

AOC Citizen's Advisory Committee – OUTREACH

04/21/2014

UWGB

Participants: Dotty, Kathy, Janet, Patricia, Angela, Annette, Laurel

Guest: Dan Robinson, Brown County, WI Board Supervisor

Facilitator: Julia

1) Takeaways from previous meeting with Staush

- Telling a personal story
- Building and maintaining good relationships
- Keeping it positive

A question that remains: How to educate people who are unknowledgeable?

2) Dan Robinson

- People care when they have time to do so
 - o How to sort through all the activities of life to pay attention to those important issues?
- County Board Supervisor is a part time gig – given the amount of time allocated to committee responsibilities, there is not much left to focus on outside issues
 - o Q: Isn't water quality a public health concern? A: This is a reflection of how the GL are perceived – as an economic resource
- Use of tax money is a defining issue, BUT there are a range of others:
 - o Public safety
 - o Quality of life
- Cast issues in a way that doesn't cost local tax \$
 - o Signing off on letters is one activity with no cost
- Shorter term gain is more important than future costs, however there is some sense that investment is needed
- Local elected officials listen to their CONSTITUENTS, but we receive very few calls from them
- Q: Are there any anti-federal funding issues that we should understand? A: No, only with the Affordable Care Act
 - o Water quality funds (e.g. GLRI) are an easy sell to local officials
 - o Comment: seems like there is no incentive for local government employees to apply for grants. Re: Adding staff might be one
- Relationship building:
 - o EOs are used to people asking them for \$ -- Flip to ask: how you can help make things easier for the EOs?
 - o Experiential activities are great, but getting people to show up will be harder
- Q: Did "dead zone" get any local attention at the local level? A: No, not really. EOs will not probably search out info unless they are interested in knowing.

3) Needs Assessment Survey

- **Primary objective:** to learn about our audience's perspective/values/concerns in order to target activities and messages most effectively.

- **St Louis Estuary AOC takeaways (pre-dredging):**
 - The St. Louis River is a tremendous resource that has a distinct identity as both an industrial working port and a hub for nature and outdoor recreation – outreach should acknowledge this dual identity;
 - Since the 1970s, the St. Louis River has become progressively cleaner, but many threats still face the river – outreach should be clear about the strengths and limitations of the AOC remediation and restoration
 - As hotspots and degradation are addressed, improvements on the river will largely be localized – outreach must be vigilant when discussing the health of the river as messages may sometimes seem contradictory
 - Because the St. Louis River is large and complex, collaboration is an essential aspect of the AOC program, including the Spirit Lake project – outreach should contain simple messaging, be collaborative, and clarify how the Spirit Lake remediation fits into the larger delisting effort
 - Spirit Lake is an important site locally for the Fond du Lac Band, the Morgan Park neighborhood, and community leaders – outreach must recognize that Spirit Lake and the larger St. Louis River are important to stakeholder identity
- **Sheboygan River AOC takeaways (post-dredging):**
 - Significant improvements to recreation and perception have been observed – outreach should highlight these benefits to show how the river has improved.
 - Major economic impacts have not yet been observed but are expected to occur in time – outreach should emphasize that some economic benefits take time, so that when change does occur, the community attributes it to the cleanup work.
 - Benefits to fish and wildlife are predicted, but there is uncertainty as to when the impacts will be realized – outreach should provide basic information on the current scientific understanding of the relationship between sediment remediation and the health of fish and wildlife populations.
 - Much of the change that took place was not visible, and momentum is needed to keep the river clean and address emerging threats – outreach should remind the public how the river has changed and promote stewardship to maintain cleanliness while communicating the health of the river and appropriate use of it.
 - A mixed media approach is most effective for raising public awareness about remediation and restoration – an outreach approach that combines local media, information at public areas, and exclusive mailings will be most effective for reaching a diverse public.
- **Brainstorm session of possible survey questions**
 - What is the most important aspect of the river for you?
 - What do you value the most about the river?
 - What are the biggest problems/threats to the river?
 - Do you think this matters to your constituents?
 - How does water quality rank in your priority areas?
 - Do you think there are other things besides spending \$ that I can help do?
 - Water quality in terms of drinking water
 - DR comment: what can I do? Vote? Who's in the rooms during the vote matters (i.e. constituents)
 - Staff time dedicated to project/grant
 - Communication with other officials higher up the food chain
 - Shifting \$ in budget