

MEETING REPORT

REGION III STAFF STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE IDENTIFICATION MEETING

Location: Wedgewood Resort, Fairbanks

Dates: October 23-25, 2001

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OPENING REMARKS:

Regional Supervisor, Mac Minard opened the strategic planning session with an enthusiastic explanation of why the Division of Sport Fish is embarking on this strategic planning process and what it means to Region III.

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

Mark Burch explained where we were in the strategic planning process and how both staff and the public will be involved in the future.

VALUES AND VISION:

Mac Minard described the values of the Division of Sport Fish as articulated by Division Leadership. He further explained how they formed the foundation for the vision statement, which was distributed to staff.

MEETING PRODUCTS AND APPROACH:

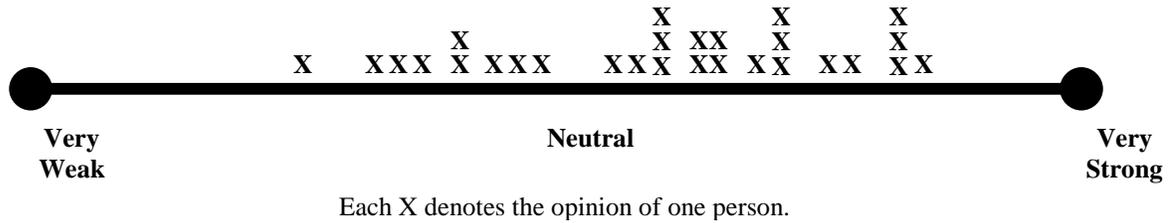
Mark Burch and Jim Schwarber lead the group through a process where participants answered three questions related to how well the Division of Sport Fish is currently attaining its vision. The large group was broken into four smaller groups for this part of the meeting. Later the whole group reconvened to compare notes, compile and further define the issues.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ *Question 1:* How well are we doing in meeting the Sport Fish Division vision?
- ❖ *Question 2:* What issues, factors, and opportunities are sustaining our progress toward meeting the vision?
- ❖ *Question 3:* What issues or factors are restraining our progress?



Individuals answered question 1 within their small group. A figure showing the combined response is shown below.



Cumulative Summary of sustaining and restraining factors:

Region III staff took the time to flesh out and further define some of the major issues as shown below. The purpose for this additional step was to assist the DLT, through Mac Minard, to better understand the main issues identified by the breakout groups.

Question 2, Sustaining Factors:

The group identified **servicing our constituents** as a sustaining factor. The idea that users pay contributes to this strength. They were concerned that the public might misconstrue the concept of constituent. Some rural residents are more subsistence users than “sport”, but they seek service at the Sport Fish office in Glenallen. The public expects all Fish and Game staff to represent the entire Department. Therefore, rural staff must do a broader scope of work when all divisions are not represented in the area office.

Operational planning and peer review were also recognized as strengths. The division conducts good science/research.

Staff recognized the **Budgeting** process as a factor that sustains the Division. The process is project leader driven and provides for flexibility and discretion. We also have a good expense tracking procedure. Along with a good budgeting process, the Division enjoys **consistent and adequate funding.**

Competent and dedicated Staff are a tremendous asset to the Division. The group thought that staff tend to be compatible with each other. They get along. The group discussed the

importance of training and felt it tended to be opportunistic and can conflict with the summer schedule. There is a need to assess training needs across staff functions. Employee evaluations could be used to identify training needs. They also thought that individual training plans should be developed. The group recommended setting aside money in the regional budget for training, e.g. outboard motor training. Each project needs to include a training line item. **Continuing education** is an important part of maintaining competent staff. The group also thought it was good that staff are **personally connected to resources**. Resources are important to staff and they spend personal time recreating outdoors.

The group thought **partnering** was an important factor in the success of the Division. They defined partnering to include two-way communication, working with and involving various diverse interests. They saw partnering in a political context.

Healthy Resources including habitat, fish stocks and the stocking program sustain the effort to meet the Division of Sport Fish vision. Additional sustaining factors included the **Board of Fish regulatory process, management plans and strategies**, and **information and education programs**.

Question 3: Restraining Factors

Staff recognize that internal and external **communication** problems negatively affect the Division in its efforts. External problems include communication with other agencies and the public. The public, especially in rural Alaska doesn't know what we do. Communication with the media is not adequate. Communication within the Division of Sport Fish can also be a problem. One example cited was a lack of information exchange with I&E staff. Another problem is that email intended for everyone in Sport Fish does not reach employees who are shared with other Divisions such as the Division of Wildlife Conservation. Modes of communication are not always effective and tend to be top down.

Staff mentioned **difficulty in obtaining public input** as a related problem. Media roles are unclear and staff have a hard time engaging them. The Division tends to be reactive rather than proactive toward the media. There is too much reliance on written media and not enough on TV. Staff believe anti-state sentiment has resulted from past abuses of public involvement processes by ADF&G and other agencies. Language barriers (e.g. Yupik) can contribute to the problem, especially since there is a lack of staff with Native language skills. Staff called for training in cross-cultural communication. The group discussed reaching out to seniors and youth. The question came up of how to best reach rural Alaska given the size of Region III. Some thought that having walk in visitors complete a survey would help the Division define its users.

Even though funding was listed as a sustaining factor, **funding reductions** were listed as a restraining factor. Staff pointed to the lag between identifying a need and obtaining funding as a problem. Timing of the fiscal year makes the situation worse. Lag between area reviews and budgeting for projects, differing software, lack of understanding of the process, leave adjustments, vacancy factors, lack of criteria for budgeting among regions, and no consideration of inflation were all cited as contributing to the funding problem.

Conflicting state and federal management systems are restraining the Division's progress in attaining its vision. Staff recognized the political reality of this situation. **Access** to public lands across both private and public lands is a problem, as is the loss of public lands. Other problems listed included; **shifting management needs, administrative rules and policies, lost data and data gaps in biological data**, as well as **improvements to the hatchery system**.

PARTICIPANTS:

Richard Barnes, Larry Boyle, Mark Burch, John Burr, Sara Case, Dave Davenport, Fred DeCicco, Steve Donalson, Mike Doxey, Matt Evenson, James Fish, Doug Fleming, Nancy Greiner, Andy Gryska, Angie Hickman, Julie Kietzman, Bob Lafferty, Mac Minard, Susan Pace, Fronty Parker, Lin Perry-Plake, Dan Reed, Don Roach, David Sarafin, James Savereide, Brendan Scanlon, Jim Schwarber, Rita Stadtmiller, David Stoller, Lisa Stuby, Charlie Swanton, Chris Vaughan, Tim Viavant, and Klaus Wuttig

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