

A DECADE OF THE NEW YORK STATE WETLANDS FORUM

LONG RANGE PLANNING IDEAS FOR YEARS 2000 to 2004

Held August 18, 2000 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Onondaga Yacht Club in Liverpool, NY.

Present: Jennifer Brady-Connor, Sally Daly, Anne Secord, Norbert Quenzer, Barbara Beall, Diane Kozlowski, Ray Cummings, Jeff Zapperi, Joe McMullein, and Richard Smardon.

Facilitator: The meeting was facilitated by Frank L. Maraviglia, President, Creativity Unlimited, 208 John Street, Syracuse, New York 13208-2840. Telephone 315-422-6938. E-mail: CreativityUnlimited@excite.com. See Appendix A for Creativity Unlimited's brochure.

IDENTIFICATION OF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Attached is the previous long-range planning effort write-up from 1999. Also attached are notes from individuals from conversations/e-mails preceding this meeting. See Appendix B, "Long Range Planning Efforts." To start the meeting, Frank had each member write two items they wanted to have discussed at the meeting on a post-it. Below are the items suggested by those present organized under group headings identified by Frank after looking over the suggestions.

Getting to know people on Board/interactions

- Sense of my potential contribution to organization (x2)
- Ideas to bring back to the board for discussion
- Learn more about the various factions of the board and their interaction. Can we or should we change the way we interact and/or communicate?
- Get to know the other board members better.

Business or Mission of Forum/its niche

- What should the Forum be...what does our membership want us to be?
- What are most important wetland issues...how to provide a "Forum" for them?
- Compare what we do to other similar related organizations (i.e., SWS, ASWM).
- Get better understanding of the vision/objectives of the Forum.
- Review mission statement.

Long Range Goals or Future

- Consensus on future goals of group.
- Set goals for long range plan.
- Direction for program – who needs it or wants it?

Membership

- Strategy for improved coordination and interaction with state agencies.
- Ideas for increasing membership.

Grants, Funding, and Money

- Guidance for seeking additional funding.
- Decide how we can best fund and use our executive director.
- Directions for administration (Executive Director or not and what tasks).

Frank indicated that he would have the group spend approximately 20 minutes on each item with brainstorming and then take some time to summarize each item and have discussion

GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE BETTER

For this brainstorming session, Frank divided the group into two smaller groups and handed them out a small piece of paper with boxes on it. Interestingly, Group 1 was new board members and Group 2 were the old timers. Each person was asked to write down three ways people could get to know other people better in the Forum. The ideas were not meant to be limited to just getting to know people on the Board better, although that was part of it. After the three ideas were written down, the papers were passed to the next individual, and they were asked to add more ideas, building off of the ideas on the paper. This went on for a while, and then Frank asked each group to write down their best ideas on a piece of paper. The ideas below were generated. Then Frank asked people to go and underline the best parts of these ideas. Below is the list as it appeared on the sheets:

Group 1 (new board members)

- Fall social meeting, nice setting as an incentive, reward in a unique corner of the state. Rotate who is in charge of meeting, responsibilities, choices. Leave family behind.
- Naked Twister. (Twister came first, then naked twister).
- Small committees, perhaps based on geography so people can meet face to face. Committee members do not need to be board members.
- Discuss career paths, goals, history and how Forum complements them.
- Exchange or make available personal information among board members, strengths and interests of board members, available on web in restricted section?
- Regional workgroups based on particular topic important to a region in New York.

Group 2 (old timers)

- Make being on the Board fun.
- Wetland problems in New York – a web chat room.
- Monthly lunch (regularly) for business and fun in three parts of the state for board and summarize what happened by e-mail.
- Field trip/Picnic Party/Canoe Trip for Board and membership.
- Have a more formal "Welcome/Farewell" ceremony for board members.
- Board members writing or speaking about vision for forum. Share on web. Have something similar to the SWS profiles that are written up by individuals running for board positions.
- Better committee structure to help accomplish work and communication.
- Membership survey.
- Increase number of state and federal representatives in the membership.

Frank's Summary:

Networking is Needed: It seems in this field that people need to get together either electronically or face to face to discuss issues. Get together by chat room, e-mail, newsletter or face to face.

You have reasons to meet: Networking, sharing information is useful in work. Regional meetings to know people better in an area. Ray suggested that meetings are important to address issues, address events beyond your control, and to obtain information about new regulations.

Talents and Expertise: It seemed like the group might not have a good handle on who has areas of expertise in particular areas. Develop a list of membership and bio. Start with the board members. Develop a two-line bio on each Board member descriptive of that individual. Have it as a hand out and on the web and in the newsletter.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement of the Forum: The New York State Wetlands Forum, Inc. is a non-advocacy organization comprised of individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds, interests and viewpoints regarding wetlands and their

science, use and management. Incorporated in 1994, the Forum is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Its purpose is to:

- improve communication among people interested in wetlands,
- call attention to and objectively discuss local, statewide, regional, national and global wetland issues as they relate to New York State,
- improve its members' knowledge and understanding of wetlands, and
- make available information about wetlands to its members and the general public.

Norbert Quenzer discussed the Mission of the Forum and compared it to the mission of the SWS and ASWM and others. The mission statement of the Forum is below. We touch a wide audience including scientists, attorneys, agency folks, consultants, regulators, environmental groups, landowners. The geography is New York State, and other issues as they relate to New York State. In general, the people who are involved with the Forum deal with wetlands on a regular basis. We do not want to be competitive with the other organizations out there. Norbert is going to be developing a spreadsheet to compare the Forum to the ASWM and the SWS to see what our niche is.

Frank had each individual write on a post-it whether or not they agreed, in general, with the mission statement, and what, if anything they would change. Below are the responses:

1. All individuals agreed with the mission statement. However many wanted to either improve its implementation or tweak its meaning.

Jeff: Need more involvement with local government and better ways to get information out to them.

Ray: The words "improve communication" are not strong enough and do not convey the action adequately. We need to find a way to do it better. Use groups to promote the Forum better and do more sharing. Get good...do better.

Diane: Need to reach a larger audience by reaching a larger public. Need to improve relationship with landowners so they can be educated.

Barb: Need to maintain our neutrality rather than appearing pro wetland. It is the only way we will get the people to our meetings we want to "educate". Makes no sense to preach to the choir.

Norbert: Mentioned that the word "non-advocacy" is in the mission statement. Need to implement better outreach.

Anne: Asked if there was a way to develop a policy paper for wetland development and protection that did not have values associated with it. If developer complied with such a program, perhaps it could increase certainty. This generated significant discussion. Norbert mentioned that the Wildlife Society and the SWS both write "white papers" on important issues stating their position. Barb mentioned that the USGA/GCSAA sponsored meetings on the environmental issues of golf course development with environmental groups and golf course developers and architects and out of this came a position paper on environmental design principals for new golf courses. It seemed that group agreed that Forum could facilitate a regional group discussing that issue to develop such a position paper, but not prepare the paper ourselves.

Sally: Indicated that Paula Marshman had thought that we could accomplish our mission by improving communication with ASWM/SWS and linking and making alliances with other groups.

Ray Cummings: Indicated that there is a perception that the Forum is "green" from the viewpoint of developers. Need to show developers the value of meeting with Forum – that networking and having more awareness of regulations helps them in the long run because they will make better decisions. Local governments will also make better decisions on projects if they understand wetland regulations.

Joe was then asked by Frank to summarize the mission statement and the feelings of the group

Joe: How we implement the ideas might change the long-range plan. Is frustrated by the fact that we generate ideas but do not implement them. Need to involve developers and legislators more, get rid of the perception that we are

green. Need to let them know that their view is welcome, they are welcome, and moreover, their involvement is helpful and healthy for the group. Wants to make up lists of developers in the area and invite them to annual meeting.

Frank suggested getting to know the state and federal legislative representatives and getting them knowledgeable and involved in Forum.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Frank discussed "long range planning." He wondered what our timeframe for a long-range plan was. He had the idea of "The Decade of the Forum." Why doesn't the Forum attempt to implement some of the most important ideas by January this year as short-term goals, and then attempt to implement the rest of the best to build to a grand celebration in the year 2004, which would be the decade of the Forum.

Some of the ideas Frank liked best are:

- *Having a canoe trip*
- *Networking with the regulators*
- *Recognition of new people*
- *Article interviewing members describing what they get out of being members of the Forum*
- *Local governments – what is in it for them?*
- *Speak to other groups, go out and see the developer*
- *Building relationships is important.*
- *Identify who the power players are in each group (i.e., business), which ones are most effective, and meet with them to discuss the Forum.*

ANOTHER MEETING?

The question was raised whether or not we should hold another meeting every year? Five individuals out of eight said two meetings per year was good. Three or four (the math doesn't add up, we know... vote early, vote often) said they would like another meeting kind of depending upon type:

Jennifer – hands on science like winter botany. Sally – economics of wetlands in the community. Barb – regional meetings and working groups. Norbert – specific topic related

Discussed the possibility of dividing the state up into regions, perhaps based on NYSDEC regions or geographic regions. It would make it easier to build membership, share information, network, get to leaders in the area, make meetings, disseminate information. The group decided that at this time, the Forum is was not really big enough to support regional "chapters". But, the group was very excited about identifying key contact people from each five or so regions in the state to have them help with membership, identifying regional issues and working groups.

Frank asked for Volunteers

Diane: Volunteered to organize local regional working groups to delegate some of our work to.

Jeff: Same as Diane.

Jennifer: Volunteered to prepare and issue announcements.

Barb: Volunteered to be an advisory resource. Done time already/writing up long range plan.

Norbert: Identify topics and informational resources.

Sally: As only non-wetlands professional, finds it difficult to stay in network and accomplish tasks. Knows the local land trusts but difficult to talk to people at 7 pm. Advise group.

Richard: Can set up meetings. Knows people to reach. Has student help.

Frank asked for volunteers later on for implementing Long Range Plan

Membership: Jennifer Chair with Joe and Rick helping out.

Mission Statement: Jeff, Sally and Norbert

Regional Meetings and Program: Diane, Barb and Anne

Information/Communication: Jennifer/Sally/Ray/Kevin/Teresia

Some Steps to Developing a Long-Range Plan

1. Identify the issues to be solved.
2. Identify possible solutions to those issues
3. Select the best and most feasible solutions to the issues.
4. Identify individuals to implement solutions.
5. Identify resources necessary for implementation.
6. Identify timeframe for implementation.
7. Implement solution and move on to next problem

STUDENTS AND PRE-PROFESSIONALS

Richard discussed the availability of students and pre-professionals and how to get them more involved in organization.

- Student memberships
- Use contributed work time towards payment
- Stress benefits of professional networking
- Have a job opportunity board at the annual meeting
- Regional meeting working group for students
- Have students help with logistics at meeting.
- Have students do poster sessions at meeting
- Have students matched up with professional for internship or mentoring
- Invite students to meeting for the cost of the meal with a poster session.
- Get an EPA Grant to help pay for students at meeting
- Student chapters

Discussed Sally's identification of resistance from SUNY Albany. She said that it was probably due to lack of time on students' and teachers' part, inertia or inability to get away. She acknowledged student working on the Town of Knox wetland project.

Group indicated that the long-range plan should include student involvement. RIT Faculty, SUNY Albany, Buffalo, Plattsburgh, Stony Brook, ESF all have wetland/water study programs. Area needs to be looked at and we need to go to the colleges for support.

While the Forum does not offer a "professional meeting" or journal (not peer reviewed), still, it is a good organization to be involved in due to networking opportunities.

Richard discussed Great Lakes Consortium and fact that students are involved in that group with regional meetings featuring student presentations (8 groups in Ontario and 16 groups in NYS) and 100 student and faculty attending. The student presentations and poster sessions are judged and prizes given out. Usually done during March break.

Jennifer mentioned that at the ASWM/NYSWF November meeting in Saratoga, Don Leopold brought 6 to 8 students who helped out at front desk in return for free registration.

INCREASING MEMBERSHIP

Frank had us write on post-its all the ideas we had for increasing membership. We then passed the post-its to the next person, and so on, building on the ideas we were reading from other people. He also asked us to brainstorm ideas thinking about gold and silver Hershey kisses and pictures of the boats on the wall. Once the post-its had made it around the room once (it did seem like twice), each person read the ideas off of the post-it in their hand and they were recorded on sheets of paper. Frank then had each person place a star next to those ideas they would like to see implemented by January 2001. Here are the ideas with those receiving the most stars first. The ideas have been organized somewhat into categories for ease of review.

Top Vote Getters

- (**) Mailings to targeted groups
- (**) Review and update membership database/Get agency lists to update mailing list database
- (**) Membership over the web
- (*) Better membership return mailing cards
- (*) Mailings to municipalities
- (**) Sponsor fun activities around wetland issues/boat trips and wetland tours
- (**) Presentations at other association meetings/Piggy back with other association meetings
- (*) Ten new members from each board member
- (*) Personal attention
- (*) Special benefits to individuals (members)
- (*) Reach out to local communities
- (*) Outreach to local environmental groups
- (*) Give assistance to students attending meetings
- (*) Better use of EPA Grant to attract new members
- (*) Bring the meetings to targeted groups so they can learn stuff without leaving town.
- (*) Speakers bureau
- (*) Facilitator/mediator for builders and developers
- (*) Newsletter articles on new members and why they became members
- (*) More wetlands information on website

"Free-bees"

- Free t-shirt drawing
- Members only reception
- Have a raffle for a yacht (or perhaps just a canoe)

Outreach and Education

- Outreach to developers
- Speakers bureau
- Presentations around state
- Sponsor regular or regulatory public forums
- Regional meetings
- Provide wetland field experience for key groups
- Key members present to local organizations
- White papers/position papers

Alliances

- Alliances with similar groups
- Identify groups in adjacent states
- Meet with legislators and politicians.
- Meet with the press – invite press to meetings
- Info about NYSWF in ASWM Wetlands Toolkit
- Suck up to developers and get them to attend meeting

Membership Mailings

Letters to nonmembers – a sweet letter. Let them know we are good on the inside

Internet

Better internet site information

Awards

- Gold and silver memberships
- Professional recognition awards
- Incentive awards especially to developers
- Provide annual gold and silver award for wetland contribution of the year

Networking

Kiss the regulator – a reception for regulators in New York State

Miscellaneous

- Membership for networkers?
- Wetland tours: the good, the bad and the ugly
- Presentations by key members
- Better food at meetings
- Boat/canoe trips and wetland tours
- Advertise in journals and publications
- Professional event in communities with protected wetlands

THE LOGO

Richard Smardon asked Frank to lead us on a brainstorming exercise to develop the key "elements" or "forms" that the group considered important in a Forum logo. Frank gave us all a large piece of paper and a marker. He asked us to pretend we were fourth graders, about 10 years old. He asked that we imagine what a wetland in New York State looked like. What are the main plants and animals in the wetland? What do wetlands look like from the air. What is the Forum all about. What does the Forum do? He then asked us to draw very simply the things we were visualizing. We then went up and showed everyone our drawings and described them.

Jeff: A book with words, a circle in the center of the book with wetland plants, and two hands shaking underneath.

Sally: A circle with five or so words emanating horizontally including "business", "preservation."

Jennifer: A person with a hat on the left, a cattail in the middle and a bulldozer on the right. The bulldozer could be development or it could be restoration.

Anne: Healthy wetland ecosystem drawing.

Norbert: Triangle with "science" "use" and "management", two frogs talking, and hand shaking.

Diane: Circle broken into four quadrants with pictures of wetland, development, regulations and mountains/rivers

Joe: Circle with words "wetland forum" on top, a picture inside of wetland/farm/residential, and bottom words "Balancing Wetland Issues."

Barb: New York State with two herons near Rochester saying "can we talk?"

Rick: Bridge over wetlands with two figures and words "Linking wetland issues."

Frank's summary:

Themes: Cattail, heron, water, bulldozers, people, hands, book or regulations, NY outline, circle

Location: Should be used in newsletter/web page in the upper left side

Visual: Needs to be something a 4th grader can relate to. Anne Secord and Terresa Bakner's kids will be the judges. Don't make it too complex.

Interaction: To show interaction, do not close the figures

Logo should make you feel not think

Due to the diversity of our membership, we might have the membership pick the logo from a selection given to them on newsletter, membership dues notice or e-mail.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

This was an exercise we seemed least ready to look at. Frank asked us how much operating money would the Forum need annually in the year 2004 to accomplish its goals. After much discussion, we agreed upon \$60,000 per year as a nice round number. This would give us \$30,000 for an executive director, \$15,000 for current annual expenses and \$15,000 for money market account. Frank asked us to brainstorm who could give us money and how much.

- NYS Legislative Line Item 10,000
- Great Lakes Research Consortium 30,000
- Increase in membership 3,000 to 5,000 (Joe)
- Increase in membership 1,000 new at \$25 25,000
- Meeting Income
- Sponsorships Telergy, Utilities, developers
- Raise vendor fees
- Grants 10,000
- Mitigation in lieu Fees for education
- State/Federal Funds
- Quality Community Smart Growth Funding
- Not for Profits (Isaac Walton, Ducks Unlimited)
- Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council 10,000
- Community Foundations 10,000
- EPA Educational Component Grant 10,000 to 15,000
- NYS Environmental Consulting Firms Match 10,000
- Corporate sponsors
- Bake Sales, T-Shirts, Mugs, silent auction of the canoe or duck stamp
- Diet Pepsi Corporate Fund Foundation
- State or stock beneficiary tax write-off (Save the county) 30,000
- EPA Funding
- JP Kapland
- National Science Foundation
- Private funding 5,000
- Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation
- Paper companies (Finch Pryne)
- NYS Canal Corporation money for waterfront revitalization education program
- Kellogg Foundation
- General Electric
- SUNY ESF
- Iroquois Pipeline Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- Fisheries Groups
- Price Chopper/Golub Foundation

- Phillip Morris
- Cities and Counties Association
- Council of Mayors
- Chase Bank
- Key Bank
- NOW WHAT

We all lead busy lives, both at work and at home. We are dedicated to our work, our professions, and our spouses and families.

By volunteering to serve on the Forum Board of Directors, you also dedicated yourself to serving this organization and its mission.

The strength, growth and excellence of the Forum is due to the efforts of past Boards and past presidents such as Norbert and Sally. Now it is your opportunity to step up and grow the potential of the Forum. As an added bonus, by making this effort, it is likely we can expand our volunteer base and spread out some of the work.

I think one has to be excited about the task at hand in order to be effective at implementing something voluntarily. I have been very excited about the concept of the Forum, and the ideal it represents. That is why I have dedicated so much of my time on the Board, as president, and now serving on the Long Range Planning Committee, and typing this conclusion at 2:00 AM.

I would like each of you to look deep into your heart now. I would like you to think about:

- why you decided to become a board member of the Forum;
- why the Forum is important to you;
- where you see the Forum in the year 2004, the year celebrating "the decade of the Forum."
- how you would prioritize the various ideas generated during the 18th for implementation (or not) in the short-term, and long term.

I know that Frank asked for volunteers during the meeting (see page 6), but you may have volunteered under duress.

So go ahead, take this opportunity to think about which ideas here excite you the most. If you think an idea is great, don't you want to take ownership of that idea and run with it? If you love an idea, wouldn't you be the best person to implement it? Imagine what you could do with one of these ideas. How you could grow the idea? What steps you would take to implement it? With that much enthusiasm, it would be easy.

You are getting excited about it aren't you? Well, quick, don't waste another minute. Sit down at your computer and write up a quick implementation plan for that portion and e-mail it back to me. I will combine those writings together to form the "implementation plan" portion of this long-range plan.

I'd like to hear from you by the first week in October. Thank you again for your help to date, and your continued efforts on behalf of the Forum.

APPENDIX A

CREATIVITY UNLIMITED'S BROCHURE

APPENDIX B

LONG RANGE PLANNING EFFORTS

Terresa Bakner's Ideas from Telephone Communication:

Structure for Board. Nobody has developed an SOP:

- what is expected of Board Member
- Insurance for Board Members (errors and omissions policy)
- Insurance for meetings
- Information on participation on NFP Boards/Leadership

Mission: Cannot endanger our neutral position. More important than ever given the difficulties developers are facing with the new federal regulatory program.

Meetings: Need to have more of debates. Keeps audience engaged and interested. Perhaps mock pre-application meeting with ACOE/NYSDEC. Need to get Sam Collison to annual meeting to explain ACOE NFPs. (Sam is head of Regulatory Branch at HQ in Washington DC).

Other Ideas: Need better grant management. Need an emeritus group. Need fresh blood. Need to encourage agency involvement.