

Natural Resources Work Group Meeting Notes

DATE	April 17, 2012
PURPOSE	Prepare for Community Meetings and Refine/Finalize Goals
FROM	Kristin Peppel
ATTENDEES	Steve Duckett, Lang Hornthal, Anne Keller, Steve Macleod, Michelle Pugliese , Valerie True, Dawn Godwin, Karen Cragnolan, Eric Caldwell, Kristin Peppel, Erica Anderson,

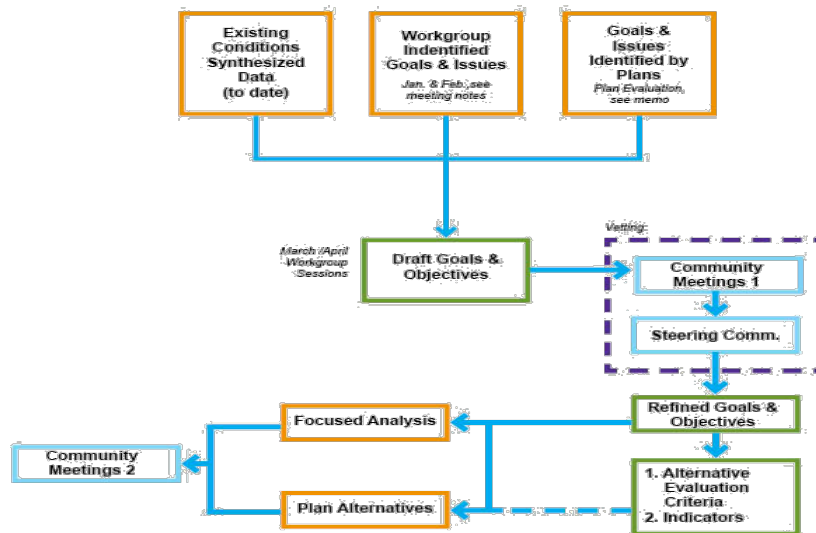
Introductions

Participant introduced themselves and each shared one thing they've seen at a public meeting that struck them as a really good and effective idea. Responses included:

- Anything that facilitates interactivity and physical interactions (voting with popsicle sticks example)
- World café style discussions where people rotate from table to table, discussing various questions and building on the responses from the group before it (2 people said this)
- Overview and ideas on the board that help get discussions going
- Use of powerful images and Word cloud that shows various values related to the topic (example – Buncombe County Greenway Mtgs)
- Asked people to say the first word they thought of when you think about a topic (example –Blue Ridge Parkway...in all the community meetings no word was said twice!)
- Mind mapping around a concept that is done visually on a wall or large sheet of paper
- The option to provide written comments so not to be put on the spot
- NO DOT VOTING (group agreed)
- Set ups that keep people moving through, so staff don't get cornered or stuck
- Kids station where they draw what they think is special about their place and then their drawings are used to illustrate the voice of children in the discussion
- Enough space – so there is room to move, without feeling so cramped that people don't want to stay
- Important for people to see how their ideas are important and that the decisions have not been predetermined. Not just “we want you to respond to what we did”, but “what do you want to do, what do you see”, etc.

Overview of the Process / Where we are

Kristin reviewed the flow diagram that describes the overall GroWNC process (next page), showing the group where we are (refining goals and objectives and preparing for the first opportunity to vet these with the public in the Community Meetings. We then previewed the next Project Team meeting and discussed the format and focus on goals at that meeting.



Community Meeting Discussion

Ideas for the NR Station

- Use the “one word” example that Dawn provided by having a poster with the question, “What do you value about our region’s natural resources. Have markers available so people can draw, decorate, express this value however they choose. A wall behind the tables (if possible) would be ideal for something like this.
- Hire a “word-all” artist who can graphically depict conversations
- Keep the information SIMPLE and focus on concepts
- Focus on the things we CELEBRATE– and not so much on issues, problems.
- Focus on regional as much as possible and what we all SHARE.
- Maps are often distracting if they don’t directly relate to the information being collected. Want maps to be used only to illustrate the interconnectivity within our region and not all of the other details. Green infrastructure map is the best map to show this. Looked at the list of maps from Land Design (on ppt slide) and group didn’t want any other maps other than regional GI map.
- Would be great to have a map that showed the economic drivers across the region – but wasn’t sure that this existed
- Would be great to have a visual way to show the interdependence between Asheville and rural areas to help decrease animosity and help folks recognize the important role that Asheville has in supporting their economies.
- Be careful with the titles we use for things – pay attention to wording (no “buffers”)



- Identify one picture for each goal to use with each goal statement. Some suggested bringing in 3D items to display (hiking boots, fresh food, etc.). Kristin shared Kate's idea of using trading cards to get a sense of what people value the most based on the goal statements.
- Use diagrams to show how all of the various values /inputs fit into the bigger picture. Group really liked the idea of using the river as the main graphic, showing how the headwater streams flow into it at various points. This could depict all the ways that the value (or loss) of a resource impacts the region (economy, health, costs, energy consumption, etc.)
- Have local food guides (ASAP) at station
- Michelle offered to bring an old window frame that SAHC uses to display photos that relate to their work. We could use this and swap out the photos for those which would correlate with our goals
- Ask people to give examples of where good work/projects/efforts are happening in their communities that illustrate the goals and concepts presented at the NR station. Important to continue to build on successes and celebrations.
- Easy to read/understand charts that compare costs of protection/management versus restoration/clean-up. Specific examples the group suggested are restoration of wetlands and other degraded natural systems; food supply/value of farmland; waterways/stream clean ups, and Low Impact Development, and land conservation. Good sources of information are Land For Tomorrow, NC Rural Center, Center for Watershed Protection. Make sure to include sources on these charts.
- Group discussed showing current funds available for land conservation compared to previous funding (before cuts), but decided that these numbers can be misleading to folks who don't understand the true costs involved in land conservation.
- Groups want to have written goals available for folks to take home if they choose

Ideas for the Broader Community Meetings

- The group expressed the importance of having small group and one-on-one conversations with folks to listen to their ideas, responses, and general thoughts on the event as a whole and on the NR station. The suggestion that the group liked the best was to have a "stop" every hour on the hour and have facilitators (staff) lead small group discussions wherever people are to capture immediate feedback and generate conversation amongst attendees.
- Folks commented on the importance of people understanding where we currently are in the process, how their input is being used, and what the next steps are. Erica and I responded that we thought this was the purpose of the "process" station.
- Make a greenway/path on the floor that invites people to go to each station that winds through all of the stations. Additional signage and arrows done in this same theme may entice people to stop at each station.
- Make sure that staff are available to have one on one conversations with folks- "floating staff" who can sit down with someone and have a more personal conversation if the interest arises, without feeling pulled

away to other responsibilities. This person / people can wear name tag that says ““Want to talk” (or something like that)

- Have a quiet space off to the side with chairs where people can rest, or spark up conversations with others. Have this near the food area.
- Karen Cragolan talked about the “BE THERE” Wheel they created (See below) for the Wilma Dykeman Riverway and how valuable it was to have a visual that conveys the various values associated with that project. The group discussed how valuable it would be to have a visual representation of the interconnectivity within the region related to the various topics/spheres by which this project has been organized.



- Ask people to bring photos of the things that they celebrate in their neighborhoods/communities/places and have a tent or some areas where these pictures can be displayed. Suggested that we have a scanner there so we can scan and print the photos and then immediately return them to folks (assuming people give permission to have photos copied).
- Make sure we have enough space so people don't feel cramped and space feels inviting.
- Have large poster paper on the wall (horizontal) asking folks the question, “**What do we share regionally?**”
- Have debrief immediately after meeting so staff and volunteer can share information while it is fresh
- Make the meeting feel generational and emphasize that the plan is a living document.

Refining the Goals for the Community Meeting



The group reviewed the survey monkey results and discussed the 9 condensed goals for the community meetings. From this list the group was able to further consolidate them into 4 broad categories, 6 goals, and identified two strategies that should still be noted, though in a different way.

A STRONG ECONOMY

- Goal 1: The region actively supports sustainable farming and forestry practices and invests in the necessary infrastructure to ensure a strong, vital farm community that provides at least 10% of foods locally
- Goal 2: The region has significantly decreased the rate in which it is losing high quality farm/ forestlands and prime soils.
- Goal 3: The region invests in eco-tourism as a key economic driver, supporting collaborations, land and water conservation, stewardship, promotion, and educational or support infrastructure.

LAND AND WATER

- Goal 4: The region's decision- makers, community leaders, and landowners recognize that sustaining high quality natural habitats enhance and sustain the region's economy and overall quality of life for its residents, and maintain or improve water resources, air quality, biodiversity and scenic viewsheds.

WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY

- Goal 5: The region recognizes the importance of connectivity between protected lands by managing wildlife and recreation corridors for biodiversity and protecting unfragmented forest blocks.

HEALTH

- Goal 6: Residents recognize the health and restorative benefits associated with outdoor recreation and regularly take advantage of opportunities throughout the region.

KEY STRATEGIES THAT WILL ENABLE OUR REGION TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS

- Policies and planning efforts prioritize protection of habitats that support resilient communities and a positive response and adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- The region has dedicated sources of funding that support land and water conservation.

Next Steps



- Kristin will send out the finalized Community Meeting dates once they are confirmed.
- A small group of folks expressed interest in working on some of the ideas suggested in today's meeting. This group will be meeting on Wednesday, May 2 at 11:00 am at a location TBD.