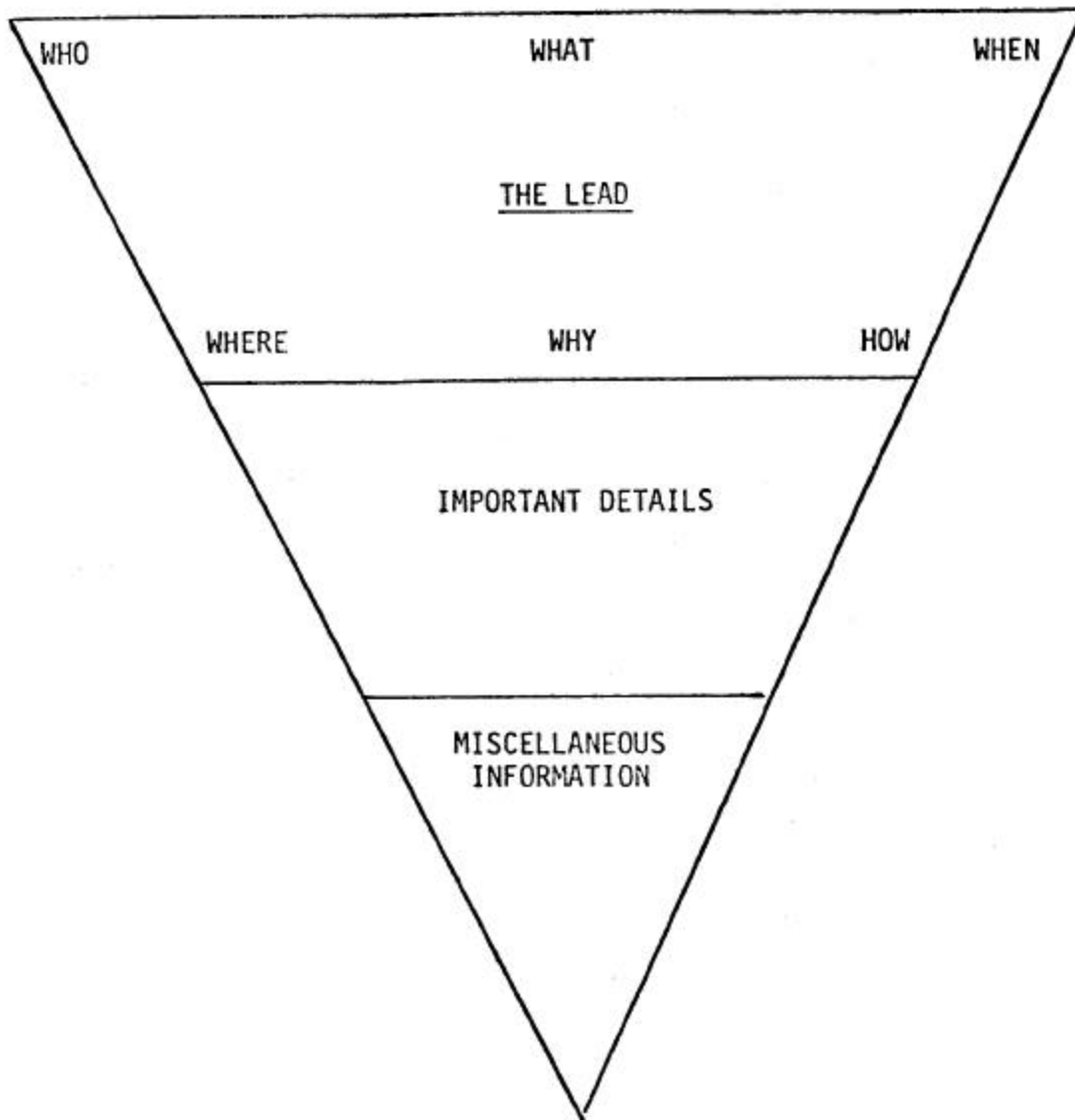
There are certain general principles that should be observed in writing a press release. The most important is that a press release is written so that the most important information is in the first paragraph, the next most important information in the second paragraph, etc. Newspaper people refer to this as the "inverted pyramid" (See Figure 1). The first part of the story--the lead--should cover "who, what, when, where, why, how."



The second part of the story should cover other important details, and the third part should cover other miscellaneous information. The reason for this is that the first paragraphs of the story should attract the reader's interest to the story. By providing the essentials in the first paragraph or two, the reader gets the important information even if he does not complete the entire story. Also, when editors are squeezing stories into limited space, they will cut the story from the bottom up. As a result, sometimes only the first few paragraphs will survive. If important information has been included in the final paragraphs, the readers may miss the essentials of the story.

Other principles that should be observed in writing press releases include:

1. Keep sentences short.
2. Prefer simple language to the complex.
3. Use the active voice, e.g., "IWR announces it will conduct a series of workshops" instead of "A series of workshops will be conducted."
4. Add conversation (quotes) to your story, e.g., Capt. John Q. Smith, District Engineer, stated: "These meetings will give us a chance to hear the public's ideas about the proposed project."
5. Avoid wordiness, e.g., "comments from the public about the alternatives are invited" instead of "opportunities for thorough discussion, analysis and evaluation of alternatives will be provided."
6. Write as you talk.
7. Relate the story to the reader's experience.
8. Don't overuse adjectives, e.g., dynamic, outstanding.
9. Use a consistent style.
10. Be honest and strive for accuracy.



Press Conferences:

Press conferences are a useful way of getting the press interested and involved in your stories. But press conferences should not be held if the material to be covered could be equally well handled by a press release. As a result, press conferences should be held only when there is a major story, or when you have a "name" figure such as an agency leader or a local political figure who will act as a spokesperson. If you do not show concern for the newsworthiness of your press conference, you are unlikely to receive continued coverage of your stories. You must constantly be aware that you are in competition with other newsworthy events. Since press conferences require additional travel time, they mean the reporter has less time to cover other stories, so press conferences should be utilized only when the additional time is justified by the importance of the story.

The typical format is to have a spokesperson present a short statement, and then allow time for questions from the press. Both the spokesperson's statement, and general background on the study or decision-making process should be printed and distributed to the press at the time of the press conference. The reason for issuing a printed version of all statements or speeches is to assist the reporter, but also protects you by insuring that you are quoted accurately.

WORKING WITH RADIO AND TV

Public Service:

All radio and TV stations are required to provide public service news coverage and features to the community as a condition of keeping their license. As a result, radio and TV stations expect to provide a certain amount of "free" public service time, and will be happy to discuss with you how your public involvement program might be publicized. Keep in mind that although the radio or TV station must provide public service time, it does not have any obligation to provide public service time to your particular program, as there may be a number of other worthy programs competing for the public service time. As a result, it is best to assume that you will get coverage to the extent that your story is newsworthy, rather than because of any obligation of the radio or TV station.

Establishing Yourself with Radio and TV Stations:

Most of the principles of working with newspapers apply equally to radio and television stations. The first step is for you to identify those radio and TV stations which you believe will best provide information to the public interested in your public involvement program. You may find that a five minute program on a station with a very large audience elicits far greater public interest and response than a half-hour program on a station with relatively low coverage. Public broadcasting stations and cable television stations, for example, are far more likely to provide you with prolonged coverage, but the number of people watching these stations is substantially less. The first step, once again, is to make a personal call on the news director of the radio or television stations from which you wish to receive coverage. Once again, printed materials should be left with the news director, and the presence of a citizen representative will add legitimacy to your story.

Types of Radio and Television Coverage:

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

There are several types of radio and TV coverage which you should discuss with the news director. These include:

1. Coverage of meetings or other public involvement events on regular news programs on the stations.
2. Thirty-second spot announcements of public meetings or inviting participation in the public involvement program.
3. Pre-taped guest editorials describing your public involvement program and inviting participation.
4. Appearance of an agency official or leading community figures on an interview show.
5. Appearance of an agency official or other program participants on a call-in show.
6. A taped documentary describing the issues which will be covered during the decision-making process.
7. Some form of participatory radio or television.

### Writing for Radio:

In preparing press releases or announcements for radio, most of the same rules apply as in newspaper stories. The critical difference is that with radio and TV the time you will receive will usually be much briefer. You must remember that major world events may receive no more than 30 to 60 seconds of coverage on radio or television news, so your public involvement program will be very fortunate to receive anything equal. As a result, brevity is of extreme importance. You can assume that a story longer than eight to fifteen lines will not appear. It is also important to remember that the news announcer will "speak" your story, so sentences must be brief and of sufficient simplicity that they sound conversational. Like news stories they should always be written in the present active tense, using tight, simple language.



USE OF SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

by Jerry Delli Priscoli

Introduction

Surveys and questionnaires are specialized social science tools which can be adopted in specific circumstances by Corps planners. They can be used in program and policy planning, setting budgeting priorities, identifying needed areas of change, and as checks on other citizen participation efforts. For the planner, they can provide citizen feedback on services which will be valuable in planning for future services. Surveys and questionnaires help the planner better understand those who are silent on certain issues. They can provide an overview of trends in communities and comparison among geographic as well as demographic units.

OMB Clearance

One problem that must immediately be considered in using a survey or formal questionnaire is that any interview schedule to be given to over ten people must be cleared through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). For the Corps planner, this means clearance through his/her immediate project superior, the district, the division, OCE and then OMB. Consequently, a field survey effort requires six months to one year advanced planning. While efforts are being initiated to try and establish generally approved OMB forms for social interviewing, the requirements dampen the applicability of the questionnaire or survey.

Partly due to the OMB ruling and to the fact that questionnaires are expensive, and valid for only one moment in time, several innovative attempts to substitute for them are emerging. Minisurveys are an example. Minisurveys are used as checks against other sources of public information such as expert panels and citizen committees. They generally involve 10-50 interviews done at very low cost over a short period of time. As such, they can be used cumulatively over the course of a study.

Another area to examine is the use of secondary survey analyses. Since many surveys and questions have been used in the past, the planner should contact relevant repositories of such surveys. Every effort should be made to both adopt and build on previous survey research efforts.

Impact in the Community

The problems with OMB clearance are not the only cautions in using surveys. Surveys can incur certain risks. It is important to remember that just doing a survey means you are interacting with the population you are observing. The survey itself will affect the groups in which you are interested. Therefore, propagandizing must be avoided and good honest survey design sought.

---

This is an original article describing material used in IWR training programs.

Surveys can induce suspicion within the observed population. As such, they can have negative as well as positive impacts on future Corps actions in an area. In fact, surveys can induce opposition where none existed. Thus, surveys should not be trivial. They are serious business best done by trained professionals.

Because of these factors, doing a survey can limit the range of available decision making options. Thus, the appropriateness of the survey must be clearly established in each situation. For example, continued surveying of very small rural communities may be very inefficient. It might be better to establish some type of social monitoring system using respected local people or county agents over the life of a project.

One must be particularly careful when using surveys in planning. Since planning is anticipatory in nature, the planner often seeks information about potential impacts. People are often asked to respond to contingencies which have not existed and with which they are unfamiliar. For planning, the best surveys are those which focus on specific issues within specific targeted groups as opposed to broad coverage.

Types of Surveys/Questionnaires

There are three basic methods to do a survey: 1) Mail Questionnaires; 2) In-person interview; and, 3) Telephonic surveys. Different response rates and costs can be expected from each method (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 - SURVEY METHODS

<u>Method</u>	<u>Projected Results</u>	<u>Costs</u>
Mail Questionnaire	Low % returns	least expensive
Telephone Interview	Some sampling inadequacies	medium costs
Personal Interviewing	High response	high

Some illustrations of survey costs are provided in Figure 2.

In doing personal interviews, the basic cost items are: prepare listing, selecting the samples, developing the schedule, printing the interview schedule, specific interviewing personnel costs, editing, coding, key punching, telephoning, mailing, analyzing and reprinting the material. Mail questionnaires involve similar startup and administrative costs. They also involve higher mailing but lower interviewing personnel costs. Telephone surveys reduce mailing and printing costs but also have high interviewing personnel costs.

FIGURE 2 - EXAMPLE COMPARISON OF COST  
FIGURES FOR SURVEY METHODS

<u>Method</u>	<u>Estimated Moderate Cost</u>	<u>Cost/Respondent</u>
<u>Personal Interview</u>		
sample of 400	\$ 9,925	\$24.80
sample of 500	11,325	22.65
sample of 1,000	19,550	19.55
<u>Telephone Interview</u>		
sample of 500 (Including personal interviews)	8,510	17.00
<u>Mail Questionnaire</u>		
2,000 mailed 1,000 mailed (Supplemental/50 telephone and/or personal interviews)	8,475	8.10

Mailed surveys have the advantages of inducing more candid results because they are done in private and usually the comfort of familiar home surroundings. However, they are susceptible to considerable bias because of the unpredictability of response rates and composition.

There is considerable research on techniques to increase response rates, but clearly followup procedures are the most important. Mailed reminder cards, duplicate questionnaires, multiple followups and a telephone followup are the most frequently used. How much each technique will improve your response rate will ultimately depend on the composition of the group you are surveying. However, the one-time followup letter with an inclosed duplicate questionnaire is probably the most efficient procedure.

Beyond followup procedures other techniques are available to increase response rates. The type of postage, cash rewards, nature of sponsoring organization, personalizing the survey, assuring anonymity of the respondent, specific appeals, and the length of the questionnaire might all effect the return rates. Of these, personalizing the questionnaire, specific appeals and cash rewards have the most significant effect. The more a respondent can be made to feel as if he/she personally has been asked to respond, the better the chance of a mailed response. This can be accomplished through methods such as signatures and handwritten addresses.



Cash rewards are most economically employed after initial mailings to the nonrespondents. Specific appeals to the egotism, altruism or social responsibility of the respondent can also help improve response rates.

Telephone surveys are increasingly popular. They are relatively easy to administer, have lower costs, and have a good potential for reaching large segments of the population. This method suffers from the fact that significant portions of the population do not have telephones or have unlisted numbers. While "random dialing" can partially overcome this problem the planner should be aware of these sources of bias. Nonetheless, good telephone surveys depend upon skilled telephone "voices" and extensive training.

Personal interviewing is considered to be the most accurate and flexible. Samples can be drawn from census housing tracts and visual aids can be employed. High response rates over better societal cross-sections can be attained by returning to households. However, interviewer bias due to direct interaction can increase. Costs of personal interviewing are also high.

A considerable amount of hard data is available on the costs, techniques, impacts and usefulness of each of these techniques. A decision to employ any of these should be preceded by careful consultation, homework and thought.

#### Content of Survey/Questionnaire

Distinctions among several types of questions in surveys should be made. Most importantly, the planner must determine whether he/she desires opinions, attitudes and/or values. Distinction among these items is of major theoretical importance and debate. The planner must be, at least peripherally, aware of this debate. Basically, opinions refer to what a person thinks about a specific issue at a specific time. It is one of the most familiar survey types. However, opinions are a function of structural attitudes which are acquired through experience and learning. Structured attitudes are thought to be a precondition for action. An attitude refers to an organization of several beliefs around a specific object or situation. A value refers to a single belief of a very specific kind. It concerns a desirable mode of behavior or end-state that has a transcendental quality to it, guiding action, attitudes, judgments and comparisons across specific objects and situations beyond immediate goals to more ultimate goals. Ultimately, understanding values and value change is the most powerful way of projecting impacts. However, understanding behavior also depends on understanding how values translate to attitudes and opinions.

Beyond attitude, opinions and values surveys ask questions of fact and levels of information. Fact questions are those used to set the "object" situation of the respondent. They are primarily demographic. Often surveys have questions on the level of information as comparative and objective checks on the knowledge and qualifications of the respondent for answering.

Several types of questions can be cited which allow the planner to cross-check the validity of answers and get more indepth answers. Self-perception questions are those which ask the respondent to evaluate himself in relationship to others. Further questions are used to determine whether a respondent is qualified to answer a set of questions. "Why" questions can be added to illicit reasons for specific responses. Probe questions ask for further reasons after a "why" question has been asked. Intensity questions are those designed to determine the strength with which people hold a specific view. Sleeper questions are seemingly innocuous requests for information which can be used as a check on the level of respondent information.

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

Whatever types of questions are asked in a survey, certain basic pitfalls must be avoided. First, avoid ambiguous wording. Usually this takes the form of imprecise wording or incomplete questions. However, in making questions precise you should avoid using words which are familiar to you but not to your respondent. Asking precisely what you want in words that mean something to respondents is critical to the success of the survey.

Secondly, you must avoid loading questions. That is, do not suggest that one answer is better than another. Don't present unfair alternatives or obvious strawman answers. Avoid maligning either side of the argument by using stereotypes in emotionally charged words. Do not link prestige personalities and figures to specific questions.

Finally, be careful to avoid special wording problems. Do not assume too much knowledge on the part of respondents. Avoid "briefing" the respondents on the situation before they answer. Avoid lengthy and two-part questions.

### Types of Questions

Survey questions are usually either structured closed-ended or unstructured open-ended. Both have advantages and disadvantages. Structured closed-ended questions have the advantage of being easy to administer and analyze. However, they do sacrifice intensity of response.

Unstructured open-ended questions are particularly useful in exploratory situations where knowledge is limited. They can induce unanticipated responses and foster "serendipity." Unstructured questions also are useful in probing motivations of respondents.

On the negative side, open-ended questions tend to be unwieldy, hard to quantify, analyze and manipulate. They take up large amounts of time and space. Also, they may give false impressions that the planner is explaining complexities where that is not the case.

Some of the open-ended question advantages of probing intensity and directions can be captured with structured questions. Numerous techniques are available to structure questions. However, the rule of thumb is to assure that the problems determine the techniques and not to allow the technique to dictate the problem. Beyond "yes-no" and basic multiple choice type questions, several examples of closed-ended questions are included below:

These samples only begin to suggest the variations involved in asking questions. Format will affect the number and accuracy of responses. Format will also affect your ability to develop specific attitude scales and measurement indices. where possible, you should consult specific expert advice in questionnaire development. Also, where possible, you should use and adopt proven tested questions.

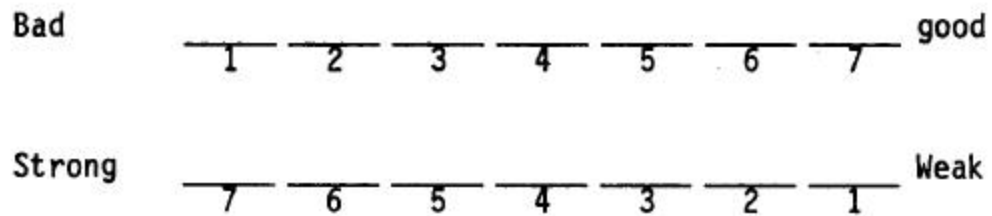
Scaled Question

How important is it to wash your car?

- \_\_\_\_\_ very important
- \_\_\_\_\_ important
- \_\_\_\_\_ unimportant
- \_\_\_\_\_ very unimportant

Rating Scale - Semantic Differential

How would you describe Jimmy Carter as President



Sampling Size and Costs

Sampling is the procedure by which we can infer the characteristics of a large body of people (a population) although we talk with only a few persons (a sample). Samples must be of adequate size so that estimates about the population characteristics can be made with acceptable precision. Also the sample must include people who together are representative of the community.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

Phrases: Statement Questions

The ideal president:	Agree	1	2	3	4	5	Disagree
Should be tough-minded							
Should be able to control Congress							
Should be able to control the military							
Should be college educated							

Using a series of statements to form a scale

All presidents should be tough

Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

---

Presidents should avoid controlling Congress

Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

---

Presidents should control the military

Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

---

Cumulative Scaling: (Example for five questions)

	Least Feasible		Most Feasible			Most Favorable	Agree Score
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
Respondent 1	A	A	A	A	A	5	1 (Most)
Respondent 2	A	A	A	A	D	4	2
Respondent 3	A	A	A	D	D	3	3
Respondent 4	A	A	D	D	D	2	4
Respondent 5	A	D	D	D	D	1	5
Respondent 6	D	D	D	D	D	0	6 (Least)

Ranking Subjects

Please rank the five most influential citizens  
(1 =Most Influential, 5 = Least Influential)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ronald Reagan
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Meany
- \_\_\_\_\_ T. Kennedy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jerry Brown
- \_\_\_\_\_ Billy Graham
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tom Landry

Paired Ranking

Who is the most influential?

- \_\_\_\_\_ J. Carter or T. Kennedy \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ T. Kennedy or G. Meany \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Meany or J. Carter \_\_\_\_\_

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

---

The basic methods of sampling are: simple random sampling, structured random sampling and cluster sampling. Costs with each vary. Simple random sampling involves drawing a sample at random from the whole population. A table of random numbers is traditionally used. In structured random sampling, samples are drawn separately from subgroups of the universe (e.g., white males, black females, etc.) Cluster sampling can reduce costs because batches of people living near each other are selected and travel time is reduced. However, in any given sample size there is less coincidence in the findings

Two concepts of error are important in considering sampling. First, how much error will we tolerate between a sample estimate and a population. The answer to this depends on the use of a sample. For example, if we are trying to predict a close election, an error factor of 4 percent is too much if the population vote difference is 2 percent. Thus, we must have an idea of how much error between the sample and population is permissible.

Since we can never be absolutely sure that sample population error is within the tolerated limits, we must specify to what degree we are confident that the estimate is reliable. Usually we say that in 95 (or 99) out of 100 samples like ours the true value lies within the estimated range tolerated error.

The following table outlines the relationship between sample size, tolerated error, and confidence limits.

FIGURE 3 - SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLE SIZE  
FOR SEVERAL DEGREES OF PRECISION\*

Tolerated Error	Confidence Limits	
	95 Samples in 100	99 Samples in 100
1%	9,604	16,587
2%	2,401	4,147
3%	1,067	1,843
4%	600	1,037
5%	384	663
6%	267	461
7%	196	339

---

\*From: G.H. Backstrom, G. D. Hursh, Survey Research, Northwestern University Press, Chicago, 1963.

In doing a survey, the planner must be aware of how much higher confidence levels and increased sample size cost. He (she) should also be aware of how the various types of surveys can, in turn, affect these costs. Figure 4 gives a rough illustration of these relationships.

CONCLUSION

Surveys and questionnaires are valuable and sophisticated research tools. But as has been illustrated in this article, there are pitfalls in using them, and numerous options in how they are used that have important implications for cost and confidence of accuracy. While this article provides an overview of the use of surveys and questionnaires, people who are not trained in their use should consult with Corps social scientists or other trained professionals to ensure the best use of surveys and questionnaires.

FIGURE 4

COMPARISON OF COST AND ACCURACY LEVELS  
FOR DIFFERENT SAMPLE SIZES AND METHODS  
(Rough approximation for illustrative purposes)

	COST LEVEL <sup>a</sup>		ACCURACY LEVEL <sup>b</sup>	
	Moderate Total	Approximate cost per response	95 percent	90 percent
Personal interview				
Sample of 400	\$ 9,925	\$24.80	+ 4.9	+ 4.1
Sample of 500	11,325	22.65	+ 4.3	+ 3.6
Sample of 1,000	19,550	19.55	+ 3.1	+ 2.6
Telephone interview				
Sample of 500 (including 50 in-person interviews) <sup>c</sup>	8,510	17.00	+ 4.3	+ 3.6
Mail questionnaire				
2,000 mailed 1,000 returned (supplemented by 50 telephone and/or in-person interviews)	8,475	8.10	d	d

<sup>a</sup>Costs are estimated "moderate" costs.

<sup>b</sup>Accuracy levels are the percentage points (+ or -) by which the sample percentage could differ from the "true" percentage in the population, if the reported percentage is about 40 to 60. Nonsampling errors are not considered here.

<sup>c</sup>If all assumptions of randomization have been met.

<sup>d</sup>Because of self-selective nature of returns, this difference will inevitably be greater than the earlier sampling tables indicate, but how serious this bias is, is very difficult to forecast.

\*From Carol H. Weiss, H.P. Harry, An Introduction to Sample Surveys for Government Managers, Urban Institute, Washington, D.C., 1971.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES

By James L. Creighton

One major objective of public involvement is to arrive at a consensus on a most desirable plan so that there is a broad base of public support for the future actions of the agency. Sometimes this consensus occurs quite spontaneously as the result of the various public involvement activities. Other times there are basic conflicts which do not appear resolvable and no consensus is achieved. In this paper we will look at those principles of public involvement design which encourage consensus formation and describe the procedures that might be used when conflict does occur.

THE ROLE OF THE AGENCY

The role which the agency assumes in relationship to the public is one of the major determinants of whether or not a consensus can be achieved. Many agencies have adopted an adversary relationship to the public in which the public is viewed as "a troublemaker" which simply impedes the progress of the agency. Most frequently this occurs when the agency sees itself as having a "client" and sees opponents of a particular project as blocking the agency's role in fulfillment of this client relationship. The most typical ways the agency communicates the adversary role to the public are by beginning the study already committed to a particular outcome or by consulting with the public only after the agency has become committed to a particular outcome. Whenever an agency sees the public as the adversary it is likely to create a self-fulfilling prophecy: Any public treated as an adversary will soon act as an adversary, even though that adversary role might otherwise not have been inevitable.

Another basic determination that an agency must make is whether it views itself primarily as "the decision maker" or as the "facilitator" of a decision making process. In the first conception, the agency makes the decision with various individuals and interests appealing to the agency to consider and support their cause. In the extreme, this places the public in the position of supplicants to the all-powerful agency. The alternative conception is that it is the agency's role to create a decision-making process which will result in a consensus on an implementable plan which, so long as it is acceptable to the public as well as technically and economically feasible, will be accepted and recommended by the agency as its decision. In effect the agency retains the legal responsibility to see that a decision is made, but operates on the assumption that the best possible definition of "the public good" is achieved through open problem solving and negotiation among the various interests.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program. Creighton, et al., "Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. 1977.

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

In this latter conception the agency can certainly participate as an equal in pointing out technical problems, impacts, benefits or costs; but the agency does not present itself as an advocate for particular alternatives or values.

When the agency sees its role as the decision maker and the public is placed in the role of supplicant, then negotiation between the various publics becomes extremely difficult. Each group will attempt to manipulate or contrive to win over the agency in much the same way that two children may engage in elaborate strategies in an effort to win the parents' approval. If, instead, the agency believes its responsibility is to create a decision making process, this creates a much more conducive climate for problem solving as the public can meet its needs by open and visible problem solving rather than through manipulation and power games.

### THE PUBLIC'S STAKE IN PARTICIPATING

Even when there have been serious and honest attempts at public involvement there have been significant interest groups that have avoided the public involvement and have attempted to "win" through the judicial or political process. This raises the important question: Can a group meet its needs best through participating in public involvement or through appealing to a higher authority at a later date? When groups do circumvent public involvement programs and go instead to higher judicial or political authority, they reduce public involvement to simply a set of legal procedures to be fought over in a courtroom. Public involvement is reduced to a legal requirement which is carried out not because any resolution is expected to result from it, but because it could be a point of litigation subsequently. Some of the remedy for this ailment will have to come from the courts themselves when they recognize (as they have recently in several court decisions) that genuine efforts have been made on the part of the agency to include groups that have not always acted in good faith. If, under these conditions, the courts force the litigants back into the public participation process rather than the legal process, then the courts will assist in making it in the interest of all the groups to participate openly and visibly rather than in a manipulative manner. The other major protection against groups choosing not to participate and then attempting to win through a subsequent appeal to higher authority, is to have broad-based and enthusiastic public support and interest in the public participation activities. Given the present political climate all groups are dependent on support from other interests to have any political clout. If a group continually appears to be unreasonable or "way-out" then they will begin to lose their support with the other groups and become increasingly isolated politically. If there is local public enthusiasm for the public participation process, then groups that choose not to participate will appear undemocratic and "elitist" to other groups and threaten their base of political support. Nevertheless, the precondition for expecting all groups to participate openly and enthusiastically in public participation is the provision of public participation programs in which their needs can be met. If there is no way that an interest group can get its needs met through public participation they will inevitably go outside the public participation process in an effort to win their point.

### WIN/LOSE vs. ALL/WIN DECISION MAKING:

There is a tendency to approach any decision making on the assumption that there will be winners and losers as there are in elections, games, etc. There is an old axiom of negotiation, however, that whenever one party

to a conflict believes they have lost, the negotiations have been unsuccessful. Inherent in anyone's loss are the seeds for the next battle. When the emphasis in decision making is on winning or losing, the public participation process is likely to degenerate into a situation in which each group exercises veto power on the other groups but there is no ability to mount a positive program on anyone's behalf. Instead the agency must create from the beginning an atmosphere which encourages the notion that through the public participation process everybody can win. The climate must be created in which everybody believes that the agency is attempting to develop plans which incorporate everybody's needs rather than choose sides. This ALL/WIN atmosphere must pervade through the entire public participation process if a consensus is to be achieved.

### TRUST

Another major precondition for effective problem solving and consensus formation is a climate of trust. Such a climate is of course difficult to achieve between the agency and publics where there are genuine differences of interest and historical antagonisms. Nevertheless there is considerable evidence that in the course of public participation programs substantially higher levels of trust can be built as a result of the agency and groups working together.

One of the major issues in establishing trust is reducing the surprises; so that no one feels "taken" or "had" by the position of one of the other groups. Two important ways of building trust are:

1. Early identification of the issues so that no one is startled by a major new issue as the process approaches completion.
2. Establishing visibility for each group's objectives: In many cases groups have stereotypes about the objectives of other groups which are misleading and cause inappropriate reactions and mistrust. One major component in an effective public involvement program is to create visibility for each group's objectives so that their actions are not misunderstood or their positions inaccurately perceived.

One important consideration in designing public involvement activities is to design activities which allow for sufficient interaction so that individuals representing different interests come to know each other as human beings rather than just as stereotyped representatives of a particular point of view. One agency has developed a practice of taking representatives of the conflicting interests on a two-day camping trip in the study area for on-sight inspection. This agency has found that (in addition to the information acquired about the site) relationships are built between the participants by sharing in the physical experience of camping out which breaks down many of the misconceptions and barriers to further communication between the interests. While such a technique is not suitable in all public participation programs, the agency should be aware to design activities that encourage the establishment of relationships at a human level between the agency staff and between the various interest groups.

#### SHARED DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

One of the first rules of mutual problem solving is that before it is possible for people to agree to a mutual solution they must agree to a mutual definition of the problem. While this may sound simple, in fact, a characteristic of most public dialogue is that different interests have radically different definitions of the problem. One person may define the problem as "getting the most economical flood control"; another may define the problem as "protecting the natural system of the river"; while still another may define the problem as "planning regulations that allow people to build homes in the flood plain." With these widely divergent definitions of the problem it becomes virtually impossible to get the groups to agree to a specific plan because the plan is likely to be responding to an entirely different problem than that perceived by other individuals and groups. One process for creating a shared definition of the problem is the process of objective setting. In the process of agreeing on objectives for a project, you are in effect also agreeing on the definition of the project. One important point would be to see whether everybody agrees to all the objectives or in fact each group is simply agreeing with the objective that is written for their particular concern and really does not buy into the other objectives as being legitimate.

#### OPEN COMMUNICATION

Another key element in creating a climate in which a consensus is possible is open communication. Unless both the staff and the public feel that all information is open and shared and people can talk about those things that concern them most, it will be impossible to establish the kind of relationship where a consensus will be possible. At times this runs counter to the bureaucratic tendency to "keep the lid on" or to consider any public participation a failure when there is a high level of controversy. The critical measure of success in public participation is not that it eliminated controversy, but that it created a process by which whatever controversies that existed could be genuinely resolved. Efforts to "keep the lid on" have a tendency to solve the problem of suppressing noisy confrontations at the cost of failing to resolve the genuine issues that exist.

#### PARTICIPATION IN CONSENSUS FORMATION

The act of negotiating one's way to a consensus is by its nature highly interactive, thus any conflict resolution must usually be done with a small number of participants in a situation which allows for maximum interaction and discussion. Negotiation is not possible in front of a large public meeting. In a large meeting leaders of various interests must be seen by their constituencies as defending their interests. As a result, positions taken during meetings are likely to be more fixed and more polarized than those that would take place in private discussion. In effect, negotiations must take place in the atmosphere of private discussion between a few limited individuals. However, when the number of people that participate in negotiations is substantially restricted then there can be charges of "elitism." There is also the substantial possibility that while the participants have agreed to a plan, other interests and groups that did not participate will disown the plan based on the failure to include them in the decision making. Therefore; there is always a balance to be made between the need to limit the number of people involved in any consensus formulation stage with the need to ensure that all critical parties are present so that when a consensus is reached there will be a commitment of political support for it. Even if a relatively large number of individuals must participate for a consensus to be

acceptable it will still be necessary to limit the number of participants in any particular meeting unless some form of large group/small group format is used. As a result, it may be necessary to hold a series of negotiating meetings although this entails certain risks of arriving at apparent agreement at one meeting only to have it unacceptable to the next, thus creating a need to return to the first group, etc.

#### BASIC STRATEGY OF CONSENSUS FORMATION

There are four basic steps that appear in most processes of negotiation whether in political parties, labor and management, etc. These are:

1. Establish areas of agreement: The first step is to eliminate from the field of negotiation any issues on which all parties are already agreed. For example, the agency might ask: "Do we all agree that some form of flood protection is needed?" This serves both to ensure that we have a shared definition of the problem and to eliminate any time wasted arguing issues that everybody has already agreed upon. In addition--and most important--by working together to establish areas of agreement some trust has been built and a success pattern established between the participants.
2. Clearly define the areas of continuing disagreement: In many cases the disagreements that people have are not clearly defined and there are misunderstandings as to what the positions of the other groups really are. Once some communication has already been built on things to which everybody can agree, then it is often possible to get a much more precise definition of the areas of disagreement. While this may appear to sharpen the conflict in fact people are working together in this process. People may continue to disagree with the content, but the relationship they have established is one of cooperation which will ultimately pay off in a better problem-solving climate.
3. If possible, agree on a procedure for resolving any continuing disagreements. Even when people have chosen to disagree and cannot resolve the disagreement directly, they may be able to agree to a methodology or process by which it can be resolved. Again, even if they still continue to disagree, they are also working together in an effort to resolve that disagreement and this establishes a suitable climate in which agreements can be made.
4. Continue to work on each issue, one-at-a-time. Rather than try to resolve the remaining issues all at once, the usual pattern of negotiation is to work on each remaining disagreement one-at-a-time.

This four-step process can, and has, served as the basis for workshops in conflict situations and has proven to be effective. This procedure can work either of two ways:

1. The most frequent outcome is that rather quickly some broad areas of agreement are established leaving relatively small areas of disagreement. Having achieved such a substantial amount of agreement there is then a willingness on the part of all parties to try to find means of resolving those few differences that do remain. In addition since there is such a substantial agreement established that--even if some differences are not resolved--people tend

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

to have enough sense of commitment to the area of general agreement that they will support the plan even though they do not get all that they wish out of it.

2. In those situations where there is a substantial degree of conflict then the reverse process may take place. By working successfully on some small issues and achieving an agreement on them while postponing the large issues temporarily, it may be possible to establish a climate of sufficient trust that it then becomes possible to work on the large issues. This is the classic methodology of difficult management/labor negotiations.

**FIVE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS**

Another procedure which can be helpful in solving problems is the Five-Step Problem-Solving Process shown below. These five steps are a systematic means of approaching problems whether in management or in relationship with the public. An outline summary of the Five-Step Problem-Solving Process is shown below:

Five Steps in Mutual Problem-Solving:

1. Define and gain acceptance of the problem.
2. Develop alternative solutions.
3. Evaluate alternative solutions.
4. Agree on mutual solution.
5. Establish a mutually acceptable plan for implementation.

Initiating Problem-Solving:

- a. Tell all involved that you are attempting to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution and be certain they understand the procedure you wish to follow.
- b. Problem-solve the agenda. If the agenda is not set up mutually, it may be difficult to achieve mutuality on the bigger problems.
- c. Allow plenty of time to work through to a mutually acceptable solution--a time-pressured solution usually means time wasted.

- d. Be certain that the time, location and manner of setting up the meeting communicate mutuality.
- e. Include in the problem-solving only those people involved in the conflict. Conversely, include everyone involved in the conflict.
- f. When there are very strong feelings about a problem you may need two meetings: one to get feelings out in the open and the other to do problem-solving.

#### BREAKDOWN OF FIVE-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING

##### Step I Define and Gain Acceptance of the Problem:

- a. Send your feeling rather than evaluating or blaming.
- b. Use active listening to be certain you will get to a deeper problem if there is one.
- c. Avoid preconceptions as to solution--with good communication, the whole nature of the problem may change. Besides, problem-solving is not a subtle form of manipulation for influencing others to arrive at your solution.

##### Step II Develop Alternative Solutions:

- a. Again, be certain that everybody realizes that you are searching for a solution acceptable to all.
- b. Encourage others to offer solutions. If you are the agency representative your solutions may be considered of more importance than anyone else's unless they are included among a number of other proposed solutions.
- c. Keep evaluation out at this stage. You want to create a psychologically "safe" climate.

##### Step III Evaluate Alternative Solutions:

- a. Encourage everyone to evaluate solutions in terms of how it affects them personally.
- b. Use lots of active listening (especially when feelings crop up) to get at true feelings about proposed solutions.
- c. Use active listening to find out which part of proposed solution is acceptable.
- d. Don't get side-tracked with tangential problems. Put them on the agenda to be solved at another time.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Step IV Agree on Mutual Solution:

- a. Be sure solution is truly acceptable to all. No one must be pressured into buying unacceptable solutions.
- b. Try to reach consensus agreement--avoid voting.
- c. Restate the solution and "test for consensus" when there seems to be agreement.
- d. Steps to take when agreement is difficult to reach:
  1. Keep on talking it out.
  2. State what portions of the solution are acceptable to all and what parts are still hanging the group up. Stress areas of agreement, pinpointing remaining areas of disagreement.
  3. Ask: "Are there any hidden agendas which are keeping us from reaching agreement?"
  4. Restate the premise of mutual problem-solving--nobody is going to have his way at the expense of others, so we must find a solution acceptable to all.
  5. Get more data to break deadlock and propose new alternatives.
  6. Set up another problem-solving session in the future.
  7. Review the definition of the problem to be sure there is mutual acceptance and that it defines the problem in the most basic terms.

Step V Establish a Mutually Acceptable Plan for Implementation:

- a. Be sure that decisions in implementation are also arrived at mutually. The effect of making decisions mutually may be lost if implementation decisions are made unilaterally.
- b. If the implementation must be made by one person, at least give everyone involved in the decision a chance to give that person his/her ideas on implementation.
- c. You may find it effective to have someone summarize any agreements and distribute them for comments or initialing. This will insure that there is common understanding or will give a chance to identify areas of misunderstanding.



- d. Communicate the attitude of trust that everyone will stick to the agreement if it has been agreed upon mutually.
- e. Keep your part of the bargain.



ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC COMMENT

by James L. Creighton  
and C. Mark Dunning

In the early days of public involvement there was a tendency to sort public comment into two simple categories: FOR the proposed action, AGAINST the proposed action. In this way, a manager would look at a summary of 800 letters from the public and find that 427 people supported the project, and 373 opposed. Since the potential impacted public was 220 million, if he was an insightful individual he realized that all he could conclude from this summary was that he had a controversy on his hands--something he probably already knew if he got 800 letters.

Obviously this kind of summary was unfair to both the public and the manager. A citizen might write a four-page letter giving detailed argumentation for his position, only to have it given equal weight and analysis with a one-sentence postcard. The manager didn't learn from the analysis why people supported or opposed the action, the differences in opinion of different kinds of groups, or points of agreement between different groups. As a result he just muddled through, or if he was a conscientious manager, he read most of the letters. This, of course, was very time consuming, and still not very systematic.

In recent years, however, more sophisticated tools have been developed which do less savagery to the public's comment, and provide an important tool for the decision maker. The need for these improvements has been experienced particularly by two Department of Agriculture agencies, the U.S. Forest Service and Soil Conservation Service. Both of these agencies have been required under Federal legislation to conduct major appraisals of the national resources under their supervision. In addition, they have held national public involvement programs as part of these appraisals. The number of comments requiring analysis ranged from 20,000 in one instance up to 200,000 comments. Obviously this makes it a little hard for the decision maker to read all the comments. As a result, they have reached out to new techniques which would allow them to analyze these comments and receive maximum information from the analysis. The techniques which have evolved are adaptations of content analysis, a technique already used in academic research, applied to the specific needs of public involvement. This article summarizes those techniques which appear to be most usable.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The purpose of an analysis is to summarize and display public comment in such a way that maximum information is available to decision makers (and to the public) about what was said. To the maximum extent possible, analysis should display public comment without interjecting interpretation or judgment.

---

Reprinted from: A shorter version of this article appeared in IWR Training Course, Creighton, et al., "Public Involvement in Regulatory Programs," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1979.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Theoretically, two skilled analysts using the same technique should arrive at virtually identical analyses of the comment.

Evaluation of public comment takes place after analysis and includes judgment and weighting of relative value. Evaluation might require a weighting of comments from 315 handwritten letters, versus 400 names on a petition. Evaluation might assign a (nonnumerical) value to the concerns of people living in the area of a proposed action, versus the concerns of people 2,000 miles away. Obviously, evaluation is an essential element of decision making, while analysis is getting the information ready, so that the evaluation process can begin.

The techniques described below are strictly analysis techniques, not evaluation techniques. They display the public comment as objectively as possible. A representative of an interest group could come into the office--and this has occasionally happened--and with a little training produce an analysis which is almost the same as that produced by the agency analyst. This objectivity is, of course, essential if these techniques are to be utilized in public involvement. Since government agencies are often already suspect of listening selectively to the public, any system which allows insertion of agency values into analysis of public comment will invalidate the public involvement process. On a controversial issue it may, in fact, be necessary to hold a workshop for key interest groups just to show them how the analysis is being made. If the analysis technique is a "black box" into which public comment goes and is mysteriously analyzed, the lack of visibility and openness will result in the analysis not being accepted as a fair representation of public comment.

### METHODS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

The two analysis techniques which are most useful are both variants of content analysis. Content analysis is a research tool developed by academic researchers in sociology, journalism and political science. It is used, for example, to conduct research on propaganda used in newspapers during Hitler's era in Germany. Or it might be used to compare the relative frequency of certain topics in letters to the editor, as a means of identifying public priorities. This is done by analyzing the actual content (arguments, facts, logic) contained in newspaper articles, letters, etc.

The two variations of content analysis which have been most useful in analyzing public comment are:

1) Content Summary Analysis, and 2) Codinvolve.

Content Summary Analysis is designed to capture the actual language of the public in describing their reason for supporting or opposing the proposed action. As a result, a summary prepared using Content Summary Analysis will give the decision maker a "feel" for the intensity of language used, or the closeness of argumentation. Content Summary Analysis is very simple to use if the number of comments being analyzed is relatively small, as you can see from the instructions below, it becomes more complex if the number of comments is very large. It has been used, however, for one national public involvement program with many thousands of comments.

Codinvolve is a name of a content analysis process developed by a team of Forest Service researchers headed by Dr. John Hendee, of the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Range and Experiment Station. Codinvolve attempts to capture all the content of public comment, but does so by recording the comment in categories, rather than in the public's own language. Using Codinvolve you might determine that 54 people opposed a permit because "its conditions were an unfair burden on the property owner," while 137 opposed the permit because "it would allow the property owner to alter natural wetlands." But you would not see the actual language in which the public expressed these arguments, only a tally of the number of people in the category. As a result, something is lost in Codinvolve--the intensity and feeling quality of the public's language--but in return you gain a technique which can more simply analyze large volumes of comment.

#### PROCEDURES FOR CONTENT SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The basic procedures in Content Summary Analysis are as follows:

1. Coding Responses for Identification, Origin and Affiliation: Each letter when it comes in will be assigned an identification code which will tell you when the letter was received, the geographical area from which the letter came, and any affiliation or organizational information provided in the letter. Usually the code comes in three parts, for example: Sequence number--zip code or other geographical code--affiliation. The sequence number is simply a number indicating the order in which the letter is received. If this is the 15th letter received, then the sequence number is 15. The master files are then kept by sequence number so that any time you want to refer back to letter 531, all you have to do is look in the file by number.

The geographic code can be a zip code, or some other geographic code you have worked out that has meaning for this analysis. Zip code is useful if you plan to do a mailing, since the post office may require sorting by zip code for mass mailings. On the other hand, you may want some geographical division which makes more political sense, e.g.:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>GEOGRAPHICAL AREA</u>
-------------	--------------------------

A	Central business district
B	Other City of Phoenix
C	East suburbs
D	West suburbs
F	South suburbs
G	Tucson
H	Other Arizona
I	Other states

The affiliation code indicates any information provided about organizational affiliation. You might, for example, use the basic categories shown below:

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

<u>CODE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>
10	ACADEMIC
20	BUSINESS/INDUSTRY
30	CITIZEN (No affiliation indicated)
40	ENVIRONMENT/CONSERVATION/CIVIC
50	GOVERNMENT
60	OTHER

The reason for using a two digit number is so that you could make even finer distinctions if you want to, for example:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>
51	U.S. Senator or Congressman
52	State or local elected official
53	Federal agency
54	State or local agency etc.

To summarize, using the codes above if this was your 47th letter, from the Mayor of Tucson, your code would be:

47-G-52

The reason this code is important is so that you can cross-reference your responses in such a way that you can ask the questions:

How do people from Tucson (all responses coded G) feel about the proposed action?

or

How do state and local elected officials (all responses coded 52) feel about the proposed action?

or even

How do all environmental groups from out of state (all coded I-40) feel about the proposed action?

2. Make multiple copies: Once an identification number has been assigned, make at least three copies to be used as follows:
  - C Original for filing
  - C One copy for decision makers (district engineer, etc.)
  - C One copy for public review
  - C One copy for mark-up
  
3. Identify your topic codes: The next step is to identify the basic topic categories you want to establish. These can range from very simple to very sophisticated. You could, for example, just establish a file for all comments supporting the action, all comments opposing the action, or you may find by quickly reading a sample of letters that there are five basic reasons that people oppose the action. In this case you might want to establish six different folders:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>
10	General opposition (no reasons given)
11	Opposed--environmental impacts
12	Opposed--unjustified gov't intervention
13	Opposed--too costly
14	Opposed--guidelines unclear
15	Opposed--inadequate public notice

Anything in the 10 Series indicates opposition. Anything from 11-15 indicates the argument used. It is possible that a single letter might have comments that will go into several different files, since several arguments may be used.

4. First Analysis: The analyst should first read the entire letter to get the overall meaning. Initial the letter at the bottom after reading, so that you will know it has been read, in case you get interrupted. Then re-read the letter underlining all portions of the letter containing comments that contain content or "message" related to your categories. Underline in pencil.
  
5. Coding response: Go through the letter again. This time, for each underlined portion of the letter put both the ID code (sequential number, origin, and affiliation) and the code corresponding to the file in which you want the comment stored, e.g., File 12--opposed--unjustified governmental intervention. The reason for using the ID number is so that the decision maker can refer back to the entire letter if the comment is of particular interest, or so that the comments in that file could be analyzed by origin or affiliation.
  
6. Secondary Review: To ensure that the letter has been objectively analyzed, it is recommended that the marked-up copy then be reviewed by a second analyst. If there are differences of opinion, these can be resolved by discussion between the two analysts. If the second analyst agrees with the analysis, he/she highlights the underlined portions and the margin code with a yellow felt marker.
  
7. Make a copy of the marked-up letter: This copy will be put in a master file so that you can always document to the public or decision makers how the analysis was done.

8. Cut up a marked-up copy and distribute the coded portions into the appropriate file: Each letter is likely to have several codes on it, so cut the letter up and put the underlined portions into the appropriate file folder, e.g., if it has codes 11, 12, and 14 on it, the underlined portion of the letter where the margin is coded "11" is placed into file 11, 12 into 12, etc.
9. Preparation of Report: When you go to make your report, simply paste-up all the comments by category. This is the point at which you can cross-reference comments by origin or affiliation. All comments in that file from the City of Phoenix, for example, could be pasted-up together. Or all comments from environmental groups could be pasted together.

It is this paste-up procedure which places some limits on the Content Summary Analysis. If you have thousands of letters, with several comments cut out of each letter, then the process of cutting out the comments and pasting them up is very time consuming. In addition, the document itself is very thick. Finally, cross-comparisons between categories (by origin or affiliation) become difficult. This is where Codinvolve may be a more useful technique.

#### THE HARDING DITCH CASE STUDY

While content summary analysis is primarily used to create "data files" of comments that can then be pasted-up into summaries, it can also provide a generalized report to the decision maker on the frequency with which comments go into a particular file. A decision maker may not be at the point where he/she wants to reach each comment, but may simply want to know the number of times a particular problem was reported. This approach was used in the Harding Ditch Case Study to report the public comment received.

The material which the codebook was designed to record included:

- C An identification number for each respondent
- C The affiliation of the sender
- C The date of the letter
- C The general kind of problem mentioned
- C Specific problems mentioned
- C The location of the problem (e.g., water course, reach)
- C The cause of the problem
- C Any measures recommended



- C Problems that recommended measures address
- C The impact of the problem
- C The impact of the measure
- C The evaluation of the measure

The coding instructions are then designed to fit on computer cards which are organized into columns containing rows of numbers. Each card would contain the card number (to keep track of all the cards for that person), an identification number for the comment, and other information shown by punching the numbers in each column associated with the appropriate category. The coding instructions for the first two cards are shown below.

CODING INSTRUCTIONS

<u>CARD</u>	<u>COLUMN</u>	<u>VARIABLE</u>	<u>CODE</u>
1	1	Card Number	1
	2 - 3	Identifier	01 ..... N
	4 - 5	Affiliation of Sender	10 = private
			11 = industrial
			12 = group
13 = corporation			
	20 = local government		
	30 = State government		
	40 = Federal government		
	6 - 7	Date of letter-month	
	8 - 9	Date of letter-year	
2	1	Card Number	F = Flooding
	2 - 3	Identifier	M = Maintenance
	4	General Problem Referenced	P = Plans - Measures
			E = EQ
		H = Groundwater Seepage	
	D = Development		
	5 - 6	Specific Problem	Flooding
F 10 urban			
20 agricultural			
	Maintenance		
	M 10		
	20 silt		
	30 weeds, etc.		

## *Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution*

---

The printout on the following two pages illustrates the information that is quickly available to the decision maker. Page A of the readout shows the total numbers of times a problem was reported, and where the problem was located. Page B shows the affiliation of the people reporting, different types of problem, and which year--during the four-year study--that the problem was reported.

Using content analysis like this, the decision maker knows the kinds of problems that are being reported, and then must go to the data files to see the actual comments if he/she wants to know more about the problems. If the decision maker wants a system that provides more detail from the comments, but does not want to read all the data file, then the Codinvolve technique may be more useful.

### PROCEDURE FOR CODINVOLVE

With Codinvolve we are not attempting to store the actual wording of the comment, but simply tally the comments by category, e.g., 115 oppose the action because it is unwarranted governmental intervention, 316 oppose it because of environmental impacts. The procedures for Codinvolve are as follows:

1. Define in advance what question the agency or decision maker wants answered: In order to develop intelligent categories it is necessary to know what questions the decision maker wants answered by public comment. Questions might be:
  - C How many people support (oppose) the action?
  - C How do government agencies (environmentalists, elected officials, etc.) feel about the proposed action?
  - C For each alternative action, what are the reasons for supporting (opposing) the action?
  - C On which issues do environmental groups and business leaders (elected officials, etc.) agree?
  - C On what modifications in the proposed action is there general agreement (defined in numeric terms such as 75% of all respondents in that category)? etc.
2. Survey the response: Read a sample of the comments to get an impression of the information contained in the comment. Perhaps the comments address issues you hadn't even thought about, and new questions need to be formulated. You may also want to do a content summary analysis, as outlined above, of a random portion of the comment to give decision makers a "feel" of the comment which is being received.

Harding Ditch Case Study: Sample Content Analysis Tabulation

PROBLEM REFERENCED	PROBLEM REFERENCED				PROBLEM REFERENCED SENDER	COUNT	ROW PCT	COL PCT	TOT PCT	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP	CORP	LOCAL GO	ROW TOTAL
	ABSOLUTE FREQ	RELATIVE FREQ (PCT)	ADJUSTED FREQ (PCT)	CUM FREQ (PCT)										
GENERAL FL	1	2.9	5.6	5.6	PROBLEM	11	12	13	20					
URBAN FLOOD	3	8.6	16.7	22.2	100	2	1	1	0					4
MAINTENANCE	1	2.9	5.6	27.8	GENERAL FL	50.0	25.0	25.0	0					22.2
MAINT-DEBR	3	8.6	16.7	44.4		50.0	16.7	5.6	0					
MAINT-SILT	3	8.6	16.7	61.1	200	11.1	5.6							
MAINT-WEED	1	2.9	5.6	66.7	MAINTENANCE	1	2	3	2					8
STATE PLAN	1	2.9	5.6	72.2		12.5	25.0	37.5	25.0					44.4
WATER QUALITY	2	5.7	11.1	83.3	300	25.0	33.3	75.0	50.0					
GROUNDWATER	1	2.9	5.6	88.9	PLANS MEAS	5.6	11.1	16.7	11.1					
DEVELOPMENT	1	2.9	5.6	94.4		0	1	0	0					2
RUNOFF	1	2.9	5.6	100.0	510	0	1	0	0					11.1
BLANK	17	48.6	MISSING			0	50.0	0	50.0					
TOTAL	35	100.0	100.0		410	0	16.7	0	25.0					
					GROUNDWATER	1	0	0	0					2
						100.0	0	0	0					5.6
					710	25.0	0	0	0					
					DEVELOPMENT	5.6	0	0	0					1
						0	0	0	100.0					5.6
					800	0	0	0	25.0					
					RUNOFF	0	1	0	0					1
						0	100.0	0	0					5.6
						0	16.7	0	0					
						0	5.6	0	0					
					COLUMN TOTAL	4	6	4	4					18
					TOTAL	22.2	33.3	22.2	22.2					100.0

PROBLEM REFERENCED LOCATION OF PROBLEM		COUNT						ROW	PAGE B
ROW PCT	DOBRY SL	HARDING	CENTRAL	GENERAL	FAIRVIEW	ROW	TOTAL		
COL PCT	OUGH	DITCH	DITCH	BOTTOMS	HEIGHTS	HEIGHTS	TOTAL		
TOT PCT	1	2	3	5	6	6			
100	1	2	1	0	0	0	4		
GENERAL FL	25.0	50.0	25.0	0	0	0	22.2		
	50.0	18.2	50.0	0	0	0			
	5.6	11.1	5.6	0	0	0			
200	0	6	1	1	0	0	8		
MAINTENANCE	0	75.0	12.5	12.5	0	0	44.4		
	0	54.5	50.0	100.0	0	0			
	0	33.3	5.6	5.6	0	0			
300	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		
PLANS MEAS	0	100.0	0	0	0	0	3.4		
	0	9.1	0	0	0	0			
	0	5.6	0	0	0	0			
510	0	1	0	0	0	0	2		
WATER QUALITY	0	50.0	0	0	0	0	11.1		
	0	9.1	0	0	0	0			
	0	5.6	0	0	0	0			
610	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		
GROUNDWATER	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	5.6		
	50.0	0	0	0	0	0			
	5.6	0	0	0	0	0			
710	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
DEVELOPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0	5.6		
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
800	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		
RUNOFF	0	100.0	0	0	0	0	5.6		
	0	9.1	0	0	0	0			
	0	5.6	0	0	0	0			
COLUMN	2	11	2	1	2	2	18		
TOTAL	11.1	61.1	11.1	5.6	11.1	11.1	100.00		

3. Design a Codebook and Summary Form: The codebook contains instructions, definitions and examples of how information should be coded. It contains codes for ID numbers, as well as codes for analysis of information. Because only a tally is kept rather than actual comment, Codinvolve allows for many more categories. Instead of just a category 10 for "opposed," or category 11 for "opposed--environmental impacts," you could now have a whole raft of categories such as:

110 Series - Opposed - Environmental Impacts

111 - only remaining healthy harbor porpoises

112 - major bald eagle population impacted

113 - encourages development

etc.

An essential guide in developing your categories is the list of questions developed in Steps 1 and 2 above. You must be sure you have sufficient categories developed to answer all the questions.

In addition to developing a codebook, a summary form is also prepared at this stage. The summary form is a check-off form of some sort to capture all the codes appropriate to each letter or comment. One form will be completed for each letter or comment.

4. Coding the Comment: The process of coding the comment is similar to that in Content Summary Analysis. Place an ID code on the originals, make a copy of the originals, and place the originals in a master file. The analyst reads the letter or comment once, and initials the bottom. Then the analyst reads the letter or comment again, underlining significant portions. Then the analyst places the appropriate code in the margin opposite the underlined portions. Finally, the analyst completes a summary form with all the codes from the margin.
5. Second Analysis: Again to ensure objectivity, a second analyst can read the marked-up comment to be sure that comments have been coded properly, and codes transferred correctly to the summary form. Differences of opinion are resolved by discussion between the two analysts. The marked-up copies are kept in a file for public review, if necessary.
5. Storage of Codes: The information on the summary form is then transferred either to key-sort cards or to a computer. While key-sort cards can work for small numbers of letters, computers are far more useful for larger quantities. Not only is the computer less cumbersome, but there are sophisticated computer software programs, such as the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) which can be utilized for highly sophisticated statistical analysis of the data.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

6. Organize the Report: The computer readouts can then be summarized into a report designed to answer the decision-maker's questions from Steps 1 and 2 above, and any other useful information which may be relevant to the decision-maker. It is often useful to accompany statistical displays with a narrative summary, e.g., "a majority (61%) of comments from environmental groups indicated support for the action for these three reasons...." Many people, including decision makers, are still intimidated by statistical analysis and will understand the material better in narrative form. It is essential, however, that the narrative simply summarize the analysis, rather than evaluate the comment. Both Content Summary Analysis and Codinvolve are strictly analysis techniques, and misuse of them by substituting evaluation will undermine their credibility and usefulness.

REFERENCES

Content Summary Analysis:

Babbie, Earl, The Practice of Social Research, Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1979.

Berelson, Bernard, "Content Analysis" in Gardner Lindsey (ed.) Handbook of Social Psychology, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1954.

"Handbook for Public Response Content Analysis," U.S. Forest Service, 1978.

Codinvolve:

"Forest Service Inform and Involve Handbook (Draft)," U.S. Forest Service, 1977, pp. 61-63.

Clark, Roger, G. H. Stankey and J. C. Hendee, "An Introduction to Codinvolve," U.S. Forest Service, 1974.

Introduction to Section VII

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL PERMITTING

The thrust of public involvement during the decade has been to incorporate public involvement in planning. However, the Corps, like other agencies such as EPA or SCS, has a regulatory function as well. Since permits issued by the Corps for projects proposed and constructed by other parties are often as controversial as some of the Corps' own projects, the need for public involvement in regulatory programs has also become apparent. One particularly promising use of public involvement has been in the consideration of general permits. General permits are permits that permit a whole class of actions--rather than the action of a single permittee--so long as certain standards are met. Since a whole class of actions is possible, the public can be involved in establishing the standards, rather than overseeing hundreds of individual permits.

In his first article Creighton discusses the whole logic and need for public involvement in regulatory programs. In the second article he describes the analysis process necessary to integrate public involvement into the regulatory decision making process.

Merle Lefkoff describes an actual case of utilizing public involvement in a general permit case. Articles by Rosener and Munch (pages 388 and 403) in the next section, provide more detailed evaluation of the benefits of utilizing public involvement in cases like these.

WHY CONDUCT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
FOR THE REGULATORY PROGRAM

by James L. Creighton

While the need for public involvement in planning has been established for some time, the emphasis on public involvement in regulatory programs is relatively new. Why is it needed? What do we hope to get out of it? When is it necessary?

THE LEGAL MANDATE

The regulations governing public involvement are summarized in the following papers. These requirements come both from Corps regulations and NEPA requirements under which most environmental decisions are made.

At a bare minimum--assuming that no Environmental Impact Statement is required--the legal requirements may be met by an adequate public notice, and if there is no significant controversy, a decision by the district engineer 31 days later. If an issue is controversial, or if someone requests a hearing, then a public hearing would be held preceding the district engineer's decisions. There are also minimum requirements regarding notification procedures, legal transcript, etc.

LEGAL MINIMUMS VS. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Those are the legal minimums. It is totally natural that anyone facing shrinking staff and a steady increase in the number of permit applications would hope that the bare minimum would be the normal requirement. In most cases it probably will be. But there are many controversial applications where meeting the minimum legal requirements does not meet the spirit of the NEPA requirements, and more important, simply shifts the battle from the hearing room to the court room. The disadvantage of a purely legalistic approach to meeting public involvement requirements is that little or nothing is resolved, and the process simply reinforces the adversarial relationship between opposing interests. The same interests will be back battling on the next controversial permit. Furthermore, the interests learn not to take the permit process itself seriously, except as preparation for a lawsuit. In fact, looking at the long view it doesn't even save time for the beleaguered regulatory team trying to escape from under a blizzard of applications, for preparation of a lawsuit throws exceptionally heavy burdens on staffs to develop evidence and testify.

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Course, Creighton, et al., "Public Involvement in Regulatory Programs," U. S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1979.



In short, the reason for developing public involvement programs that go beyond the legal minimums is to provide opportunities for resolution of conflict between conflicting interests during the permit process. While these efforts will not always succeed, they are worth that effort because of the risks associated with failing to get conflict resolved. These include:

- C Unresolved issues tend to simply end up in court.
- C When issues repeatedly end up in court, the agency loses its legitimacy as a decision maker.
- C Decisions made in courts are based on procedure rather than substance, so that "the public interest" is ignored as the paramount consideration.
- C Appeals and lawsuits generate added work for regulatory function staff.
- C Even though someone else proposes the action, the Corps becomes "the enemy" in the minds of those people who "lose." Over time, this further evades the Corps' credibility.
- C When conflicts are not resolved except in the courts, the level of conflict in society tends to escalate.
- C When conflicts are not resolved, publics tend to become apathetic, or go outside the decision making process to get heard. Either way the decision making process is undermined.

#### WHAT CAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACCOMPLISH

There are four basic objectives which public involvement hopes to accomplish. These are:

- 1) Conflict resolution
- 2) Legitimizing the decision making process
- 3) Informing the public
- 4) Improving the decision.

Conflict Resolution: The first objective of public involvement, though not always achieved, is to resolve conflict between the conflicting interests. In regulatory decisions, where the Corps is not the applicant, the Corps uses its "good offices" to encourage resolution between the groups. The term "good offices" is a diplomatic term. If two nations are in conflict, a third nation may use "its good offices"--or act as a legitimate go-between--to assist the development of an agreement between the two antagonists. In the case of a regulatory permit, the Corps has the additional influence to encourage negotiation because of the implicit threat--hopefully never stated--that interests unwilling to negotiate may be less likely to get favorable decisions or conditions. The Corps uses its role to be a mediator between the groups. If an agreement can be reached,

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

everybody wins. Not only do the interest groups win (or else they wouldn't agree to the decision), but the Corps wins both in the esteem of the public and by lowering the level of antagonism for future issues.

But if the stakes are too high, the alternatives too limited, or the antagonisms too engrained, then conflict resolution may not occur no matter the level of effort or the good intentions of Corps staff. Even when this objective is not reached, the other three objectives remain.

Legitimizing the Decision Making Process: In every closely fought election nearly half the voters "lose"--their candidate isn't elected--yet the outcome of the election is accepted because there is consensus that the decision making process has been fair and legitimate. In effect, the decision making procedure or process--the election--makes the outcome legitimate even if someone didn't like the outcome. One of the major functions of public involvement is to create sufficient visibility to the decision making process so that decisions which result from it are perceived as fair and legitimate. While some of the people most directly impacted by a decision may not be impressed by the equity of a decision, their ability to undermine the credibility of the decisions rests on their ability to convince the larger public that the decision was unfairly made. Effective public involvement can establish your credibility with the larger public, so that the claims of special interests fall on deaf ears.

Informing the Public: Closely related to this process of making the decision making process legitimate is informing the public. If they understand why things work the way they do, and how decisions are made, they are more likely to be supportive of the agency. And when they do disagree, they are more likely to disagree from an informed base which lends itself to conflict resolution. Informing the public is a central responsibility of government in a democracy.

Improving the Decision: Every agency develops fixed ways of viewing things. No agency can know everything there is to know about the resource base its decisions affect. The public can serve as an important source of basic data about the resource base, and more importantly can provide alternative values positions from which to evaluate the significance of the resources.

### WHEN IS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT USEFUL

Because public involvement serves these various objectives there may be times when it is utilized to serve objectives 2-4, even though the conflict resolution objective seems hopeless. But let's focus on those situations when public involvement has the greatest opportunity for meeting the conflict resolution objective. These include:

- 1) Whenever modification of the features of a project might produce resolution.
- 2) Whenever the conditions of a permit might produce conflict resolution.
- 3) On all general permits.

- 4) Whenever the basis of opposition is that people weren't consulted, rather than the proposal itself.

These four situations describe the conditions of maximum pay-off from public involvement. Effective public involvement programs can lead to resolution of conflict in these critical situations.

A THOUGHT PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT  
IN REGULATORY PROGRAMS

by James L. Creighton

While public involvement techniques have been developed and utilized for Corps' planning which are useful for regulatory programs, the circumstances under which these techniques will be applied differ. This article describes an approach for thinking through what public involvement is appropriate for regulatory programs.

To date public involvement in regulatory programs has relied primarily on the public notice and formal public hearings as the primary methods of obtaining public involvement. Both of these techniques have drawbacks which limit their usefulness. The public notice is often very legalistic, full of bureaucratic jargon, and unlikely to elicit much public interest. The public hearing lends itself to taking formal, fixed positions, rather than to discussion and resolution between the various interests. Both of these techniques are legally required and play a role in public involvement. The first thing to understand, however, is that on controversial issues they represent bare legal requirements for public involvement--they are simply elements of a program--rather than a total program.

In fact, one of the first tasks in designing a public involvement program for a permit review process is to identify the level of public interest. Public involvement can be as limited as issuing a public notice and publicizing the final decision, up to an elaborate series of workshops, media publicity, conferences with interest groups, public hearings, etc. The challenge is to design a program appropriate to the level of public interest. The minimum requirements are probably appropriate for many, possibly most, applications; but for controversial applications, general permits, etc., additional public involvement is required. The thought process indicated below is designed to clarify the major decisions you must make in designing a public involvement program.

Stages of Public Involvement in the Permit Process

In some cases there is an opportunity to set the stage for public involvement before the formal application is ever filed. Whenever potential applicants discuss their application before it is filed, it is useful to describe the Corps' public notice and hearing procedures, and indicate that there may even be additional public involvement activities if the permit is controversial. It is also appropriate to indicate that an applicant can strengthen his application by consulting with neighbors, local officials, etc., and documenting this fact in the application. This kind of early contact by applicants can often forestall controversy that occurs when neighbors feel "bent out of shape" because they weren't consulted. Since these individuals will be informed by the public notice, there is no advantage to the applicant in keeping other people uninformed, and modest changes in the proposal made early may forestall later opposition.

---

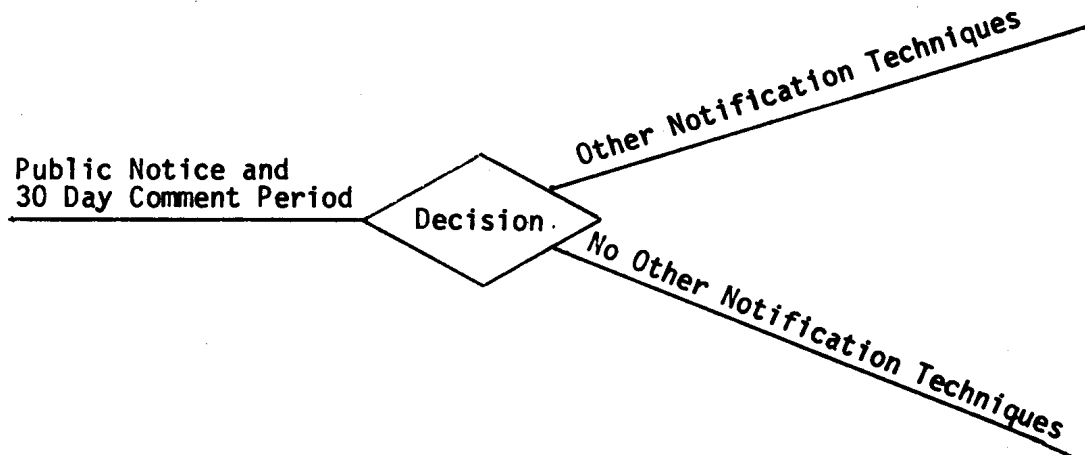
Reprinted from: IWR Training Course, Creighton, et al., "Public Involvement in Regulatory Functions," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1979.

Once an application has been filed there are three definable stages of public involvement in the permit review process. These three stages are: 1) Identifying issues/sensing public interest; 2) Providing forums for discussion and resolution; and 3) Decision making. But even these three stages are subject to the amount of controversy surrounding a permit: the second stage is necessary only when an issue is relatively controversial; and the amount and kind of public involvement activity in the first and third stages also varies with the level of controversy.

1. Identifying Issues/Sensing Public Interest: The purpose of the first stage is simply to determine how much public interest there is, and what the issues are likely to be. Based on this, a decision can be made on how much public involvement will be required in subsequent stages. The minimum requirement of this first stage is to issue a public notice and the normal 30-day comment period. The public notice and comment period serve as a "sensing" device to determine who is interested, in which issues, and how much. Obviously if a public notice is legalistic and unattractive, it is less likely to attract much interest. This doesn't mean that there is no public interest. It simply means that your "sensing" device won't provide you with an early warning of controversy, so you are more likely to be taken by surprise later in the process. It is important to make the public notice as simple, straightforward, and attractive as possible if it is to serve as an effective tool. If you already anticipate some controversy based on your own assessment of the issues involved, you may want to utilize techniques beyond simply the public notice. These techniques might include news stories or spot announcements, paid ads describing the permit, informal meetings with impacted neighbors of the project, or interviews with leaders of interested groups. The purpose of all of these activities is to be sure you know: 1) What the issues are, as seen by the public; and, 2) which publics see themselves as having an interest in the decisions.

These alternatives can be described in a "decision tree" which shows each choice as an alternative "branch" which the individual can take. Each decision point is shown with a • diamond. Events--the public's response to a decision--are shown as a " " circle. Because decision trees attempt to portray all alternatives they can seem confusing and intimidating at first. As a result each "branch" will be discussed separately, and the whole "tree" is shown on page 366. Hopefully, this tree will serve as a handy guide for decision making.

The Identifying Issues/Sensing Public Interest stage is initiated with a public notice. There is no branch shown because this is a requirement on all projects. The first decision is whether or not other notification procedures besides the public notice will be used. For most applications no additional notification may be appropriate. But for potentially controversial or significant actions, additional notification should be considered. These alternatives are shown in Figure 1 below:



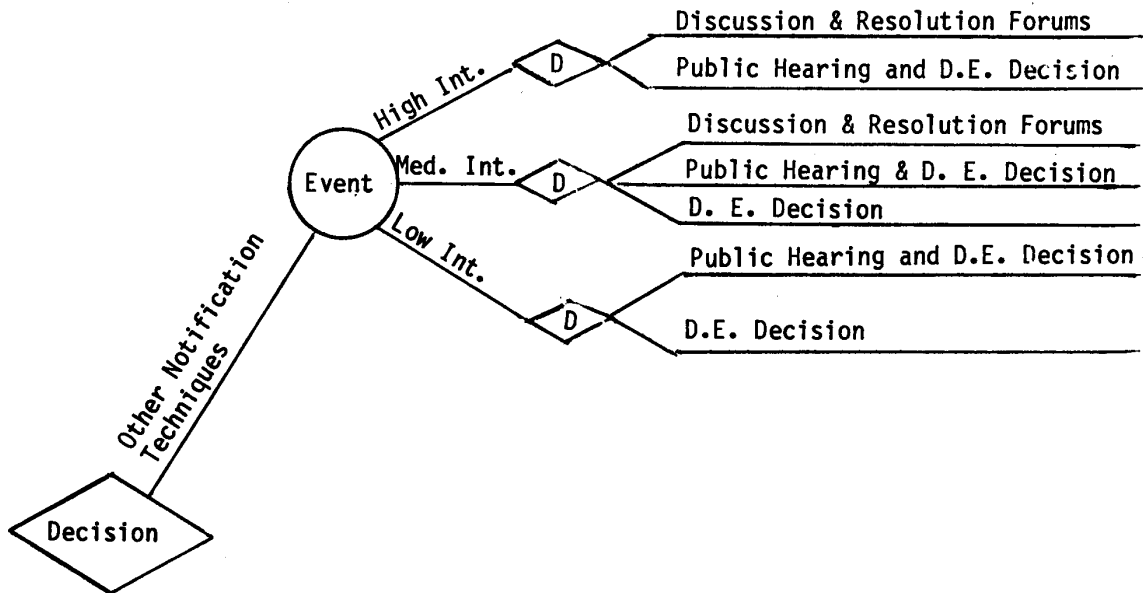
**Figure 1**

2. Providing Forums for Discussion and Resolution: If there is no interest from the public based on your "sensing" efforts, you will then want to skip this stage. But if you have discovered public interest, then you will need to design a process--a series of forums--which will provide opportunities for public discussion of issues and, if at all possible, resolution of the issues. Again the kind of techniques will vary with the kinds of issues and the kinds of publics concerned. This might consist of something as simple as a small informal meeting with the applicant and impacted neighbors of the proposed project, or it might involve the extended series of workshops and other activities referred to earlier in the article. Those techniques should be utilized which lend themselves to interaction and discussion, rather than to speech making to large crowds. This stage would not include the formal public hearing. This is categorized as a part of the decision making process, since public hearings are more a formal documentation of positions rather than an opportunity for interaction or resolution.

These options are summarized in the decision branches shown in Figure 2. If other notification techniques are used, then the next decision is whether or not the level of public interest is low, medium or high. If the level of interest is low, then the most probable choice is to go directly to a decision by the district engineer; or at a maximum, hold a public hearing, followed by a district engineer decision. If the level of interest is medium, then the additional choice of setting up discussion and resolution forums is added. If discussion and resolution forums are held, they will be followed by a decision whether or not to go directly to a district engineer decision, or to conduct a public hearing prior to the decision. If the level of interest is high, then the choice of going directly to a district engineer decision is high. Also, if a decision is made to conduct discussion and resolution forums, then a third choice is added afterwards of some form of additional negotiation and conflict resolution sessions.

If no other notification techniques are used, then the choices remain essentially the same, since the public comment could still indicate high, medium or low interest.

3. Decision Making: If there is no controversy, then the district engineer may simply announce his decision. Or a formal public hearing may be held, followed by the district engineer's



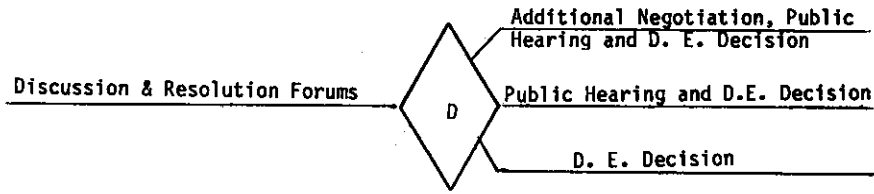
**Figure 2**

decision. On a highly controversial issue, however, there may still need to be additional techniques utilized such as negotiating sessions with various interest groups, mediation, or workshops on permit conditions. Finally, on controversial issues there should be an effort to publicize the district engineer's decision--and particularly the reasons for the decision--through the media. Informing the public of the basis for the decision is critical to maintaining the integrity of the public involvement process.

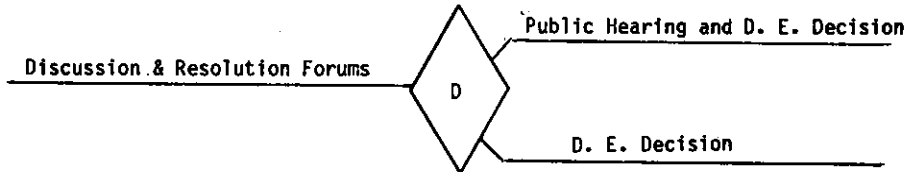
These options are displayed in Figure 3A and 3B.

Choosing Public Involvement Techniques

The article on page 267 summarizes many of the public involvement techniques which can be utilized. It is important in choosing public involvement techniques to know exactly what it is you want to accomplish. There is a series of questions which may help you in selecting the most appropriate techniques. These questions are:



HIGH INTEREST  
Figure 3A



MEDIUM INTEREST  
Figure 3B

Figure 4 is a summary of all the choices.

1. What is the main purpose I need to accomplish at this stage of public involvement, e.g., informing the public, discussing issues, determining permit conditions, etc?
  - a. What information do I need to get to the public in order for them to participate effectively?
  - b. What information do I need to get from the public?
3. Which publics:
  - a. Need to receive this information?
  - b. Can provide the information I need?
4. Which techniques will best reach the targeted publics with the appropriate information, and/or obtain the needed information from the targeted publics?



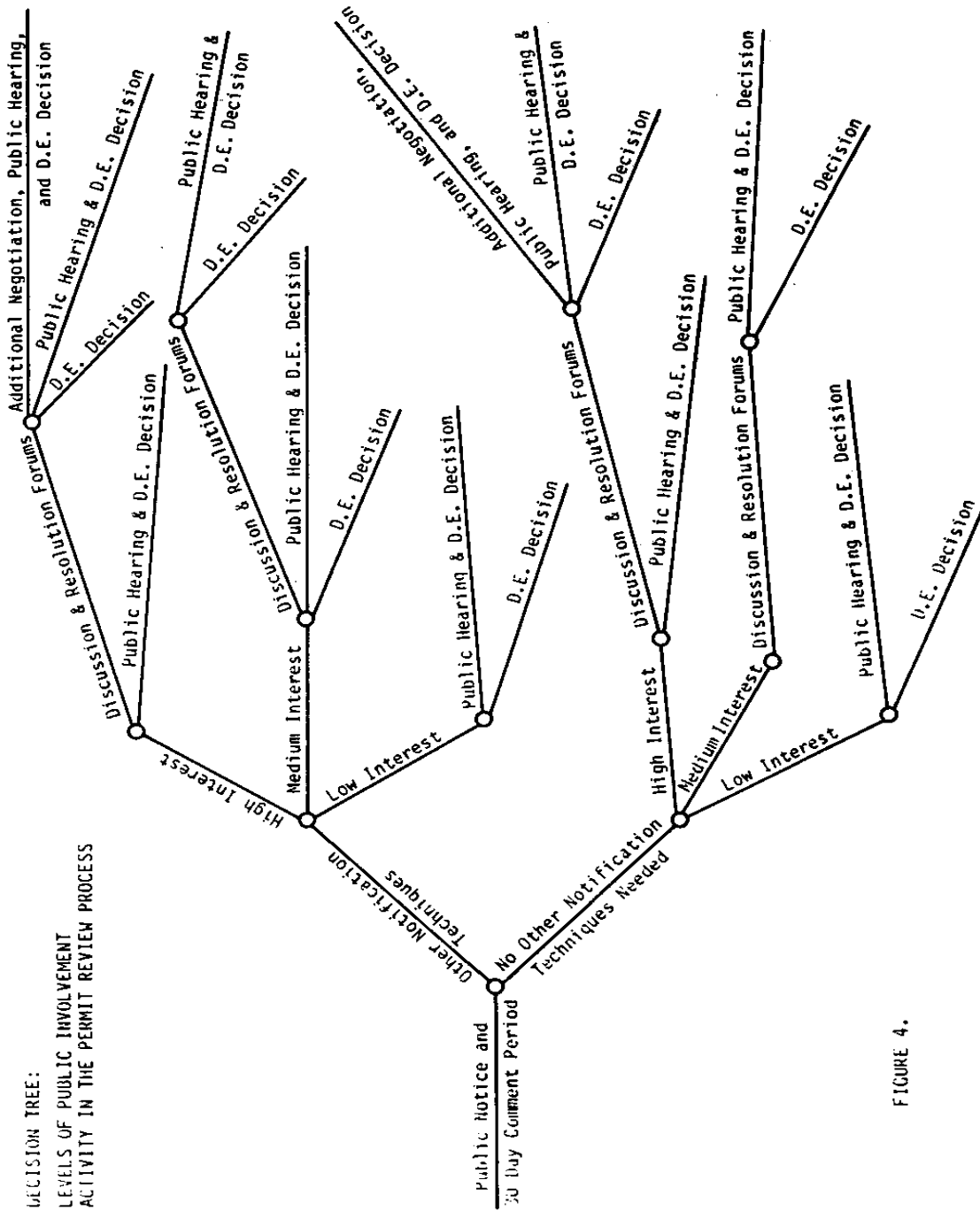


FIGURE 4.

Figure 4

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN GENERAL PERMITTING:  
THE SANIBEL WORKSHOPS

by Merle Lefkoff

Under Federal law the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is charged with protecting America's wetlands. Under this law the Corps grants (or denies) permits for most forms of construction activities, diking and filling land, etc., which take place in wetlands. In most cases individual permits are granted, but the law does permit issuances of a general permit when the activities which would be conducted are similar and do not produce a negative cumulative impact.

Under the direction of Colonel James W. R. Adams, the Jacksonville District of the Corps has been a leader in defining the procedures which could lead to increased use of general permits. Colonel Adams indicates: "We like the general permit because it offers economy in processing, provides environmental safeguards up front as conditions, and defines in advance what an applicant can do." These are by no means minor considerations. The Jacksonville District processes hundreds of individual permits a year, often for similar activities. From the permittees' point of view, one of the problems with the present system is the uncertainty involved. Only after a complete application has been submitted and reviewed does the applicant learn whether or not his proposed action is within the acceptable range of actions. A general permit defines in advance the acceptable actions, and also clearly states conditions which include stringent environmental protection. The applicant can know in advance that if he/she is willing to meet these conditions, the proposed action is generally considered acceptable. The nature of these conditions is extremely important though, because environmentalists fear that general permits could grant a kind of "carte blanche": which would mean a virtual return to the days when there were few controls over wetlands.

In fact, the Jacksonville District's first two attempts were unsuccessful. In late 1978, the staff of Jacksonville District prepared two public notices for general permits in south Florida. Public response was so negative that both permits were withdrawn.

By spring of the next year, Colonel Adams was ready to try again. He reasoned that since public involvement in project planning was already a successful reality, the same early citizen participation might also be successful in developing a general permit. He also decided that since this was an effort to innovate new procedures for developing general permits, both Corps personnel and citizens had to learn together to make it work.

The process was designed so that both staff and citizens would be simultaneously "trained" (or would "train" each other) by creating a real-life exercise and an atmosphere of communication which would allow study

---

This paper describes research sponsored by IWR and the Jacksonville District of the Corps. A more detailed report will be forthcoming.

both of the contents of a general permit and a process for developing general permits. I was retained as a consultant to assist with this process.

Sanibel Island was selected as the testing ground for this innovative public involvement process. Sanibel Island was chosen because it has a substantial history of concern for environmental protection, and has developed a nationally recognized Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), which would provide substantial guidance and reinforcement to any permit. On the other hand, there were a number of applications pending on the island, so the process offered opportunities for resolving a number of conflicts if the permit could be drawn with sensitive environmental awareness.

The actual public involvement process which was used was a series of workshops conducted by the Jacksonville District on Sanibel Island with permit conditions to protect Sanibel's interior wetlands developed cooperatively between citizens and Corps staff. In total there were three all-day task-oriented workshops and one final half-day meeting.

A team of four consultants assisted the Corps in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the workshop process. Because of the "test case" aspects of this process, an evaluation was integrated from the beginning into the workshop planning and implementation.

The balance of this article provides a narrative description of the entire process and the results of the evaluation.

#### NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Phase One: Doing Our Homework. A great deal of work was done during the month of April prior to holding the first workshop on the island on the 3rd of May. In consultation with the Jacksonville staff, we reviewed the Corps' materials pertaining to Sanibel Island. There had been some earlier exchange on the possibility of the issuance of a general permit between the Corps and City Hall. Some preliminary language for special conditions had been discussed, but the district engineer felt that it was important to widen the public input on the special conditions in order that all points of view be considered before the issuance of the public notice.

In addition, we studied carefully the history of land use planning on the island, paying particularly close attention to Sanibel's historic Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Finally, we reviewed the Corps' jurisdiction and responsibilities where the general permit was concerned. These activities helped us outline our goals and objectives. It is essential to do this at the outset of any process in order to focus efforts on the desired product. But we also felt that an ongoing evaluation of the process was essential to understanding those elements which worked and those which needed more attention. Dr. Judy Rosener from the University of California uses an evaluation methodology [see page 388] which demands an early agreement on goals and objectives.

While we were doing our preliminary groundwork, Captain Paul Munch, who was assigned to the project by Colonel Adams to act as liaison with the consultants and general administrative troubleshooter, began to assemble a mailing list to be sent out prior to the first workshop. It was essential to the success of the process that the people attending the workshops represent an equitable distribution of interests.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

Simultaneously, the public information officer for the Jacksonville District was preparing a press release on the coming workshop, as he did prior to all the workshops. The press releases were widely distributed throughout the state and were the basis for important publicity about the workshops in the island newspapers. Coordination between public information activities and public involvement programs is very important, because the success of public involvement efforts relies heavily on the participation of an informed public.

Our last task in preparation for the first workshop was to design and administer a series of interviews with identified community influentials on Sanibel. We combined both a short, structured interview with a longer, more informal interview to elicit respondents' comments on issues which might surface during the workshops, as well as individuals who might become important actors in the process. Respondents included persons from the Jacksonville District Office of the Corps, local officials, city planners, and leaders of the environmental community. These interviews gave us a better handle on what to expect at the first workshop and proved especially useful in training the workshop facilitators.

In consultation with Captain Munch, we decided to hold the first workshop at a motel on the island which had accommodations appropriate to the workshop format. Unfortunately, many of the environmentalists on the island felt that the motel was an unsuitable location because it had been built prior to the CLUP and its stringent requirements. However, they learned to live with the location as the workshops progressed, and we found that continuity of location is probably more important than actual location for a workshop process. We found that wherever possible though, it helps to hold public involvement programs in physical environments conducive to group process and where all citizens feel comfortable.

The first mailing was especially important. Captain Munch designed an information form appended to the mailing in order to get some idea about how many people to expect at the first workshop. Basic information about the 404 regulations were included, as well as a brief explanation of the purpose and format of the workshop and a cover letter signed by Colonel Adams.

Phase Two: Training the Facilitators, the Real Heroes. The district office selected eight persons from their staff to serve as trainees/facilitators at the workshops. We requested continuity on the part of those selected, because knowledge and skills grow as the process progresses, and citizens learn to develop a personal relationship and special rapport with those who participate with them over a period of time in a mission-oriented exercise. Not everyone has the personality to become a good facilitator, but without qualification we felt the Corps chose very wisely.

We asked the Institute for Water Resources to handle the extremely important task of facilitator training. They performed the impossible: In only six hours on the day before the first workshop, they turned eight apprehensive "raw recruits" into skilled and assured facilitators. This was not enough time to brief the Corps staff on the history of the island and the likely actors in the process, as well as teaching them the "tricks of the trade" of the trained facilitator. We would recommend at least two days of comprehensive training in the future, in view of the fact that the expertise of the facilitator can make or break a small group discussion. Part of the problem was mitigated by allowing the facilitators to work in teams of two. They drew strength

from each other and were able to exchange facilitator and recorder roles--which helped ease the strain of playing one role only and enabled them to test a variety of skills.

As Corps personnel in the regulatory program--those, in fact, who are in the field and in contact with the public--the facilitators played the most important role in the process. They had a dual mission: to gain new skills from "on-the-job-training" with real live citizens in a real live situation; and to help the citizens reach consensus on the necessary criteria for a general permit. Their job was to keep the group process moving, without imposing their own values, judgments, or official expertise--a very difficult task. Our job was to prepare the facilitators for the group process as carefully as possible, to allay their fears and insecurities by providing them with the basic process tools of good communication. But the key to the successful training of Corps staff was a training situation quite different from the traditional, sterile classroom techniques. The facilitators learned "jointly" with the workshop participants how to communicate, interact, moderate conflict and produce a product. We feel this "joint training" has utility beyond a classroom course.

Phase Three: The First Workshop. The first workshop was held on May 3, and an extensive mailing list of over 400 citizens was expected to draw about 75 people. About 50 people showed up, a not disappointing crowd for an all-day workshop in the middle of the week on a hot summer day. The Corps stationed a "receptionist" at the door of the meeting room to log participants in and to give them name tags which also had a number on them--from "1" to "6". These numbers were a random assignment to the six small groups (numbering 6 to 10) we anticipated during our late-morning "break-down." The random assignment prevented groups of friends who arrived together from forming their own groups.

Colonel Adams began the morning with a briefing session which explained the Corps' jurisdiction over the wetlands, the general permitting process, and the new public involvement process in which the citizens were soon to participate. An important part of the Colonel's presentation was his sincere assurance to the assembled citizens that no decision on the issuance of a general permit had been made, nor would it be made until after the series of workshops had been completed and the public comments were received in response to the public notice; that the district engineer would accept or reject in total the consensus of workshop participants as to the language of the special conditions under the general permit; and that all views would have ample time to be aired and taken into consideration.

Several citizens did not hesitate to announce to one and all that they were suspicious of the proceedings and even more suspicious of the effect that a general permit would have on Sanibel's ecology. One rather vocal citizen firmly asserted his opposition to any general permit on Sanibel Island, and a lively exchange between him and the Colonel took place. The colonel then explained that everyone had been randomly assigned to a group which would be led by a facilitator from the Corps of Engineers, and announced room assignments for the small group discussions. Colonel Adams asked the groups to return to the larger room by 3 p.m. for a presentation of their work.

The facilitators were introduced by Colonel Adams. Each one led his group to a small meeting room which was already equipped with the essential props for the group discussion: an easel, on which there was placed ample newsprint; several magic markers; and adhesive tape with which to tack a record of the discussion on the surrounding walls for everyone to see. The facilitator introduced himself, explained his role and that of the group recorder, and asked the participants to write on a piece of paper (1) why they were there; and (2) what their expectations from the day might be. This short introductory exercise was an important first step in an ongoing evaluation which is an integral part of the overall process. It also served as a small "breaking-

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

in" time to allow the group to leave its preoccupations behind and begin to focus in on the new task ahead. The facilitator then explained that the "product" of the first workshop was to be a set of tear-sheets which would document the group's "scoping" of all possible issues which should be considered in the general permit. The group was then asked to select from among themselves a "reporter" to report the group's deliberations to a meeting-of-the-whole at the end of the day.

Luncheon arrangements and breaks were left to the discretion of each group, since the groups worked at their own variable paces. There was some dropoff after lunch due to an oversight on our part of not specifying clearly in the mailing that the session was to last all day. We did not make that mistake again.

The Colonel had asked all participants to return to the large meeting room at 3 p.m. to report on their discussions. The results were remarkable. As the reporters (selected by the groups from among themselves) delivered their synopses, it became clear that all groups agreed upon basic problems to be solved, although each group managed to "scope" at least a few issues that were overlooked by the others. Even more remarkable was the unsolicited testimony of several participants in regard to the success of the process itself in settling their suspicions about what the Corps might have up its sleeve. The gentleman who had announced earlier his adamant opposition to a general permit rose before the whole group and admitted that his earlier opposition was beginning to dissipate.

The Colonel thanked everyone for coming and asked the citizens to indicate before they left whether they would be continuing as participants in the other scheduled workshops. In addition, the group was asked to add to their earlier written comments on their purpose for being there and their expectations, a short note about whether or not their expectations were met. The results of these first evaluations were overwhelmingly favorable.

After the concluding session, we assembled the facilitators for a "debriefing." This gave everyone an opportunity, while the iron was still hot, to get their own feelings about the way the day had gone out in the open. Recommendations were made for changes before the next workshop. It is extremely important to recognize in a process such as this that dialogue is unpredictable, and flexibility must be an element in the process so that changes can be made to accommodate the realities of the situation without disrupting the process itself. The facilitators were commended for an exceptional performance, and most admitted that much of their hesitancy about the process had been dispelled. They were forced to admit that not only were they learning a lot, they were having a wonderful time!

Phase Four: The Morning After. Immediately after the workshop, the tear-sheets from each of the groups were bundled together and flown back to Jacksonville for typing. When the consultants received the raw "data" the following day in Atlanta, we decided to perform three tasks in preparation for the next workshop: (1) We synthesized and refined the comments made by the citizens in their small group sessions, categorizing the range of problems into four main issue areas; (2) We prepared a summary of the first workshop proceedings and designed "task assignments" for the small groups which would be assembling at the second workshop; and, (3) We prepared a short report of the process problems and successes encountered at the first workshop, making recommendations for the conduct of the next meeting. Much of this work formed

the basis for the second mailing to citizen participants prior to the second workshop. The report enabled them to recap the issues and start thinking about the issues for the next meeting. This format was followed by the consultants after each workshop and appeared to be an efficient method for evaluating the results of the prior workshop and preparing facilitators and participants for the next one.

At the first workshop, all the citizens scoped all the issues. At the second workshop, we wanted individuals to zero in on their special concerns and expertise and devote their discussion to one special area, so participants were asked to read the materials mailed ahead of time and indicate the issue group to which they wanted to be assigned. Thus, we did not make random assignments of groups at the second workshop. The mailing for the second workshop invited those who had indicated that they wished to be kept informed, in addition to the state and local lists. Those who had attended the first workshop received a personal letter from Colonel Adams thanking them for their attendance and encouraging their continued participation. A short questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the workshop as part of the evaluation process. The second workshop produced a refinement of the large range of issues scoped out at the first meeting and began the detailed work of writing language for the special conditions for the general permit.

Phase Five: The Crucial Third Workshop. The third workshop was crucial, because it was important that the special conditions be written at that time, in order that the larger community might have a final opportunity at the fourth and final workshop to respond to the language of the special conditions. Once again, we returned to a format whereby each of the small groups addressed all issues and language under consideration. Consensus was reached smoothly by the end of the day, and the consultants were able to return to Atlanta with final language in hand. Our job was to make sure that the fine points addressed in each group were considered in the language which appeared in the mailing preceding the last workshop.

Phase Six: The Last Workshop. Because we anticipated less of a turnout than at the initial meeting, we decided that a half-day session would be sufficient to wrap up any loose ends. In the event that citizens with no prior involvement in the process showed up at this last workshop out of curiosity, we asked several citizens who had emerged as leaders within their work groups to serve as a panel to answer questions from the floor. Our thinking was that since the citizens themselves had developed the special conditions, they should be the ones to explain their work before their friends and neighbors. We thought it ill-advised to place the Corps in a defensive posture at this late stage in the game.

The give-and-take between the panelists and the audience was easy and informal. Colonel Adams was there to answer the tough procedural questions which the citizens could not address themselves. The meeting produced a few minor changes in the language of the special conditions and a lot of backpatting. The Colonel was eloquent in his congratulations to the community for their hard work; the community was equally delighted with the good faith shown by the Corps.

Phase Seven: Issuance of Public Notice and Comment Period. The public notice (or "Green Sheet", as it's known in the district) was sent out on July 3, incorporating the language of the special conditions developed at the workshops. It was with some trepidation that we all awaited the results of the comment period. Only five letters were received during that time. There appeared to be one minor problem with the language of the special conditions, that dealing with the fill elevation, in order to accommodate septic tanks. The language was changed slightly for the final permit, after concurrence from the workshop participants (who were polled by the Corps) and the Corps. The Corps also began negotiations with the City of Sanibel on cooperation in the administration of the general permit.

THE EVALUATION

Dr. Judy B. Rosener from the University of California at Irvine was asked to apply her unique methodology for evaluating public involvement programs to an assessment of the Sanibel process. Her technique involved interviewing Army Corps personnel and the citizens on Sanibel about the goals they hoped to achieve by participating in the workshops and delineating criteria by which achievement of those goals could be measured. She analyzed data obtained from pre and post workshop questionnaires, personal interviews and direct observation. Her evaluation provided unprecedented and systematic public involvement information and recommendations for further application of the Sanibel process.

Among Dr. Rosener's most interesting findings were those indicating attitude shift on the part of the workshop participants. Of those whose attitude toward the general permit changed as a result of the workshops, 72 percent changed from a neutral to a positive attitude; 14 percent from negative to positive; and 7 percent from negative to neutral. In addition, all participants had a positive attitude about the workshops. The interview data indicated that the citizens felt that the workshops were conducive to constructive dialogue; that they gained an understanding of how the general permit worked; and that what they learned made them less apprehensive about speeding up the permit process. Dr. Rosener concluded:

... the image of the Corps was enhanced, the Corps was able to get an indication of citizen desires about the protection of the wetlands, the Corps shared their decision-making authority with citizens, a general permit did issue, the Corps and local government will share enforcement responsibilities, and Corps personnel were trained in being neutral facilitators. As was anticipated, the workshops eliminated the need for a public hearing .... Wetlands will be protected by the general permit conditions, and certainty about development constraints has been provided to environmentalists, landowners, and public officials on Sanibel.



Introduction to Section VIII

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

Most assessments of the value of public involvement are anecdotal in nature, and usually react to the effectiveness of an entire program. But as public involvement becomes more accepted, decision makers are seeking further guidance to help them make hard decisions about the desirability of one public involvement approach over another, or the cost effectiveness of various approaches. This section describes several alternative approaches to the evaluation of public involvement programs.

As part of one of IWR's earliest studies, Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner, and J. William Wenrich describe the evaluation approach they used to assess the effectiveness of the Susquehanna Communication-Participation Study. The technique they describe includes both pre/post questionnaires and interview techniques.

Judy B. Rosener describes the process she recently applied to evaluating the Sanibel Island Workshops (See Lefkoff, page 367). Her approach involves the advance identification of objectives and measurement criteria, and the use of interviews and other forms of analysis to determine how well the objectives were met.

Paul Munch, also evaluating the Sanibel Island Workshops, brings a hard dollars-and-cents mentality to assessing the public involvement effort. Munch concludes that the program was cost effective, and in the process suggests a number of the cost factors that must be considered in such an analysis. Again, Munch's article (page 403) presumes an understanding of the process described in Lefkoff's article.

Finally, Delli Priscoli and Creighton, while acknowledging the importance of evaluation, express some concerns about some of the philosophy of "hard empirical research" as applied to public involvement. They point out a number of external factors which can play a determining role in the success/failure of a public involvement effort, and describe the need for use of subjective/interactive research tools.

PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF A  
PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM

by Thomas E. Borton, Katherine P. Warner  
and J. William Wenrich

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the evaluation procedures used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Susquehanna Coordinating Committee's public information program. Hopefully, these procedures will suggest methodologies which can be used in evaluating other programs. The article is divided into several areas of focal concern for program analysis. These include: bases for communication-public involvement efforts; characteristics of the workshops and public forums, including local respondent attendance patterns; and evaluation of the workshops as reflected in the followup interview comments and the pre/post opinionnaire results.

THE BASES FOR COMMUNICATIONS-PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

The research team identified four bases which were considered fundamental to the development of communication-public participation efforts. These were used as a focus for the analysis. The first basic ingredient was considered to be the development of confidence and trust in the planning process and the planning personnel involved. Second, the establishment of common perceptions among agency and local representatives on key factors, such as water problems, was considered vital to the development of a productive dialogue. Third, involvement activity on the part of the public participants (e.g., attending meetings, reading articles, etc.) was felt to be necessary if effective information dissemination and feedback procedures were to be achieved. Finally, the use of information sources that involve more direct contacts between members of the public and planning agency representatives was regarded as important to the development of a more involved and knowledgeable public constituency for water resources planning efforts.

Trust in the Planning Process

In order to obtain information about the factor of trust in the planning process and in those doing the planning, the research team asked local opinion leaders a series of questions dealing with how knowledgeable they believed certain types of people to be about area water resources problems. It was felt that the respondents, in order to trust and have confidence in an ongoing planning process, must perceive those involved in this process as relatively well-informed about, and competent to deal with, the problems of the area. The three types asked about in the questionnaire included: Federal officials and agencies; state and regional leaders; and local community leaders. The same basic questions were asked both before and following completion of the public information program. In addition, the coordinating committee and its staff were also questioned about the knowledgeability of state and regional leaders and local community leaders, before and after the information program.

It was hypothesized by the research team that local people's perceptions of the knowledgeability of both Federal officials and state and regional leaders would improve if the public information program elements had been effective in increasing people's awareness of and trust in the plan formulation work of the coordinating committee. Some increases in the perceived knowledgeability of these two groups did, in fact, occur from the pre to post-information program questionnaires, as portrayed in Figure I. The major portion of this movement was between the somewhat neutral category of "fairly knowledgeable" to the more strongly positive "extremely or very knowledgeable" opinion position.

**FIGURE I. PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGEABILITY OF  
FEDERAL OFFICIALS AND STATE-REGIONAL LEADERS**

[Percentage distribution of questionnaire responses by local  
community opinion leaders before and after information program]

Level of Leadership Evaluated and Type of Questionnaire	Extremely or Very Knowledgeable	Fairly Knowledgeable	Slightly or Not Knowledgeable	Total
<u>Federal Officials</u>				
Pre-Questionnaire	43%	48%	9%	100%
Post-Questionnaire	50%	39%	11%	100%
Percentage Change	+7%	-9%	+2%	
<u>State-Regional Leaders</u>				
Pre-Questionnaire	30%	55%	15%	100%
Post-Questionnaire	36%	49%	15%	100%
Percentage Change	+6%	-6%	0%	

It was also hypothesized that the direct experience gained through attendance at workshops and forums would to some extent modify people's attitudes. This was based upon the belief that opportunities provided by the meetings for Federal official, state-regional leader, and local community leader interactions would furnish those attending with a more concrete frame of reference for their later post-questionnaire knowledgeability responses.

Figures II and III provide an indication of the degree to which this adjustment took place. By comparing the initial knowledgeability perceptions of local respondents and coordinating committee members and staff, who later attended one or more of the workshops and/or public forums, with their responses to these same questions following the meeting sequence, a rather marked tendency toward convergence between the perceptions of the two groups is evident. This demonstrates the potential importance of the meeting approach as a process mechanism for developing attitudes more supportive of productive public involvement efforts.

FIGURE II. PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGEABILITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS--PRE TO POST-INFORMATION PROGRAM CONVERGENCE BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ATTENDEES AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE

[Local Attendees include all study respondents who attended one or more workshops and/or public forums.]

Type of Questionnaire and Type of Respondent	Extremely or Very Knowledgeable	Fairly Knowledgeable	Slightly or Not Knowledgeable	Total
<u>Pre-Questionnaire</u>				
Local Attendees	27%	41%	32%	100%
Coordinating Committee	10%	40%	50%	100%
Percentage Difference	17%	1%	18%	
<u>Post-Questionnaire</u>				
Local Attendees	16%	48%	36%	100%
Coordinating Committee	14%	52%	34%	100%
Percentage Difference	2%	4%	2%	

Common Perceptions of Water Resource Problems

The second basis for communications--public involvement programs examined during the analysis was the degree to which perceptions of important water resource problems were shared by those involved in the planning process. The research team hypothesized that if the public information program had been effective, the perceptions of planning agency personnel and those of local opinion leaders should show greater agreement following the program's completion. Such agreement is important since agency participants in a planning process must understand what factors are perceived as area water problems by the public before they can effectively discuss planning objectives and possible alternative solutions with members of that public.

FIGURE III. PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGEABILITY OF STATE AND REGIONAL LEADERS--PRE TO POST-INFORMATION PROGRAM CONVERGENCE BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL ATTENDEES AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE

[Local Attendees include all study respondents who attended one or more workshops and/or public forums.]

Type of Questionnaire and Type of Respondent	Extremely or Very Knowledgeable	Fairly Knowledgeable	Slightly or Not Knowledgeable	Total
<u>Pre-Questionnaire</u>				
Local Attendees	34%	49%	17%	100%
Coordinating Committee	57%	40%	3%	100%
Percentage Difference	23%	9%	14%	
<u>Post-Questionnaire</u>				
Local Attendees	40%	41%	19%	100%
Coordinating Committee	39%	59%	2%	100%
Percentage Difference	1%	18%	17%	

The coordinating committee respondents were asked on the initial questionnaire to rank the major water resource problems they felt existed in New York State Sub-basin I of the Susquehanna. They were also asked to rank what they thought local community leaders in the area perceived as the major water problems. Their evaluations were then compared with those made by local study respondents in Broome and Tioga Counties, New York. The three sets of rankings differed markedly as is indicated in Figure IV.

After completion of the public information program, a similar set of questions was asked on the followup questionnaires administered to both local and coordinating committee respondents. A comparison of the three sets of rankings reveals much closer agreement, particularly between the actual rankings of local respondents and what the coordinating committee members and staff believed local leaders would think (see Figure V).

The followup problem listings demonstrate a heightened awareness of local opinions and attitudes on the part of the agency planning group. The research team judges that this added sensitivity to local problem perceptions was due, to a significant degree, to the opportunities for more extensive local public contact provided through the various public information program mechanisms (e.g., workshops and forums).

FIGURE IV DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF PRIORITY  
WATER PROBLEMS ON INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRES

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Source and Basis of Rankings	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority
Coordinating Committee (Own Evaluation)	Flood Control	Water Supply	Pollution
Coordinating Committee (What Local Leaders Would Think)	Water Supply	Flood Control	Pollution
Local Respondents (Broome and Tioga Counties)	Pollution	Recreation	Water Supply

FIGURE V DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF PRIORITY WATER PROBLEMS ON FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRES

Source and Basis of Rankings	First Priority	Second Priority	Third Priority
Coordinating Committee (Own Evaluation)	Flood Control	Pollution	Water Supply
Coordinating Committee (What Local Leaders Would Think)	Pollution	Water Supply	Recreation
Local Respondents in Sub-basin I	Pollution	Water Supply	Low Flow Augmentation

Involvement in Activities Related to Water Resources Planning

Local opinion leaders were also asked on the post-information program questionnaire about the types of activities related to water resources planning and programs they had engaged in over the previous year. Participation in such involvement activities is seen as important for two reasons. First, it demonstrates a level of interest great enough to warrant some active commitment of time and energy on the respondent's part. Second, such active involvement enhances considerably the opportunities for information exchange within the planning process.

Of the 215 persons answering the questionnaire, only 7 percent indicated they had made no special efforts to express their opinions or preferences regarding water resources development. The most often cited activity was attending a local meeting to discuss water-related problems; 67 percent indicated they had attended such a meeting. The second most often cited effort was calling or visiting any of the agencies involved in water resources development. This was specified by 33 percent of the respondents.

Local opinion leaders were also asked whether they had read any materials about the Susquehanna Basin Study and its preliminary prospectus during the period of the public information program. Of the 215 respondents, 93 percent indicated that they had read at least one type of material concerning the study. For a breakdown of the activity and readership categories included in the questionnaire, see Figures VI and VII.

#### Sources of Information on Water Resources Issues

The research team was also interested in the types of information sources relied upon by the study respondents. The analysis was directed toward discovering whether a noticeable shift had occurred in the sources and information dissemination mechanisms favored following the completion of the public information program. This was investigated in both the case of local opinion leaders and coordinating committee members and staff.

Prior to the public information program, local opinion leaders ranked "personal experience" as clearly their primary source of information on water resources issues. Following the program's completion, "discussions with water resource professionals" and "newspapers" emerged as the predominant sources of information. Since a major portion of the public information program design focused upon expanding the role of professional-local person interaction processes, as well as stimulating newspaper coverage of study activities, this shift was considered important. (See Figure VIII).

On a similar set of questions regarding the most effective means for disseminating water resources information, the coordinating committee and staff respondents showed an improvement between the pre- and post-information program rankings of more direct contact approaches, such as talks by study personnel and special workshops. More traditional formal mechanisms such as brochures and public hearings declined in perceived value. Newspapers were ranked first on both the pre- and post-questionnaires by the coordinating committee members and staff. (See Figure IX).

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

**FIGURE VI SPECIAL EFFORTS MADE BY LOCAL RESPONDENTS**  
(Percentages do not add to 100% due to no response occurrence)

Type of Activity	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Written letters to a Federal or state agency regarding some aspect of water resources development	45	21%	156	72%
Organized local meetings to discuss water-related problems	45	21%	156	72%
Written to your Congressman about water problems	35	16%	166	77%
Attended local meetings to discuss water-related problems	144	67%	57	26%
Called or visited any of the agencies involved in water resources development	70	33%	131	60%
Joined or given money to support a group interested in some aspect of water resources development	39	18%	162	75%
Written letters to newspaper editors about water-related problems	17	8%	184	85%
Other	42	19%	159	74%

**FIGURE VII TYPES OF MATERIAL READ BY LOCAL RESPONDENTS**  
(Percentages do not add to 100% due to no response occurrence)

Types of Material Read	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Newspaper articles or editorials	155	72%	58	27%
Newsletters from the Susquehanna Coordinating Committee	150	70%	63	29%
Materials distributed prior to or at the water resource planning WORKSHOPS	122	57%	91	42%
Materials distributed at the PUBLIC FORUMS	76	35%	137	64%
Preliminary reports from the University of Michigan research study on ACommunication in Water Resource Planning@	117	54%	96	45%
Others	23	11%	190	88%

**FIGURE VIII LOCAL RESPONDENTS- PRE- AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE**



RANKINGS OF MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Pre-questionnaire	Rank	Post-questionnaire
Personal experience	1	*Discussions with water professionals
Discussions with water professionals	2	*Newspapers and magazines
Newspapers and magazines	3	Personal experience
Statements of public officials	4	Statements of public officials
Discussions with friends	5	Position statements of organizations
Technical publications	6	Technical publications
Position statements of organizations	7	Discussions with friends
Television	8	Television
Radio	9	Radio

\*Tied for first rank

FIGURE IX COORDINATING COMMITTEE PRE- AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE  
RANKINGS OF MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Pre-questionnaire	Rank	Post-questionnaire
Newspapers	1	Newspapers
Formal programs for groups	2	Talks by study personnel
Talks by study personnel	3	Formal programs for groups
Informal meetings	4	Special workshops
Brochures and pamphlets	5	Informal meetings
Public hearings	6	Radio and television
Special workshops	7	Brochures and pamphlets
Special television	8	Public forums
Special radio	9	Public hearings

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA WORKSHOPS AND PUBLIC FORUMS

Between January and June of 1969, the Susquehanna River Basin Coordinating Committee carried out their intensive public information program to acquaint residents of the basin with the work of the committee and to obtain public response to the preliminary proposals and recommendations of the study.

Over this period of time, 14 community leader-planner workshops and 9 public forum meetings were held at locations throughout the basin.

Among the local opinion leaders who were respondents in the communications research study, a total of 123 attendances were registered at the workshops held in the areas surveyed by the research team. These respondents constituted about 40 percent of the total attendees (301) at these meetings. At the public forums in these same areas, respondents accounted for 9 percent (78) of the total attendance figure of 907.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

The workshops and forums were conceived as linked components in a two-step communications process. As mechanisms for public involvement, they differed to some extent in their objectives and to a considerable extent in their structure and format. These differences included the following:

- a. The size of attendance.\* The forums averaged about twice that of the workshops.
- b. The type of attendees focused on. The workshops concentrated on direct invitations to opinion leaders and planners, while the forums attempted, through mass mailings and media publicity, to encourage broad public attendance.
- c. The type of agency participants. The workshops directly involved only the plan formulation work group staff while, at the forums, actual coordinating committee members assumed the major role.
- d. The style of interaction. The workshops emphasized focused, small group discussions while the forums included formal presentations followed by an opportunity for individuals in the group to voice comments and questions.
- e. The organizational responsibilities. The arrangements for the workshops were made by a local sponsoring organization or committee and local people assumed the roles of meeting chairmen and subgroup discussion leaders, while the forums were arranged by coordinating committee personnel who then assumed the major directive roles in them.
- f. The followup activity. Workshop followup activity was, in some cases, undertaken by local sponsoring organizations, while whatever continuing activity the forums stimulated was confined largely to internal agency prospectus re-evaluation and modification.

**WORKSHOP PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The local community leader information workshops played a major role in the Susquehanna Coordinating Committee's public information program. A large portion of the research team's effort was directed toward the development and evaluation of these meetings through both the contact work done with local opinion leaders and the program design and planning work done with agency personnel.

---

\*The 14 workshops ranged in size of local attendance from 18 to 71, with the average being about 40 attendees. The 9 forums, on the other hand, ranged from 69 to 631 local attendees, with the average number of people attending being about 100.

### Followup Interview Evaluation Comments

Both the agency representatives and the local respondents interviewed saw the workshop programs as a positive mechanism for improving communication in the planning process. A number of different areas of workshop evaluation were covered in their comments. Among these were the perceived results or benefits of the process and suggested modifications or changes in workshop procedures and format.

The coordinating committee staff members with whom the research team worked in designing and monitoring the workshops, felt such meetings had been helpful both in establishing local-agency communication channels and in developing a greater local awareness of and trust in the coordinating committee's planning process. Among the other major benefits of the workshop program cited by agency representatives was the fact that the workshops provided an opportunity to develop a cohesive interagency staff group or "team" which gained practical experience in presenting information and discussing recommended alternatives with the local people for whom the plans were being developed.

In addition, the workshops also pinpointed subject areas for the agency representatives where more detailed information was needed to answer the questions and discuss the concerns raised by local participants. For example, one person noted, "We need more economic data on the effects of big dams; we just did not have enough."

Information dissemination and eliciting local people's opinions and preferences were the two major objectives for the workshop expressed by the coordinating committee members and staff. These two goals are difficult to achieve simultaneously within a single meeting context. This is especially true since a water resources workshop approach was somewhat new and unfamiliar to local participants, most of whom described their primary reason for attending the meetings as being to listen to what the planners had found out.

A number of local attendees, who were later interviewed, perceived this discrepancy in objectives and suggested certain variations in the meeting sequence and procedures to alleviate it. Their most frequent suggestion was that there should be a series of two or more workshops. The first one should concentrate on introducing and describing the proposals and responding to informational questions by the attendees, while the succeeding ones should emphasize more active local opinion-centered discussions of perceived project merits, costs, and long-range consequences. It was also frequently mentioned that a series of workshops would provide more time for attendees to get oriented and effectively interact with agency technical representatives.

The several cases during the study in which a more linked, series-type workshop process was used (Corning-Bath, New York; Tioga-Wysox, Pennsylvania) produced some marked supporting evidence for this approach.

In the final questionnaire evaluation of the program, the members and staff of the coordinating committee were questioned about their objectives for the public information program and the degree to which these had been fulfilled by each of the various program components. In order of importance, the coordinating committee viewed the public information program as a means first, to generate response from the public (to be used in plan formulation and the evaluation of proposals); second, to provide information to the public; and third, to begin to generate overall support for the eventual plan proposals. Of the public information program components listed (community leader workshops, public forums, printed handouts and news media

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

coverage), the coordinating committee members and staff expressed greatest satisfaction with the workshops as a means by which their objectives had been fulfilled.

Based on their experience with the Susquehanna workshops, the agency "team" representatives pointed out that it would have been valuable to have held such meetings earlier in the planning process. They saw such earlier local meetings as potentially valuable opportunities to exchange information on local water resource needs and to establish a better understanding among local residents of the criteria and procedures being used to identify and investigate potential projects. Agency representatives noted that holding multiple meetings within an area would provide a greater amount of time in which to exchange information and to frame questions. "We can't expect a major plan input on the basis of one or two meetings," was a typical observation.

The research team supports the contention that holding multiple workshops throughout the plan formulation process would alleviate some of the problems and constraints mentioned by agency and local respondents in evaluating the Susquehanna experience. For example, one agency representative who participated in the workshops observed, "The format changed (over time) from a 'data gathering and information exchange' session to a meeting for the 'presentation and discussion of the prospectus.'" It has been the research team's contention that these are really two distinct requirements of the planning process. A sequence of workshops should be instituted in order to accomplish both of these essential functions. The Susquehanna workshops had both of these as program objectives. However, due to the late stage in the planning process at which the workshops took place, and the limited time available in which to accomplish both aims, the shift in emphasis toward the more immediate need of getting direct feedback on specific proposals for final plan inclusion was understandable.

Another consequence of the lateness in the planning process at which the workshops occurred and of their single-event character was the prevalent feeling among some local respondents that the meetings were more in the nature of review sessions than opportunities for active participation in the plan's formulation.

Holding a multiple series of workshops earlier in the planning process, however, increases the magnitude of one essential program requirement. This was summed up by one agency participant: "More budget and staff time are needed." The Susquehanna Coordinating Committee's commitment of staff time and resources to the workshop programs was substantial. The people assigned by the agencies to participate were also having direct technical responsibility for compiling and writing up the final basin water resources plan on which deadlines were approaching. If a more extensive workshop program series were to be undertaken, this type of agency commitment would have to be carefully considered, not only in terms of total time allocated, but also in terms of the time periods during the planning process when such meetings should take place. The research team believes, based on our evaluation of the Susquehanna experience, that such an investment is warranted.

### Workshop Opinionnaire Evaluation Results

The responses of local attendees to the research team's pre- and post-workshop opinionnaires also provide some significant indications of the effectiveness of the workshop program. The pre-meeting questions asked about the attendee's expectations for the meeting; the post-meeting questions focused on the degree to which these expectations had been satisfied.

One set of opinionnaire questions dealt with the amount of new information on water problems and solutions which the attendees expected and received at the workshop. A second set inquired about the respondents' expectations and resulting satisfaction with opportunities during the workshop to express opinions about water problems and solutions. A final question dealt with the extent to which the respondents believed the Federal and state planning agencies would take into account the opinions and preferences expressed at the workshops by local people.

On the first set of questions concerning the amount of new information on problems received by attendees at the workshop meetings, initial average expectations were exceeded by post-meeting responses at 5 of the 12 meetings. Another five of the workshops had no substantial decline or improvement between pre- and post-meeting responses. The remaining two workshops showed some dissatisfaction on the average response. (These two workshops included the first in the program which served as a pilot effort for the agency participants and a workshop held in an area where substantial opposition to the types of proposals made by the coordinating committee had existed for some time.) Thus the workshops appear to have met or exceeded expectations regarding receipt of problem information in 10 of the 12 meetings where opinionnaires were used.

The attendees tended to evaluate the workshops as somewhat less effective in conveying new information on problem solutions. In the case of only two of the workshops were the initial average attendee expectations exceeded; at six, expectations were essentially met, and at four workshops expectations were not met. In light of this finding, agency participants might devote more attention in future workshops to ways of discussing the information related to various types of solutions.

The two sets of opinionnaire questions dealing with the extent to which attendees were able to express opinions on problems and solutions showed very positive results. At all 12 of the workshops, initial mean attendee expectations were exceeded by post-meeting responses for the question on expression of opinions about problems. On the matching question regarding the opportunity to express opinions on problem solutions, initial mean attendee expectations were exceeded at 10 of the workshops.

These results indicate that workshops can function especially well as a mechanism which facilitates opinion expression by the public. The Coordinating Committee members and staff identified public feedback as a primary information program objective. On the followup questionnaire, they also indicated that the workshops had been the most effective program component in terms of fulfilling their objectives. The local attendees' notably positive opinionnaire responses to the opinion expression questions also support this conclusion.

The final question (dealing with the extent to which local respondents felt their opinions would be taken into account by the planning agencies) provided an indication of the trust which the attendees felt in the planning

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

process and in the agency planners following the workshops. At 5 of the 10 meetings where this question was asked, attendees showed movement toward a stronger belief that their opinions would be taken into account than they had initially specified. At only one of the workshops did the average post-meeting response levels not approximate or exceed initial expectations.

In summary, the results of these opinionnaire questions indicate several things. First, the workshops were successful in providing the public participants with an opportunity to express their opinions to a degree that many of the attendees had not initially anticipated. Second, the workshops in most cases strengthened or reinforced the public participants' belief that the comments and opinions expressed by local attendees would be considered by the planning agencies. And finally, the attendees felt that some new information had been acquired at the workshops--relatively more on water resource problems than on solutions to these problems.

From a future programming standpoint, these opinionnaire results can be linked with the numerous assertions by local opinion leaders and agency representatives that a series of workshops, initiated earlier in the planning process is needed. As the opinionnaire findings showed, a single workshop can result in some expression of participant opinions, heightened trust in the planning process and the transfer of a certain amount of new information. However, the authors believe, based on the Susquehanna experience and subsequent local and agency evaluation comments, that a linked series of such workshop meetings is necessary in order to yield public input that can be operationally useful in plan formulation at a time when the preliminary plan is still flexible enough to accommodate shifts in emphasis and proposed new inclusions or areas for investigation.



THE SANIBEL EVALUATION: WHAT WAS LEARNED?

by Judy B. Rosener

Most citizen participation evaluations suffer from an "after the fact" orientation. The goals and objectives of citizen participation programs are not well defined at the beginning, so there is no standard against which program performance can be measured.

The Sanibel Island experiment [See Lefkoff, pg. 367, Munch, pg. 403] provided an opportunity to apply the techniques of evaluation research to the citizen participation process as a means of measuring program performance. Evaluation research assesses the extent to which delineated goals are realized. It is characterized by the use of a systematic approach to the articulation of goals and objectives, and the development of criteria by which achievement of goals and objectives can be measured. It is concerned with analyzing factors associated with successful or unsuccessful outcomes.<sup>1</sup> The use of evaluation research has most often been associated with the assessment of social programs. Only recently has it been applied to the assessment of citizen participation.<sup>2</sup>

BACKGROUND ON THE SANIBEL ISLAND CASE

Under Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, a number of activities such as the diking and filling of wetlands require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The COE has authority under this act to issue two types of permits: individual permits and general permits. The individual permit is self-explanatory. The general permit is not. It is issued for categories of work and activities which are essentially similar in nature and will cause only minimal individual or cumulative adverse impact on the environment.<sup>3</sup> It is up to the district engineer to decide which kind of permit will be issued. Due to an increasing demand for individual permits, and no equivalent increase in the resources needed to meet this demand, the Corps would like to facilitate the use of the general permit.<sup>4</sup> With this in mind, the Jacksonville, Florida District Engineer, Colonel James Adams, initiated a series of workshops on Sanibel Island where the general permit could be explained, and where general permit conditions could be developed cooperatively by citizens and the Corps to protect Sanibel's interior wetlands. This effort was seen by Colonel Adams not only as a means of educating the public and Corps personnel about the general permit and gaining support for its use, but also as a means of training Corps personnel in workshop facilitation.

The "Sanibel process" consisted of three all day task-oriented workshops, and a final half-day meeting. Pre-workshop interviews identified basic issues and possible conflict areas which were given special attention in the design of the workshops. Each workshop resulted in a specific product. A summary of the workshops, including the number of participants, workshop procedures, products, and a commentary by the evaluator, is provided in Table 1.

---

This is a report of a research program sponsored by IWR and the Jacksonville District of the Corps. A more detailed report on this program will be forthcoming.



## THE EVALUATION

Since the Sanibel workshops were a "first" for the Jacksonville District, they were considered experimental. For this reason, they were evaluated more carefully than if they were a widely used participation technique which had met the test of time. Knowing of the need to be able to support whatever conclusions were drawn about the Sanibel experiment, the workshops were evaluated from their inception so that the relationship between participation activities and the achievement of specified goals and objectives could be determined with some degree of reliability.

The primary thrust of the evaluation was to articulate participation goals and objectives, and to document whether or not the criteria for meeting those goals and objectives were met. Further, an attempt was made to indicate how the participation activities or products were related to the achievement of the goals and objectives.

### Participant Goals and Objectives

In an attempt to measure the effectiveness of the Sanibel workshops in a systematic fashion, Army Corps and environmentalist goals and objectives were delineated prior to commencement of the workshops. These goals and objectives were based on comments made by Corps personnel and environmentalists in pre-workshop interviews, and on data obtained from questionnaires. Other data sources were Army Corps of Engineers documents, and the existing literature on the Corps regulation of wetlands.

It was found during the initial interviews that Sanibel public officials and developers, like the Corps, were generally sympathetic to the issuance of a general permit. They felt it would speed up the permit process and provide certainty. They felt that the Sanibel Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) provided sufficient protection for the interior wetlands. Environmentalists, on the other hand, believed that requiring a landowner to obtain an individual Corps permit was a protection which they wanted retained. Therefore, the predominately neutral, and in some cases, negative, attitude of environmentalists toward the general permit suggested that prior to the workshops, the goals of the environmentalists were different from those of the Corps. It was for this reason that the focus of the evaluation was on the goals and objectives of the Corps and the environmentalists.

Before summarizing the goals and objectives of these two groups, the terms "goal" and "objective" should be clarified. A goal is nothing more than a generalized statement of intended accomplishment. It is usually abstract and somewhat ambiguous. On the other hand, an objective is more specific. It is a statement of the changes or conditions that some activity is expected to produce. Put another way, it is a function to be performed.<sup>5</sup> The criteria by which achievement of goals and objectives are measured follow directly from the objectives. They are an attempt to force attention to measurable outcomes. For example, it may be that a "mechanism for positive interaction between the Corps and citizens" is provided (an objective), but the real question is, did positive interaction take place? The assumption is

TABLE 1

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

DATE	# CITIZENS	# CORPS	PROCESS ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT	COMMENTS
5-3-79	41	11	Comments from District Engineer Delineated issues in small groups using flip charts. COE facilitators.	9:00-4:00 Weekday	List of issues which covered a wide range of concerns from the specifics of general permit conditions to administration and enforcement.	Initial communication to participants from the Corps provided information on the Corps regulatory program, and an overview of what would take place at the workshops.
5-17-79	25	10	Participants laid out condition suggestions by issue category in small groups. Each group dealt with one set of issues. Suggestions were recorded on flip charts. COE facilitators. <u>Scoping of issues</u>	9:00-4:00 Weekday	List of possible special conditions listed by issue as developed in the small groups. These lists were in essence condition options or alternatives.	Participants were mailed copies of the lists prepared in the small groups at the first workshop, and the suggestions as reworked into categories for discussion at the second workshop. Another letter from the Corps which included this information also mentioned how the second workshop would be organized.
6-6-79	18	9	Consideration of all condition suggestions in small groups. <u>Actual writing of the final conditions</u> by each group. COE facilitators.  Report of each group to the total group that it proposed for the final special conditions. Group evaluation of the proposed conditions as means of ensuring consensus.	9:00-4:00 Weekday	List of special conditions developed by the entire group based on the work done in the small groups.	Participants in the small groups reviewed and made modifications to all of the proposed conditions and it was surprising how similar the comments were in each group. The conditions were mailed to participants from the Corps prior to the final meeting when the District Engineer appeared to answer any remaining questions.
6-21-79	15	3	Comments by District Engineer about the procedure following his acceptance of the conditions.  <u>Final review of the special conditions and comments</u> about the Sanibel workshops.  Participants acted as a panel to answer questions and comment on the process and the product.	9:00-12:00 Weekday	Final list of special conditions for the Sanibel general permit.	Changes at this point were relatively minor.  The Corps input to the substance of the special conditions was minimal; in fact the conditions were written by the participants. Participant comments toward the process, the product and the Corps were spontaneous and complementary.

that if a criterion is met (i.e., there is evidence of positive interaction) then the objective is achieved, thereby contributing to the attainment of a goal (creation of a positive public image).

The question of whether or not every goal and objective must be achieved in order for a participation activity to be labeled a success is one of individual judgment. An evaluation scheme such as this one should not be used merely to make an overall assessment of the success or failure of the process, or acceptance or rejection of the ultimate product, but also as a way to see which specific Corps or environmentalist goals and objectives were achieved by the kind of workshop activities used on Sanibel.

Table 2 summarizes the workshop goals and objectives for the Sanibel Workshops held by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff. It also displays the criteria used for measuring goal achievement. Table 3 displays similar information for environmentalists. Looking at Tables 2 and 3, it is clear that environmentalists were primarily concerned with the product, the special conditions for the general permit and how it would protect the wetlands. The Corps was primarily interested in the process, a model for needs assessment and personnel training, and as an alternative to the public hearing. The process and the product are not mutually exclusive. As a matter of fact, they are probably inexorably intertwined. However, the way in which they intertwine, and the implications of their intertwining, is not fully understood. In the case of Sanibel, conversations with environmentalists indicate that they liked the process, and probably would have even if it had not produced an acceptable set of permit conditions. On the other hand, the Corps would probably not have supported the process unless they thought it would produce the desired product...an acceptable general permit.

It must also be stressed that goals and objectives of individuals and groups differ from place to place, from time to time and from issue to issue. Therefore, it is necessary to go through the process of identifying and articulating goals and objectives prior to the commencement of any participation activity if a reliable assessment is to be made of how some specific participation activity is related to an outcome. As the evaluation below indicates, the Sanibel workshops were successful in achieving most of the Corps' and environmentalists' goals and objectives. This does not necessarily mean that the "Sanibel model" will work in other places, since the goals and objectives of other groups will inevitably differ.

#### Results of the Sanibel Goals and Objectives Evaluation

The data used in determining whether or not the stated goals and objectives were met included answers to questionnaires completed at two of the workshops, pre- and post-process interviews, and the direct observations of the evaluation. The results of the evaluation are summarized in Table 4 (Corps' goals and objectives) and Table 5 (Environmentalists' goals and objectives). The tables reiterate the goals, objectives, and criteria shown on previous tables, as well as the indicators that the criteria were met.

The evaluation indicated that the image of the Corps was enhanced by the process, the Corps was able to get an indication of citizen desires about the protection of wetlands, the Corps shared its decision making

Table 2

SANIBEL WORKSHOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: ARMY CORPS

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT
Create a positive public image of the Corps.	<p>Provide a mechanism for positive interaction between Corps personnel and affected citizens.</p> <p>Explain Corps responsibilities, and discretionary authority in its regulatory activities (general permit).</p> <p>Ask citizens to develop their own conditions for the general permit.</p>	<p>Indication of positive interaction between Corps personnel and participants.</p> <p>Indication that participants understand Corps responsibilities and discretionary authority, and the general permit process.</p> <p>Indication that Corps will use the conditions developed by the participants.</p>
Conduct a needs assessment with respect to the interior wetlands on Sanibel	<p>Find out what various interest groups want in the way of interior wetlands protection on Sanibel.</p> <p>Find out what kind of general permit administration and enforcement are desired.</p>	<p>Indication that citizen concerns about protection of the wetlands identified and acknowledged by Corps.</p> <p>Indication that citizens expressed their concerns about administration and enforcement of the general permit and conditions.</p>
Share decision making responsibility with citizens of Sanibel	<p>Provide a mechanism for integrating citizen ideas, alternatives and options into Corps regulatory actions.</p>	<p>Indication that ideas, options and alternatives suggested in the workshops are reflected in the conditions for the Sanibel general permit.</p>
Streamline permit process and provide certainty to land owners and public officials, and environmentalists.	<p>Provide a mechanism where criteria can be developed which will allow the Corps to issue one permit rather than individual permits.</p> <p>Provide a forum to identify conflict and consensus prior to issuance of a general permit.</p> <p>Provide a forum for resolving conflict regarding future land use so that landowners will have certainty and resources will be protected.</p>	<p>Indication that conditions developed in the workshops will generate support for the issuance of a general permit.</p> <p>Indication that areas of conflict and consensus are identified.</p> <p>Indication that land use conflicts are resolved thus ensuring that landowners are aware what they can and can't do, and when they need to obtain an individual permit when they come under the general permit.</p>
Facilitate permit enforcement.	<p>Develop relationship with local government which will facilitate enforcement of the general permit and its conditions.</p>	<p>Indication of agreement between Sanibel City Council and Corps spelling out enforcement responsibilities of both.</p>
Train Corps personnel in participation techniques using experiential learning about the general permit process.	<p>Expose Corps personnel who will be involved in regulatory activities to a real situation where citizens and Corps personnel can learn about the general permit process together, and where Corps personnel will act as neutral facilitators.</p>	<p>Indication that Corps personnel learned to act as neutral facilitators and were perceived by participants to have been effective in their workshop role at the same time that they and other participants learned about the general permit process.</p>
Development of a constructive alternative to the public hearing process.	<p>Provide a mechanism other than the public hearing which can satisfy the general permit concerns of those who will be affected by issuance of a general permit.</p>	<p>Lack of citizen demand for a public hearing after issuance of the public notice for a general permit on Sanibel.</p>

Table 3

SANIBEL WORKSHOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: ENVIRONMENTALISTS

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT
Protect the interior wetlands on Sanibel Island.	<p>Agreement between the Corps and workshop participants as to what constitutes a wetland and what is meant by protection.</p> <p>Develop conditions which are restrictive enough to protect the wetlands.</p> <p>Develop conditions which are enforceable and an administrative process to ensure that enforcement will take place.</p>	<p>Maps which show clearly where the wetlands are which come under the general permit.</p> <p>General Permit conditions which are acceptable to environmentalists.</p> <p>Assurance that Sanibel City Council or Corps will enforce conditions and indication of how administration and enforcement of the general permit conditions will take place.</p>
Share decision making responsibility with the Corps in its regulatory activities on Sanibel.	Provide a mechanism where citizens can help write the general permit conditions and provide input into how the general permit should be administered and enforced.	Indications that the Corps general permit includes conditions developed in the workshops, and that the Corps administrative and enforcement policy reflects the concerns expressed in the workshop.
Provide certainty to land-owners about development in the wetlands, and settle the issue of wetlands protection on Sanibel.	Development of a general permit and conditions which clearly indicates what can and cannot be done in and near the interior wetlands, and when a landowner needs to obtain an individual permit.	Issuance of a general permit which clearly delineates whose land falls under the general permit and whose does not, and what can be done under the conditions of the general permit and what cannot be done.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

Table 4  
Indications That Objectives Were Achieved: Army Corps

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	INDICATION THAT CRITERIA MET
Create a positive public image of the Corps.	Provide a mechanism for positive interaction between Corps personnel and affected citizens.  Explain Corps responsibilities, and discretionary authority in its regulatory activities (general permit).  Ask citizens to develop their own conditions for the general permit.	Indication of positive interaction between Corps personnel and participants.  Indication that participants understand Corps responsibilities and discretionary -- authority, and the general permit process.  Indication that Corps will use the conditions developed by the participants.	Questionnaire data indicates positive interaction.  Observations of evaluator  Issuance of general permit with conditions developed by the participants.
Conduct a needs assessment with respect to the interior wetlands on Sanibel	Find out what various interest groups want in the way of interior wetlands protection on Sanibel.  Find out what kind of general permit administration and enforcement are desired.	Indication that citizen concerns about protection of the wetlands identified and acknowledged by Corps.  Indication that citizens expressed their concerns about administration and enforcement of the general permit and conditions.	Inclusion of citizen suggestions in the general permit.  Information on workshop "tear sheets" showing concerns.
Share decision making responsibility with citizens of Sanibel	Provide a mechanism for integrating citizen ideas, alternatives and options into Corps regulatory actions.	Indication that ideas, options and alternatives suggested in the workshops are reflected in the conditions for the Sanibel general permit.	"Tear sheet" suggestions included in the general permit conditions.
Streamline permit process and provide certainty to land owners and public officials, and environmentalists.	Provide a mechanism where criteria can be developed which will allow the Corps to issue one permit rather than individual permits.  Provide a forum to identify conflict and consensus prior to issuance of a general permit.  Provide a forum for resolving conflict regarding future land use so that landowners will have certainty and resources will be protected.	Indication that conditions developed in the workshops will generate support for the issuance of a general permit.  Indication that areas of conflict and consensus are identified.  Indication that land use conflicts are resolved thus ensuring that landowners are aware what they can and can't do, and when they need to obtain an individual permit when they come under the general permit.	No demand for the Corps to hold a public hearing.  Interview data and "tear sheet" information which indicate that conflicts and consensus were identified.  Conditions developed in the workshops in response to questions of those who need to obtain a permit.
Facilitate permit enforcement.	Develop relationship with local government which will facilitate enforcement of the general permit and its conditions.	Indication of agreement between Sanibel City Council and Corps spelling out enforcement responsibilities of both.	Correspondence between the City Council and the Corps indicating a general agreement.
Train Corps personnel in participation techniques using experiential learning about the general permit process.	Expose Corps personnel who will be involved in regulatory activities to a real situation where citizens and Corps personnel can learn about the general permit process together, and where Corps personnel will act as neutral facilitators.	Indication that Corps personnel learned to act as neutral facilitators and were perceived by participants to have been effective in their workshop role at the same time that they and other participants learned about the general permit process.	Questionnaire data indicating that the Corps facilitators were viewed as neutral and that they and citizens learned about the general permit.
Development of a constructive alternative to the public hearing process.	Provide a mechanism other than the public hearing which can satisfy the general permit concerns of those who will be affected by issuance of a general permit.	Lack of citizen demand for a public hearing after issuance of the public notice for a general permit on Sanibel.	No requests for a public hearing.

Table 5

Indications That Objectives Were Achieved: Environmentalists

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	CRITERIA FOR MEASURING GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	INDICATION THAT CRITERIA MET
<p>Protect the interior wetlands on Sanibel Island.</p>	<p>Agreement between the Corps and workshop participants as to what constitutes a wetland and what is meant by protection.</p> <p>Develop conditions which are restrictive enough to protect the wetlands.</p> <p>Develop conditions which are enforceable and an administrative process to ensure that enforcement will take place.</p>	<p>Maps which show clearly where the wetlands are which come under the general permit.</p> <p>General permit conditions which are acceptable to environmentalists.</p> <p>Assurance that Sanibel City Council or Corps will enforce conditions and indication of how administration and enforcement of the general permit conditions will take place.</p>	<p><i>Maps prepared by Corps and City of Sanibel showing wetlands.</i></p> <p><i>No opposition expressed by environmentalists.</i></p> <p><i>Agreement between the City and the Corps to cooperate in the enforcement of conditions.</i></p>
<p>Share decision making responsibility with the Corps in its regulatory activities on Sanibel.</p>	<p>Provide a mechanism where citizens can help write the general permit conditions, and provide input into how the general permit should be administered and enforced.</p>	<p>Indications that the Corps general permit included conditions developed in the workshops, and that the Corps administrative and enforcement policy reflects the concerns expressed in the workshop.</p>	<p><i>General permit included conditions developed in the workshops.</i></p> <p><i>Concerns about the administration and enforcement of the general permit were acknowledged by the Corps and City officials</i></p>
<p>Provide certainty to landowners about development in the wetlands, and settle the issue of wetlands protection on Sanibel.</p>	<p>Development of a general permit and conditions which clearly indicates what can and cannot be done in and near the interior wetlands, and when a landowner needs to obtain an individual permit.</p>	<p>Issuance of a general permit which clearly delineates whose land falls under the general permit and whose does not, and what can be done under the conditions of the general permit and what cannot be done.</p>	<p><i>General permit delineates lands which fall under the permit and conditions are clear.</i></p>

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

authority with citizens, a general permit did issue, the Corps and local government will share enforcement responsibilities, and Corps personnel were trained in being neutral workshop facilitators. And as was anticipated, the workshops eliminated the need for a public hearing on the Sanibel general permit. Similarly, the goals of the environmentalists were also achieved. Wetlands will be protected by the general permit conditions, citizens did have an opportunity to write their own permit conditions, and certainty about development constraints has been provided to environmentalists, landowners and public officials on Sanibel. In general, it is safe to conclude that the "Sanibel process" was a success.

Factors Related to Success

It must be acknowledged that the Sanibel process had a good chance of success. This was in part due to the favorable political climate, the fact that the city had a recent and stringent Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the fact that the citizens on Sanibel were familiar with land use planning, and the fact that the Corps expended a great deal of time and money to ensure that the workshops would be well planned and executed. Nonetheless, the success of the workshops should not be minimized. There were articulate, well-respected environmentalists on Sanibel who could easily have scuttled the general permit proposal had they felt the workshops were not properly conducted, or that the general permit conditions were not stringent enough to protect the interior wetlands.

This suggests a second need which evaluation research methodology may be able to satisfy: identifying those factors that made the difference between the success and failure of a program. It is important to know that something is a success, but in order to generalize from a success, it is necessary to understand which factors contributed most to the success, which were unique to the specific situation, and which could be replicated in other circumstances.

In the case of Sanibel there were a number of factors that were important in achieving the goals and objectives. They include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The political climate in which the participation took place;
2. The timing of the participation;
3. The role played by the Army Corps;
4. The consultant team used by the Corps;
5. The variety of interests represented in the workshops;
6. The availability of information to the participants;
7. The expectations of Corps personnel and other participants;



8. Acceptance of the process and the products by the participants; and,
9. Attitudinal changes of participants.

One look at the list of factors reveals that some of them were controllable and some were not. For example, the Corps could control the timing of the workshops, the use and quality of consultants, the facilities and setting of the activity, the role to be played by Corps personnel, and the availability of information. The Corps could not control the political climate which surrounded the issue, but it could identify and understand it in such a way that "political surprises" could be avoided or minimized. The Corps could not completely control who would decide to participate and what interests they would represent. It could not control the expectations of the participants, nor their acceptance of the process. Nor could the Corps control the attitudes which citizens brought with them to the participation activity.

For evaluation of citizen participation programs to be useful, a distinction must be made between those factors over which the agency sponsoring the program can exercise some control, and those which must be left to chance. Acknowledging that there are factors over which public officials have little control helps to relieve the feeling of anxiety felt by those who plan and implement participation strategies. Separating them out will also help participation planners to concentrate on factors which can be controlled.

For example, the timing of the workshops was important to their success. By involving citizens at the very beginning of the development of the general permit, the Corps gained credibility with the participants. By having Corps workshop facilitators play a neutral and "joint learning" role, participants felt they were not being coopted. By choosing consultants with environmental credentials, the Corps telescoped its concern for the protection of the wetlands. By making information readily available, the Corps dispelled the widely held notion that government has an information advantage. Finally, by ascertaining the participation expectations of participants and considering them in the design of the workshops, the Corps maximized the possibility that expectations would be met. In other words, the Corps identified factors which they felt were related to the success or failure of their participation activity, and exercised control over them.

Those factors over which the Corps had little control, the political climate, the attitudes of those who participated, and a determination of who would choose to participate, did not prevent the process from being successful. While these factors were not controllable, they were recognized by the Corps as being capable of turning a success into a failure. Thus, the Corps considered them when it chose where to hold the workshops. It picked an area where the political climate was "right," where the attitudes of those who participated were known, and where the diversity of interests represented would not be destructive. In this sense, the Corps also exercised control over factors which might be labeled uncontrollable.

#### Costs and Benefits of the Sanibel Workshops

Using evaluation research methodology, programs are measured by the extent to which they meet articulated goals and objectives. An alternative, and more traditional form of evaluation, is to measure the benefits and costs of a proposed program. The problem with using traditional cost/benefit analysis measures when evaluating citizen participation activities is that the kinds of benefits which are included tend to be only those which are tangible, immediate, visible and most easily quantified. Costs and benefits are usually calculated in terms of economic standards of measurement. Yet, many benefits which accrue to public agencies as a

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

result of involving citizens in decision making are intangible, long range, invisible and difficult to quantify. This does not mean that they do not exist. Costs and benefits must also be measured in terms of values, "the normative standards by which we judge the way things `ought' to be."<sup>6</sup>

This kind of calculation is not always acceptable to those with budget responsibilities, but it often better reflects what people feel about a process or product. This is what makes the evaluation of citizen participation so difficult. Public officials have to justify their expenditure of funds for citizen participation activities in economic terms, and converting societal values into dollars and cents is difficult. How do you place a dollar value on public trust in government? On future public cooperation or support? On public acceptance of a regulatory concept? How do you place a dollar value on mistakes avoided? On new ideas contributed? On environmentally sensitive regulators? The answer is, with great difficulty! For this reason, these kinds of "benefits" are frequently not included in traditional cost/benefit analyses of citizen participation activities.

No attempt was made by this evaluator to assess the economic costs and benefits of the Sanibel workshops [See Munch, pg. 411]. Rather the evaluation was concerned with the effectiveness of the process--whether or not the achievement of articulated goals and objectives were related to factors associated with the workshop process. Nonetheless, it seems worthwhile to list some of the less obvious costs and benefits which should be considered in any analysis of the Sanibel experience. The benefits include, but are not limited to the following (in no order of importance):

1. Joint training of Corps personnel (together with citizens) in development of special conditions for general permits.
2. Exposure of Corps personnel to responsible environmentalists who illustrate the "people resources" available to public officials.
3. Increased public and Corps insight into procedural and substantive problems associated with the general permit process.
4. Probable reduction in future permit workload for the Corps.
5. Sharing of administrative and enforcement responsibility with local government.
6. Greater public acceptance of the general permit concept.
7. Development of a public constituency for the Corps in its regulatory activities.
8. Improved public image of the Corps overall as a result of the "good will" created by the workshops.
9. Probable decrease in legal battles with environmentalists.

10. Land use "certainty" for landowners, public officials and the Corps.
11. Citizen participation model which can be modified for use in other areas.
12. A better Corps understanding of the needs and wants of environmentalists concerned about wetlands protection.
13. Probable decrease in citizen demands for public hearings.

Most of the costs to the Corps for an undertaking such as the Sanibel workshops are the obvious ones, the cost of consultants, Corps personnel time, rental of facilities, and duplication of materials and mailing expenses. However, there are four less obvious "probable" costs which should also be considered. These are:

1. Increased public awareness of the general permit process, which may mean more citizen opposition at first.
2. Increased public awareness of the workshop process used on Sanibel, which could mean a demand for more workshops.
3. Increased awareness on the part of Corps personnel that they operate under two sets of goals, organizational goals and societal goals, and that these two are often in conflict.
4. Risk that acceptance of the participation process may not immediately guarantee acceptance of the product for which public support is required.

In the case of Sanibel, it is necessary to consider the long-term non-economic costs and benefits to the Corps in addition to those which are most easily delineated if a "true" assessment of the Sanibel process is to be obtained.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that if citizens view a process by which decisions are made as being fair and honest, then they will support the actions of those making the decisions. This is not always the case. It may work in reverse. It may be that when citizens feel the actions taken are the correct ones, then they will feel that the process is acceptable. This is an issue which the Corps needs to ponder. If after a series of experiences, environmentalists view the Corps as issuing general permits which reflect their concerns, they may come to view the general permit in a positive light. When this happens trust will be restored, and the Corps can issue general permits which will necessitate only minimal public involvement, with reduced costs both economically and socially.

#### Summary and Conclusions

Based on the Sanibel experience, it must be concluded that involving citizens in the development of general permit conditions may pave the way for a wider use of the general permit in areas where opposition might otherwise be expected. When citizens understand the general permit process, and are convinced that the Corps will condition permits according to local concerns, then the need for individual permitting might

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

disappear. The cost of the workshops held on Sanibel mitigate against holding them in all instances where a general permit may be desired. Thus, the workshops should be reserved for those instances where the issuance of a general permit is necessitated and where opposition to one is anticipated. Over a period of time, if citizens become convinced that the Corps is sensitive to local area needs in the conditioning of general permits, acceptance of the general permit concept should increase.

Since the Sanibel workshops are a first for the Corps under its regulatory function, it is important not to conclude that their use in other areas will necessarily guarantee that opposition to issuance of general permits will be stilled. However, it can be assumed, based on the Sanibel experience, that involving citizens in the development of general permit conditions is probably desirable from the standpoint of the Corps as well as the citizens.

Calls for citizen participation are usually motivated by a lack of trust in a regulatory agency. Citizens don't participate unless they feel it is necessary. Participation is time consuming and costly to participants as well as public agencies, therefore, it is important that the Corps view the Sanibel process in terms of the myriad of factors which contribute to the success or failure of participation activities.

Some of the factors which contributed to the success of the Sanibel workshops are factors which in the future can be controlled by the Corps. Some cannot. Those factors which are controllable, i.e., the timing of the workshops, the use of consultants, the communication mechanisms utilized, the availability of information, and the role played by the Corps personnel, need to be analyzed in other settings so that some kind of systematic recording of their impact can be made. Those factors which cannot always be controlled by the Corps, i.e., the political climate, the representativeness of those who participate, the expectations of the participants, and the attitudinal changes of participants, also need to be studied and documented. Until there is a history of how various participation techniques work in a variety of settings, it will not be possible to predict the success of any one.

Knowing that the Sanibel workshops were successful, and having recommendations for similar activities in the future are important contributions of the Sanibel evaluation. The most important contribution of the evaluation process is that by motivating Corps personnel and other workshop participants to think about and articulate their participation goals and objectives prior to, during, and after the participation activities took place, it was possible to obtain the kind of information needed for a test of the "effectiveness" of the Sanibel workshops. In other words, it was possible to show a relationship between the achievement of specific participation goals and objectives and a specific kind of participation activity. Too frequently, evaluations of participation activities are based on the subjective judgments of the evaluators which may or may not accurately reflect or be related to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the participants.

NOTES

1. Carol Weiss, "Politics and Evaluation Research", Evaluation, 1:3, 1973, p 37.
2. Judy B. Rosener, "Citizen Participation: Can We Measure Its Impact", Public Administration Review, Vol. 38, No. 5, pp 457-463.
3. Definition contained in letter from Colonel James W.R. Adams, dated Apr 18, 1979, which went out to all workshop participants.
4. Conversation between Colonel James W.R. Adams and Judy B. Rosener prior to the commencement of the evaluation.
5. For a good discussion of goals and objectives, see R. Mager, Goal Analysis, Belmont, California: Fearon, 1972.
6. James L. Creighton, "The Use of Values: Public Participation in the Planning Process" (Mimeo) p.2



BENEFITS AND COSTS OF THE  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM  
SANIBEL ISLAND

by Paul Munch

During the spring of 1979, the Jacksonville District undertook a series of public involvement workshops with the goal of developing a general permit on Sanibel Island. The workshop approach would attempt to bring together a number of diverse interests and produce a consensus agreement. If this approach was successful, the district hoped to use this method as a tool for future conflict resolution.

By the summer of 1979, all indications showed the public involvement program to be a success, but its continuance would be dependent upon its cost effectiveness. This report was prepared to contrast the relative benefits versus the costs of the initial program and to try to make some predictions as to the benefits and costs of future programs.

A compilation of costs was a relatively easy task. Prior to the commencement of the program, a separate cost account was organized, and all chargeable activities were subsequently charged to it. The costs should be fairly indicative of future programs with the exception of the sizable "startup" costs entailed in training the first group of facilitators and in hiring consultants to assist in the development of the model.

The projection of benefits was a more difficult task. Although the tangible benefits have been quantified for a five-year period, the intangible benefits were only identified with no attempt made to quantify them. Yet, these intangible benefits may ultimately prove to be the greatest utility to the district and should not be discounted from future programs. The process used in calculating benefits is reported on the following pages.

The total benefits derived from the program are \$62,896 and are shown in more detail in Section I. The total costs are \$37,258 and are shown in Section II. The benefit/cost ratio derived from these calculations is 1.68/1.0.

COMPUTING THE BENEFITS

Although the calculation of benefits must necessarily be subjective, past experience can give a firm basis from which a reasonable projection can be obtained. The cost of processing individual permits, conducting public hearings, pursuing violations, and training personnel are all well documented and are used in this report. These documented tangible costs can easily be projected for future manpower and funding requirements.

---

This is a report of a research program sponsored by IWR and the Jacksonville District of the Corps. A complete report on this study will be forthcoming.

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

Intangible benefits have not been considered in this analysis, but their importance should not be overlooked. Excellent public relations, future public cooperation, Corps and public exposure to the public involvement process, and increased public awareness to the Corps regulatory programs are benefits which are difficult to calculate, but, nevertheless, provide real benefits in the future.

The benefits shown in this section are based upon the issuance of a general permit derived from a public involvement process and may easily be separated into the two subgroups concerning benefits from the general permit (processing individual permits, enforcement, etc.) and benefits from the public involvement process (training, public relations, etc.). Future programs should see increased benefits from the first group, but fewer training benefits. The general permit is expected to have a five-year life prior to a complete review; and this period is used for projection purposes.

Figure 1 shows a breakdown of benefits received by the Jacksonville District, with a more detailed description of each account shown below.



Figure 1

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS RECEIVED FROM THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

<u>General Permit</u>	<u>Manpower, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
Processing individual permits (25)		
Noncontroversial (25)	87.5	\$10,925
Controversial (10)	95.0	10,890
Pursuing violations (5)	7.5	900
Public hearings (5)	<u>37.5</u>	<u>13,305</u>
 SAVINGS FROM GENERAL PERMIT	 227.5	 \$36,020
 <u>Public Involvement</u>		
Training	B	\$15,876
Model for future use	B	11,000
		<u>\$26,876</u>
 TOTAL TANGIBLE BENEFITS	 <u>227.5</u>	 <u>\$62,896</u>

TANGIBLE BENEFITS NOT INCLUDED IN THE BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Litigations	68	\$ 7,565
-------------	----	----------

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

- \$ Good public relations
- \$ Increased public awareness of the regulatory process
- \$ Future public cooperation
- \$ Exposure to the public involvement process
- \$ Greater acceptance of general permits
- \$ Better allocation of resources to cover more significant problems
- \$ Development of a public constituency for the Corps of Engineers in its regulatory activities
- \$ Land use Acertainty@ for landowners
- \$ Better Corps understanding of the needs and wants of environmentalists concerned about wetlands protection

**Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution**

---

PROCESSING INDIVIDUAL PERMITS

One of the values of issuing a general permit is a reduction in the amount of time and cost associated with processing individual permits. Experience has shown a typical noncontroversial permit needs approximately 3-1/2 man-days to process. Assuming a five-year timeframe is adopted as the life of the general permit and five noncontroversial permits may be expected each year, the following savings may be accrued from noncontroversial permits:

	<u>Manpower, MD</u>		<u>Funding, \$</u>
Manpower needed to process an individual permit	3.5		\$ 281
Overhead (10%)		28	
Travel and miscellaneous (10%)			28
Reproduction and mailing			<u>100</u>
SAVINGS PER PERMIT	<u>3.5</u>		\$ 437
Number of applications/year	X <u>5</u>		X <u>5</u>
SAVINGS PER YEAR	17.5		\$ 2,185
Expected initial life prior to review	<u>5</u>		X <u>5</u>
TOTAL SAVINGS	87.5		\$10,925

In addition to the noncontroversial applications, some applicants with potentially controversial projects may reduce the scope of their projects to meet the conditions of the general permit. A minor controversial permit averages 9-1/2 man-days and at least two could be expected per year.

	<u>Manpower, MD</u>		<u>Funding, \$</u>
Manpower needed to process controversial permits	9.5		\$ 768
Overhead			77
Travel and miscellaneous		144	
Reproduction			<u>100</u>
SAVINGS PER YEAR	<u>9.5</u>		\$ 1,089
Number of applications/year	X <u>2</u>		X <u>2</u>
SAVINGS PER PERMIT	19.0		\$ 2,178
Expected initial life prior to review	<u>5</u>		X <u>5</u>
TOTAL SAVINGS	95.0		\$10,890

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

While the issuance of a general permit may not decrease the number of violations, it will give a set of criteria from which to determine restitution.

Three violations on Sanibel are presently under consideration, and each has required approximately one man-day at the district level and one man-day at area office level. With a set of existing criteria, this manpower requirement could have been reduced from 10 man-days to approximately 2-1/2 man-days, or 25 percent of the time needed.

It is reasonable to expect one future violation per year. This could save 1.5 man-days each year, or 7.5 man-days over the five-year period. The resultant savings would be as follows:

	<u>Manpower, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
Pursue violation without general permit	2.0	\$ 200
Pursue violation with general permit	<u>- .5</u>	<u>- 50</u>
SAVINGS IN MANPOWER	1.5	\$ 150
Overhead (10%)	15	
Travel and miscellaneous (10%)	<u>15</u>	
SAVINGS PER YEAR		\$ 180
Expected life of permit before review	<u>X 5</u>	<u>X 55</u>
TOTAL SAVINGS	7.5	\$ 900

PUBLIC HEARING

Considering the environmentally conscientious citizens of Sanibel Island, it would be conservative to project the Corps of Engineers conducting five public hearings on Sanibel Island over the next five years. One would certainly be requested on the issuance of the general permit. The issuance of a general permit would save the following:

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

	<u>Manpower, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
<u>Preparation</u>		
Research and preparation of the public hearing notebook	2.0	\$ 157
Administrative support and reproduction	.5	400
<u>Public Hearing</u>		
Personnel costs (Hearing Officer, Section Chief, Project Manager, PAO and Counsel--1 day each)	5.0	612
Overhead (10%)		117
Travel		750
Per Diem		225
Transcripts	—	<u>400</u>
SAVINGS PER MEETING	7.5	\$ 2,661
Projected meetings	<u>X 5</u>	<u>X 5</u>
TOTAL SAVINGS	37.5	\$13,305

TRAINING

During the initial three workshops, thirteen personnel were trained in public involvement techniques with the use of a one-day training session and three workshops. Of these, six attended the training session and all of the workshops; four attended the training session and two workshops; and three attended only the last workshop.

The training received by the six personnel attending the training session and the three workshops would compare very favorably to the OCE course, PIMPIP, Public Involvement, Permits. The cost of this course is

\$700 plus travel and five days per diem. Those individuals involved in only part of the process may be counted on a prorated basis.

Cost of course per person:

Course	\$ 700
Travel	122
Per Diem	196
Salary	<u>602</u>
TOTAL PER PERSON	\$ 1,620

	<u>Manpower, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
<u>Total Costs</u>		
6 - Total process (6 x 1,620)	30	\$ 9,720
4 - Total process less one workshop (4 x 4/5 x 1,620)	16	5,184
3 - One workshop (3 x 1/5 x 1,620)	<u>3</u>	<u>972</u>
TOTAL COSTS	49	\$15,876

MODEL FOR FUTURE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS

One objective of the Sanibel Public Involvement Program was to develop a model for future programs. Consultants were retained and, in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers personnel, a model has been developed which may be applied, with minor modifications, to new programs undertaken.

The cost of this model and the evaluation of its effectiveness is shown below:

	<u>Man-days, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
Model	20	\$ 5,000
Evaluation	12	4,000
Travel and per diem		<u>2,000</u>
TOTAL		11,000

LEGAL ACTIONS AGAINST VIOLATIONS

It is doubtful that the Corps of Engineers would resort to the litigation of a minor violation which could be rectified by the provisions of a general permit. For this reason, the cost of litigation has not been included in

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

the benefits of a general permit. The cost of a typical recent court case is shown in Figure 2, for information purposes only.

Figure 2

ANALYSIS OF COSTS  
BROWNING VIOLATION

JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT COST

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Manpower, MD</u>	<u>Funding, \$</u>
Chief, Office of Counsel	4	389
Office of Counsel	10	1,000
Witnesses:		
F. Arrendale	5	384
R. B. Parker	5	346
Others	5	384
Sect/Admin Support	6	180
Reg. Branch Support	3	164
SUBTOTAL		<u>\$2,847</u>
Effective Charge (Subtotal x 1.3)		3,872
<u>Direct Support</u>		
(Exhibits, aerial photos, etc.)		250
<u>Overhead Support</u>		
(Personnel costs x 10%)		<u>285</u>
	38	
TOTAL DISTRICT COST		\$4,407

OTHER FEDERAL COSTS

U.S. Judge	5	\$ 792
U.S. Attorney	10	1,385
U.S. Marshal (2)	10	654
Court Reporter	<u>5</u>	<u>327</u>
TOTAL OTHER FEDERAL COSTS	<u>30</u>	<u>\$ 3,158</u>
TOTAL FEDERAL COST	<u>68</u>	<u>\$ 7,565</u>

INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

In addition to the tangible benefits that were quantified, the following intangible benefits have been identified:

Excellent Public Relations

An evaluation of questionnaires has shown an emerging perception that the Corps of Engineers is concerned with the preservation of the environment and the concerns of the public. In addition, a number of proposed technical papers and articles will continue to project the Jacksonville District as a leader and innovator in the regulatory program.

Increased Public Awareness to the Regulatory Program

As citizens become more aware of the regulatory program, there should be less hesitancy to accept the program and fewer violations.

Future Public Cooperation

As the image of the Corps of Engineers as a big, uncaring machine diminishes, public cooperation should increase. This cooperation could potentially save thousands of dollars.

Exposure to the Public Involvement Process

A well conceived public involvement program will precipitate the three items discussed above. In addition, facilitators developed a one-on-one relationship with members of their group. This relationship shows Corps personnel to be human (many times this is not perceived by the public) and gives personal contacts which could be valuable in other regulatory matters.

Greater Acceptance of General Permits

There is a general feeling that the Corps of Engineers is shirking its responsibilities when it issues a general permit. As more general permits are developed and shown to work, this feeling should be mellowed.

Better Allocation of Resources to Cover More Significant Problems

The general permit will decrease the present workload. This will allow project managers to devote more time to solving the more complex and potentially more environmentally damaging permits.

Development of Public Constituency

The ability to gain general support (constituency) for the programs, policies and directions of the district should significantly facilitate the smooth implementation of future programs and projects and eliminate future

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

costly public relations programs. Although one public involvement program would not gain this constituency, it is a good start.

Land Use "Certainty" for Landowners

At a time when many regulations seem to conflict and are becoming more restrictive, the district is giving landowners some "certainty" to at least a minimal development of his land. This "certainty" should give landowners a more favorable outlook toward the Corps of Engineers.

Better Corps Understanding of the Needs of Environmentalists

Many permitting conflicts have been simply due to misreading the concerns of the public. The public involvement process allows close associations with various publics and gives a chance to hear different viewpoints and concerns.

COMPUTING THE COSTS

The expense of the initial public involvement program was somewhat higher than that which could reasonably be expected in future programs. This was expected. The Sanibel program was as much a training vehicle as an attempt to generate a general permit. In addition, there were some "start-up" costs, such as hiring consultants, that would not be seen in future programs.

The single greatest expense of the program was the contracting of a team of consultants to assist the Jacksonville district in designing an appropriate public involvement program, and assisting in the implementation and evaluation of the program. In addition, the team provided a sounding board for the feasibility of the district's ideas, acted as an unbiased audience for the concerns of the citizens of Sanibel, and added credibility to the Corps' motives and objectives. The consultants provided a very valuable service during this initial program and greatly contributed to the success of the program.

Future programs should make much less use of the consultants. It is expected that the consultants will be used only to a minor degree and for independent evaluations of each program. The future expense of the consultants should necessarily be limited.

The single biggest noncontract expense to the program was travel and per diem. The sum shown below is inflated, since a selected cadre of facilitators was taken on each workshop for training purposes, and this cadre was greater than was actually needed to conduct the workshops. Further expense was incurred since none of the government employees lived in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area.

It is expected that the travel and per diem cost will remain the major expense of future public involvement programs. The more extensive use of personnel living in the selected area will generate some savings, but these savings should be offset by the programs needing more facilitators and taking place in high-cost areas.



Prior to commencing the public involvement program on Sanibel, a separate cost account was established, and all subsequent costs of the program were charged to it. The costs have been grouped and summarized in Figure 3 and explained in detail below.

Regular labor

Regular labor includes the salaries of the program coordinator, the facilitators, and any government employee directly contributing time to the program. The hourly wage rate has been raised by a factor of 1.36 to account for the employee's annual leave and government paid benefits.

Indirect Labor

The salaries of personnel directly supporting the program, but not directly contributing to the program are included in this category. Secretarial assistance is an example of indirect labor. The hourly wage rate has been raised by a factor of 1.36 to account for the employee's annual leave and government paid benefits.

Travel and Per Diem

This item includes costs (except salaries) incurred in the travel related to the public involvement program.

Training Costs

The training costs were incurred during a one-day training session on May 2, 1979.

Reproduction Costs

This includes the expense of reproducing public notices and letters to the general public. It does not include individual reproduction which is included in the overhead category.

Miscellaneous Items

Miscellaneous includes all items not readily included in other categories--meeting incidentals, express mailing of reports, etc.

Overhead

Overhead is a 10.2 percent surcharge to all costs (except contract costs) intended to cover the supporting costs of the comptroller, personnel division, etc. This also includes mailing costs. This surcharge was lowered to 9.7 percent in mid-July.





DEVELOPING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT EVALUATIONS:  
A FEDERAL AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

by Jerry Delli Priscoli  
and James L. Creighton

After a recent public involvement program in Florida, a colleague remarked, "Sure public involvement worked--you gave away all regulatory authority to a nonrepresentative group of professional local activists." During the same program, one participant stated, "I want to publicly congratulate the Corps in getting out of the office and coming to the people."

A housewife from Missouri remarked, "Public hearings are unproductive farces--your small group workshops are a great improvement." Recently planners from Chicago, Baltimore and Seattle confided, "We didn't measure it, but intuitively we know our recent public involvement workshops were successful." Supervisors of those same planners asked, "How do I cut down the time public involvement adds to planning?" "Will public involvement build a needed project?" A well-meaning engineer from Alabama asked, "How can I do a competent plan? Public involvement takes time and money away from other appropriate technical analysis."

During a recent public involvement training program in California, a GS-5 field permit inspector asked, "Public involvement programs are great, but how do I tell an angry landowner he has built an 'illegal' dock for his boat on his own land?" In a Florida meeting a farmer shouted, "You can't let these nonlandowners determine what I do with my land--that's communism. This public involvement is a joke." A trainee in the Northeast stated, "I agree. These public involvement skills are critical. But don't talk to me, talk to my boss. He vetoes all my creative public involvement ideas." At an executive training session in Denver, one executive stated, "I am for public involvement but my staff has neither the proper attitude nor skills to run such programs."

As this smorgasbord of comments illustrates, public involvement programs swirl with disagreements about the purposes of public involvement, expectations of what it can accomplish, even differing definitions of who constitutes the public. Nor are these controversies new: participation and involvement themes are the subject of several thousand years of Western political philosophy. While there are an increasing number of people asking for effective methods of evaluating public involvement, those who are deeply concerned at this time with the need for evaluation rigor may actually obfuscate rather than simplify the problem. The political issues we are dealing with are as old as the first group which ever made a decision, but public involvement program evaluation is still in its infancy. With notable exceptions, comprehensive and systematic public involvement evaluations in natural and water

---

A longer version of this paper was delivered by Dr. Delli Priscoli at a conference on the evaluation of public involvement programs held in Washington, D.C., on February 4, 1980.

resource agencies are scarce.<sup>1</sup> From the perspective of individuals actively engaged with numerous public involvement programs in Federal agencies, it is our belief that the problem now is not so much rigor in methodology, as clarity as to the conflicting expectations of public involvement and how those expectations shape what is possible in evaluation. For this reason, we have focused this paper on clarifying many of the problems which surround evaluation of public involvement, rather than propose methodological solutions.

### THE EVALUATIVE FRAMEWORK

One fundamental consideration in the evaluation of public involvement programs is the impact of the evaluation process on the public involvement program itself. Traditional paradigms of evaluation assume that the evaluator is a "stand-off" objective observer. In fact the term "rigor" often simply stands for the degree to which subjectivity is removed from the evaluation process.

Yet, all practitioners know--and this has been the source of some conflict between public involvement practitioners and evaluators--that subjecting public involvement programs to evaluation begins to change the program. People are aware of being "measured." The consequences of actions are interpreted not just for their utility in the immediate situation, but how they affect the evaluation. Often the actual modes of citizen response are modified to use those which lend themselves to measurement, rather than "softer" more subjective modes which may have as much or more political utility. The fear of many practitioners is that the evaluation will drive the process, rather than measure it. The evaluator is clearly part of, interacts with, and changes the very thing that is being measured.

There is a tendency to assume that as public involvement moves out of its infancy and begins to mature it will lend itself to more rigor. This assumes that it is public involvement practice which needs to change rather than the evaluative procedures. Yet, the measurement of physical properties based on a conception of a mechanistic separation of observer and phenomena has already been exploded in modern physics<sup>2</sup>, and has long been recognized in social science literature. Many of the problems of public involvement evaluation may be resolved not by changes in public involvement, but by a maturation of the premises underlying evaluation to include such concepts as "intersubjective transfer of knowledge" and "mutual social learning."<sup>3</sup> The paradigm of "objective evaluation" will itself have to change before a number of the problems of evaluating public involvement can be resolved.

This is particularly true to the extent that evaluators also assume that "cost effectiveness" and "decision-making efficiency" are the primary values which need to be measured. Cost effectiveness is often achieved simply by externalizing--not counting--many of the costs of a decision-making process. If decisions are made, for example, very quickly but in a way which undermines the long-term legitimacy of the decision-making process, the process is usually judged to be cost effective because it fails to count the potentially

---

<sup>1</sup>For some examples, Ragan (Nov 75); Mazmanian (79); Ortolano (76); GAO (74); U.S. Army Corps (68); Warner (71); Borton (70).

<sup>2</sup>For more discussion on this point, note Capra (1977); Zukav (1979).

<sup>3</sup>For more discussion of these concepts, note: Friedmann (1973); Brecht (1967); vickers (1970).

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

disastrous costs in the future from a lack of credibility for the decision-making process itself. Many of the costs of public involvement today are the externalized costs of "efficient" decisions made in the late forties, fifties, and early sixties.

Another "externalization" of costs often associated with measuring decision-making costs is the costs during implementation when a decision has been made but resolution has not been achieved. It is entirely possible to make a quick--apparently economical--decision, only to experience tremendously increased costs of litigation, construction delays, etc., resulting from continued opposition to the project. It is one of the basic tenets of public involvement that when people participate in a decision, they thereby establish emotional "ownership" for the outcome and assist toward implementation. A study by the General Accounting Office has concluded that while public involvement cannot guarantee resolution, on balance increased public involvement in public works decision making will actually reduce costs which presently result from continued opposition after decisions have been made.<sup>4</sup> Dysart<sup>5</sup> has made a similar argument, pointing out that the manager's job is to manage probabilities. While there is no guarantee of the effectiveness of public involvement being effective in a specific situation, a manager with a good eye for probabilities will still commit to public involvement efforts. This has important consequences for evaluation: most evaluation programs focus on the public involvement during the period of decision making. Evaluation studies would have to last 10-15 years to fully consider the effect of public involvement on implementation costs--that's longer than most agencies have been providing formal public involvement programs.

One area in which the maturity of public involvement as an established body of knowledge and the maturity of evaluation procedures clearly interact is in the area of evaluating specific techniques. Many initial evaluations of public involvement found few positive results because the agencies running the public involvement programs assumed that they consisted solely of public hearings. As knowledge about public involvement has increased, the use of public hearings has generally been discredited except for specialized situations.<sup>6</sup> Rather than evaluations proving that public involvement didn't work, the evaluations simply showed that the inappropriate use of a specific public involvement technique didn't work. Only now, as we are beginning to get an understanding of the appropriate use of public involvement techniques, can we begin to put forward "best case" public involvement examples which will allow some evaluation of public involvement as a field.

EVALUATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AS AN END

---

<sup>4</sup>GAO (1974).

<sup>5</sup>See Dysart (1977).

<sup>6</sup>For example, note: Hampe (1976); GAO (1974); Davis (1973).

Most efforts to evaluate public involvement approach it with a desire to measure its efficiency or cost-effectiveness. In other words, public involvement is approached as a means, not an end. This is natural, since if you start from the premise that public involvement is an end in itself, rather than just instrumental to some larger public policy, then it becomes difficult to define the amount of public involvement which is appropriate because it is a question of values rather than scientific investigation. The idea that public involvement is an all-inclusive self-evident end is a democratic faith that has found expression from Pericles to J.S. Mill.<sup>7</sup> The belief that a democratic decision is "better" whether or not it is more cost effective or efficiently made is essential to the survival of democracy. An evaluation that fails to come to grips with the fact that public involvement is at least in part an act of faith in the values of democracy, will do an injustice to our democratic ideology.

This leaves us still having to answer the question of the governmental manager who must decide how much public involvement is appropriate. This problem is not without solution, for it is still possible to articulate criteria for those premises of democracy which justify the belief in public involvement as an end. We have found at least the following six useful:<sup>8</sup>

- a) To inform the public;
- b) To enhance the accountability of government decisions through increased opportunity for citizen participation;
- c) To build consensus by resolving conflict;
- d) To enhance the legitimacy of government decision-making processes;
- e) To build trust between client citizens and government producers of services; and
- f) To produce better decisions.

Obviously these objectives are broad and difficult to evaluate. In any program, all, some, none or a few might be achieved. Clearly, the objectives are not discrete. In some programs they may be congruent; in others, conflicting. Each also poses problems for the evaluator, as discussed below.

Inform the Public: The objective of informing the public is one with which most evaluators are comfortable, because they believe they know how to do it. But it is not as easy as it looks. One of

---

<sup>7</sup>For a full discussion of this train of thought, note Pateman (1970); also Rosenbaum, in Langton (1978).

<sup>8</sup>See Hanchey (1975). For an operational definition of these goals, note Creighton in IWR (1979), SYNERGY (1975), U.S. Corps (1978a, 1978b).

the first questions is whether it is essential that the entire public be informed, or just those parts of the public who are most likely to be concerned with the decision, and therefore likely to participate.

Even when it is possible to measure how informed the public has become as a result of a public involvement effort, there remains the question of how essential or desirable is it that the public be informed. From an instrumental point of view it is possible to define the need for information in terms of the amount of information needed to participate effectively.<sup>9</sup> Advocates of public involvement within agencies also frequently argue that if the public(s) understand why things work the way they do, and how decisions are made, they are more likely to be supportive of agency policies. This suggests an obviously simplistic equation that "more information equals more support." A somewhat more sophisticated position recognizes that even when well informed the public may still not support agency actions, but will disagree from an informed base which lends itself to conflict resolution.<sup>10</sup>

However the question of "how much" the public should be informed returns to the whole issue of democratic values. It is a fundamental axiom that an informed public is an essential of a democratic society. As Thomas Jefferson stated:

*I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves. And if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion.*<sup>11</sup>

This end is independent of the usefulness of that information to participate in any single decision, create support for agency actions, or even lead to conflict resolution on that issue. Somehow the evaluator has to come to grips with the fact that evaluating the worth of informing the public in the context of any one decision-making process does not fully describe the potential value of public involvement.

Accountability: The principle of accountability derives from the democratic maxim of "the consent of the governed." It is the result of a belief that those affected by decisions should have influence on such decisions. In the past, voting has been the primary mechanism in our society for providing accountability. However, increasingly important decisions are made within administrative agencies,

---

<sup>9</sup>Note Bultena (1978) discussion on how information can act as a prerequisite for participation.

<sup>10</sup>Creighton in IWR (1978b). Note also Deutsch (1973) on information and conflict resolution.

<sup>11</sup>Letter to William Charles Jarvis, Sept 28, 1820.



not subject to either confirmation or recall by the vote. How can such bureaucratic decision making be made accountable?

We view public involvement as the mechanism that provides this accountability by the bureaucracy. But this raises many questions: Is the accountability to the entire public, or to those publics most seriously impacted by the decision? At what level of public controversy does public involvement conflict with our system of elected representation? How can agencies resolve conflicts between laws and regulations which limit their actions, and the sometimes contradictory desires of the public to which they are supposed to be accountable?

The evaluator must deal with many of these issues before attempting to measure whether or not accountability has been provided by a specific public involvement program.

Consensus-Building/Conflict Resolution: The degree to which public involvement can build a consensus or lead to conflict resolution, is both a long-term and short-term concern. There is first of all a long-term concern that processes be available in our society by which conflicts be resolved, or else the society can tear itself apart. A concern for "how" decisions are made can't just deal with the immediate impact on one decision, but the cumulative impact of making a number of decisions that way. A single public involvement program might not produce consensus, yet contribute to a long-term benefit if it provides a context for eventual resolution of the issue. The environmental protection vs. economic development dichotomy, for example, is unlikely to be resolved right now on any one issue. But if public involvement establishes a process which keeps these interests talking to each other, some long-term resolution may occur. A quicker cheaper process might produce as much immediate resolution, but set in motion no longer-term process leading to eventual resolution.

Even in the short run measuring conflict resolution is not simple. It just isn't true in conflict resolution that you either totally resolve the conflict, or fail. Agreeing on areas of disagreement can be an important prelude to future conflict resolution.<sup>12</sup> The first stage in conflict resolution is often a venting of feelings that have built up over time--so the first impact of public involvement may appear to increase conflict rather than decrease it.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the government manager's commitment to public involvement is often a commitment to managing probabilities. The real evaluation question is not whether a single public involvement program reduced conflict, but whether the probability is higher over the long run that public involvement is more likely to resolve conflicts.

Legitimacy of Government Decision Making: Even when a particular public involvement program does not lead to conflict resolution it may contribute to the legitimacy of governmental decision making. As one of us has stated elsewhere:

---

<sup>12</sup>To follow up on this and other such hypotheses, See Deutsch (1973).

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

*In every closely fought election, nearly half the voters "lose"--their candidate isn't elected--yet the outcome of the election is accepted because there is consensus that the decision making process has been fair and legitimate. In effect, the decision making procedure or process--the election--makes the outcome legitimate even if someone didn't like the outcome.*

*One of the major functions of public involvement is to create sufficient visibility to the decision-making process so that decisions which result from it are perceived as fair and legitimate. While some of the people most directly impacted by a decision may not be impressed by the equity of a decision, their ability to undermine the credibility of the decisions rests on their ability to convince the larger public that the decision was unfairly made. Effective public involvement can establish your credibility with the larger public that the claims of special interests fall on deaf ears.<sup>13</sup>*

The problem the concept of legitimacy poses for the evaluator is that it shifts the emphasis from the substantive content of the decision to the process and relationship among participants. Evaluating process and relationship are difficult precisely because they deal with the subjective and emotional--the area most evaluators strive to avoid.

An increasing number of policy and procedural standards for public involvement emphasize the need for visibility and traceability of decisions. These are, however, the means to an end state which is the credibility of the decision making process itself. Measuring visibility and traceability must be done within the context of their ultimate contribution to legitimacy.

Building Trust: The need for building trust is closely tied, even overlaps, with both the legitimacy and conflict resolution objectives. A part of legitimacy is the trust that citizens have in the governmental agencies making decisions and providing services. Trust is also an essential pre-condition for conflict resolution. Without some level of trust, resolution on content becomes virtually impossible.<sup>14</sup>

Again the evaluator is faced with evaluating a process or relationship issue, rather than content. Trust is an emotional issue, inherently subjective, and therefore difficult to measure.

Producing Better Decisions: The concept of "better" decisions is inherently values-laden. In the context of public involvement as an end, a decision is "better" if it increases accountability, contributes to conflict resolution, contributes to the legitimacy of governmental decision making, and builds trust. But at the level of content, a "better" decision is always defined by an individual's personal values. Without a values context to define desirability, there is no basis for evaluating the content of a decision.

One reason the question of "better" decisions is particularly difficult is that many people who have supported public involvement have done so because of an additional commitment to some substantive

---

<sup>13</sup>Creighton in IWR (1978b).

<sup>14</sup>See Deutsch (1973).

outcome they hope to accomplish through public involvement. In many people's minds, for example, public involvement will lead to increased environmental quality. It is entirely possible, of course, that increased public involvement could lead to decisions that are more developmentally oriented. The environmental belief that "the public" is with them may be just a fond wish. An evaluator of a decision-making process will have to evaluate the legitimacy of the process without reference to whether or not the content of the decision was the expected outcome, or coincides with personal values as to what constitutes "better."

### EVALUATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AS A MEANS

Discussions of public involvement as an end are important to sensitize people to the fundamental democratic issues which underlie public involvement. In the trenches of line budgeting, program evaluation and upward mobility debate focuses on public involvement as a means--an instrument to some other public policy or professional ends. Instrumental tools and techniques form the bulk of public involvement training programs, budget discussion and regulations.

Even in the realm of the instrumental utility of public involvement programs, we believe there are questions of context that evaluators must deal with before their findings have meaning. Success in public involvement, like beauty, often lies in the eyes of the beholder. Without understanding the context or frame of reference, which shapes perceptions, it is difficult to understand the bases from which different actors evaluate public involvement. The three context questions which we believe are central are: 1) the mission of the agency; 2) the type of governmental decision being made; and, 3) the rewards derived from public involvement by both participants and the responsible public managers.

### THE AGENCY'S MISSION

Most agencies view public involvement within the context of the agency's mission. If they view the agency's mission as "the development of water projects," public involvement will be seen as having value only to the extent that it contributes to water projects. It is for this reason that agencies are susceptible to the argument that an informed public is likely to support agency programs, but are not too impressed by arguments about public involvement's role in maintaining a democratic society.

The democratic values which underlie public involvement indicate that a public involvement program could be a huge success if it simply led to a high level of consensus that no project was needed. While an agency might tolerate this occasionally, if an agency sees its mission as "building projects," public involvement's failure to produce projects frequently would result in a lack of agency enthusiasm for public involvement. No matter what is said in public involvement meetings, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will not suddenly be inspired to shift mitigation money from fish to people. The Corps will not suddenly beat their chests and bury plowshares to plant roses. Nor would EPA announce pollution as productive. Agency missions embody values--packages of views on how the world out to be. Since agencies exist in a public world, that package of "oughts" legitimately services some segment of society's values. It is unreasonable to expect agencies to forego the perspective of their mission in evaluating public involvement. However, it should also be noted that public involvement can affect how the agency views and carries out its mission. Involvement can help agencies expand the range of alternatives considered, may lead to new definitions of problems, may make

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

visible new and legitimate constituencies for the agencies' services. In short, public involvement can be a catalyst to help align agency capabilities to changing social values.<sup>15</sup>

From the agency's perspective the evaluator is going to be asked to evaluate the instrumental questions: (a) how much did the public involvement contribute to completion of the agency's mission as the agency traditionally sees it, or, as it might have changed during the public involvement process; b) how much did the public involvement process contribute to reduction and management of interagency conflicts; c) how much does the public involvement process enhance or detract from the capacity to make decisions on implementable alternatives. These are important and worthwhile questions, but as pointed out in the discussion of public involvement as an end, they are not the only questions. When the evaluator accepts the agency's questions as the only legitimate questions, they accept a definition of public involvement which is far more limited than the total range of democratic values upon which public involvement is based.

### **THE TYPE OF DECISION BEING MADE**

Some agencies make planning decisions, others make implementation decisions, still others make operating or even regulatory decisions. In some cases, these different types of decisions are distributed among several agencies. In other cases, one agency may make all four kinds of decisions.. There is often overlap in the kinds of decisions being made by several agencies, even in the same substantive area--such as environmental quality.

Appreciating this difference in the kind of decision being made is extremely important, for our experience shows that public involvement program design will vary with the type of decision the agency is making. Findings an evaluator may make in the context of one kind of decision may not be applicable with another kind of decision.

Some of the major differences between these kinds of decisions, and the impact these differences have on public involvement are discussed below:

**TIME FRAME:** Planning decisions often take from 2 to 5 years, with the probability of implementation 15-20 years in the future. Implementation, operation and regulatory decisions usually take just a few weeks or months, with the decision going into effect almost immediately. This time frame difference probably makes planning decisions more difficult. It is often difficult to interest the public in actions that are 15-20 years in the future. During that time period, new publics may emerge which challenge the original decision, or new agencies may be formed which assume responsibility for implementation. Implementation, operation and regulatory decisions have the advantage of being in the immediate time frame. Participation now can lean to a result now. On the other hand, the impact of the benefits and costs created by the decision is also experience now, so that the level of controversy may be far higher.

---

<sup>15</sup>Note Mazmanian (1979).

THE KIND OF SOLUTION SOUGHT: In planning, the search is for the "best" solution. In regulatory decisions, the search is for the appropriate "balance" of interests. These two images of the kind of solution needed represent very different conceptions of what constitutes the public interest. Most planners are trained to believe that there is an abstractly definable public interest, and their job is to discover that despite the cries and inducements of the special interests. This often leads planners to be suspect of the public, and assume that they (the planners) best personify the public interest. The concept of public interest inherent in regulatory decisions is one of finding the appropriate "balance" between the interests. This role should lend itself more readily to public involvement, because it implies seeking public response and facilitating consensus where possible. There is not an abstract definition of public interest so much as a reasonable balancing of interests at the present time.

THE RANGE OF CHOICES AVAILABLE: In planning there is often a great range of possible alternatives, which allow the planner to consider a number of different values positions. In implementation and operations decisions, the range of options available is often very limited. In water resources development, implementation is the time when ground is broken, real estate acquired, relocation begins, etc. Since the impact is direct and visible, public(s) now surface which did not participate during the planning stage. Perhaps no public involvement program was available 15 years ago. Conditions may have changed. The composition of the community may have changed. Community values may have changed. People may not have understood the implications of the earlier planning decision. Similar problems occur with operational decisions, where it becomes clear who will benefit and who will receive a cost. The problem, though, is that the range of choices available to the decision maker at this point in time are very limited. When construction contracts are being let, public involvement can deal with reducing construction impacts on the local community, but it cannot deal effectively with whether or not the project can be built. If a dam has been constructed to provide flood protection, there is also limited flexibility in operating that dam to protect certain kinds of recreational opportunities. It has to be recognized that if the stakes are too high, the alternatives too limited, or antagonisms too engrained, public involvement is unlikely to resolve the problem.<sup>16</sup> An evaluator who considers public involvement a failure because it cannot cope with a situation like this, does a grave disservice. Even voting, the most universally accepted method of citizen participation, was incapable of resolving the issue of slavery in America. Yet we continue to accept the general validity of voting as a method of conflict resolution.

Over the past decade, public involvement in planning has gained general acceptance within Federal agencies. It is our projection that over the next decade increasing efforts will be made to extend public involvement to implementation, operations and regulatory decisions.<sup>17</sup> Because of the time frame and role perception associated with this kind of decision, public involvement may actually be easier for most of these decisions. It is easier to motivate a decision that is being made in present time, with real consequences. The limitation on the success of public involvement in this area will be whether the range of available options will be large enough to be responsive to the range of public values and concerns.

---

<sup>16</sup>Creighton in IWR (1978b).

<sup>17</sup>See Lefkoff (pg. 367) for a successful example.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

For the evaluator a growth in these areas will represent a challenge, for the evaluation methods used so far primarily in planning will have to be adapted to different contexts and different challenges.

THE REWARDS OF PARTICIPATION

Just as the mission of the agency provides a context within which the agency evaluates public involvement, individuals--both participants and agency managers of public involvement programs--evaluate public involvement in terms of the rewards it offers for them.

Citizens may appreciate the new found openness of an agency, the efforts to provide full and complete information, the visibility of the decision making process; but it is clear that many citizens will not consider public involvement to be effective unless they "win" on the substantive issue. Efforts to evaluate public involvement programs based on public perceptions of the program must take into account that a program might be "perfect" from a process standpoint, but still fail to impress citizens who did not accept the outcome of the process.

An appreciation of changes in process are far more likely to be appreciated by groups that participate in a number of issues, and can see the value of building openness and trust over a number of decisions, not just one. But the average citizen may be participating only on this one decision, because it affects him/her directly, and is less likely to be impressed by the process, and more concerned with the outcome. Evaluation must deal with the fact that an appreciation of process issues usually comes out of an overall perspective which may be shared by well organized groups, but is unlikely to be shared by the average citizen.

Another factor that certainly influences the effectiveness of public involvement is whether or not groups can win more by participating, or can win more by going outside the public involvement process to elected officials, the courts, etc. No public involvement program--no matter how well designed--can lead to an efficient and effective decision if the participants believe there are more rewards in "doing an end run" around the public involvement program to another political or judicial forum. The net effect of this may be positive, if it engages elected officials in issues they previously ignored. This remains an important problem in evaluation: Has the evaluation process been designed so that the public involvement is a success only if the problem is solved within the context of the public involvement program, or does the evaluation take into account the total political context? On the one hand, it is impossible for a public involvement program to succeed because of the external political influences, and on the other, may an apparently unsuccessful public involvement effort be in fact a success because it engaged a larger political audience? Effective evaluation must take these contextual issues into account.

Just as participants make appraisals of the effectiveness of public involvement programs based on the payoffs of these programs to them, managers of public involvement programs also appraise public involvement within the context of the agency's reward system. First, there is the question of where in the organization an individual is located, and at what point they are in career progression. Like most organizational changes, public involvement is most likely to be favored by those who are still moving up in the organization, have

values somewhat different from the mainstream of the organization, or are members of functional units which are not part of the mainstream of the agency.<sup>18</sup>

This observation based on "rational self-interest" has to be tempered, however, by Beaty's research finding that lower-grade civil servants have lower enthusiasm for public involvement.<sup>19</sup> It is likely that this difference reflects the different functions performed at different levels of the organization. At lower levels individuals are more likely to be involved with the smooth and efficient processing of information. At higher levels individuals become more concerned with how decisions get made, conflicts resolved, etc. The prototype of the public involvement supporter would probably be the upwardly mobile middle or lower/upper manager of a function that is rapidly changing. The prototype of an individual likely to consider public involvement to be ineffective is an individual who has risen to his highest probable position in the agency and is in a functional area that has been stable for some time and therefore, concerned primarily with issues of economy and efficiency.

Again, our reason in making this contrast is to point out to the evaluator that how instrumental a particular activity is perceived to be is a function of personal context. The very qualities which make public involvement attractive to one part of the organization make it appear a waste of time and effort to another.

#### CONCLUSION

This article has proposed more problems for the public involvement evaluator than solutions. This is in response, in part, to cries for rigor in evaluation that have not simultaneously indicated much understanding of the problem. We have concentrated primarily on defining the problem, so that any rigor is applied to coping with its full complexity. The general thrust of our observations is that evaluation is never free from values and context. The premise that evaluation is objective, non-involved, is neither appropriate nor accurate. Evaluation methodologies must be developed which recognize that the process of evaluation itself impacts on the public involvement process. Methodologies must also be developed which deal with issues of process and relationship, not just the content of the decision. Evaluation of public involvement primarily in terms of economy and efficiency fails to deal with many of the end values of public involvement in a democratic society. Finally, even when measuring instrumental values of public involvement, context can have such a substantial impact that the evaluator must utilize methodologies that ensure that it is the public involvement that is being measured, not just the context.

---

<sup>18</sup>For examples of how internal hierarchy can link to public involvement see: Ortolano (1976); Wolff (1971); Beaty (1977); Fredrich (1975); Ragan (1975).

<sup>19</sup>Beaty (1977). Beaty also found that peer attitude toward public involvement was critical.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beaty, L. F., Attitudes of Federal Natural Resource Decision Makers Toward Citizen Participation, M. A. thesis, Graduate School of Public Administration: University of New Mexico, May 1977.
- Borton, T. E., et al., The Susquehanna Communications Participation Study, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, IWR, Fort Belvoir, #706, Dec 1970.
- Brecht, A., Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth Century Political Thought, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1967.
- Bultena, G. L., Rogers, D. L., Conner, K. A., "Toward Explaining Citizen's Knowledge about a Reservoir Project." Journal of Environmental Education, Vol. 9., No. 2, Winter 1978, p 24-35.
- Capra, F., TAO of Physics, Bantam Book, Boulder, 1977.
- Creighton, James L., "Use of Values: Public Participation in the Planning Process" in Executive Seminar: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning Workbook, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, Washington, D.C., Mar 1978.
- Creighton, James L., "Why Conduct Public Involvement Programs for Regulatory Functions" in Public Involvement in Corps Regulatory Programs: Training Manual by Creighton, J. L., Delli Priscoli, J., Ballentine, T., Institute for Water Resources, Washington, D.C., 1978.
- Creighton, James L., SYNERGY Citizen Participation/Public Involvement Skills Workbook, SYNERGY, La Mesa, California, 1975.
- Davis, A. C., Public Participation in Water Pollution Control Policy and Decision Making. Water Resources Research Institute, University of North Carolina, No. 88, Dec. 1973.
- Deutsch, Morton, The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1973.
- Dysart, B. C., et al., Attitudes, Characteristics and Education of Water Resources Planners and Managers Relative to Effective Public Participation. Water Resources Research Institute, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, Jun 1977.
- Fredrich, A. J., "Public Participation - Poison, Placebo, or Panacea?" Paper presented at American Society of Civil Engineers Specialty Conference "A Better Life through Water Resources Planning and Management." Fort Collins, Colorado, Jul 1975.
- Friedmann, J., Retracking America: A Theory of Transactive Planning, Anchor Books, New York, 1973.



- General Accounting Office, Public Involvement in Planning Public Works Projects Should Be Increased, Comptroller General of the United States, Dec 1974.
- Hanchey, J. R., Public Involvement in the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA, Oct 1975.
- Hampe, G. D., An Evaluation of Public Hearings on Water Development Projects in Mississippi, Water Resources Research Institute, Mississippi State University, Jul 1976.
- Langton, Stuart, (Editor) Citizen Participation in America, Lexington Books, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1978.
- Mazmanian, D. A., and Nienaber, J., Can Organizations Change Environmental Protection; Citizen Participation and the Corps of Engineers, the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1979.
- Ortolano, L. and Wagner, T. P., Testing an Iterative Open Process for Water Resources Planning, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Dec 1976.
- Pateman, C., Participation and Democratic Theory, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1970.
- Ragan, James F., Jr., Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: An Evaluation of the Program of 15 Corps of Engineers Districts, Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, VA., 75-6, Nov 1975.
- U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Communications with and Service to the Public, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Technical Liaison Office, 1967-1968.
- Vickers, G., Freedom in a Rocking Boat; Changing Values in an Unstable Society, Allen Lane, London, England, 1970.
- Warner, K. P., Public Participation in Water Resources Planning, National Water Commission, Arlington, Virginia, Jul 1971.
- Wolff, R. D., Involving the Public and the Hierarchy in Corps of Engineers' Survey Investigations, Stanford University, Palo Alto, Nov 1971.
- Zukav, G., Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1979.

Introduction to Section IX:

FUTURE ISSUES IN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This has been a decade during which important contributions have been made to the field of public involvement. But public involvement remains a field undergoing rapid change. This section identifies several current trends that may presage important developments in the field for the future.

As discussed earlier, simply hearing and acknowledging public comment does not necessarily lead to resolution of conflict. One of the problems facing the next decade is to create processes that actively bring conflicting groups together in consensus decision making. In his article, Creighton describes some of the skills and approaches that might be taken to encourage conflict resolution.

In a second paper, Creighton argues that legal requirements that the Corps assess the cumulative impact of permits granted by the Corps puts the Corps squarely in the futures business. Without some image of the future it becomes impossible to assess the effects that a series of actions may have. Creighton describes a process for including the public in projecting this image of the future.

Finally, the last decade has brought not only increased requirements for public involvement, but also increased assessment of social, economic-demographic, and environmental effects of proposed actions. Creighton, James Chalmers, and Kristi Branch argue that public involvement, social assessment, economic-demographic assessment, and the environmental assessment are all part of the same process of identifying the benefits and costs of an action. Furthermore, they argue, public involvement provides the framework by which the assessment and planning processes can be combined. The authors believe that this kind of integration may be one of the important trends of the next decade.

ACTING AS A CONFLICT CONCILIATOR

by James L. Creighton

Throughout this training program we have stressed the potential for creating processes for resolving conflict surrounding permits. Implicit in these processes is a shift in the agency's role from a "judicial" role--judging the merits of the application against legal standards--to a role as a conflict conciliator--acting as a "third party" to produce resolution between conflicting publics. This paper explores just what conflict is, and how you might go about acting as a conciliator to bring about resolution.

THE VALUE OF CONFLICT:

Political scientists who theorize about conflict believe it serves a necessary, useful and positive function in society. They see it as a necessary "escape valve" for genuine conflicts of interest within the society. They see it as a process which can lead to evolutionary change in society, as compared to revolutionary change. They believe that conflict helps groups accurately perceive their interests, and assists in establishing group identity. In fact, they believe that both individuals and groups need a certain amount of conflict to assist in forming a clear sense of identity. Just as teenagers seem to need to contest their parents' ideas as a part of becoming mature adults, groups seem to need to joust with other groups in the process of becoming mature, viable entities. These theorists do acknowledge, however, that while conflict plays important functions in society, it can become so exaggerated that it becomes dysfunctional and no longer serves useful purposes. The institutions of society, particularly the actions of decision makers, can play an important role in determining whether or not conflict becomes dysfunctional.

AGENCY ATTITUDES TOWARD CONFLICT

While conflict plays important social functions, from the perspective of an agency or decision maker conflict is all too often seen as an impediment to progress. Conflict can also stimulate personal fears of inadequacy. It is easy to imagine a conflict situation becoming dysfunctional, and therefore beyond personal control. Since we all like to feel fully competent, having an appropriate level of control over events in our lives, conflict becomes a threat to our adequacy.

The difficulty then is that we tend to avoid conflict situations, or if they have to be dealt with, attempt to "keep the lid on." Unfortunately both avoidance and "keeping the lid on" are behaviors that tend to encourage dysfunctional conflict. Neither behavior leads to resolution, so there is added urgency for the conflicting parties to press their claims. Or the conflict goes "underground," then erupts with a vengeance. It is an observable phenomenon that conflicts that are not solved within the regulatory process will be dealt with by the courts and/or by the political process. Both of these latter processes are then likely to be adversarial, with

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Public Involvement In Regulatory Programs, U. S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 1979.

less potential for use of the range of creative solutions available during the regulatory process. While avoiding the risks of revealing momentary inadequacies in contributing to resolution, the long run effects of avoiding conflict will be to call into question the very existence of the agency--if the agency isn't contributing to decisions that stay made, of what use is the agency? The answer, then, lies not in avoiding conflicts, but in acquiring the skills necessary to make a significant contribution to conflict resolution.

#### THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONFLICT

To be able to cope with a conflict we must first understand that there are different kinds of conflict, and the behavior which may contribute to resolution of one kind may exacerbate another. Each kind of stress has a different basis. These include:

Cognitive Conflict: This is conflict which occurs when people have a different understanding or judgment as to the facts of a case. Will a particular action increase water rates? Will an action provide adequate flood control, etc.? When conflict is exclusively cognitive conflict, then it is possible to resolve the conflict if a process can be agreed upon to determine "the facts." Arguments over facts are often advanced, however, as part of values or interest conflict, so it is not always easy to distinguish the cognitive elements of a conflict from values or interest.

Values Conflict: This is conflict over goals, whether or not an action (or outcome) is desirable/undesirable or should/should not occur. Obviously people with different values have a fundamentally different perspective from which they evaluate a proposed action. Values conflicts are also difficult to distinguish from cognitive or interest conflicts. People tend to accept those facts that support their values position; they also tend to adopt values consistent with their interest. This can quickly lead to a "chicken or the egg" argument: Do facts cause people to tend to certain values positions? Do they then take on roles (which define their interest) based on their values? Or does their self-interest dictate their values, which in turn filter the facts to which they pay attention? At a minimum, they are intertwined.

Interest Conflict: Since the costs and benefits resulting from an action are rarely distributed equally, some people will have a greater interest in an action than others. Some may have an interest in assuring it does not occur. As a result, it is possible to have agreement on facts, and on values, and still have conflict based on interest. A flood control project that will lead to major redevelopment of the central business district may be ardently supported by downtown businessmen and opposed by suburban interests. They may agree on the effects of the project, they may even all agree that economic development is a desirable goal, but since the downtown businessmen may be heavily favored by the action there may still be conflict between the downtowners and the suburbanites.

Relationship Conflict: There are several psychologically oriented bases for conflict as well. Every time people communicate they communicate both content (information, facts) and relationship (how much someone is valued, accepted, etc.). Decision making processes can also communicate

relationship--decision making processes may, for example, favor those groups which are well enough financed and organized to present scientific supporting data over those who primarily argue from a values base. The result is that there are a number of emotional motivations that lead to conflict on grounds other than disagreement on facts or values, or interest differences. One group may feel insulted or oppressed by another. A group or individuals may feel that the decision-making process gives an advantage to one group or another. Individuals or groups may react to others based on emotional symbols such as hairstyle, dress or language. A group or individual may feel resentful that they were not consulted.

Of course, it is no secret that personality factors enter into conflict. Psychologists have observed that there are individuals who have a strong need to express aggressiveness, almost independent of the target of the aggression. It is almost impossible to resolve a conflict with such an individual, since the basis of opposition does not lie in current interest or behavior and cannot be "satisfied" by compromise. Even groups that usually operate based on a hard assessment of self-interest, such as labor and management, may take actions at odds with their apparent self-interest if they feel insulted or tricked by their opponent. Dysfunctional conflict is often made inevitable by these emotional reactions.

Economists tend to stress the importance of the first three bases for conflict (cognitive values, or interest differences), calling emotional motivations "nonrealistic." Psychologists, on the other hand, stress the importance of emotional factors--many of them unconscious--in how people define their self-interest and interact with other groups and individuals. If an individual emotionally defines himself as a "revolutionary," he will have extreme difficulty accepting compromise even if his apparent self-interest would dictate it. Many people react to government agencies based on reactions to authority learned from youthful experiences.

The "truth" about conflict, it would seem, is that it is characterized by "all of the above." There are elements to most conflicts of both rational and emotional factors, of both conscious and unconscious factors. The skilled conciliator must be sensitive to the different motivations, and utilize strategies appropriate to them.

It should be noted that the environmental conflict of the past decade has a basis in all four sources of conflict. There is a fundamental values difference between environmental groups and pro-development groups. That there is an interest basis can also be observed by the rather consistent minority group and labor union support for projects opposed by environmental groups. Not only do environmental groups not agree on the "facts" of most environmental issues, there is often fundamental disagreement on who constitutes a credible source. Finally there are differences in dress, language, and customs which form symbolic barriers, as well as generational differences and disagreements about attitudes toward authority. The result is that there is a full range of potential bases for conflict.

#### ZERO-SUM/POSITIVE-SUM CONFLICTS

Another important dimension of a conflict is whether or not both people can gain by a proposed action, or if it is inevitable that whatever one group gains is at the expense of the other group. A body of theory, called "Game Theory," has been developed to assist in this kind of analysis and is widely used in analyzing possible tactical behavior of foreign countries given the occurrence of an event, e. g., how the Russians will react to a decision by the U.S. to develop a new strategic weapon. The part of game theory that is useful for our

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

purposes are the concepts of zero-sum games and positive-sum games. A zero-sum game is a conflict in which for one side to win, the other side must lose an equivalent amount. Thus, if one side wins 1 unit (man, land, power, status, etc.) then the other side will lose 1 unit, and the total is zero:

$$\begin{array}{r} +1 \\ -1 \\ \hline 0 \end{array}$$

A positive-sum game is a game in which both parties can win. If you want flood control, and I want a recreation lake, then we may both gain by building a dam. Since flood control may be extremely important to one of us, while recreation opportunities only mildly important to the other, we won't gain the same amount by the action, but the sum is still positive:

$$\begin{array}{r} +.7 \\ +.3 \\ \hline +1.0 \end{array}$$

In a positive-sum conflict, the conflict may not be over whether or not an action should be taken, but over the distribution of benefits. There is, however, an incentive toward resolution since neither side will gain anything unless the action is taken.

One of the main challenges facing a third-party conciliator is to find ways of turning a zero-sum conflict into a positive-sum conflict. This may be done by expanding the alternatives, mitigating the effects, providing benefits to those who would otherwise be losers, or changing the rules by which benefits or costs are determined.

**THE LIFE OF A CONFLICT:**

In his book Conflict Regulation<sup>1</sup>, Paul Wehr describes five basic steps which a conflict follows unless there is some intervention or external force applied to alter the pattern.

1. Precipitating Event: This is an event which focuses the conflict. In the case of regulatory permits, it would usually be an application and public notice.
2. Issue Emergence, Transformation, Proliferation: Conflicts frequently get started with just one or two issues, but quickly change, expand, and grow. What starts out as opposition based on a lack of knowledge, or the nuisance potential (dust, noise, traffic) during a project

---

<sup>1</sup>Wehr, Paul, Conflict Regulation, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, (forthcoming).

quickly becomes an issue of quality of life, growth/no growth, navigational safety, wildlife habitat, property rights in coastal waters, etc. This proliferation and change in issues seems to be a natural happening resulting from the need to gather supporters. In an effort to be persuasive, an opponent will generate as many opposing arguments as possible. In the process of affiliating with others, the new people will add arguments of their own. Eventually those arguments will predominate which can provide the greatest base for support, or have the greatest strategic value, even though those may be different than the original basis for opposition.

3. Polarization: As the conflict progresses each group tends to define their position more sharply. The emphasis is on differentness, rather than similarities. Part of this is simply the result of the groups meeting resistance in meeting their goals. The people who resist them are quickly characterized as "adversaries," and there is pressure to distinguish oneself from the adversaries. There are also group pressures which lead to polarization. Groups will tend to seek internal consistency. Also, in the process of seeking allies there may be pressure to form affiliations by emphasizing similarities with the allies and differentness with the adversaries. Also, when there is competition for leadership within groups, leaders are often selected based on various tests of ideological purity. Leaders also consolidate their position by declaring a firm organizational position (and demonstrating how their challenger for leadership is "soft" on the opponent).
4. Spiraling or Escalation: As issues change and positions become firmer, there is a tendency for the level of conflict to increase. Each action of one group can be justified as a reaction to the other group. Soon no one has to act in a responsible manner because whatever destructive behaviors they engage in are justified by the perceived (or anticipated) destructive behavior of the adversary. Ironically, efforts of one group to break the spiral (or de-escalate) result in even greater escalation if they do not perceive that the other side reciprocates. When the other side fails to reciprocate the way it was hoped or expected they would, this proves that they are bad people, i.e., "war mongers," and cannot be trusted. As a result, the only tactic that can be used, the group or individual concludes, is power. In his book Interpersonal Peacemaking,<sup>2</sup> Richard Walton stresses the role of the third-party conciliator in coordinating the timing of moves between the conflicting parties to ensure that any positive gestures are reciprocated, beginning a process of de-escalation.
5. Stereotyping and Mirror-Imaging: Once the process of spiraling or escalation begins, it is contributed to by stereotypes of the adversary. Stereotypes are exaggerated negative images that people form based on some trait that might otherwise be minor. Thus, developers become "rip-off artists raping the land for a fast buck" while environmentalists become "long-haired, pot-smoking, hippie freaks who never worked a day in their lives." One particular form of stereotyping is mirror-imaging. If you feel aggressive or hostile toward the other party, you will tend to see your adversary as rapaciously aggressive and hostile-- your own feeling is attributed to the adversary, and grossly exaggerated in proportion.

---

<sup>2</sup>Walton, Richard E.; Interpersonal Peacemaking, Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

FACTORS THAT CAN BREAK THE CYCLE

Fortunately, this cycle is not inevitable, and there are countervailing pressures on individuals and groups that keep them from escalating indefinitely.

Internal Factors: There may be values and interests that groups have in common, despite their differences. Conflict can occur between elements of the Corps, for example, but there is still a commonality of interest which places an upper limit on its escalation. Sometimes a relationship exists which neither party wants to endanger. In a marriage, for example, conflict can occur but both people are under pressure to resolve the conflict unless they are willing to sever the relationship. There are also the cross-pressures of multiple commitments. You may be in conflict with a group on one issue, but need their support on another. This creates obvious pressures toward resolution. In fact these pressures become greater when there are multiple parties to a conflict, rather than just two. The efforts to form alliances also create pressures for cooperation as well as competition. The more mutual dependencies are developed, the more likely it is that conflict will occur, but the more likelihood there is that the conflict will not be allowed to become dysfunctional.

Ironically, one observable phenomena is that when leaders of opposing groups are in regular contact with each other they form an identification with the leadership class which often transcends their commitment to their followers. This creates pressure for resolution, but creates a long-range instability since the followers will eventually rebel and get new leaders whose primary commitment is to the followers. Then the cycle begins all over again.

Finally, there are limits imposed by internal values and norms about how one human being can treat another. This is, of course, where stereotyping comes in, for if you can stereotype an individual sufficiently, he/she is no longer a human being to you--and all kinds of behaviors are justified that would otherwise not be acceptable. If an individual is "depersonalized," you know them only in an official role, then norms of behavior may also be violated. One action which a third-party conciliator can take is to bring the antagonists together so that they get to know each other as people. This takes some skill, however, for if no empathy develops between them, escalation of the conflict can result ("I thought he was a no good so-and-so, and now that I've met him I've found I was right all along").

External Factors: Other times there are external factors that create pressures toward resolution. If you need the frequent support of a key political figure, for example, you may moderate your stance on one issue to remain acceptable to that person. In the case of the regulatory program, you may consider mitigating measures or modification of your proposal if you fear that the Corps will not grant it otherwise. Or you may moderate your stance if you fear that the district engineer is beginning to see you as an irresponsible, illogical person, and you are in danger of losing any influence on future permit decisions.



Exaggerated conflict may also cause other powerful external forces to come into play. A governor, for example, may be politically threatened by a conflict and use his power across a wide range of issues to insist that some accommodation be reached.

Finally, a trusted third party may provide an impetus to all conflicting parties to seek a resolution, and may create a process by which the conflict can de-escalate and differences can be resolved or negotiated.

#### CONDITIONS FOR THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION

Not all conflicts are amenable to third-party intervention. Even with those that are, timing may be critical in the success or failure of the enterprise. As a result, practical experience suggests that there are certain key conditions that must exist--or must be within the power of the third party to create--if the intervention is to be a success.

1. Motivation toward resolution: The first requisite is that all critical parties must have motivations that make resolution desirable. If one major party can win more by no decision being made, the conditions for resolution do not exist. If one party can only lose if a decision is reached, the conditions do not exist. The motivation toward resolution must also be assessed at a relationship or emotional level. If people are actively nursing grudges, insults or slights (real or imagined), then the timing may be wrong. If people are beginning to think they are wasting emotional energy with all the psychological games, then the timing may be right. It should also be remembered that different sides have different degrees of viability. If a "loss" on this issue threatens the continued existence of a group, then it is forced to play by different rules than the organization that will continue to exist, no matter the outcome. This can be a major factor in creating motivation toward resolution, or against it.
2. Roughly equal power: Neither side is likely to compromise if they think they have the political or legal power to "win" outright. This can apply to the permit process, where one side believes it has a clear-cut legal basis for its point of view, or it can apply where a group or individual is confident of winning through the courts or through intervention of outside political power. In effect, people will only negotiate when they can win more (or endanger less) by doing so.

In some cases, the role of the third party is to insist that both sides be treated as equals. This assumes that the third party has some power in the situation. When national strikes occur, for example, and one side or other refuses to negotiate because it believes it is dealing from a position of strength, the government may step in and insist that negotiations begin. The government will usually not impose a resolution--which wouldn't stay resolved without continued governmental power--but will use its power to insist that both sides take the other side seriously and get on with it. The Corps might use its power to grant or withhold a permit to force one side or another to listen to the concerns of the other, and attempt to respond to them.

3. The risks of failure not too great: The old saying is that "it is better to have tried and lost than never tried at all." That depends on the consequences of failure. Sometimes the consequences of a failure at third-party intervention may be that a controllable conflict may become totally dysfunctional. Had President Carter failed to achieve an accord at Camp David, for example, the likelihood of war between Egypt and Israel following Camp David was extremely high. In that case the likelihood of war without intervention was probably just as high. In other cases, when a visible effort at conciliation fails, this reinforces the negative perceptions on both sides. Even if the leadership is willing to continue negotiations they are often under intense pressure from their followers to take a hard-line position. Since the other side is almost invariably seen as the cause of the failed negotiations, the anger and resentment toward the adversaries is increased to the point that war, or its moral equivalent, is inevitable.
4. Organizational authority: To be effective, a conciliator must usually speak for an organization that possesses authority and credibility. Even when an individual is hired as a "mediator," he is placed in that position with the authority and credibility of the organization doing the hiring. If the organization the conciliator represents is not credible to the antagonists, the conciliator will not be accepted.
5. Negotiability of issues: One of the tactics engaged in by a conciliator is to attempt to enlarge the number of issues which are negotiable. The more issues which are negotiable, the more likelihood exists that a "positive-sum" solution can be found. This negotiability is a function of a number of things: a) the strength of the leadership of each group within their own organization; b) the consequences of a "loss" to the continued viability of a group or entity; c) the external pressures on the groups to compromise; and, d) the skills of the conciliator.
6. Control over the process: Experienced conciliators stress the importance of the conciliator's control over the communication process. This is particularly true in formal mediation, or at critical junctures in negotiations. It is no accident that negotiations between Israel and Egypt were held at Camp David, where the President controlled access of outside parties, the conditions under which the antagonists met, access to the press, the physical setting, etc. Obviously, the willingness of the antagonists to grant this kind of control is a function of the credibility and authority of the organization the conciliator represents, and the personal skills of the conciliator.

#### SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE THIRD-PARTY CONCILIATOR

Paul Wehr<sup>3</sup> indicates ten skills and attributes of the successful conciliator. These include:

---

<sup>3</sup>Wehr, op.cit.

1. Conflict Situation Analysis/Fact-Finding--party, issue, goal clarification.
2. Empathy--ability to understand positions of antagonists without subscribing to them.
3. Listening--"active listening" to parties helps them vent hostility and frustration, gains trust of conflict parties for intervenor.
4. Sense of Timing--judging when conflict is receptive to intervention; when negotiations appropriate.
5. Trust and Credibility Development--establishing "credentials," trust relationships with conflict parties and between them intervenor objectivity.
6. Mediation--a set of skills including: scheduling negotiations; helping negotiators formulate "yesable propositions"; clarifying and getting parties to agree to trade-offs; insuring full implementation of an agreement.
7. Communication--facilitating and validating communication among conflict parties; accurate verbal and nonverbal messages.
8. Imagination--capacity for eliminating impasses through imaging creative alternatives, recombining alternative solutions or parts thereof, priority goals re-ranking.
9. Joint-Costing--helping conflict parties to accurately assess the costs of the conflict to each, and potential benefits of resolving it.
10. Crisis Management--minimization of hostility and violence in extremely tense conflict situations through such measures as rationalizing the command-and-control system of forces of order, controlling access to weapons of violence on all sides, rumor control.

#### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION

Through this paper the term conciliation has been used, rather than the more specific term of mediation. Conciliation may take place without the formal assent of the conflicting parties. Corps personnel can encourage, cajole, persuade, or push antagonists to negotiate, without any formal agreement between the parties. Mediation is a more formal process in which the parties agree to try to reach an agreement, with the third party orchestrating the process. The concept of mediation comes from labor/management disputes. The need for mediation is sufficiently frequent that there is a U.S. Mediation Service, a government agency which provides mediation in labor/management disputes.

The concept of mediation is beginning to be recognized in the environmental field. There are several environmental mediation groups that have been established in the last few years to assist in resolving conflict on environmental issues. The possibility for use of mediation rests on a recognition by both environmental and developmental groups that neither side is going to "win" outright, and therefore, accommodation is necessary. It also rests on a more mature appreciation of self-interest, rather than an emotional resistance of

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

both groups to each other based on symbols of lifestyle difference. It also represents the development within the environmental community of a more stable leadership group, able to recognize a "long-sighted" strategy, rather than more opposition to single issues. On the part of developmental interests it represents an admission that environmental interests are a legitimate part of the political process.

The basic elements of a mediation process are:<sup>4</sup>

1. An invitation from the disputants for a mediator to intervene.
2. An expressed willingness on the part of the disputants to come to an agreement.
3. A period of fact-finding.
4. Separate meetings with the disputants to clarify issues.
5. Joint face-to-face negotiating sessions.
6. Separate position reformulation sessions with the disputants.
7. Clarification by mediator of trade-off points.
8. Formulation of a settlement package.
9. Development of means to "guarantee" the agreement, e.g., courts, political authority, etc.

Again, it should be stressed that mediation is only one variant of conciliation, and one that can occur only when the conditions are ripe. Simply because the conditions do not exist for mediation does not mean that there aren't many conciliation strategies which can be employed.

DIFFERENTIATION STAGE/INTEGRATION STAGE

---

<sup>4</sup>Wehr, op. cit.

In designing a process for resolution of conflict it is essential to understand that when conflicting groups begin to work together to resolve differences they appear to go through two stages: a differentiation stage and an integration stage. During the differentiation stage groups state their positions and emphasize how their positions are different from the other parties. Only after this differentiation has taken place do groups or individuals begin to move toward each other. During the integration phase groups begin to acknowledge their commonalities and increase the areas of agreement. Many conciliators have noted that differentiation must take place before integration can occur. In fact, Walton states that "the potential for genuine integration at any point of time during the confrontation is no greater than the adequacy of the differentiation already achieved."<sup>5</sup> Others have reported experiences in which when groups got together they emphasized their differences to the point that the conciliator was beginning to feel hopeless, believing that the effort was a failure, and just at that point the groups--as if recognizing that they were reaching the "limits of no return"--began to make a positive move toward each other.

It has also been observed that the cycle of differentiation/integration may be repeated several times during the course of a conflict resolution process. This can be discouraging, of course, to the conciliator who feels progress has been made, to suddenly discover that the groups are emphasizing differentness again. It is helpful to remember that rather than a defeat this may be a prelude to the next level of integration.

#### WHAT CONCILIATORS CAN DO

There are a number of techniques or approaches which conciliators can employ. Obviously, the particular strategy or approach must be appropriate to the issue and groups involved. As mentioned earlier in the paper, if a conflict exists because of a different judgment as to the effects of an action, then the conciliator may work with the disputants to develop a process to answer these questions factually. This is essentially the strategy of the NEPA process--the development of an appraisal, of the impacts of an action, so that everyone can have an agreed-upon factual base from which to offer. But if there are values differences also, then this factual basis will not resolve differences. This is observable with the NEPA process: When people disagree on goals, then the EIS will always appear inadequate to one side or other, since they value only the information that supports their positions, and mistrust information which opposes it. Under these conditions the sources or authorities from which the information is taken will also be challenged, with each side finding credible only those sources that support their positions. Again, the point is that different strategies must be employed based on the nature of the conflict. This means that some front-end appraisal must be made of the nature of the conflict.

Entry Stage: The first stage of conciliation is a stage during which the conciliator begins to identify the true nature of the conflict, and appraises the potential for conciliation leading to a positive result. Most typically, the primary techniques employed during this stage are one-on-one or one-to-group interviews or discussions. During these interviews the conciliator must appraise whether or not the six conditions for third-party intervention (pages 446-448) exist. In particular, the conciliator needs to assess whether there is any motivation to reduce the conflict, and if that motivation is mutual. The conciliator must also appraise whether or not the distribution of power is sufficiently equal that the

---

<sup>5</sup>Walton, Interpersonal Peacemaking.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

disputants recognize the need to deal with each other. Both of these factors can be substantially a matter of timing, as willingness to compromise ebbs and flows. The recognition of the power of a countervailing group often grows only with time. So the decision to make an effort at conciliation--to "enter" the conciliation process--is a decision requiring skill and timing. And even if an effort is made to initiate conciliation, the refusal of any significant disputant to respond to your offers or encouragement to engage in conflict resolution may still abort the process.

Techniques during conciliation: The initial agreement between disputants may be as limited as "we agree to meet with them--once" to an agreement to formal mediation. If the initial commitment is very tentative, then the cycle of differentiation/integration may be modest. Groups will neither emphasize all their differences, nor make too substantial an integration. When the ground rules are more formal and substantial, then greater risks may be taken, and the differentiation/integration cycle may be more dramatic.

Once the process is launched the conciliator must operate at two levels: 1) Process (or interpersonal), and 2) Content (substantive). The techniques employed are somewhat different:

Process Techniques: Some of the skills and approaches which the facilitator will use at the process level are:

1. Create norms that encourage openness and candor.
2. Provide emotional reassurance to disputants to risk open discussion.
3. Facilitate communication between parties to ensure that they feel understood.
4. Prescribe discussion techniques.
5. Encourage exchange of perceptions.
6. Ask for clarification of the basis for a perception.
7. Diagnose conditions causing poor dialogue.
8. Counsel participants on ways to communicate more effectively.

Content Techniques: In addition, to keep the process of communication open--and in the process remove much of the emotional basis for conflict-- the conciliator can employ a wide range of content techniques. These include:

1. Provide a common vocabulary. Some conflict may be created by differences in vocabulary which create reactions and misunderstandings. The conciliator may be able to talk the same language to all sides, beginning the chance of dialogue.

2. Collect more information. If the disagreement is on facts, then collecting more facts could contribute to resolution.
3. Appeal to presumed authority. If it is hard to determine the facts, then it may be possible to appeal to an authority that all sides agree is best able to make a judgment as to the facts. When there are values or interest differences this is difficult, because each side will accept as authority only those who support their position.
4. Conduct the research necessary to tip the balance decisively. Sometimes--and this doesn't occur too often--one last piece of research may be necessary to tip the balance and make the scientific data convincing. Under these conditions the conciliator may find some way to see that this research is carried out.
5. Clarify participants' views. In conflicts that have a high interpersonal or emotional element, it is often necessary for the participants to clarify the basis for their emotional reaction before they are willing to communicate about it to their opponent. Other times participants are basically unclear on what does constitute their realistic interest. It may be necessary to work with individuals or groups independently to clarify their interest.
6. Assist participants in developing realistic images of each others' positions. Often conflict is based on a misperception of what the opposing sides want to accomplish, or what their motivation is. Usually these perceptions are clarified during meetings or workshops designed to make these perceptions visible.

One workshop format that has been used in interpersonal conflict has been to have the groups engage in an activity in which they 1) describe what they think another group "really wants to accomplish," and 2) describe how they think the other group views them. Often this activity makes stereotypes visible so that they can be adjusted in discussions following this exercise.

There are also more formal techniques available for clarifying disputants' positions and separating out cognitive values and interest elements. One of these is social judgment analysis,<sup>6</sup> which not only displays different judgments, but by a series of computer programs analyzes and predicts choices which will be made by various groups. While this, and other techniques like it, hold promise, they run the risk of being so complicated that the public can feel manipulated by the technique.

Out of sharing perceptions and clarifying each others' positions, it is hoped that new options or possible ways of resolving the conflict will emerge. In addition, empathy

---

<sup>6</sup>Lord, William B., et al., Conflict Management in Federal Water Resource Planning, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, prepared for the Office of Water Research and Technology, Mar 1978.

for each others' position is built during this exchange, laying the groundwork for further negotiation.

7. Encourage agreement on a decision making role. If people cannot agree on a specific action, they can sometimes agree on a method by which a decision can be made. Examples could be: agreement on a ballot initiative to be settled by majority rule, submission to a jury of experts, agreement to enter mediation, or acceptance of binding arbitration.
8. Enlarge the objectives of the proposed action. One individual or group may propose an action which costs another group, but when the idea is enlarged provides sufficient benefits to justify the action. A proposed landfill might be opposed, but a landfill that could include a Little League diamond might not.
9. Enlarge the range of alternatives. This is by far the most frequent technique employed by conciliators. The original alternatives proposed may all have been "zero-sum" alternatives. The conciliator encourages a search for "positive-sum" alternatives.
10. Change the balance of internal/external costs. This is a tactic often employed in water resources planning. Some costs are "internal"--they must be borne by direct users, e.g., water rates. Others are "external"--borne by the taxpayers. An example of an "external" cost is fish and wildlife benefits. Sometimes a change in the mix of internal/external costs can create resolution. This assumes that the project has enough overall benefits to justify absorption of additional external costs (or that the taxpayer doesn't know about it).
11. Change the rules for assigning benefits/costs. Sometimes the rules used in calculating benefits/costs create zero-sum conditions, where a change in the rules might create a positive-sum condition. Obviously, rules should not be changed everytime there is a conflict, but some conflicts are created by inequitable rules that do need change.
12. If conflict is inevitable, encourage bargaining. When conflict is inevitable, and will continue for the indefinite future--as in labor/management conflict--then the only answer is either to continue the impasse or engage in straight-out hard-nosed bargaining. A proposed project may be redesigned, for example, to provide more benefits to the "losers"--those who opposed the project. The exact amount of benefits is the subject of negotiations.

This kind of bargaining is usually the result of a "mature" conflict. During the early stages of a conflict both sides may believe they will gain supremacy and battle furiously, with no room for negotiation. But when everybody has fought to a



standstill, and an impasse has been reached, then the recognition dawns that new mechanisms must be developed so that the relative balance of power will not result in inaction which benefits neither side. At this point, various kinds of bargaining are possible.

Guaranteeing the Agreement: The final stage in any formal agreement is to guarantee its implementation. One way to do this is to incorporate any agreements or stipulations in the Corps permit. This must be done with enough visibility that one side or other will pay too high a political price and still go to court in an effort to "win" outright. This might be accomplished by having a local political figure on whom both sides are politically dependent, a key Congressman, U.S. Senator, Governor, act as a political guarantor of the agreement. Other times such agreements are reached in formal legal documents. At the other end of the scale, obviously, is the handshake between honorable people. The problem is that even honorable people can have slightly different interpretations which can lead to re-initiation of the cycle of mistrust.

Long-Sightedness: The distinguished economist Kenneth Boulding has referred to conflict-resolution as a "learning process." In this process, he believes, people learn the skills of negotiation and agreement. They also often learn what their realistic self-interest really is. The final thing people learn if the process is successful, Boulding argues, is "long-sightedness." Long-sightedness is the ability to see one's self-interest over time, not just in the immediate situation. Short-term self-interest may cause a person to "go all out for a win," and in the process setting in motion a counter-reaction which causes an eventual loss. Smothering every project in a demand for local permits may, in the long run, produce legislation preempting local permits. Short-term victories can result in a long-term loss. Alternatively, a long-sighted individual or group may recognize that something less than total victory now may lead to creation of a productive relationship which may have many benefits in the long run. The job of the third-party conciliator is to encourage this perception of long-term interest, create the conditions for reciprocal long-sightedness from conflicting groups, and help establish processes that begin to lead to successful conflict resolution.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

by James L. Creighton

Corps of Engineers policy regarding regulatory programs states that one of the criteria [Part 320.4 (2) (iv)] for granting permits will be "the probable impact of each proposal in relation to the cumulative effect created by other existing and anticipated structures or work in the general area."

This regulation puts the Corps in the position of not only assessing the impact of a project on a specific site, but also its impact on the land use pattern in the surrounding area. It also puts the Corps in the position of anticipating future trends and probabilities.

There is still a lack of a single definition of what a cumulative impact is, or how to measure it, which is used by all Corps districts. The Institute for Water Resources is currently conducting studies which will hopefully provide assistance in the technical aspects of identifying cumulative impacts. In the meantime, there are three concepts which are frequently mentioned in connection with cumulative impacts. These are:

1. Setting a Precedent: If a permit were granted which was the first development in a wetlands area, or the first of a particular type of development, it might set a precedent for the continued development of that wetland. The environmental impact of the single development might be minimal, but the impact of the total development--based on this precedent--might be devastating.
2. Carrying Capacity: This is a concept taken from observing the uses of grazing land. An area can "carry" a certain number of cattle, with no negative impact on the vegetation. But if the number of cattle is greater, long term damage to the vegetation and soils may result. The number of cattle have exceeded the "carrying capacity" of the land. A similar concept can be applied to human development: there must be upper limits of development beyond which there is a negative impact on the natural productivity both for man and other life with whom man shares the land. A permit might have a negligible impact, but because of other development in the area, be the final development which would push past these natural biological limits of the land.
3. Growth Inducement: This concept is closely related to precedent setting, in that a development in a new area may encourage growth. But it goes something beyond this to recognize that certain kinds of facilities--such as roads, sanitation systems, power lines, water systems, etc.--may induce or encourage further development. Naturally, there is considerable argument whether such facilities actually "induce" growth, or merely "permit"

---

Reprinted from: IWR Training Program, Creighton, et al., "Public Involvement in Regulatory Programs," U.S. Army Engineers Institute for Water Resources, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 1979.

growth which is occurring in response to other pressures and forces. It is observable that increased development does often follow such facilities; the question is whether or not these facilities "caused" the growth. But because of the observable historical pattern of development following such facilities, the potential of such facilities for either "permitting" or "inducing" growth is a part of cumulative impacts.

The studies which are underway at IWR emphasize the identification of the biological/ecological limits of the land. They will produce study techniques most closely related to the concept of carrying capacity. While there are certainly critical ecological limits which must be identified, there are numerous institutional, social and economic factors which will substantially influence development patterns. These factors take us out of the biological sciences into the social and political sciences.

For example, it is often possible to utilize some level of social control to mitigate the impact of development. Two similarly sized developments in a wetlands area may have substantially different impacts on the wetlands, depending on the conditions and mitigating measures imposed upon the development. If the existing political and legal authorities can impose conditions to provide optimal protection of resources, then the carrying capacity of the land can be "stretched" further than if no social controls exist. Or to put it another way, there is a kind of carrying capacity to social institutions as well. Not only are there upper limits beyond which social institutions are stretched to the point that they collapse, but some social institutions provide greater adaptive capacity.

As another example, an action which might be precedent setting with an absence of controls, may be insignificant if the political will and legal authority exist to contain it as a single action. The factors that might cause the development of a highway to be growth inducing are not only biological and physical, but a function of our economic, political and social needs. A highway would not be growth inducing if a rebellion in an Arab country resulted in a worldwide gasoline shortage. Yet that change is entirely at a social-political level, not at the level of the physical environment.

#### THE CONCEPT OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

The result of this interrelationship between the natural environment and the socioeconomic-political environment is that there is a range of alternative futures. Given the same physical base, there is an almost infinite number of possible futures. If there is a major fuel shortage, the distribution of people within the United States will probably change. A technical breakthrough might provide a whole new process for waste disposal which could radically alter water quality issues. A change in the political climate resulting in a willingness to prohibit structures in the flood plain would substantially alter most Corps projects. The range of possible futures is almost infinite. No one possesses a crystal ball which will allow them to accurately predict the effect of a single action, but each action interacts with so many other factors that the effect of a single action can range from nonexistent to gigantic.

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

THE NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Since we don't possess a crystal ball, the demand that the Corps assess cumulative impacts is really a requirement that we assess the potential impact of the project against the images members of the public have of what the future could or should be. This places the Corps right back in the public involvement game. To assess cumulative impacts it is necessary to understand what the public's images of the future are, and how they see this proposed action interacting with those images.

In projecting the future there is always an interaction between "likelihood" and "desirability." "Likelihood" is the event which is most likely to occur as the result of existing social, political and economic trends. "Desirability" is the thing which people would like to have happen. Some social, economic and political trends change in response to people's desires, others prevail in spite of them. But to assess cumulative impacts, the public involvement must ascertain both the existing social, economic and political trends which will affect development and the desires and values of the public--people's sense of the way things ought to be. Because different individuals and groups have different images of the desirable future, any single proposed action produces a different perception of what the effect of that action on their lives will be. As a result, a recent conference of researchers studying cumulative impacts--most of them biological scientists of some sort--agreed that public involvement was an essential tool to providing a social-political context for projecting probable patterns of development, and the impact on natural resources.

THE CORPS AS AN ACTOR

Once it is understood that cumulative impact is the result of an interaction between the physical environment and the social-political environment, then it also becomes obvious that the Corps' regulatory program is a major contributor to the amount of impact that a particular action has. Different conditions and mitigating actions required by the Corps can substantially change the impact of the actions. A future in which the Corps exerts stringent control over wetlands would be very different than a future in which the Corps exercised no control or minimal control. If the Corps didn't act, what other legal and political forces might come into play to exercise control?

ONE METHOD FOR INVOLVING THE PUBLIC IN ASSESSING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As stated earlier, to assess cumulative impacts it is necessary to understand what the public's images of the future are, and how they see a proposed action interacting with those images. The procedures below show one method for involving the public in assessing cumulative impacts for a general permit. It is doubtful that they would be usable at the level of an individual permit. While this approach has been employed in several instances, it is more a suggested direction than a complete and polished process.

The first step in the process is to determine what alternative images the public has for the future of the study area. The simplest way to determine those would be to conduct a workshop(s) among those individuals and interest groups with the greatest interest in the permit. A workshop format which can be used for generating

alternative futures scenarios is shown in the article on Designing Workshops, page 246.<sup>1</sup> During the workshop(s) participants should also be asked to rate the "likelihood and desirability" of these scenarios. The product resulting from the workshop(s) will be a set of scenarios describing alternative assumptions about future developmental patterns in the future. Since the public will usually provide general principles only, these scenarios may require some technical elaboration before they will be usable.

The next step is to conduct an analysis of the changes which would take place in each of these scenarios if a general permit is granted. Would the issuance of this permit tend to increase or decrease the likelihood that a particular scenario would occur? If there is a need for documentation of this analysis, some relatively simple form of Delphi technique would be employed. This technique, which is described in the article "A Short Catalogue of Public Involvement Techniques," page 270, involves several rounds of consultation with a panel of experts. In this case, the experts would be asked to estimate whether or not granting the general permit would increase or decrease the likelihood of a particular scenario occurring.

These estimates are then compared with the public's evaluations of the desirability of the various scenarios. If the impact of a general permit would increase the likelihood of an undesirable scenario occurring, then the permit is unlikely to gain public favor. Obviously, the next level of analysis would be to determine if modifications in the general permit could increase the likelihood of creating desirable scenarios, and decrease the chances of undesirable scenarios.

If the various interests in the community are substantially divided on the futures they consider desirable, then it is unlikely that modifications will produce any single set of permit conditions which will be agreeable to all. This process will, however, serve to show the community that the real problem is not the permit conditions, but conflicting images of the desirable future within the community.

Once the analysis described above has been made, the decision making process might well require additional meetings or workshops to discuss with the publics what the estimated impacts of the permit would be in each of the scenarios. This permits the public to assess the proposed action with full visibility for the most educated estimate of the future impacts of the action.

It is clear that this process will not necessarily produce the kind of "hard" data which is reassuring to a scientist. It is my guess, however, that it responds to the political concerns which generated the demands for cumulative impact assessment in the first place. The demand for cumulative impact assessment was created out of a concern that agencies were not considering the long-range implications of their individual actions. This process would demonstrate that the agency has considered the implication in the full range of alternative futures which the community believes are likely to occur.

---

<sup>1</sup>A more detailed description of procedures for involving the public in alternative futures planning is provided in: Creighton, James L., Alternative Futures Planning, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado, 1976.



INTEGRATING PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT  
THROUGH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

by James L. Creighton  
James A. Chalmers  
Kristi Branch

During the last 10 years the nature of planning has changed substantially with the addition of requirements for public involvement, preparation of environmental impact statements and social impact assessment. The assessment of economic-demographic impacts--while long a requirement--has also undergone considerable change in the methodology used, and the factors which must be considered.

The addition of these forms of assessments, or revision of existing methods, is an indication that many impacts of a project which previously have been seen as "external" to the project, are now being internalized. There has been a considerable revolution in what we believe "has to be paid attention to." We "discovered" the environment in the late 60s and 1970s--although there are reports that it did exist before then--and have more recently discovered that projects have social and economic effects which extend far beyond a simple benefit/cost ratio. Finally, we've discovered that benefits and costs are a matter of perception; what is a benefit to one person, is perceived as a cost by another. Values, people's sense of the way things "ought to be," provide a context for assessing benefits and costs. The emphasis on efficiency and economy in the benefit/cost analysis of the 50s and 60s turned out not to be a scientific procedure so much as the logical conclusion of one competing value system. As a result, we are faced with requirements to conduct assessments in the context of values concerns expressed by the public.

Public involvement--which is an assessment of public acceptability, environmental assessment, social assessment and economic/demographic assessment, are all part of the same process of identifying the benefits and costs inherent in the proposed action. They all answer the question: What are the impacts and effects of the proposed plan?

These observations may seem simple and obvious. Yet, it is our experience that often these assessments are not treated as part of the same process. Responsibility for the four assessments is often located in different organizational entities, each with its own staff, values, budgets, pressures and concerns. There is an "environmental shop" and an "economics shop." Social impact assessment is relatively new, so it is often contracted to an outside consultant, or is the responsibility of a newly-hired social scientist who is at best a poorly understood appendage on the side of the organization. Hopefully, public involvement is the responsibility of the study manager, but the study manager may not have any authority over the work done by the environmental or social group. The result, frequently, is that while people have responsibility for parts of the study, nobody has responsibility and particularly authority for the total process. The result is that there is not an integration of all assessment information.

---

This is a previously unpublished paper submitted to IWR as part of an effort to define future research needs.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

As described above, the role of these four assessments is more reactive than proactive. The planners or engineers define the options, then the public involvement specialists, environmental scientists, economists-demographers and sociologists assess the impacts. It is this conception which is inherent in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS). After the plans are all formulated, often after the agency is at least tentatively committed to an alternative, then the evaluation of environmental impacts comes into play.

If there is anything that we have learned from the last few years' experience with environmental assessment, it is that this is too little too late. For environmental studies to have an effect on the important decisions made throughout the planning process, then environmental analysis must be integrated into each step of the planning process. The same logic holds for the other assessment processes: information from public involvement, economic-demographic and social assessment can play an important role in identifying needs and problems, formulating alternatives, eliminating unacceptable alternatives, and reformulating alternatives to mitigate impacts. This requires, however, that the planning process itself be designed to elicit this information in an appropriate manner at each stage of the planning process.

In the Corps of Engineers' planning process there are two or more iterations of alternatives. Typically, the first set of alternatives represents a broad range of values but are also somewhat general in nature. The second set of alternatives are somewhat narrower in the values they portray, but have much greater detail. The final plan has full and complete detail. The analysis process which must be utilized is to determine what kind of information from the assessment process could be available, and would be useful, at each stage of plan formulation. With "broad-brush" alternatives there is a need for "broad-brush" assessments of their impacts. As the level of detail of the alternatives increases so must the level of detail of the assessment.

The EIS is simply the culmination of the assessment process, not the entire process. It summarizes and concludes the process, but often the greatest value of the assessment process precedes the EIS by shaping the alternative plans themselves. Yet, it is our experience that this value is often lost because inadequate mechanisms have been identified for integrating the assessment and planning processes.

### **THE INTEGRATING ROLE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Properly designed, public involvement provides the integrative framework within which the assessment and planning processes can successfully interact. It can play this role by performing three vital functions:

1. Public Involvement as the Mechanism for Exchange of Information.
2. Public Involvement as the Source of the Value Context.
3. Public Involvement as the Source of Credibility.

#### **Public Involvement as the Mechanism for Exchange of Information:**

In order to provide the public with up-to-date information with which to assess study progress and options, it is necessary to summarize available planning and assessment information into short, succinct documents written in a language understandable to the public. Thus each public involvement activity becomes a natural



point of synthesis for all the information generated during the study. If it is not, the public involvement will be less than adequate, for it will not supply the public with the information that is necessary to adequately assess the study results. In this sense, our experience with large planning studies suggests that once public involvement activities have been planned based on the logic of plan formulation (See Creighton, pg. 124), the need to get information ready for that public involvement activity often "drives" the study. The need to get information ready for public involvement provides a focus which can be otherwise missing, coming together only in an EIS at the end of the process.

Public involvement is also a mechanism for obtaining information from the public. Much of this is in the form of values information, discussed below. Public involvement is also an indispensable component in the attempt to identify reliable information relevant to the planning and assessment problem at hand. The public (defined as everybody external to the agency conducting the study) is a major resource in identifying existing sources of information within the study area, thereby reducing search costs and the accidental duplication of previous work. The efficiency implications of this role are much more significant than commonly realized. Explicit public identification of information needs will rapidly lead to the volunteering of sources, reports, links into existing information networks, and even offers of professional, technical or layperson assistance. The design of public involvement programs with this information gathering objective in mind will often further enhance the help that may be obtained.

Public Involvement as the Source of the Value Context:

It is not enough to know that a particular action will produce 78 jobs, will flood 200 acres, will create noise impacts during construction. It is necessary to know whether this is desirable/undesirable, acceptable/unacceptable, good/bad. This is the realm of values, people's standards by which they evaluate the way things ought to be. Although sharing the realm of values somewhat with social assessment, values issues are the heart and soul of public involvement. Not only is it necessary to know whether a particular action is acceptable or unacceptable to the public, it is equally important to distinguish which groups and individuals value the action, and which do not. Few projects distribute their benefits and costs equally to all elements within a society. Public involvement (coupled with social assessment) plays an essential role in displaying the differential effects of actions, as well as assessing overall acceptability.

Increasingly environmental, economic-demographic and social assessment methodologies have been recognizing the need for a values context by distinguishing between "impacts" and "effects." "Impacts" are the events that will occur if an action is taken, e.g., population growth, flood damage, reduction/increase in construction workers. "Effects" are an assessment of what that impact means in the impacted community, in light of community conditions and attitudes. Public involvement is a necessary methodology by which to get from the assessment that an impact will occur, to an understanding of the effect of that impact upon the community. Again, public involvement provides a framework that integrates the other forms of assessment.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Public Involvement as the Determinant of the Credibility of the Planning and Assessment Process

The ultimate synergy of well-integrated assessment and planning processes depends on their credibility in the eyes of potentially affected publics and in the eyes of the institution or group responsible for planning and implementing the proposed action. The credibility of any planning effort rests on the perception that the relevant issues were identified and addressed, appropriate information was obtained and correctly interpreted, and the significance of projected impacts assessed in the context of local values. Each of these criteria centers on the public involvement process. If the public perceives that it had access to the decision making, if the role that public concerns and values had at each stage of the process is well documented, then the credibility of the process is enhanced. Effective public involvement often provides a kind of credibility within the planning agency as well. If the agency is confident that it is fully acquainted with public concerns and that a maximum effort has been made to incorporate public values into the planning process, it can commit to the implementation of the plan with a substantial increased confidence and security.

### Public Involvement and the Other Assessment Processes:

Because of these three functions, public involvement interacts with each of the other assessment processes. The comments below illustrate this interaction.

### **Public Involvement and Economic/Demographic Assessment**

Economic/demographic assessment is required in order to develop realistic descriptions of economic and demographic conditions in an area as they may exist both with and without various proposed alternatives. The important independent variables that determine economic and demographic conditions must be identified so they can be linked to the proposed action to generate its immediate employment, income and population implications. The analysis to this point will usually be of a jurisdictional area, usually a county or an aggregate of counties because of data availability considerations. The next step is disaggregation to the community level in order to clarify the implications of the projections for facilities and services provided by both the private and public sectors, and to provide input to the social assessment.

Public involvement plays important roles throughout the economic/demographic assessment process. From the very beginning, it is an important aid in the identification and collection of information.

Public involvement meetings, interviews, and surveys can be structured to gather economic/demographic information or to identify additional sources of information. Public involvement can also assist in interpreting the economic/demographic data. It is one thing to collect data, but still another to understand its significance and relative importance. Public involvement can provide assistance in assessing which data is perceived by the public as relevant and enrich the interpretation of the data.

The role of the local value context in economic/demographic assessment is subtle, but increasingly recognized as being of critical importance. "No growth" baseline assumptions may make a project redundant, while "growth" assumptions may make it appear highly necessary. Yet, these assumptions are themselves political

in nature. Public involvement activities can be designed to provide opportunities for examining the implications of different assumptions and for verifying the political relevance of the assumptions that are studied. There are many cases in which this kind of "alternative futures approach" is the only responsible approach to the planning problem. The economic/demographic future of an area may be so uncertain that a proposed action will have to be assessed in several different contexts. In this situation, public involvement can be an important input into the construction of the alternative-futures, and public involvement can be used to assure that the public properly understands the uncertainties under which the assessment and planning processes are operating.

### **Public Involvement and Social Assessment**

There is substantial overlap between public involvement and social assessment. In fact, the boundaries between the two are a matter of definition on which there would not be general agreement. For the purposes of the discussion here, social assessment will be defined narrowly to include the study of changes in the structure, functioning or mode of operation of the social system, where social system is broadly defined to include the community social system, the political/institutional system and the local economy. Thus, the social assessment focuses on the way in which the proposed action may affect the structure or operation of local social, political or economic systems. Emphasis is placed on the stratification within these systems and on their leadership.

Particular attention is also given in social assessment to the distribution of the impacts that may be associated with a proposed action and the consequences of that distribution. The economic/demographic analysis typically deals with aggregates, while the social assessment attempts to determine whether or how certain groups or classes or individuals will be differentially affected by a proposed action.

Thus, as defined here, social assessment is focused on structural or process impacts on local social systems and on the way in which these systems (either changed or unchanged) distribute the effects of a proposed action among different groups in the community. Once these effects have been defined, they have to be evaluated together with economic/demographic and environmental effects in the context of local values. We would argue here, therefore, that the value analysis, both in the identification of issues and in evaluating the relative significance of all different kinds of impacts, cuts across all of the components of the assessment process. The value analysis is better thought of, therefore, as part of the public involvement than as part of social assessment.

The point should not be overdrawn, however, because it is only a matter of definition, and the terms are not used consistently at present. The point is simply that public involvement, as defined here, is an important information-gathering tool for social assessment and also develops the value information that is essential to the overall assessment process.

Interviews, surveys, workshops, etc., are all frequently used as public involvement tools and can easily be used to study effects on local social structures. Similarly, there is a great commonality between public involvement and social impact assessment when it comes to identifying publics and community influentials. In the same way that information gathered in social impact assessment can contribute to the identification of publics, information received in public involvement could contribute to the identification of community influentials and groups.

## ***Public Involvement and Dispute Resolution***

---

### Public Involvement and Environmental Assessment

After a decade of experience with environmental assessment, many of the points made in this paper regarding all forms of assessment have been incorporated into NEPA guidelines regarding the preparation of environmental impact statements. Among the innovations in the recently announced NEPA regulations are:

1. The Scoping Conference - This is a conference, early in the planning process, at which the agency consults with other governmental entities, groups or interested individuals to determine the central issues which should be addressed by the environmental impact statement. In effect the scoping conference requirement formalizes a public involvement activity which effectively begins to integrate planning and assessment, but which had previously been somewhat haphazard (NEPA - Regulations - 1501.7). The scoping conference explicitly recognizes that public involvement is the mechanism to provide an information and values context for preparation of the environmental impact statement.
2. Early Integration - The NEPA guidelines specifically state that "Agencies shall integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to ensure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays in the process, and to head off potential conflicts." (NEPA Regulations - 1501.2). Clearly the same statement applies to early integration of social and economic-demographic values. As suggested earlier, public involvement often provides the focal point for this integration.
3. Recording in the Decision how the EIS was used. - NEPA Regulations (1505.2) now also require that agencies produce a record of how the EIS was used in arriving at a decision. The logic of this requirement pushes toward documentation of how assessment information was used in decision making throughout the entire process. Obviously this requirement deals directly with the issue of credibility. It is not enough just to assess, it is necessary that the public understand how that assessment is used in decision making.

One of the authors has written draft public involvement guidelines for a Federal agency which go further by requiring preparation of a decision report which summarizes the role which public involvement played in each stage of decision making, and describes both the assessment information and public values information which entered into the final decision. This may provide a simple mechanism for forcing the agency to integrate all these factors at each decision-making juncture.

### Summary:

We have argued that public involvement, the environmental assessment, social assessment and economic/demographic assessment are all part of the same process of identifying the benefits and costs of a proposed action. But more than passively assessing the impacts of an action, the assessment process should play an active role in plan formulation, shaping the character of the plans being considered. Public involvement, we believe, provides the framework for this integration of the assessment process and the

planning process by providing the focus for exchange of information between the agency and the various publics, by providing a values context in which assessment findings can be interpreted, and providing the visibility to the decision making process which is necessary for the credibility of the overall planning effort.



THE ENDURING MYTHS OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

by Jerry Delli Priscoli

Imagine you are to build a several million dollar power plant or waste disposal site. How much would you be willing to invest to reduce the possibility of project stoppage? Suppose you are to manage an extensive water quality permit program. Would you invest one-half of one percent of the project funds to reduce court case loads by 30 or 40 percent? Public involvement in administrative decision making can, and has, performed such management functions.

Yet somehow the public involvement of the 1960's and 1970's seems less important to the 1980's free market ideology. We agency bureaucrats speak of a pendulum's swinging back. Agency public involvement regulations are modified or eliminated; budgets are cut; OMB tightens citizen advisory group regulations; volunteerism is touted as the only legitimate form of participation. Why the undercurrent of retrenchment? One could offer many reasons. I will discuss six and then offer opinions of where we are going with public involvement.

I PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT = PARALYSIS OF ACTION AND INEFFICIENCY

Most legislation throughout the 60's and 70's required some form of public involvement. Along with its positive benefits of open government, the legislation was sometimes confusing. In effect, Congress passed laws requiring public involvement at the same time they stated specific substantive policy ends. For example, Congress passed the #208 water quality program calling for cleanup of U.S. waters by a certain date and, further, for involvement of the public in reaching these goals. Some of the best public involvement done under 208 reached the opposite conclusion - that cleanup, as defined in legislation, was too expensive! Consequently, the good bureaucrat, concerned with efficiently achieving legitimately established goals, was frustrated. When all that resulted was expensive reports and few plants, the public was also frustrated.

More generally, public involvement came to symbolize "anti-project" or "anti-bureaucratic" goals. The public, at least those who participated, were seen as adversaries, not partners. Increased access meant increased delay. As both agencies and the public turned to legal mechanisms to resolve conflict, extreme positions solidified. The major reasons for access - to share information, to create new approaches, and to negotiate reasonable tradeoffs - were thus subverted. The combination of access in the hands of extremists, bureaucratic intransigence, increased regulation, and fixation with legal tactics to manage conflict, created paralysis.

Still, many outstanding exceptions emerged. All of us concerned with public involvement programs sought to find and describe them. But to many within bureaus, public involvement simply meant negative

---

Reprinted from Citizen Participation, 3(4), March - April 1982

***Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution***

---

paralysis. In short, the positive rationales for participation - to build coalitions and to create consensus as a precursor to action - were forgotten.

Although often viewed differently, public involvement is pragmatic management. Over two thousand years ago, no less a pragmatist than Pericles stated:

... Athenians,... instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling block in a way of action,...think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all....

As we reexamine our public service commitments, we are in danger of succumbing to a false illusion of efficiency. So what if we sneak into town at night and get the hazardous waste disposal license with no one watching? Is this efficient when citizens subsequently shut down an operation after it's begun? So what if we produce an elegant flood control plan in four rather than 15 years? Is this efficient when the project is delayed by local residents and national interest groups after 20 or 30 percent of capital costs have been sunk into the project?

Efficiency is illusive in a pluralistic society where authority is fragmented across many bureau offices and departments. Limiting public access to bureaus and offices in the name of efficiency is a very dangerous path in a society that calls itself democratic. If the government--that means its administrative as well as its legislative branches--demonstrates daily disdain for fundamental social ideologies, you cannot expect the larger public to long hold those beliefs.

Public involvement is symptomatic of broader changing social values in society. Within administrative agencies, it can be a tool to build consensus or to find proof, or disproof, of constituency support for project alternatives. Public involvement really says, "Two heads are better than one." However, its synergistic effects cannot be realized when met by bureaucratic indifference. We bureaucrats should spend more time summoning the creative and positive power to public involvement than eulogizing its policy death. The question is not "Should we do public involvement," but "Can we do anything without it?" Seeing public involvement as equal to paralysis of action will be an expensive myth to cling to, should we so choose.

## II PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT = A SINGLE POLICY STAND

This impression is particularly strong in the natural resources and environmental policy areas. Public involvement has come to mean environmental groups. Since much of its visibility was achieved through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this is not surprising. But even the environmental community is beginning to question the equation. What happens when you achieve good public involvement and the result is bad environment? Which belief is jettisoned? Look at the debate over the Clean Waters Act's #404 permit program. Many water-based sport and recreation groups who tend to support the current regulatory reform initiatives are in favor of reducing the paperwork burden imposed by the government. They are also in favor of wetlands and 404 regulations to protect their industry. However, that 404 permit program processes over 18,000 permits a year, most of which involve small and medium-sized individual projects! These same



groups become ambivalent when participating in public involvement efforts to write general regional permits designed to reduce the citizen burden of individual permitting.

For years, natural resources agencies worked under the consensus of the "self-evident" truth that economic development was always good. Recently, environmental protection groups challenged this concept with their own "self-evident" truths, such as decreasing resources and increasing vulnerability of public health. The truth lies in some blend of these extremes. Public involvement is a "process" belief that assists the achievement of some substantive synthesis between these views. It is beyond a substantive single issue focus. Those who falsely invoke the legitimacy of public involvement in the name of substantive policy values will ultimately compromise their own credibility.

### III PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT = VOCAL MINORITY

"Whom do they represent?" How often have you heard, or maybe used, this statement? Bureaucrats, as well as citizen participants and special interest groups, often claim to represent the silent majority. If they would only speak, they, the silent majority, would surely support our position. Of course "they" never do speak; that is why they are called silent. One consultant has referred to the silent majority as the "mythical beast."

Those who enthusiastically question the validity of public participation often do so feeling that they possess a special hotline to the mythical beast. This misses the point, which is, as another consultant states, to "create the greatest possible number of unsurprised apathetics." Not everybody is, or perhaps should be, involved in every issue. Public involvement provides a means for those who feel strongly and are consequently likely to be major actors, to express feelings. It is a representation of values, not necessarily numbers, which is critical to the administrator.

If it does nothing else, public involvement confronts the administrator with alternative sets of values. Development of technical options without public involvement begins simply to reflect the values of their bureaucratic creators. With our multiple "realities," the taxpayers money will be increasingly wasted on unrealistic and unimplemented alternatives.

How often have you heard the following statement: "Well, the environmental groups only represent a leisure middle class anyway." The fact that we administrators are from that same middle class is often forgotten. Rather than a reason to discount their views, the middle class bias is crucial. It is symptomatic of value differences within our own middle class.

So the majority-minority perspective is misleading. Administrators need a broad representation of values. It is the interested and committed, those willing to coalesce into action, not necessarily the inactive, whom we should seek. Both goals are served by public involvement and, like it or not, are part of the bureaucratic reality. No amount of executive orders will change that reality.

#### IV PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT = IRRATIONALITY AND INVALID INFORMATION

Early in my career, I was attending a public meeting with several hundred participants. After listening to one participant pour her heart out in tears over a proposed project, the presiding officer responded, "Thank you, Ma'am. Now do we have any factual comments?"

The officer was unaware that he had just received some of the best factual data anyone could ask for. Feeling and intensity are among the most important "facts" any administrator requires to design implementable alternatives.

For us bureaucrats, armed with advanced engineering and scientific degrees, this is a hard pill. To us, emotions are irrational; facts can be separated from values.

Both environmental groups and bureaucrats often summon the "perfect information" myth to climb out of this box: "Once the public has the facts, they will understand." Well, perfect information can just as easily lead to perfect conflict as it can to consensus. It can perfectly describe the reality of basic conflicts. No amount of "factual" information will automatically overcome such value conflicts.

We administrators must realize that facts and values are not separate. Our elegantly constructed algorithms and projections of the future are based on human assumptions. They are statements of how we feel the world ought to be. And the public knows it. They are not fools. It takes about two months in the public involvement business to discover a variant of Newton's second law: for every Ph.D., you can find an equal and opposite Ph.D.! Yet we now continually couch our assumptions in complex jargon, effectively locking out meaningful contributions from those whom the projects are to service.

I don't know whether we do this to reassure a sense of technical competence, or to assure our continual role. There is nothing wrong with values. It is only when we deny their existence that we both look suspicious and deny ourselves access to this most crucial source of information.

In our business, the idea of a pure, objective observer of natural and social systems serves us poorly. Actually, it is questionable science. Note what John Wheeler, the well-known physicist, says on the topic:

May the universe in some strange sense be brought into being by the participation of those who participate.... The vital act is the act of "participation." Participation is the incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics. It strikes down the term "observer" of classical theory, the man who stands safely behind the thick glass wall and watches what goes on without taking part. It can't be done, quantum mechanics say.

If you think the public is irrational, you only have a few choices. One is to ignore them and wait for disaster to descend. Another is to tell the public what is good for them and force them to accept it. Another approach is better stated by Thomas Jefferson;

I know of no safe depository of the society, but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

In other words, not only must we educate the public, but we must also be willing to be educated. As Wheeler's comments reflect, and public involvement experience confirms, reality is a process of shared creations. Jacob Brownowski reached a similar conclusion:

There is not a field of science which has not been made over from top to bottom in the last fifty years. Science has filled our world because it has been tolerant and flexible and endlessly open to new ideas. In the best sense of that difficult word, science is a democratic method. That has been its strength; that and its confidence that nothing can be more important than what is true.

Administrators should search less for excuses to separate values from facts in our decisions and concentrate more on developing skills to synthesize them. Public involvement techniques provide tools to hone such skills.

#### V PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT = SUBVERSIVE ACTION

Nobody enjoys being threatened, and public involvement can be a threat. Most bureaucrats are dedicated people who honestly do their job. It is hard to understand why the rest of those folks out there don't see it that way.

However, as administrators in a world of fragmented authority, information is our power. It is difficult to share power. Among other things, public involvement requires sharing information and power. That can be uncomfortable to the expert.

After all, "I spent a lifetime in training, working, and being concerned about this issue. The idea that Joe Sixpack knows more about nuclear engineering or bridge building is ridiculous." While Mr. Sixpack might not build the bridge, he is likely to use it, look at it, and feel the good and bad consequences of its construction. In our society this qualifies him for participation in the engineering decisions.

As experts, we must employ our technical expertise to create new technical options which had not previously been conceived. If we talk only to ourselves, this is difficult to accomplish. Often it takes outside and even uninformed naive questions to spur a look at that which we thought unthinkable. This is the design, or creative, aspect of professional engineering which Samuel Florman has called the "existential pleasures of engineering."

Much of the environmental and natural resources debate in the 1970s centered around forcing public engineering bureaucracies to create and embrace new technical solutions. Far from a threat, this is a need which is crying out for technical expertise. Not to answer the cry-out to reach for Florman's "existential pleasure" is to deny our country a needed technical professionalism. It is to condemn our society to technology fix. We become solutions seeking application rather than problem-solving capabilities ready to create new options. It will gradually push the expert into a role of limiting, rather than expanding, possibilities. When this occurs, the experts' legitimacy deteriorates. If the technical expert cannot help our

*Public Involvement  
and Dispute Resolution*

---

society, will quickly jettison its experts as expensive overhead. Public involvement is a principal tool to assist the technical expert in providing such service. It is subversive and threatening only to the degree that we, ourselves, have become sedentary, unenthusiastic, and fatalistic.

VI FORGING SYNTHESIS IN THE 1980's

The forward-looking administration of the 1980s will be rewarded for implementation, efficient delivery of services, timely action, and innovative mixes of private and public funding packages. The critical administrative skills will be management of uncertainty, negotiation, conflict management, coalition building, and consensus formation—precisely those skills which formed the heart of public participation in the 1970s.

For example, a businessman's notion of efficiency is not simply analytical economics, but also implementability. It does no good if the deal is elegant but cannot be closed. Public involvement in reducing closing is an investment in costs and closing the deal.

Competition over funds for capital investment will increase. Most projects will require multiple funding sources. Putting together funding and cost-sharing packages will require far more public involvement than previously experienced. More numerous funding sources bring that many more competing values. In an era of tight money, those putting up funds will ask more penetrating questions about how their constituencies will be affected. As states scramble to meet increased service responsibilities, and the private sector performs more public service functions, the ability to negotiate, to build awareness, to resolve conflict, and to have public involvement will grow.

Successful administrators will be those who forge workable plans that compensate local people for bearing a highly perceived risk—often not in dollars—to provide geographically disbursed benefits. A successful administrator will seek information about how people perceive risks. They will seek to know how a proposed project may assist communities to reach established goals or even assist communities to establish future goals. Without agreement on goals, administrators will need to know how to mitigate negative project effects within communities. They will have to assess whether intractable conflict is likely. Successful administrators will build "win-win" options by planning with, not just for, people; by interacting with, not just observing, those impacted by their projects.

If the experience of the 1970s taught us anything, it was that good project management demands a blend of analytical and process skills. Successful administrators in the 1980s will encourage such synthesis. The tool kit of the successful administrator will include, among other tools, a working knowledge of nominal and other small group-process techniques; listening and communication skills; meeting and workshop designs; conciliation and mediation techniques; values analysis and mapping skills; policy profiling; trend and cross-impact forecasting; community service impact projection assessment; and tradeoff analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The degree to which public involvement is dead is in the minds of us bureaucrats. Perhaps we yearn for a simpler world, for a time when consensus was clearer and our job simpler. Perhaps we carry bitter tastes of public involvement experiences. However, public involvement is central to our social ideology and public service responsibility. It is both a great frustration and a great job. As with Pericles' Athens, public involvement places us apart and makes us better. Thomas Jefferson once noted:

... the execution of the laws is more important than making them... To introduce the people into every department of government...is the only way to insure a long-continued and honest administration.

As with most issues in life, we can choose to see public involvement as a negative burden or a positive opportunity. Just as in other engineering and technical programs, we can choose to see public involvement as managing probabilities in order to increase potential acceptability or decrease potential conflict. Choosing a positive outlook means creating incentive for compromise in building a middle ground, expanding opportunities by forcing new technical options, and building new coalitions of support. When we feel our traditional engineering products rejected, we should ask whether it is the fault of the consuming public, or whether we should either modify the old product or develop a new product.

So where is public involvement? Alive, resting, and awaiting our call to public service.



IWR PUBLICATIONS ON PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

1970

"The Susquehanna Communication - Participation Study," by Borton, Warner & Wenrich, University of Michigan, IWR Report 70-6.

"Public Participation in Water Resources Planning," by A. Bruce Bishop, IWR Report 70-7.

1972

"Public Participation in Planning: A Multi-Media Course," by Charles W. Dahlgren (includes articles from Georgia Tech Short Course), IWR Report 72-1.

"Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waters Study: An Evaluation," by Ann Widditsch, IWR Report 72-2.

1974

"Structuring Communications Programs for Public Participation in Water Resources Planning," by A. Bruce Bishop.

1975

"Water Resources Decision-Making on the Basis of Public Interest," by Leonard Ortolano, IWR Report 75-1.

"Public Involvement in the Corps of Engineers Planning Process," by James R. Hanchey, IWR Report 75-R4.

"Public Participation in Water Resources Planning: An Evaluation of the Program of 15 Corps of Engineers Districts," also "Summary Evaluation and Recommendations," (Internal Distribution Only), by James F. Ragan, IWR Report 75-6.

1976

"Testing an Iterative, Open Process for Water Resources Planning," by Thomas P. Wagner and Leonard Ortolano, IWR Report 76-2.

"Executive Seminar: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," by James L. Creighton, SYNERGY Consultation Services.

1977

"Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," by James L. Creighton, SYNERGY Consultation Services (cases by W. A. Wiedman, Jr., and Richard Ragan).

1978

"Why the Federal and Regional Interest in Public Involvement in Water Resources Development," by Jerry Delli Priscoli, IWR Working Paper 78-1.

"Public Involvement and Social Impact Analysis: Union Looking for Marriage," by Jerry Delli Priscoli, IWR Working Paper 78-2.

"Planning for Discourse: A Manual for the Diagnosis, Planning, and Management of Group Participation Processes Based upon the Use of Issue Analysis Measures," by David E. Wojick, IWR Report 78-1.

1979

"Public Involvement in Regulatory Programs: A Training Program," by James L. Creighton.

1982

"Advanced Course: Public Involvement in Water Resources Planning," by James L. Creighton.