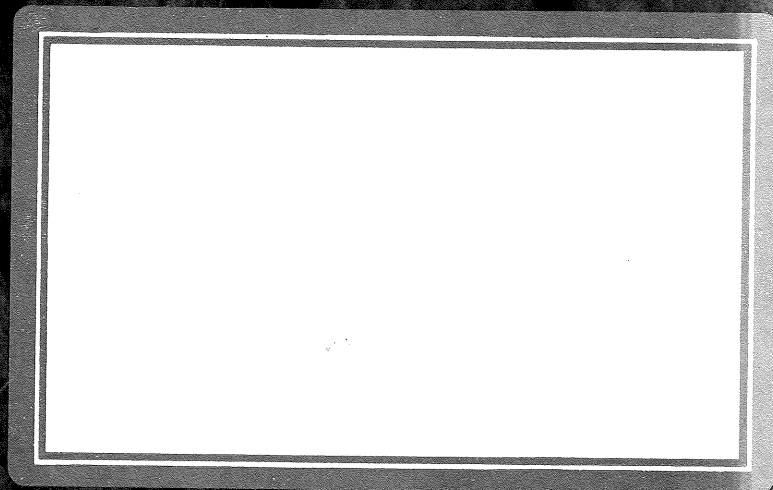


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**DNR NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION  
PLANNING INITIATIVE  
FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT  
APPENDIX**



Prepared by:  
**Natural Resources Education Committee  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
July, 1991**

**APPENDIX**  
**NREC STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE**  
**FOCUS GROUP SPECIFIC RESULTS**

***Introduction***

As part of DNR's Natural Resources Education strategic plan development, seven focus groups were conducted with selected educators, natural resource education specialists, representatives from sporting and conservation groups, and local industries in each of the DNR regions. The purpose was to receive information to help clarify DNR's role with respect to environmental/natural resources education. The specific results from each of these focus groups are included in this Appendix.

In addition to the constituent focus groups, another meeting was conducted with department staff. The same questions were asked on DNR staff as were asked of the public; however, the results of the DNR focus group have a departmental perspective.

***Focus Group Process***

The Natural Resources Education Committee (NREC) appointed a subcommittee to design the process for conducting the focus groups and to develop the questions to be asked at each of the meetings.

The subcommittee developed questions designed to gather information on what DNR's constituents think are the most important needs for environmental education and how the DNR could best meet those needs. Another goal was to gain a better understanding of the public's awareness of DNR's current programs. In addition, a question was developed to help determine if there is any perceived difference in the terminology "environmental education" and "natural resources education." The results of this question would assist the NREC in defining the department's role in providing educational programs. The subcommittee recommended a total of six questions to be asked at each focus group.

The subcommittee recommended that focus groups be conducted in each DNR region of the state. They identified a range of types of groups to be represented at each meeting and developed a process outline for scheduling the focus group, including working with Regional Administrators to identify specific participants and to assist with the logistical arrangements. The subcommittee then developed a package of materials that was sent to each invitee to each focus group prior to the meeting and designed the focus group follow-up procedures.

The NREC as a whole recommended that a focus group also be conducted with DNR staff. This meeting would provide an opportunity to test the questions prior to the Regional focus groups, to train NREC members in conducting a focus group, and to receive an internal perspective on the state of environmental/natural resources education. The NREC also recommended that two focus groups be held in the Twin Cities Metro Region to accommodate the cities and suburban areas.

The DNR focus group was held April 16, 1991, and was facilitated by two members from the Office of Planning. NREC members attended the meeting to observe how to conduct a focus group and met afterward with the facilitators to ask questions and share observations.

The Regional focus groups were held during the month of May. NREC members formed team of two facilitators for each of the Regional focus groups. Each team was responsible for contacting participants and for making the logistical arrangements, all in cooperation with the Regional Administrators.

Following each focus group, the facilitators compiled the results and sent a copy to each participant for review and comment. The final results of all focus groups were then compiled to form this report. The Regional focus group results are presented first, followed by the DNR focus group results.

**NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

Region I  
Bemidji, MN - May 20, 1991

**Question #1**

**What Do You Believe Are the Most Important Needs Today?**

1. We need education on lake management, water quality and forest management.
2. We need to promote public stewardship.
3. We need to educate people about the interconnectedness of the environment and biodiversity.
4. We need to educate people about the impact of lifestyles and promote the understanding of humans as part of the environment.
5. We need to promote an understanding of interrelationships and tradeoffs.
6. We need to educate teachers (elementary and secondary).
7. We need to provide people with an understanding of ecological and biological principles. Formal and informal education is needed. We need a literate electorate.
8. We need to educate people on solid waste management.
9. We need education for those making decisions at local and state levels (planning commissions).
10. We need to target efforts to those who can influence decisions (opinion leaders).
11. We need to create a broad environmental awareness. We need more integration of environmental education into other curricula - social, arts, etc. (not just science).
12. We need to focus on the young.
13. We need to provide hands on opportunities.
14. We need funding to back the system from the grass roots level.
15. We need to define DNR's role in environmental education.
16. We need to communicate DNR environmental education programs available to people who can use them.
17. We need to investigate whether or not DNR can serve as coordinating body for environmental education.
18. We need to provide an understanding of rural issues to metro residents, who comprise 60% of the state's population.
19. We need to layout work units, projects and programs with 4H--broaden 4H to include hands on environmental learning opportunities.
20. We need to set priorities for target audiences.

## **Question #1 Priority Actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).**

### **GROUP 1 (12 points)**

We need to provide people with an understanding of ecological and biological principles. Formal and informal education is needed. We need a literate electorate.

We need to educate people about the interconnectedness of the environment and biodiversity.

We need to educate teachers (elementary and secondary).

### **GROUP 2 (8 points)**

We need to educate people about the impact of lifestyles and promote the understanding of humans as part of the environment.

We need to educate people on solid waste management.

We need to promote an understanding of interrelationships and tradeoffs.

We need to promote public stewardship.

### **GROUP 3 (8 points)**

We need to set priorities for target audiences.

We need to target efforts to those who can influence decisions (opinion leaders).

We need to focus on the young.

We need to communicate DNR environmental education programs available to people who can use them.

We need to provide an understanding of rural issues to metro residents, who comprise 60% of the state's population.

We need education for those making decisions at local and state levels (planning commissions).

### **GROUP 4 (7 points)**

We need to provide hands on opportunities. We need to layout work units, projects and programs with 4-H - broaden 4H to include hands on environmental learning opportunities.

We need to investigate whether or not DNR can serve as coordinating body for environmental education.

### **GROUP 5 (3 points)**

We need to create a broad environmental awareness. We need more integration of environmental education into other curricula - social, arts, etc. (not just science).

### **GROUP 6 (2 points)**

We need education on lake management, water quality and forest management.

## **Question #2**

### **What Do You Believe Are DNR's Strengths and Weaknesses in this Area?**

#### **Strengths**

1. Pool of expertise.
2. Dissemination system - organization exists throughout the state.
3. Willingness to help.
4. Library of audio visual materials.
5. Good base upon which to build-Project Learning Tree - Project Wild.
6. County biological surveys.
7. Internal disagreements/diversity can have some positive outcomes, as well as being a weakness.
8. State park interpretive program.
9. DNR has a high profile - public recognizes DNR.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Find a better way to use DNR expertise and dissemination system.
2. Lack of awareness of materials.
3. Outdated materials should be disposed of and replaced.
4. Need directory of contacts. Need contact persons in Regions who work with schools.
5. Regulatory nature gets in the way of people using the DNR's services.
6. Lack of resources available for environmental education.
7. Not building partnerships with others (PCA and local governments, for example).
8. Legislative changes are not integrated in all programs. This prevents integrated approach to environmental education.
9. Limited Regional office staff interaction with local governments.
10. People involved with related programs don't have time for the environmental education aspect.
11. Environmental education is not part of Divisions' missions.
12. Inconsistencies within department, disagreements between divisions.
13. Technicians required to wear "two hats". Technical skills not necessarily transferrable to education programs.
14. Public perceives Divisions pushing their preferred strategies. Public not aware of best resource management practices. Lack of interactive decision making (public with DNR).

15. Evaluation of projects is lacking. No accountability.
16. Limited distribution of the Volunteer.
17. Lack of expertise in organizing communities.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR Services Do You Use or Are You Aware Of?**

1. State parks, forests.
2. Non game program.
3. Fish & Wildlife.
4. Expertise-information and education from divisions - speakers.
5. Trails
6. Cultural and historical resources in state parks. State park naturalists.
7. Brochures
8. Posters
9. SNAs
10. County biological surveys.
11. Trail explorer
12. Canoe routes
13. Volunteer
14. Technical reports, such as Fisheries.
15. Private Forest Management program - wildlife protection
16. Badoura Nursery
17. Forestry
18. Enforcement
19. Entomologist
20. Bike trails
21. Office of Planning and Environmental Review
22. Waters
23. I & E
24. MinnAqua
25. Take a Kid Fishing



26. Hunter education
27. MCC
28. Project Wild
29. State trails

#### **Question #4**

#### **What Additional Resources or Services Should the DNR Provide?**

1. What is DNR's role in environmental education. Clarification of Department of Education role is needed.
2. If DNR gets involved in environmental education, take appropriate level of action.
3. Build bridges with other agencies doing environmental education.
4. Liaison needed to work with schools because of complexities involved in delivering information.
5. Start where there are ongoing programs. If a program is mandated, education must go along with it.
6. Need partnerships with other agencies.
7. Need to explain why we are doing what we're doing (ecological principles behind regulations and programs).
8. DNR needs to define what it does best and concentrate on those activities.
9. Focus on key areas to educate about - select and delete vs. add. Fill in holes, can't cover everything.
10. More communication with people. People like their freedom - restrict as little as possible.
11. Environmental education needs support from top.
12. Quality control is needed.
13. People need an accessible, convenient way to get the environmental education information they need (clearinghouse within DNR).
14. DNR's organizational structure should follow geographic divisions.

#### **Question #4 Priority Actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).**

**GROUP 1 (12 points)**

Environmental education needs support from top.

If DNR gets involved in environmental education, take appropriate level of action.

Build bridges with other agencies doing environmental education.

Need partnerships with other agencies.

**GROUP 2 (9 points)**

What is DNR's role in environmental education. Clarification of Department of Education role is needed.

Liaison needed to work with schools because of complexities involved in delivering information.

**GROUP 3 (8 points)**

Need to explain why we are doing what we're doing (ecological principles behind regulations and programs).

More communication with people. People like their freedom. Restrict as little as possible.

**GROUP 4 (5 points)**

Start where there are ongoing programs. If a program is mandated, education must go along with it.

Focus on key areas to educate about - selected and delete vs. add. Fill in holes, can't cover everything.

DNR needs to define what it does best and concentrate on those activities.

Quality control is needed.

**GROUP 5 (3 points)**

People need an accessible, convenient way to get the environmental education information they need (clearinghouse within DNR).

**GROUP 6 (2 points)**

DNR's organizational structure should follow geographic divisions.

#### **Question #5**

**Are There Services That DNR Offers That Could Be Better or More Appropriately Provided by Other Organizations?**

1. Let Board of Soil and Water Resources educate about water quality.
2. Need to rethink how DNR does what it does. Need to get involved with co-production (extensions, MHB, lakeshore associations, Audubon.) Frameworks may already exist - need to connect with them.
3. Need to redefine and focus on the interrelationships of how we relate to communities and

clientele.

4. Question is worded badly. It is not a matter of do or don't do, but how is it done. Local water planning is an example of an opportunity for partnership.
5. Need "better" public involvement. Don't do it for us--involve stakeholders in designing and delivering products and services.

#### **Question #6**

#### **Do You Perceive a Difference Between Environmental Education and Natural Resources Education? If Yes, What Are the Differences?**

1. Environmental education is a broad term--holistic. It deals with environmental inter-action.
2. Environmental education is about how things interact and interrelate.
3. Natural resources education concerns water, forests, specific resources and their management; it is a subset of environmental education.
4. Environmental education concerns the underlying factors and provides the basis for natural resource management.
5. Natural resource education focuses on use (wildlife, hunting, wise use).
6. Environmental education is more ecologically oriented. It includes the human element.
7. Environmental education is emotional--social and ethical responses are included.
8. Natural resources education--what is the action's impact? Acknowledges impacts on the resource.
9. Natural resources education connotes conservation and use.
10. Natural resources education teaches us to be custodians of resources--it educates the public on wise use.
11. Weakness in distinction may occur in the lower grades. Terms may separate in higher grades.
12. Who cares what it's called as long as it exists?
13. Separation does not seem wise or advisable.
14. We're not different, can't separate natural resources from ecological principles.

**Participants:** Laddie Elwell (Opportunities in Science), Kay Getting, (Chippewa National Forest), Steve Spigarelli (Bemidji State University), John Ringle (Leech Lake Reservation), Cliff Tweedale (Commissioner, Headwaters Regional Development), Mark Jenson (Potlatch Corporation), Dale Krystosek (Beltrami County Soil & Water Conservation), Earl Dickinson (Dickinson Lumber Company), Robert Baker (Bemidji State University), Robert Treuer (Beltrami County Commissioner), Ken Schreiber (Teacher), Annette Drewes (Bemidji, MN), Molly McGregor (Mississippi Headwaters Board), Betty Smith (Audubon Chapter), Mike Tangen (Teacher).

**Facilitators:** Terri Yearwood (DNR Office of Planning), Laurie Young (DNR Trails & Waterways Unit).



NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Region II  
Duluth, MN - May 15, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

1. We need to educate the public about what the DNR does.
2. We need to target more materials towards youth.
3. We need to provide more interpretive programs at parks.
4. We need to provide more information about what is being done for air & water.
5. Natural resource science needs to be put in a social science context.
6. We need to provide experiential education opportunities.
7. We need to go beyond the facts and approach environmental education from an ecosystem perspective.
8. We need to link the Office of Environmental Education's learner outcomes to DNR materials and programs
9. There is a need for state government to take action to provide good comprehensive environmental education.
10. A partnership needs to be formed between the DNR and Department of Education so that there is better coordination of environmental education.
11. We need to bring natural resources to a more personal level.
12. We need a broad based unified mission statement that is accepted statewide and presented by a credible spokesperson.
13. We need more materials that are user friendly, and should provide "how to" training to educators. This is especially important for the elementary education level.
14. We need to provide more devices like the non-game wolf boxes and make them available on a broader basis.
15. Each DNR discipline needs to educate about what their purpose is and about the things they are doing.
16. We need to include in our educational efforts an understanding about the big picture economic & social tradeoffs that must be made with each action. For example, the public shouldn't discourage mining in Minnesota, instead we should adopt environmentally safe practices. Just because we don't mine doesn't mean others around us won't, and their practices might be worse for the environment.
17. The DNR has a problem with its credibility. We need to do a better job of listening to stakeholders and getting the public involved in the decision making process.
18. We need to do a better job of getting information out before, during, and after DNR actions.

19. Don't create new educational programs, instead do a better job of coordinating and facilitating the existing ones.
20. We need a clearinghouse of environmental education materials.
21. We need to develop our programs and materials in cooperation with other groups, instead of doing it in isolation.
22. We need to use the Bureau of Information and Education for education.
23. We need to do a better job of addressing interdisciplinary topics.

### **Question #1 Priority actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses.)**

1. Educate the public about what DNR does so that we improve our credibility and get the public more involved in our planning and work. (10)
2. Be proactive in developing environmental education materials appropriate for our target groups and providing training on how to use them. (10)
3. Form partnerships with DNR disciplines and other providers of environmental education so that better coordination and communication of efforts is provided. (8)
4. Use an ecosystem approach to educate the public and include the social, economic, and spiritual perspectives. (8)
5. Provide more interpretive and experiential opportunities. (5)

### **Question #2**

**What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

#### **Strengths**

1. We are willing to participate on cooperative projects.
2. We are now making plans for individual fisheries.
3. Our subject matter - parks, wildlife - is fun!
4. We have good programs like Project Wild, Project Learning Tree and others.
5. Good people working in the field.
6. Good technical expertise.
7. DNR staff are some of the best in the nation.
8. We have the people and resources that make education fun.
9. Public has a high trust of the DNR and wants us to provide them information.
10. DNR does a good job with programs that it does provide to the public.

### Weaknesses

1. We fall short in getting our education message out to the public.
2. Our credibility on following through with actions is poor.
3. We tend to avoid corresponding about the tough issues.
4. We don't have programs like "Project Rock, etc" that work like Project Wild.
5. DNR disciplines don't work together at the local or St. Paul levels.
6. No interdisciplinary programs, instead each program is done in isolation.
7. A lot of talk but no real commitment is given to education.
8. For most DNR disciplines communication and education are lacking.
9. Managers and interpreters have a disjointed education message. Interpreters rarely tell the land management and use message.
10. Poor credibility when it comes to showing commitment to education.
11. Lack of coordination with other organizations and states. We don't need to keep re-creating the wheel.
12. It is confusing to the public on how and where to get DNR information and how to then take that information and present it in an educational context.
13. We do a poor job of communicating and distributing our knowledge to the public.
14. License fee monies need to go to the resource, so we need to get other funding for education which will require more legislative involvement.
15. Good public relations is needed to get the message out.
16. A lack of educators in DNR.
17. Don't know how to go to the public to get input and involvement in the process.
18. The size and many missions of the DNR causes lack of focus.

### Question #3

#### What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?

1. Private forest management programs like Forest Stewardship
2. Project Wild, Aquatic Wild, Project Learning Tree, MinnAqua, Take a Kid Fishing, Non-game's educational kits, and groundwater display
3. "DNR Reports" and various other technical information sources
4. The state parks, naturalists, and programs
5. Fisheries reservoir plans, surveys, stocking, and rehabilitation information
6. Advanced Hunter Education

7. Firearms safety and ATV and snowmobile training
8. Hunting & fishing licenses
9. Volunteer Services and other similar programs
10. Speakers bureau
11. Bureau of I & E
12. Ski trails
13. Maps
14. "Best Management Practices" publication
15. Boating and Water Safety programs and materials
16. Posters

#### **Question #4**

##### **What additional resources should the DNR provide?**

1. Increase the education role of the Bureau of I & E.
2. Need more education officers, like interpreters, whose major role is education.
3. Do more joint education opportunities and seminars both within our own agency and with other agencies or organizations.
4. Do more educational promos, like proper release of fish, using the media especially T.V.
5. Produce VHS materials for schools which highlight DNR issues.
6. Provide easier access and availability of current videos, films, etc. If don't improve access, provide a more economical method for groups to purchase these materials.
7. Provide a DNR liaison to work with the Dept. of Education.
8. Provide more financial support so that each park has at least one interpreter/educator to tell that parks story.
9. Make land use and management an integrated part of the environmental education message throughout the DNR.
10. Provide a resource library or clearinghouse of DNR materials.
11. More and better school materials which provide a holistic view. Then get them to the teachers with training and backup support.
12. Provide programs with equal representation of all DNR disciplines.
13. Start managing resources at a level which allows environmental education to be the process and visionary scope that leads to action.
14. Do focus groups within the DNR that involve all disciplines.
15. Develop curriculum with other groups using the DNR for technical approval.



16. Look at existing programs in more cooperative ways.
17. As ambassadors of the DNR, Conservation Officers need to be educators as well as enforcers. We also need more of them across the state.
18. Resource educators that meet and work with the public as much as Conservation Officers.

#### **Question #4 Priority Actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses.)**

1. More educational opportunities developed with other agencies that use existing programs or work together to develop new ones. (8)
2. More DNR staff whose primary job is to educate the public. (6)
3. More and better access to educational materials using mass media techniques. (6)
4. Present staff, especially conservation officers, doing more education. (5)
5. Increase the education role of the Bureau of I & E. (5)
6. Integrate land use management into education. (3)
7. Start managing resources at a level that allows environmental education to be the process that leads to action. (3)
8. Better coordination between DNR disciplines and the Dept. of Education. (2)
9. School materials that approach environmental education on a holistic approach. (1)
10. Provide a resource library or clearinghouse. (0)
11. Provide programs with equal representation of all DNR disciplines. (0)

#### **Question #5**

**Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately provided by other organizations?**

1. Don't duplicate efforts already being done, for example we don't need to provide naturalists to resorts because it is already being done by another agency.
2. Each agency should pool their resources and try to get past the discipline and agency turf battles so that these resources are cooperatively used.
3. Curriculum development can be done by others using DNR technical expertise.
4. Have hands on activities, kits, etc. developed by others, but coordinated by DNR.

## **Question #6**

### **Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. Resource education is teaching how to manage while environmental education is a more global approach that incorporates issues and ecosystem information into its materials.
2. When using natural resources to educate the public, one finds that management becomes easier. If they aren't educated about the natural resources, then management is almost impossible.
3. As we become more environmentally literate, then the two will not be different. This is the type of shift in thinking that we need to work towards.
4. Don't worry about what to call this type of education, use the Office of Environmental Education's learner outcomes to provide the parameters for our education efforts and as a plan of action to bring the two together.
5. Resource education keys on the consumptive users because this is the DNR's audience.
6. Resource education is more about conscience decisions
7. Resource education is a part of environmental education, and visa-versa. There is no separating the two.
8. The DNR's mandate is the natural resource component and should focus on this aspect of education.
9. The DNR has a mandate to manage which is natural resource education but we need to use environmental education to bring our message to a broader perspective that is more holistic.
10. Environmental education is about use as is resource management. However, environmental education helps tie our resources to a much broader context.
11. Need a plan of action to bring the two together, but should be the least of our worries at this time.

**Participants:** Ken Gilbertson (University of Minnesota--Duluth), Bruce Johnson (Duluth Schools Curriculum), Diane Laabs (Lake Superior Paper Company), Tom Martinson (Lake County Land Commissioner), Lowell Neudahl (Minnesota Power), Gloria Noren (Surfside Resort), Art Norton (Itasca Soil and Water Conservation District), Christine Olsenius (Lake Superior Center), Linda Parker (U.S. Forest Service), Shawn Perich (Cook County News Herald), Jack Pichotta (Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center), Don Rosenberg (United Northern Sportsmen Conservation Club), Billy Scott (Lake Superior Steelhead Association).

**Facilitators:** Linda Erickson-Eastwood (DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife), Laurie Young (DNR Trails and Waterways Unit).

**NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

Region III  
Brainerd, MN - May 30, 1991

**Question 1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

1. We need education programs about how to keep watersheds clean. (Knife Lake restoration funds could have been better spent for education.)
2. We need to direct more education efforts to adult audiences, not just k-12. Adults who make decisions now need a stronger environmental ethic.
3. Environmental education needs to include economics and society's need for and appropriate use of resources.
4. We need to provide environmental education based on the ecosystem concept and apply the concept to current critical natural resource issues.
5. We need to identify and reach specific target groups who impact particular resources with information on their impacts, their role and what they can do about the problem.
6. We need education programs that take a holistic approach and emphasize multiple use of natural resources.
7. We need natural resource education programs that emphasize a "hands on" approach.
8. We need more and better ways of reaching students at the post- secondary level.
9. We need programs that will reach the grassroots and provide useful information and feedback to agencies. (Lake Advocate system is an example).
10. DNR needs to avoid programs that appear to be self-serving. They sometimes generate distrust.
11. We need to use and work with existing resources such as area learning Centers (Deep Portage) to reach the public.

**Question 1 Priority Actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).**

1. Environmental education programs are needed that stress ecosystem management. (7)
2. Key target groups must be identified and served with education programs. (5)
3. Education efforts should emphasize multiple use. (3)
4. The DNR should give more support to natural resource education. (3)
5. DNR education programs should be designed to prevent future environmental problems. (2)
6. DNR's education programs should not be based on traditional models; should employ hands-on approach, utilize learning centers, etc. (1)

## **Question 2**

### **What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

#### **Strengths**

1. Qualified staff with expertise, dedication and credibility. (Mentioned four times.)
2. Has potential for good statewide delivery of information. (Volunteer magazine and Water Talk are good examples.)
3. Target audiences are readily identifiable.
4. DNR currently has some good educational materials and programs
5. DNR has good visibility and regional presence.
6. The department recognizes that it has a "communication-education problem.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Education program delivery sometimes not effective
2. Education is not a priority. Dollars are not there so information does not get out.
3. DNR has no education coordination or unified approach.
4. The department offers little training to help staff develop education program delivery effectiveness. Hunter ed is a good model.
5. Some DNR attempts at information/education delivery are really boring.
6. Messages are not coordinated. Divisions sometimes disagree.
7. Some messages are "censored" or DNR representative "duck" issues.
8. Lack of funding targeted to education needs.
9. Technical experts need to work better with communication experts.
10. The department is too "management" oriented. As a result, opportunities for education are missed.
11. Ecologically trained staff are sometimes dominated by the Forestry Division.
12. Too little priority is given to I & E.

## **Question #3**

### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. Advanced Hunter Education
2. Racks of brochures (But most people don't know what's available.)
3. Firearms Safety
4. Park interpretive services
5. Project WILD

6. Project Learning Tree
7. DNR Reports
8. Wealth of nongame materials
9. Consultation with staff, an invaluable service (Mentioned by five.)
10. Radio interviews
11. MinnAqua
12. Volunteer
13. Water Talk
14. Open door policy in agency is good.

**Question #4**

**What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

1. A complete bibliography of available materials
2. A proactive clearinghouse of DNR materials. (These materials should be pushed.)
3. Small landowners should be targeted for additional attention. They don't seem to ask for help.
4. Need increased emphasis on marketing. Parks is doing a good job; almost too good.
5. Videos should be developed on current natural resource topics of importance.
6. DNR education efforts and materials should convert technical info/jargon into something people can understand.
7. Use licenses as a vehicle for education.
8. DNR needs a team of educators who can help divisions with messages and getting them out. Each region needs an I & E adult education person.
9. More of an education component could be built into programs such as Sentenced to Serve. Punishment for environmental crimes should involve environmental education.
10. DNR should increase the number of parks and broaden their definition in order to use them as vehicles for education.
11. Anglers need to learn what contaminants are in their fish
12. Establish more recreation/education centers such as Deep Portage where resources are used for more than just viewing.

#### **Question 4 Priority Actions**

(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).

1. Much better and broader "marketing" of DNR education programs, services and needs. (7)
2. DNR educators team. (5)
3. Establish more Recreation/Education areas similar to Deep Portage. (4)
4. Increase number of parks and their education services. (2)
5. Provide more information/education to anglers concerning fish contamination (1)

#### **Question #5**

**Are there services that the DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately provided by other organizations?**

1. Be open to and use sporting organizations more for feedback about education needs.
2. Relying too much on sporting groups for supplemental funds could be detrimental.
3. DNR should focus on adult audiences and let the Department of Education manage programs such as Project WILD and Project Learning Tree. (Assumption is that Dept. of Ed. would embrace these programs.)
4. There isn't much environmental education happening, therefore we aren't seeing duplication.

#### **Question #6**

**Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. Conservationists and pressurizations seem to be competing for environmental education "turf." This is unproductive.
2. "NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION" pertains to issues of management concern to the DNR. "Natural resources education" is more broadly defined and "environmental education" views the ecosystem from a third party perspective.
3. Existing Schools and the Dept. of Education have failed to provide natural resources education
4. DNR needs to cooperate with Dept. of Education on environmental education.

**Participants:** Terry McGaughey (Brainerd Area Chamber of Commerce), Dave Nieman (Crow Wing County Planning and Zoning), Gray Payne (Brainerd, MN), Pam Landers (Brainerd Technical Institute), Larry Shaw (Pollution Control Agency), Doug Applegren (MN Deer Hunters Association), Lansin Hamilton (MacMillan Bloedel).

**Facilitators:** Bob Bystrom (DNR Bureau of Information and Education), C.B. Bylander (DNR Region III Office).

**NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

Region IV  
New Ulm, MN - May 29, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

**(The following are listed in order of priority. Number of votes received is in parentheses.)**

1. The need to develop partnerships - at the grassroots, regional and state levels. These would include partnerships between agencies, private organizations and other volunteers. (8)
2. Teach the proper stewardship of Minnesota's environment and natural resources to all ages. This includes educating for the preservation of our quality of life. (6)
3. To improve the public's perception of DNR. Currently, DNR is viewed as solely an enforcement agency. (2)
4. Adequate funding for natural resources/environmental education. (1)
5. Determine what is the right "umbrella" for natural resources/environmental education. The question was asked as to the responsibility of DNR vs. Department of Education. (1)
6. Information about what is available for natural resources/environmental education. Perhaps a directory or comprehensive catalog is needed. (1)
7. Build involvement by doing activities and stewardship. (1)
8. The need to deal with current issues. (0)
9. There is a misperception that DNR employees "know everything" about all other disciplines. (0)
10. DNR may be trying to spread itself too thin. (0)

**Question #2**

**What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

**Strengths**

1. Good personnel who are a good resource for environmental education partnerships.
2. State parks as a venue for environmental education. They are well distributed geographically.
3. Extremely cooperative personnel.
4. Good state parks - facilities and personnel.
5. DNR has involved citizens in its planning processes.

### **Weaknesses**

1. DNR staff has not been hired for the purpose of teaching environmental education.
2. DNR units (divisions) are fragmented, they are not coordinated.
3. There is a lack of consistency--programs and staff come and go (the Blue Mounds State Park naturalist, for example).
4. There is a lack of environmental education commitment by some park managers.
5. DNR has involved citizens in its planning processes, but not on an ongoing basis.
6. Fragmentation--there is a territorial problem.
7. DNR resources for environmental education are a well-kept secret.
8. There is a lack of state parks or facilities in all areas. Some citizens can't access the programs.
9. DNR needs a program to train and use volunteer interpreters.
10. A problem in getting information to the right people.
11. Have the enforcement staff do more education.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. Regional office personnel involvement in activities; e.g, the environmentally sound deer management options.
2. State parks--for both formal and informal environmental education bases.
3. The interpretive programs.
4. State park open houses, the cornerstone of community involvement.
5. Lifetimes & Landscapes program should be expanded to other options, there is a wealth of opportunities for involvement.
6. Charlie Maguire, the Centennial Troubadour.
7. Speakers from many programs and disciplines in college courses.
8. Assistance with public programs; e.g., bluebird recovery, etc.
9. Information and Education specialist.
10. Students help with projects.
11. Internships.
12. Social and scientific projects.
13. Cooperative planning efforts example, town/gown/park.
14. Wolf traveling kit.



15. Hunter education, and the "game warden" as a resource.
16. In-service science workshops.
17. Conservation Day - fisheries and forestry specialists.
18. Nongame and Check-off posters, which provide visibility.
19. The DNR building at the State Fair.
20. State parks to demonstrate lifetime recreational activities and skills.

#### **Question #4**

##### **What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

(The following are listed in order of priority. Number of votes received is in parentheses.)

1. Provide "guides" for how to use the school yard, to teach environmental education, for activities. Publish it as an environmental education magazine. Perhaps make The Volunteer more geared to environmental education. (5)
2. Provide a seasonal naturalist (at least!) in every state park. (4)
3. Provide more local resources/training/environmental education opportunities. (4)
4. Involve more arts and cultural resources in the interpretive effort. (2)
5. Develop community advisory committees for parks. (1)
6. Establish MCC programs in every state park, but expand the opportunity beyond just the disadvantaged. (1)
7. Develop a grassroots/regional lobbying effort for environmental education. (1)

#### **Question #5**

##### **Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately offered by other organizations?**

1. Concerned about Department of Education cutbacks--don't shift environmental education efforts from DNR to Department of Education.
2. DNR should develop more partnerships cooperatively with other agencies and/or units to deliver environmental education services.

#### **Question #6**

##### **Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. They are different routes to the same goal. We do need to show the relationships.
2. It is important to differentiate between environmental and natural resources education because this is where the fights start: "Pollution gets all the funding."
3. DNR works with some of the facts. We need to define the areas each agency can do best. That means also accepting the fact that people learn and are motivated differently. We need many avenues to reach their areas of interest.

**Participants:** Roni Dauer (Fairmont Community Education), Merrill Frydendall (Mankato State University, Biology Department), Jean Replinger (Southwest State University), Art Straub (LeSueur, MN), Scott Stuckey (New Ulm, MN), Ben Vanderkooi, Jr. (Luverne, MN).

**Facilitators:** Bobbie Gallop (DNR Division of Parks & Recreation), Dorothy Waltz (DNR Trails & Waterways Unit).

**NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

Region V  
Rochester, MN - May 14, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

1. Implement the existing laws relating to Parks Education #86A05.2C.
2. Implement the Environmental Education Act of 1990. There is a need to determine who is in charge and accountable for the 1990 Environmental Education Act.
3. Implement "DNR Directions".
4. Increase number of Naturalists at State Parks because the Naturalists have to turn schools away.
5. DNR take a holistic and coordinated approach to environmental education with other agencies.
6. Emphasize experiential education with young people participating in the environment outdoors.
7. Develop a way for teachers to access existing information from agencies.
8. Develop lists and calendars of what is available in Environmental Education.
9. There is a need to educate both students and teachers in environmental education.
10. Conservation (wise use of natural resources) must be incorporated into any future education efforts.
11. There is a need to train the trainers (volunteers).
12. Future education efforts must use outdoor sports such as hunting, fishing, and trapping (tools of wildlife environmental management) as education learning tools.
13. There is a need to develop a network of resource persons.
14. There is a need to produce more Educational Specialists for specific DNR regions.
15. There is a need to develop outreach programs to a variety of ethnic communities.
16. There is a need for residential southern environmental centers.

**Question #1 Priority Actions**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).**

1. Develop education curriculum, materials, and opportunities with a truly holistic approach by utilizing a coordinated network of resources, school personnel, students and agencies. (11)
2. Increase the number of Naturalists to adequately meet the demands made upon them by the schools and general public. Increase outreach programs to ethnic communities. (6)

3. Develop southern residential environmental education centers and emphasize experiential environmental education opportunities. (5)
4. Implement the existing environmental education laws and DNR education policies. (2)
5. Provide adequate training for students and teachers. (2)
6. Incorporate conservation (wise use of natural resources) into the environmental education programs. (0)

## **Question #2**

### **What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

#### **Strengths**

1. Expert knowledge of personnel.
2. Continue management of lands and water to protect resources.
3. Multi use of resources.
4. Many resources--natural and human--available.
5. Technology and research.
6. Use of bio-diversity.
7. Has a better holistic approach to education than Department of Education.
8. DNR is everywhere.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Don't communicate well with lay people.
2. Lack of communication to schools, parks and recreational wildlife organizations.
3. Get passed to different departments to get answers to questions.
4. Be careful in promoting/overdeveloping resources to deterioration.
5. Personnel are not educators--do not see themselves as educators.
6. Working with people.
7. Serve so many--multi use of resources.
8. So big--don't know about other divisions.
9. Don't implement laws.
10. Outcome-based evaluation of employee productivity.
11. Lack of coordination with other agencies and U.S. Fish & Wildlife conservation organizations.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. Volunteer Magazine
2. Interpretive Programs
3. Hunter Education Programs
4. Conservation Officer Services with Wounded Animals
5. Wetlands
6. Parks
7. Nongame Program
8. Trails, Bike Trails
9. Canoe Routes
10. Hunt, Fish, Hike with Boy Scouts
11. Trout Streams, Camping (primitive), Skiing (Cross Country)
12. Project Wild/Aquatic Wild
13. Project Learning Tree
14. Forestry
15. Firearm Safety
16. Minnesota Bowhunter Education
17. ATV
18. Public Shooting Ranges
19. Division of Wildlife

### **Question #4**

#### **What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

1. Complete curriculum packages--pre, post, learner outcomes, in-service.
2. Learning stations to schools.
3. Clearing house of environmental education resources and resource persons.
4. Regional residential facilities.
5. Cooperate with Department of Education in producing curriculum.
6. Use resource persons to work with educators.
7. DNR personnel in classrooms.

8. Teachers employed by DNR to give programs at schools--as a resource to schools, in-service teachers, with at least two per region.
9. More resource persons
10. Regional Naturalists job description--to be responsible for environmental education.
11. Naturalists for smaller parks/combine a few parks.
12. Put education in job description of Information and Education personnel.
13. Land and Management as a model for education--keep acquiring land.

#### **Question #4 Priorities**

**(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses).**

1. Increase the number of DNR resource persons (teachers employed by DNR) to provide in-service training and education resources to schools. (12)
2. Cooperate with Department of Education in producing curriculum packages and learning stations and in-service training based on learner outcomes for kindergarten through adult. (8)
3. Provide for regional residential facilities. (4)
4. Continue to acquire land and use the land management as a model for education. (3)
5. Develop a clearing house of environmental resource education and resource persons. (2)
6. Broaden the job descriptions for regional naturalists to include responsibilities for environmental education. (1)
7. Provide naturalists for smaller parks/share naturalists between parks. (0)

#### **Question #5**

**Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately provided by other organizations?**

1. DNR can do Environmental Education better than the Department of Education.
2. Work with 4-H Natural Resource classes
3. Work with 4-H Shooting Sports
4. Vocational/agricultural instructors/classes

#### **Question #6**

**Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. Same; can't separate.
2. Environmental education = ecosystem education - how it works.
3. Natural Resource Education = how area is managed - how people are trying to help.

4. Difference depends on your background.
5. If Natural Resource Education is subset of environmental education, then DNR should incorporate environmental education; bring in environmental education global issues at local level.
6. "Connectedness".
7. DNR should be a leader and model of educational image.

**Participants:** Laura Blackman (Oxbow Nature Center), Cory Landgren, Jim Eddy, Nancy Reynolds, Bill Johnson (DNR Region V), Chuck Thesing (Land Stewardship Project), John Kvasnicka (MN Deer Hunter's Association) John Weiss (Rochester Post Bulletin).

**Facilitators:** Roger Grosslein (DNR Enforcement Division), Karen Van Norman (DNR Fish & Wildlife Division).





**NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS**

Region VI - Metro Focus Group  
Twin Cities, MN - May 20, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

**(Responses were not ranked by the group and appear in order as given.)**

1. We need nature appreciation classes for youth.
2. We need to emphasize what we can do in our everyday lives to help the environment; i.e., recycling, etc.
3. We need more balanced information for the public; environmental issues are not all black and white.
4. We need to emphasize interpretation of natural resources for inner-city youth, to help them make the connection between themselves and natural resources and their survival.
5. We need more cooperative programs like that between Dayton's Bluff community education and DNR metro region office with programs for youth after school and during the summer.
6. We need to educate adults about the environment.
7. We need to begin to look at and manage natural resources with a "garden" approach rather than the traditional industrial approach.
8. We need to change the mind-set in the way we live, we all need teachers and learners.
9. We need to educate the business community.
10. We need to develop partnerships between agencies, schools and businesses in order to educate about environmental issues.
11. We need more conservation officer programs in schools.

**Question #2**

**What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

**Strengths**

1. Project Wild
2. Conservation Officers educate public
3. DNR can be agent for public trust.
4. Public information on oak wilt.
5. Volunteer magazine
6. Fishing "catch and release" information

7. Sentence to Service program
8. Volunteer Programs
9. Information service
10. Employee time spent at public meetings, schools and sports groups

### **Weaknesses**

1. Conservation Officers get "bum rap"
2. DNR doesn't resist corporate mentality.
3. Don't get across technical information or management issues.
4. Don't educate the public about what we do and what resource needs are.
5. Don't put out balanced information on a continual basis.
6. Assumptions made about what public knows
7. Programs are not relevant to people's lives.
8. Assume people care about environment.
9. Don't work with community organizations.
10. We are a public organization that acts very privately.
11. We don't publicize volunteer program enough.
12. One division doesn't know what the other is doing.
13. No "one stop shopping"
14. Don't know about information available from other agencies.
15. Need to be more user friendly.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. Minnesota Mammals book
2. Volunteer magazine
3. Metro Region newsletter
4. DNR Resource Review
5. Staff presentations
6. Environmental mini-camp for disadvantaged
7. MCC
8. Youth in Natural Resources

9. Land Trust
10. RIM Wetlands Forum
11. State Park Naturalist programs
12. Conservation Officers save lives
13. Firearm safety
14. Permanent school trust fund

#### **Question #4**

##### **What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

1. Tell our (DNR) story.
2. Provide transportation for groups to DNR areas.
3. Encourage more youth involvement in classes and programs.
4. Provide story material for media, establish connections with media.
5. Provide teacher training and resource materials.
6. Provide more information to special interest groups.
7. Organize a DNR fair for inner-city school youth with corporate sponsorship.
8. Attend teacher conventions.
9. Start a school of environmental journalism.
10. Move responsibility for teaching science and math from the Department of Education to DNR. DNR should help solve the problem of science and math illiteracy.
11. DNR needs to educate its own organization about natural resource issues.

#### **Question #5**

##### **Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately provided by other organizations?**

1. Enforcement. Share responsibility, clarify role and then educate public concerning reasons for regulations.
2. Raising wildlife. Look at whether this should be public or private.

#### **Question # 6**

##### **Do you perceive a difference between environmental and natural resource education? If Yes, what are the differences?**

1. Environmental education means water, air and soil quality.
2. Natural resource education means management of resources.
3. Environmental education includes the built environment.

4. Natural resource education reflects more of an industrial approach.
5. Environmental education means more of a system approach.
6. Natural resource education deals more with how we use resources and deals with resources that can be used or consumed.
7. Ecological education is a less "loaded" term than environmental education and refers to the totality of communities and systems.

**Participants:** Rob Aitken (American Indian Opportunity Industrialization Center), Sylvia Adams (Northrop Environmental Learning Center), John Carlson (WCCO-TV), Duane Lund (Minnesota Conservation Federation), Mary McConnell (Metro Wetlands Forum), Malcolm McDonald (Fort Snelling Park Association), Laura Scott-Williams (Minneapolis Urban League), Toni Smith (St. Paul Community Education).

**Facilitators:** Judy Thompson (DNR Division of Parks & Recreation), Karen Van Norman (DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife).

NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Region VI - Suburban Metro Focus Group  
Twin Cities, MN - May 15, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

(The following are listed in order of priority. Number of votes received is in parentheses.)

1. To improve the participation of Afro-Americans and all people of color in the use of natural resources, including the use of multi-ethnic people in the DNR staff. (6)

*From the African-American standpoint, there is a serious disuse of natural resources by people of color. To change this, put people of color in a range of positions so that the users can relate to people of their own cultural background.*

2. Expand the range of public awareness "We all benefit from natural resources." This includes the real value of all natural resources, including biodiversity and the problem of the fragmentation of habitat. (5)

*The public and legislators don't seem to understand all of the values involved - aesthetic, economic, medical, etc. Also, we need to expand our efforts to include all people, not just K-12 students include hunters, anglers, the non-hunting public, or in other words, adults in general.*

3. Build awareness of the need to change lifestyles. (3)

*Teachers are generally aware of environmental needs. What is needed is the tools to help people understand how they can change their lifestyles.*

4. Develop public-private partnerships for continuing education. (3)

*Since finances are the crux of many of our problems in developing environmental and natural resources education, we should nurture public-private funding partnerships to continue education.*

5. Develop a stewardship ethic toward our natural resources. (2)

*The typical naturalist programs cover biology, geology, etc., but do not put enough stress on the need for stewardship.*

6. A better balance is needed in DNR between "development" and "conservation," to include dialogue and public participation in policy and program development, including accountability and access. (2)

*We should lean far in the direction of "conservation" for an extended period to balance the long-term previous emphasis on "development." People feel shut out of the process, due to the DNR political structure.*

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Nancy Harger's input, not prioritized: We need to educate the public about the need for a life-long commitment. And - We need to understand our place in the environment, including the factual base for stewardship plus an emotional commitment.

## **Question #2**

### **What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

#### **Strengths**

1. Committed/dedicated DNR employees.
2. Regional organization.
3. The system in which DNR operates - statewide system.
4. Local involvement in programs.
5. Printed information (e.g., Volunteer, publications, etc.).
6. Ability to do an overall resource utilization plan (potential).
7. Informing the public on exotic and endangered species.
8. Successes in saving animal and plant populations.
9. Dedicated people, despite salaries.
10. DNR controls the rules and regulations.
11. Good safety programs and information.
12. DNR knows our natural resource the best.
13. Some of our prime resources are in our parks, etc. in DNR's trust.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. No one place providing a focal point for the public, re: environmental education.
2. Lack of ethnic diversity.
3. Not enough coordination with local organizations (govt or private, parks, community centers, etc.)
4. Not enough information and emphasis on stewardship of resources.
5. Political pressures on the Department.
6. Lack of effective public participation in policy-making and implementation.
7. Bureaucratic system within the Department.
8. Criticism and interference by the Legislature; inhibits conservation management, programs set up without funding and implementation left to DNR.
9. Lack of communication, re: the good things DNR does and on controversial programs. DNR doesn't always promote the positive aspects of programs (i.e., conservation) while others are well promoted and well received (i.e., safety).
10. Lack of involvement in the school system.
11. DNR gets a bad rap because of the political mandates.

12. Does not always have continuous funding.
13. There is too much fragmentation between resource areas, such as waters, minerals etc.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. The phone service for information.
2. The service at the Information Center.
3. We can't find "DNR educators," except for the interpreters at the parks.
4. Information on "how to function" in parks and the interpretive services is very satisfactory, particularly the personnel.
5. The availability of the special events staff.
6. DNR publications, posters, etc., especially The Volunteer, and the DNR News.
7. The Division of Parks.
8. Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, Clean Rivers, Ag-Stravaganza, and the Non-Game programs, both materials and the staff. (There is a need to educate tax-preparers about the checkoff.)
9. The DNR Film Library.
10. The Forestry Division, especially the publications and videos.
11. Minnesota Mammals, which should be reprinted. Also DNR Reports.
12. Ecological Services.
13. Advanced Hunter Education and youth trips. (Why has hunter education been put in the Enforcement Division? Worried that this will narrow its focus.)
14. Fishing clinics.
15. Enforcement programs.
16. The presence at the Minnesota State Fair.
17. The accessibility of speakers.
18. Education of legislators. (There is a strong need for more of this.)
19. Non-game and Natural Heritage materials.

### **Question #4**

#### **What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

1. Seminars/clinics for elected officials, political party leaders, etc.
2. Seminars/clinics in the schools for students. Especially targeting the inner-city schools.

3. More contributions from and visibility (in programs and publications) of people of color. These groups have a rich historical contribution which is untapped by interpreters. Need to show pictures of persons of color in our publications. An idea was to focus an issue of the Volunteer to this issue.
4. More emphasis on and awareness of Native American contributions to history and the conservation ethic.
5. Urban environment education. Possibly devote an issue of the Volunteer to this.
6. Work more closely with other agencies in the regions, for example Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). Joint projects and programs. Could do a joint program with SWCDs in the schools.
7. More media-oriented information. Better TV spots on conservation stewardship - not just on safety.
8. Work more with volunteers - groups, individuals, business, industry.
9. Have more environmental resource directories and keep them up to date. Examples are state park gift catalog, "wish list" of volunteers, more publications.
10. Access and accountability for resource protection, as well as for development of natural resources.
11. More gender diversity in the development of programs and in developmental activities.
12. More DNR people in the schools giving programs.
13. More DNR efforts on sustainable agriculture.
14. Ways for DNR to utilize citizen environmental activists/spokespersons without co-opting them. Cooperation with citizen activists. Give them a platform. Make them more a part of the system.
15. Recruitment programs to hire and retain people of color. Retention is incumbent upon a supportive environment. There must be true viable mixing, not just the "token" hire.
16. Provide field staff to be examples. Include environmental education in their position descriptions so that they can allocate the time to do it. Have personnel share their knowledge.
17. Need to develop an on-going network, since DNR has the knowledge, expertise and graphic capability.

#### **Question #4 Priority Actions**

There was a consensus with the group that all of the items were of equal importance; there was no ranking of the items.

#### **Question #5**

**Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately offered by other organizations?**

1. What about the public schools? Conclusion was that we should be working on environmental and natural resources education together.
2. The key word is cooperation among all state and national agencies, etc.



3. Coordination is needed between agencies, organizations, etc.
4. Conferences - employees should attend and participate in a wide spectrum of conferences.
5. It's important for DNR to decentralize to avoid too much bureaucracy.
6. There should be a central, comprehensive clearinghouse of information print and audio-visual. It needs to be kept current through an ongoing review process.

#### **Question #6**

#### **Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. An environmentalist is one who recycles and reuses. A conservationist saves and uses the resources wisely and manages them with wisdom. A protectionist saves the resources and does not use the resources.
2. "Ethnic ethic" saves and uses the resource wisely. This is in contrast to our consumptive society.
3. "Environmental" is global.
4. "Conservation" is a subset of "environmental protection/preservation." The environmental aspects should be included in all contexts.
5. Maybe "conservation" and "sustainable" are the correct words.
6. DNR has a special role in environmental education. That role should be conservation.
7. Conservation and wildlife education is not being stressed in grades K-12.
8. Does not know that there should be a difference, but there is. Environmental education should involve all disciplines to teach about the environment. This would allow the greatest number of avenues for teachers.
9. Environmental education should be life-long, using all levels of understanding. Need to involve both the brain and the heart so that they will make a commitment.
10. People need to understand the trade-offs. Each decision has social and economic impacts.
11. In terms of natural resources education, sometimes DNR focuses on the science aspect too much.

**Participants:** Char Brooker (Audubon Society, Izaak Walton League, Teacher), Barbara Ohman (Dakota County SWCD), Lance Ness (Fish & Wildlife Legislative Alliance), Janet Rafferty (Teacher), Diadra Decker (Environmentally-concerned Citizen), Paul Gustafson, (Lutheran Brotherhood), Kamau Kambui (Wilder Foundation, Naturalist)

Nancy Harger (Richardson Nature Center) was unable to attend, but came in later to give comments. Her comments are included within the regular section except for those issues that were prioritized. In those cases, her comments were added at the end.

**Facilitators:** Vicki Hubred (DNR Division of Minerals), Dorothy Waltz (DNR Trails & Waterways Unit).



NREC STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS GROUPS  
QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS

DNR Focus Group  
St, Paul, MN - April 16, 1991

**Question #1**

**What do you believe are the most important needs today?**

1. We need a base of materials from which to provide education programs.
2. We need a comprehensive list of what is available within DNR and from other agencies.
3. We need funding for curriculum & materials.
4. We do a good job of reaching our friends. We need to find a way to reach those people who are not aware of our programs.
5. We need to do a better job of letting people know what already is available. Libraries provide an excellent opportunity to address this need.
6. We need to reach groups that are school age and younger.
7. We need to reach all groups who are interested in our services.
8. We need to work with children to help them understand how we fit in the ecosystem, i.e., what effect our actions have on the environment.
9. DNR is the bridge between issues and the public. We need a better understanding of that role and need to get the appropriate messages to all age groups.
10. We need a central point of contact who will know the environmental education activities and programs conducted in all units. This will improve departmental coordination.
11. We need a better understanding of internal roles and responsibilities in order to develop an organized approach to providing educational programs and services. The department needs to state the overall goals of environmental education, and we need to focus on our market segments.
12. We need to define our message and tell people what it is. We need to focus on our audience and what we have to offer.
13. We need to provide a service that lets people know how the choices they make in their daily lives benefit the environment; e.g., recycling, and purchasing..
14. We need to define the expected outcomes of environmental education in order to measure the success and effectiveness of our current efforts. For example, what would be the characteristics of a successful environmental education effort?
15. We need to educate the public about DNR's regulatory responsibilities.
16. We need to establish a mailing list of groups that request information and groups we identify as our customers.
17. We need to establish relevancy of environmental education to DNR employees.

18. We need a new approach on how to make our information and materials usable, accessible, and simple (without a lot of technical language).
19. We need to share the mailing lists we already have through a "list broker".

### **Question #1 Priority Actions**

(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses)

1. Internal coordination, define audience and markets. (12)
2. Information dissemination, catalogue, and advertising. (8)
3. Funding. (8)
4. Reaching new audiences. (6)
5. Base of materials. (3)
6. How we fit into ecosystem. (2)
7. Define outcomes. (1)
8. DNR role as bridge between issues & public. (0)
9. DNR regulatory responsibilities. (0)
10. Mailing lists. (0)
11. Relevancy of environmental education to DNR employees. (0)

### **Question #2**

**What do you believe are DNR's strengths and weaknesses in this area?**

<b><u>Strengths</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses</u></b>
1. Hunter education program, fishing opportunities, volunteers.	Responding to general resource issues, we don't use our friends enough.
2. Public expects education information from DNR.	Not seen as being objective.
3. We have good facilities associated with natural resource education.	Lack of priority setting within divisions.
4. We have good technical people.	Communication skills for technical subjects.
5. The programs we already have are good.	Education programs receive lower priority for funding.

### Strengths

6. Work well with adult organizations that ask for assistance. There is a willingness within DNR to work with these groups.
7. We are good at getting information out to public.
8. We have a lot of information.
9. Regional structure provides greater accessibility to the public.
10. We have good laws and programs.
11. Our state parks are great "outdoor labs" for education. Our parks interpreters are great teachers.
12. We have a wealth of knowledge and information
13. We have a motivated and talented staff.
14. No current statewide leadership provides an opportunity for DNR to become a leader in the field.
- 15.

### Weaknesses

- Less willingness to work with smaller, less organized groups.
- Practicing what we preach.
- Our materials aren't easily used.
- Need to be better organized in disseminating information.
- Our dual mission to preserve/conserv **and** to promote development of resources results in internal inconsistencies.
- Our professional egotism: we are the experts. We don't listen well.
- Need greater internal focus, a coordinating body for education, and information housed in one place.
- Lack of direction, funding, support, and priority for implementing programs.
- Environmental education is a specialized field in which we have little technical advertising expertise to get the message out.
- It is difficult to get environmental education issues elevated in other agencies. They must be tied to other priority issues. Environmental education is no one's number one priority.

### **Question #3**

#### **What DNR services do you use or are you aware of?**

1. DNR Library
2. Volunteer
3. Info center
4. News releases
5. DNR reports
6. Discipline services and information
7. Boat & Water Safety information.
8. Fire arms
9. Snowmobile
10. ATV
11. Volunteer Services
12. Referrals from disciplines
13. DNR retiree group
14. Heritage Program Library
15. DNR publications
16. Personal contacts in the department.
17. Minn Aqua
18. Bureau of Information & Education
19. Parks resource coordinators
20. Non Game Program
21. Sign Shop in Region II
22. Special events such as canoe and prairie days.
23. Bureau of Information & Education to advertise land sales through news releases
24. Documents from the Department of Administration
25. Combine discipline information with information from Nature Centers.
26. Don't use DNR resources when we probably could. This is an awareness issue.
27. BREM could be listed as a source of information, for example its land records.
28. GIS System. We need to monitor its development to be sure it is usable.

29. State Parks, Interpretive Centers
30. Bureau of Management Information Systems
31. DNR Regional and area offices
32. Other agencies, University of Minnesota, PCA, Department of Agriculture, Publishers, Historical Societies

#### **Question #4**

##### **What additional resources or services should the DNR provide?**

1. Interpretive centers and resources that are accessible to population centers
2. Outreach to schools
3. Curriculum and interpretive materials to schools
4. Experienced educators on staff
5. More shooting ranges on public land
6. More internal information on what resources are available
7. DNR-sponsored field trips, led by DNR staff in partnership with private groups
8. Up-to-date films and videos that are accessible to the public
9. A DNR Speakers Bureau
10. More answer lines and information lines within units
11. Expanded promotional spots and effective use of sponsors.
12. More vehicles for self-exploration for adults. Include environmental education message in all materials.
13. Long-term professional liaison with teachers who can assist in interpreting our information to pass on to children.
14. Coordinate clean-up programs with schools and non-profit organizations.
15. An Integrated Resource Management approach to Natural Resources education. Education should be a common theme in all of DNR's programs. Informing is not educating. We need to define what approach is needed for education.

#### **Question #4 Priority Actions**

(Actions combined into groups from the above list. Number of votes received is in parentheses)

1. School Outreach. (12)
2. Integrated Resource Management approach. (7)
3. More resources, better information on availability. (6)
4. Shooting Ranges. (3)

5. Expand quality promotional efforts. (2)
6. Include environmental education message in existing publications. (1)
7. Develop more vehicles for adult self-exploration. (0)
8. DNR-sponsored trips (Public/Private). (0)
9. Interpretive centers and resources that are accessible to population centers. (0)

#### **Question #5**

#### **Are there services that DNR offers that could be better or more appropriately provided by other organizations?**

1. Need more information on what other providers do before the question can be adequately answered.
2. A Lake Advocacy Group is being created in Region III that will cover 9 lakes. Each lake will have a designated contact person for information on activities that affect the lake. The group will be trained by DNR, PCA, and the county. This group provides the potential to handle public information requests about the lakes instead of DNR. Using this concept as a model, there may be opportunities to decentralize in other areas.
3. Eliminate the Film Library and provide information on where to obtain films. There are other delivery systems in place. If we keep it, it should be upgraded.
4. DNR should concentrate on its role in developing public information about resource issues by supplying the facts. We should not try to explain the role of industries or constituent groups; let them do it themselves.
5. We get a lot of requests for information on recreation areas administered by other agencies (NPS, USFS, etc.). Should we provide more of this type of service?.

#### **Question #6**

#### **Do you perceive a difference between environmental education and natural resources education? If yes, what are the differences?**

1. If we're trying to split the concept, we are in trouble and we will fragment the agency. DNR has the middle ground.
2. Managing natural resources is part of managing the environment.
3. Natural resource education is about how we affect the environment. It is a subset of environmental education.
4. Natural resource education focuses on the resource; environmental education focuses on the human component.
5. Environmental education is a subset of natural resource education.
6. The distinction is due to institutions. It could be called ecological education, etc..
7. Natural resource and environmental education goals are aligned.
8. Environmental education is the umbrella. We don't provide total environmental education programs. That authority must be given to DNR. Natural resources are within DNR. We must educate about them, not just inform.



9. DNR defines the things within environmental education we will address through our programs.
10. DNR does both. We are the only agency that addresses both concepts; but we are not necessarily the experts.
11. Natural resources can be spoken of in a holistic way that becomes environmental education.
12. The two can't be separated; this is an issue of semantics.
13. Public perception doesn't always align with DNR's definition of natural resources; specifically, we separate fish, wildlife, forestry, etc.

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