

# ST. CROIX CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SPEAKER SERIES

- Purpose: To explore & discuss new ideas for encouraging authentic civic engagement in watershed projects in the St. Croix Basin.
- To increase the collective understanding of civic engagement and how it can be encouraged and supported with the St. Croix River Basin.
- Setting the Stage: Why it matters

Sept. 2010- Jan 2012



# WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT?

- Much confusion exists about what it means
- Many people think it is simply—
  - ❖ more public participation (public meetings, newsletters, speeches, open houses, etc.)
  - ❖ information and education programs
  - ❖ talking to citizens in person or by phone

However, civic engagement is something else....



# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DEFINITION

“Making resourceful decisions and taking collective action on public issues through processes of public discussion, reflection and collaboration. ”

-- *Minnesota Extension Service*



# SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Increasing Level of Public Impact



**Inform**

Provide Information

**Consult**

Obtain feedback on analysis or decisions

**Involve**

Work directly with public to understand public aspirations and consider them

**Collaborate**

Partner with public in decision making, including development of alternatives and solutions

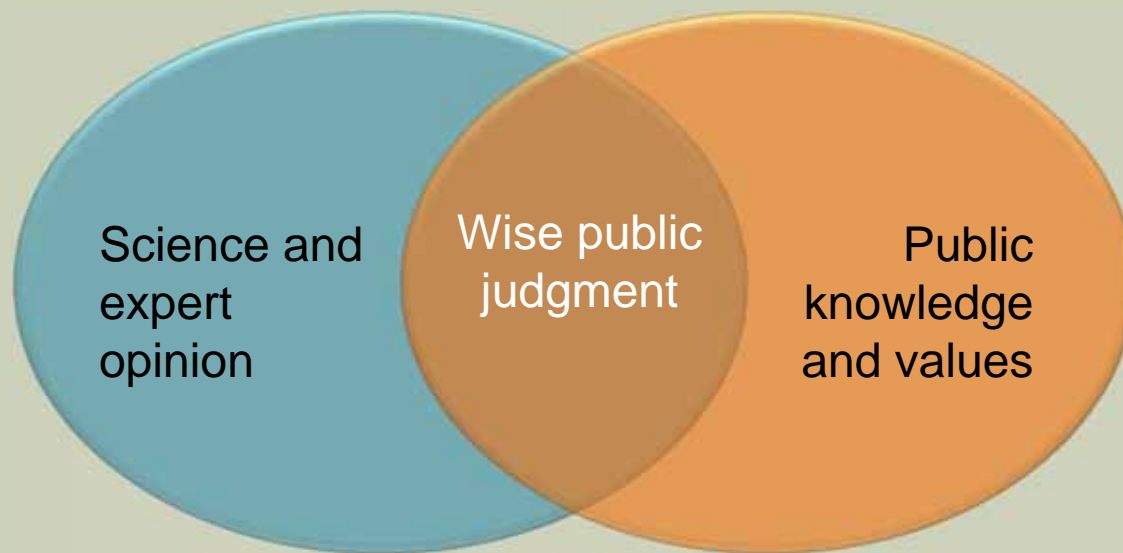
**Empower**

Place final decision making in hands of the public

Source: IAPP

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IS FOREMOST A SHIFT IN PHILOSOPHY ABOUT GOVERNANCE AND THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN OUR WORK

Collaborating with, empowering  
the public – a balancing act



# WHY IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AN IMPORTANT TOPIC?

Great progress made:

- Wastewater treatment
- Septic Tanks
- BMPs
- Wellhead protection
- Others

However, we seem to have "hit the wall"

Goal  
of  
Clean  
Water

# NEXT HORIZON: AUTHENTIC CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Builds trust and relationships
- Trust = relationships
- Relationships = getting work done





# AT THE HEART OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Genuine Discussion (dialogue and deliberation)
- Reflection
- Collaboration





# TWO PARTNERS IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Community
2. Conveners

Conveners have a significant responsibility for creating a safe and collaborative environment for all who participate

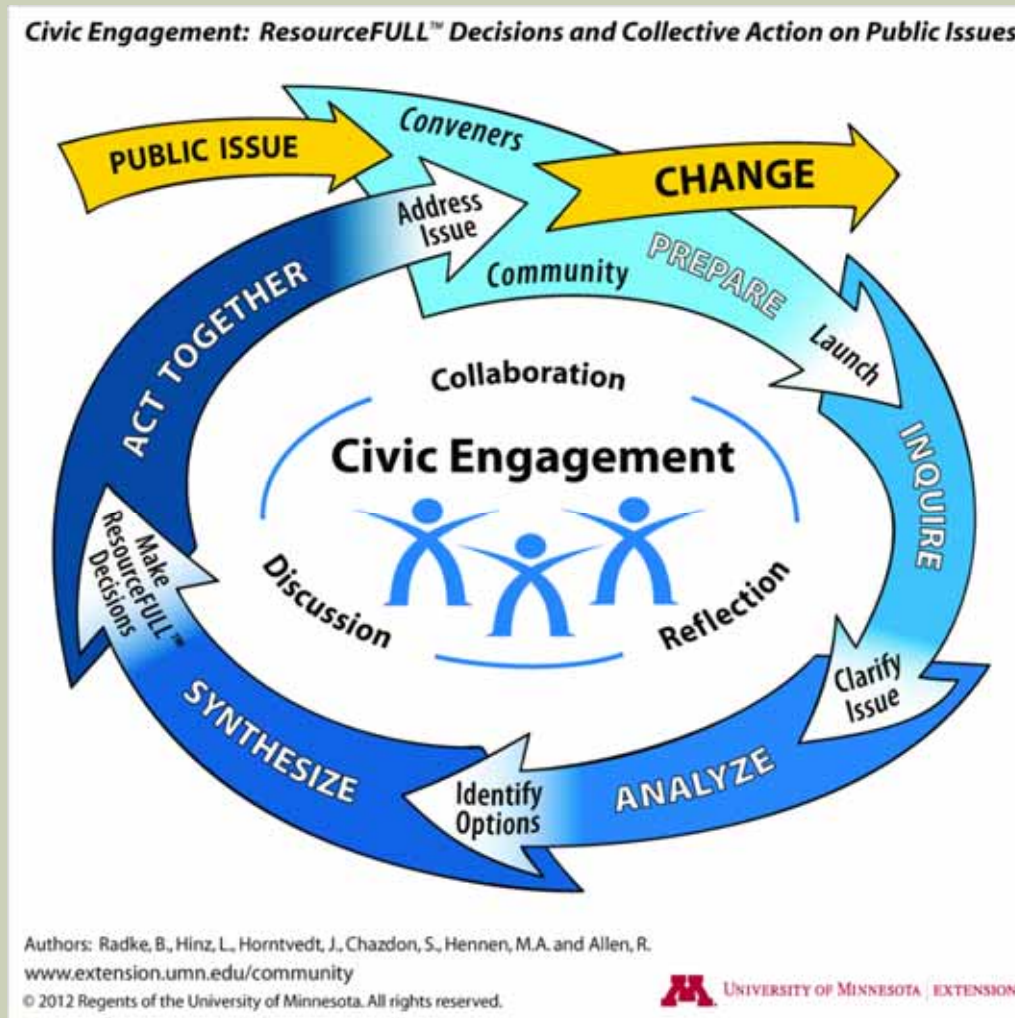


# MUST HAVES FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

1. Credible scientific data
2. Appropriate people (those impacted by problem)
3. Constructive process grounded in democratic principles



# APPROACH TO PROCESS DESIGN



Authors: Radke, B., Hinz, L., Horntvedt, J., Chazdon, S., Hennen, M.A. and Allen, R.

[www.extension.umn.edu/community](http://www.extension.umn.edu/community)

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# APPROACH TO PROCESS DESIGN

- Prepare – understand the community readiness , assets, challenges, history, understand stakeholders
- Inquire – frame the issue with the community and understand it
- Analyze – generate options and understand tradeoffs inherent in each
- Synthesize – Match issue and solutions, reach decisions, develop plan.
- Act Together – Collective action





# HOWEVER...

before we begin engaging, we must understand why we are doing so



# Civic Principles and Why They Matter



US culture and society embrace the idea that people should have the right to influence what affects them –

People should have a voice

Civic principles articulate such democratic values and ground our work





# WHAT IS A PRINCIPLE?

Literal meaning - *“A governing rule of conduct”*

- Principles define the identity, obligations, practice and purpose for our civic engagement actions
- They are aspirational in nature



# WHAT IS A PRINCIPLE?

- In a democracy, principles are based on transcendent, democratic ideals (values) that can be claimed by all and that apply to all
- Cannot stand alone
- Need to be embedded in institutions to have real meaning and sustain democracy



# CIVIC PRINCIPLES

- Civic Principles transcend a particular individual, institution, or sector of society
- Civic principles are the basis for governing for the common good



# EXAMPLES OF CIVIC PRINCIPLES

- Human Capacity to Govern for the Common Good
- Active Citizenship
- Transparency



## HOW MANY OF US...

- have our own deep democratic principles that drive us?
- work for organizations that are driven by democratic principles?
- if asked, could articulate these principles, why they matter and how they influence your work?





# CIVIC PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE ARTICULATED

- Important to tell the public what your organization stands for
- Principles become a common basis for governing and holding us accountable for upholding democratic values
- Principles frame and drive all civic engagement actions and make it real, authentic



## WITHOUT PRINCIPLES...

- there is no clear foundation, no expectations for transforming our relationship with citizens
- civic engagement can become a lot of “activities” that don’t add up to sustainable democratic institutions, meaningful change or authentic citizen involvement





# A FIRST STEP IN CHANGING OUR APPROACH

Encouraging local partners  
to adopt their own civic  
principles



# THE ROLE OF CITIZENS IN WATER GOVERNANCE

- Engaging Citizens in an Authentic & Timely Way- Citizen League
- Re-imagining the Citizen Role in Collaborative Watershed Mgt.
- Citizen Activism in the MN River Basin- Documentary, "River Revival: Working Together to Save the Minnesota River"



# Community Capacity Strategic Planning





# TO THE SOURCE

## Moving Minnesota's Water Governance Upstream – Engaging Citizens in an Authentic & Timely Way

*Report of the Citizens League, November 2009*



TO THE SOURCE: MOVING MINNESOTA'S  
WATER GOVERNANCE UPSTREAM



# WHO'S RESPONSIBLE TODAY?

- Perception that clean water is government's responsibility
- Reinforced by what we've set up – minimal role for citizens
- No one satisfied with citizen participation processes
- Government will never have enough staff or resources to “fix” the problem



# NEW MODEL OF WATER GOVERNANCE

- People who live and work in a watershed are in the best position to reduce nonpoint source pollution
- Must engage the public as problem-solvers





# COMO LAKE - COMMUNITY EXAMPLE



Janna  
Caywood,  
Como Lake  
Neighbor  
Network



# THE ENEMY



# COMO LAKE NEIGHBORS





# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REQUIRES CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT GOVERNING

- A belief in human capacity to govern for the common good
- Encouraging the public to carry out their obligations as citizens
- Supporting active citizenship (the role that obligates all citizens to govern for the common good)
- Building effective institutions—improving existing organizations in order to sustain democracy and citizenship

- Lynne Kolze , MPCA



# SO, WHAT DO WE DO?

- One logical response is to strengthen the abilities of people to respond to “wicked” problems
- Good civic engagement strategies can help to expand practical know-how and enhance the capacity of people to govern for the common good



# BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

- Civic engagement seeks to build community capacity to self-govern so that it is *sustainable*
- When people begin to see their part in creating policy – they no longer seeing themselves as victims or as powerless
- Allows the public to become open to the possibilities and to look beyond individual gain



# Defining & Exploring the Potential of Civic Engagement

When communicating with the public in a meeting...

- Be clear what the ask is
- Be clear what the roles are
- Be clear to what end
- Use the right tools

- *BARBARA RADKE, UNIVERSITY OF MN EXT SERVICE*



# DEFINING & EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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# KNOW THE COMMUNITY

## Community Assessments in Watershed Projects: Dr. Mae Davenport, U of MN, Dept of Forestry

- What are community capacities for and constraint to sustainable watershed management?
  - To be effective Ed & Outreach
  - Increase awareness and concern about consequences
  - Enhance personal responsibility
  - Make WMO more visible in communities
- October 20, 2011



# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

## Envisioning a Better Future Through Dialogue and Understanding Innovations in Engaging the Public

- Performance Base Management.
- Patrick Moore, Clean Up Our River Environment, Montevideo, MN
- Warren Formo, Agricultural Coalition for Water Resources (Formerly MN Corn Growers Association) November 17, 2011



# PERFORMANCE BASED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS FOR AGRICULTURE

## Watershed Councils

Residents work together as a watershed community on environmental goals.

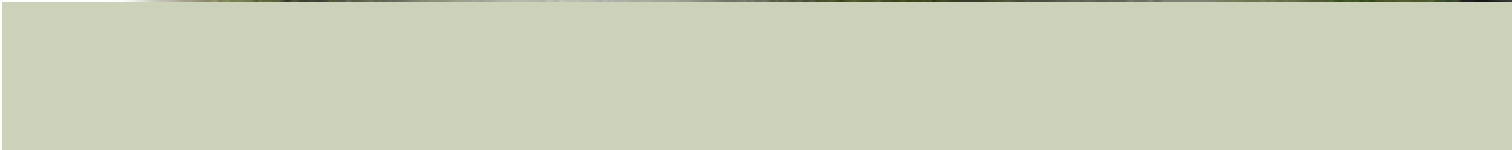
- Non-profit status
- Regular meetings
- Establish water monitoring
- Use outside information and gather local data
- Develop incentive structure
- 12/5/12



# FARMER-LED COUNCIL PILOT PROJECT

- Goal – accelerate restoration of water quality by engaging citizens in the process- 2010
- Establishment of Farmer-Led Council
- Establishment of Citizen Advisory Panel

*Whitewater River Watershed Project*









# EVALUATING HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF WATER QUALITY PROCESS

What are social outcomes?

- Does a targeted audience increase their *knowledge* about a particular problem?
- Do their *attitudes and opinions* change in a positive direction?
- Does the audience *adopt a recommended practice*?
- Is that *practice maintained* over time?



- Can these social actions be linked to biophysical improvements in water quality?

- Dr. Karlyn Eckman, UM, Water Resources Center



# EXPLORE MODELS FOR CREATING UNDERSTANDING, COMMON GROUND & HOPE...

...between organizations and individuals that care about and want to protect water

- Discuss additional methods/ opportunities for bringing diverse organizations and individuals to the table and how to keep them coming back for more



# ST. CROIX APPROACH TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- New approach to water governance
- Tap our collective capacity
- Develop basin team civic engagement vision
- Use civic engagement in Education & Outreach
- What can we do working together
- WRAP UP...Jan 19, 2012



CIVIC  
ENGAGEMENT:  
WHAT IT IS,  
WHY IT MATTERS, AND  
WHY CIVIC PRINCIPLES  
SHOULD GROUND THIS  
WORK

John Haack  
UW Extension  
Regional  
Natural  
Resources  
Educator



# DEFINITION OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

“Making public decisions and taking collective actions through processes that involve discussion, reasoning, and citizen participation rather than through the exercise of authority, expertise, status, political weight, or other such forms of power.”

- *Elano Fagatto and Archon Fung*

**Dialog NOT a Debate**





# GOOD PROCESS DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

- Design of dialogue through the five stages of the cycle are critically important
- Case in point – Chisago County Water Planning

