

Meeting Process Logic and Guidance

One of the hallmarks of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition is our capacity adapt what we do as we learn new things. As such, we have modified the format of this year's Annual Policy Meeting in response to feedback we've gathered from coalition members and through the RVCC evaluation.

The following explanation is meant to give everyone a sense of where we're going over the next few days and why.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

Plenary Presentations 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Purpose:

- Each of these presentations is meant to help inform our discussions during the breakout sessions and help us make strategic decisions during the meeting about how to best engage with policy-makers and have our message heard.

Round Robin Session: 1:00 pm – 5:05 pm

Purpose:

- Generate ideas and identify areas of *common focus* among participants to provide working groups with the information needed to develop the 2009 RVCC Platform and issue papers.
- Build common understanding among RVCC participants on a range of issues.
- Issue areas discussed will include: forest and range restoration, private lands, contracting and workforce issues, biomass, and climate change.

Who goes where?

- APM participants are divided into four separate groups and assigned a facilitator.
- Group and facilitator stay in the same room throughout the afternoon.
- Issue discussion leaders will rotate among the four groups.

What will we do?

- There will be four, 50-minute discussion sessions, with 10-minute breaks in between.
- Each group will discuss four of the five issue areas (one issue area at a time).
- Issue team leaders will present an overview of the issue from an RVCC perspective based on existing issue papers and pre-meeting survey results.
- Group discussion will be structured by responding to the following four questions:
 - a. What is your organization's vision or goals for the issue?
 - b. Why is this issue important to your community or the communities you work with?

- c. What are the biggest policy challenges your community faces in regards to this issue?
- d. What would fix it? What are the policy opportunities or solutions that would help your community achieve your vision on this issue?
- During the session, notes will be taken electronically and projected on the wall for the group to see and be able to reflect on.

Ground Rules

- Be constructive and creative.
- Trust in the process. We're experimenting with a new meeting format this year, so please follow the structure we've laid out. For example, please stay with your assigned round robin group throughout the afternoon.
- Have fun!

Facilitator and Issue Team Meeting: Synthesis of information generated during round robin sessions 5:15 – 6:15 pm

Purpose: To synthesize the issue areas so that 1) they can be reported to the full group, 2) every working group will be able to use the information to develop their plank of the platform, 3) areas of congruence can be highlighted and 4) areas needing more dialogue can be identified.

Where will we go?

- Facilitators, issue team leaders and notetakers will meet in the “office” on the first floor of the Edgefield.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11TH

Issue Report out 8:15 am – 9:00 am

Purpose:

- To share with all meeting participants the major areas of agreement and opportunities for issue integration developed during the round robin sessions the previous day. This will help inform our working group break-out sessions later in the day.

Rural Compact Presentation: 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Purpose:

- Identify ways to work with the National Rural Assembly to integrate the work they're doing and their message with the RVCC's 2009 policy platform.

Working Group Sessions: 11 am – 12:30 pm and 1:45 pm – 3:15 pm

Purpose:

- Develop a “plank” of the RVCC platform highlighting legislative, administrative, appropriations, and Presidential priorities related to the group's issue area.
- Identify actions the working group plans to take in 2009.

Who goes where?

- Participants will choose which working group session(s) they'd like to attend
- The sessions will be facilitated by members of the Core Group.

What will we do?

- Each working group will meet for an hour and a half to draft their planks of the platform and develop a list of actions for the coming year.
- Working group chairs will give a 10-minute overview of the purpose of the working group, what positions the group has taken in the past and what activities the group has done in the last year.
- Working group chairs will give an overview of the results of the pre-meeting survey for their issue area.
- Working group members will develop a vision statement for the group and draft the legislative, administrative, appropriations, and Presidential priorities for their plank of the platform.
- Working group members will develop a list of actions the group plans to take in 2009.

Preliminary Platform Preview: 3:30 – 4:45**Purpose:**

- To provide an opportunity for all meeting participants to hear what each working group proposes to include in their platform, in preparation for the working group caucusing session.
- To discuss, coordinate, and integrate ideas and proposed actions among working groups.

What will we do?

- The chairs of each working group will have 10 minutes to present their group's legislative, administrative, appropriations asks to the full group, and answer any questions.

Working Group Caucus Session: 4:45 pm – 5:30 pm**Purpose:**

- Provide time for all APM meeting participants to informally review and make suggestions about working groups' platform planks.
- Further refine details and information included in platform planks.
- Identify areas of overlap and opportunities for coordination among working groups.
- Increase understanding among meeting participants about all of RVCC issue areas.

What do we do during the caucus session?

- Working group chairs and/or a few working group members will:
 - Display their draft plank on flipchart paper at tables around the room.

- Answer questions about the proposed plank
- Record suggestions made by meeting participants from other working groups.
- Revise the platform plank to be ready to present to the full group on Friday morning.
- Meeting participants will:
 - Circulate around the room, read, ask questions and make suggestions about the draft planks on display.

Working Group Chair Meeting: 5:30 – 6:00 pm

Purpose:

- Members of the core group will meet in the “office” on the first floor of the Edgefield to incorporate the feedback on their issue area planks received during the caucus session. The planks will be refined and prepared for presentation to the full group.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

Platform presentations and discussion: 8:30 am – 9:45 am

Purpose:

- To provide the opportunity for all meeting participants to hear the most recent version of each working groups’ proposed plank of the 2009 policy platform, with any modifications, additions, or deletions the group decided to make following the working group caucus session the evening before.
- To provide an opportunity for meeting participants to comment on and discuss these versions.

Platform Prioritization and Initial Ratification (“Dotting”): 9:45 am – 10:30 am

Purpose:

- Collectively prioritize the elements of each working group’s plank for inclusion in the RVCC platform.
- To give working groups an idea of where the broadest interest lies within the RVCC.
- Provide the opportunity for people who didn’t attend the working group breakout sessions to express their priorities (helpful for people interested/active in more than one working group).

What will we do?

- Each meeting participant will be given 18 colored adhesive dots (three each of six different colors)
- Each color represents a different issue area plank (i.e. restoration, biomass, workforce, etc.)
- Meeting participants will put *up to three dots* next to items on each working group’s plank that they think are:
 - Most needed
 - Ripe for collective action

- Supportable by their organization
- You are only allowed to put the color of dots assigned to that issue area on the various pieces of the plank. For example, if the biomass plank is coded green, then you're only allowed to put your three green dots next to the different elements of the biomass plank.
- You can put all three of your issue area dots next to the same piece of the plank, or distribute them among the pieces of the plank.
- Please don't trade your dots – this exercise will work better if everyone indicates their preferences on each plank of the platform.

What happens after we “dot”?

- Each working group will record the number of dots each portion of their platform plank received and use the feedback to prioritize their policy activities in the coming year.
- The final decision of what will be included in each plank will be decided by the working groups after the meeting.

Working Group Meeting: 10:30 – 11:30

Purpose:

- To provide working groups an opportunity to review the results of the dotting process and to discuss how they will advance their plank of the platform in 2009.