

Green Tier Advisors

March 5, 2008

Adaptive Governance 1.0

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Advisors have developed recommendations related to metrics for the Green Tier Program and one of the remaining considerations is how those metrics might be effectively used. There is a body of research directed at the topic of adaptive management. While over simplified, the adaptive management literature considers how both information and decisions based upon that information come together in ways that influence public policy decision making. Rebecca Power very graciously agreed, as a part of graduate level course work, to develop information that considers both metrics and governance in the context of Green Tier decision making. Initially presented to staff and managers at DNR, the information has relevance to further considerations by the Advisors as we proceed with the implementation of Green Tier. There is not an expectation that a recommendation would necessarily develop from the information but there did seem to be relevance to the ongoing discussions of the Advisors as Green Tier seeks to pursue an “adaptive” public policy model.

EDITOR: Mark McDermid

BACKGROUND:

The work that was done by Rebecca Power focused on the following:

- Work with DNR and selected Green Tier Advisors to develop a preliminary model for categorizing Green Tier performance measures as they related to adaptability. This model will consider standard performance management practices such as the clarity of strategic goals, linkages between strategic goals and performance measures, the presence of outcome-based performance measures, and the use of performance measures to improve program performance. There is ample literature to draw on to support this effort.
- Work with WDNR to compile:
 - A current list of indicators and benchmarks related to program adaptability
 - How those indicators and benchmarks are being monitored and recorded
 - How those indicators and benchmarks are currently being used to adapt the program
- Work with WDNR, Green Tier Advisors, participating business, and environmental organizations to identify a high priority gaps in current indicators and benchmarks and design a process to begin filling those gaps.

The work was done between October and January 2008 and there were several meetings and discussions with DNR staff and significant research done on the potential for an adaptive governance model.

DISCUSSION:

The current system of decision making is frequently criticized, whether right or wrong, for an inability to quickly and efficiently react to changing scientific, social, economic and political information. One of the reasons for creating Green Tier was the “finding a better way” and the law provided some framework for implementing, if not uniting, environmental and economic decisions in a transparent way. Discussions leading up to Rebecca’s work raised the question whether the governance framework within which Green Tier was operating was getting the right information and also, armed with the right information, equipped to be truly adaptive. Early research done by the University of Wisconsin Law School and LaFollette School for Public Policy suggested some areas where gaps in information could be addressed and pointed out some barriers within existing governance that might need to be surmounted. Ms. Powers work sought to illuminate the potential for applying the adaptive management work in a way that might provide a framework within which that earlier research could come together more cohesively.

The purpose of the meeting on March 5, 2008 is to provide some basic background on the adaptive governance exploration that was done and determine if the Advisors would like to have more in depth discussions about this work. While the staff has looked at the work, theirs is a decidedly biased view that could really benefit from the diversity of opinions within the Advisors ranging from the understanding of how metrics can and should drive decision making to the current realities of how legal systems created over the last 30 years drive environmental and public health decision making. Similarly, given limited resources, there is benefit in understanding where the Advisors see the greatest potential for creating value for the Green Tier Program. As this will likely represent new information for the Advisors, the majority of the time will be dedicated to background and questions. The primary question will be whether the Advisors would like to dedicate more time to this and place adaptive governance somewhere on their work plan.

DISCUSSION SYNOPSIS (from prior meetings):