

# Great Lakes United

## Windsor Focus Group

November 20, 1993

### Memorandum:

To: Great Lakes United Directors

### Reflections on the First Focus Group

Although the turnout to the first focus group seemed disappointing, those who were there were very open about the concerns they have regarding their membership in GLU. They were unanimous in stating the absolute necessity for GLU to exist and for GLU to be able to give member organizations the "Bigger Picture".

Below you will find the outline of a brain storming session in three parts. In the first section, the representatives from member organizations expressed what issues they currently face, both internally as an organization and externally, the environment. The second section contains member organization's ideal world. If they could have all of the ingredients necessary to really carry issues forward to successful resolution, what would they want from GLU to do this. The third section, is an articulation of the representative's best judgment about where they think GLU should go, in the near future and in the long term.

As the conversation developed some members were offering strategic suggestions early and again later in the process. You will notice some repetition of comments and some overlap of the three sections.

I have recreated what was noted on flip chart pages verbatim. Short of audio tapping the conversation, this is an accurate reflection of comments made at this focus group. I'm looking forward to Milwaukee.

David.

### Participants

Terry Yonker	Great Lakes United	716-886-0142
Andrew Dervan	Lake St. Clair Advisory Committee	313-725-8827
Sauliunas Simoliunas	Sanitary Chemists Tech. Assist.	313-832-3117
Diane Furlong	Citizens Environment Alliance	519-973-1116
Bruce Relyea	East Michigan Envirn. Action Coun.	313-624-0148
William Furlaw	Michigan United Conservation Clubs	313-765-5279

Wayne Schmidt  
Rick Sullivan  
Fred Brown

National Wildlife Federation  
Centre for Environmental Study  
US Treasurer - GLU

313-769-3351  
616-771-3935

### Issues and Concerns

Andy:

- B pack, St Clair River RAP
- DNR and army corp. engineers activities - filling wet lands
- G. L. water quality
- water and air quality concerns
- struggling to keep the group together
  - many of our issues are not front page in the media

Saul:

- (written Hand out)
- challenges by industry
- we need to challenge industries' technological standards
- environmental groups science papers

Diane:

- trying to keep house and home together while doing all of the work
- job protection
- continue IJC momentum
- benefits of Windsor office

Bruce:

- health concerns - somewhat personal orientation
- sunset persistent toxic chemicals
- medical profession - doesn't get enough environmental education - not being trained in environmental issues
- environmental health impacts
- medical literature not enough focused on man made toxins as a source of disease
- public needs to know health concerns are well founded - prevention - affects jobs
- cleaning environment could remedy many current health issues - 'cancer'
- newsletter so much information out there hard to keep up. Screen inf. perhaps
- trying to count act health problems - need to change conditions which cause health problems

Bill:

- helping industry become more environmentally effective
- city of Port Huron a polluter
- work locally

Wayne:

- not looking for GLU to do specific things for us
- GLU support for GLI crucial
- not working on RAP, etc. not enough resources for such specific issues
- we do need leadership
- From GLU
  - handle maintenance issues - winter navigation, etc. to maintain the interest and the archives on these non front page issues
  - water quality agreement
  - provide recognizable leadership for grassroots issues
  - communication
- GLU seems to be on the ropes what happens with the SP process will make or break the organization
- personally concerned

Rick:

- communication and education
- GLU - Lead and Communicate
- concerned about current leadership activities - i.e., NAFTA, Leaders lead and no one follows
- We have an agreement with Grand Rapids Comm College.

### **How We Would Like It To Be**

Diane:

- can work in isolation
- speedier resolution to issues
- provide an umbrella organization for consensus

Bruce:

- communications - survey
- this meeting valuable
- computer modem as a communication tool
- training in Eco-Net
- information isn't there - easier access to information

Rick:

- someone to winnow out the information that is out there

Bill:

- lots of groups trying to do what we are!
- is there a way to tie between groups
- our district alone -20-30 clubs - to generate interest
- tendency for groups to want to be autonomous
- GLU wants to support autonomy and provide umbrella

Wayne:

- at IJC conceptually fort the role down well. practically could be improved

Rick:

- information for us, the right sort the right type for our membership
- Newsletter
  - keep it, it is a critical tool for informing
  - written at a level for what audience?
  - seems to be written for a core group
  - too many anachronyms
  - more general, in part for a more general consumption
  - an analogous newsletter could be the Wall Street Journal - it has personalized articles - articles with a range of complexity
  - publication needs to meet expert and lay persons needs

Wayne:

- Newsletter
  - short and simple, action oriented and timely
  - relevancy to readership
  - who is audience
  - build ownership into the issues to build the readership
  - making information in the newsletter relevant to people's lives will bring people to read
  - can't be the sole means of communicating - too much paper today
    - use targeted action alerts and there is a need for a hierarchy of information

Rick:

- make the newsletter more general and accompany it with technical papers
- very diverse audience
- newsletter a tool to get people involved
- need some layers of complexity
- make it a reference

Andy:

- who to contact and ;link with in Government
- links to industry and there is a need to identify industry front groups
- information needs, one pagers, accessible

Saul:

- support for 43 RAPs,
- present this process world wide
- define what a good RAP is
- take a stand on RAPs
- the newsletter is good -all issues addressed

**What should be GLU's Direction in the short term and in the Long term?**

Saul:

- individual members drive
- more contact between member organizations and the GLU Board

Wayne:

- hearing and seeing leadership on RAP issues both in the mid term and long term
- foundations are also looking for GLU to provide leadership here as well

Andy:

- lay the ground work for long term, meaningful RAP plans

Wayne:

- what game is GLU in?
- two personalities (schizophrenia):
  - pragmatic American approach
  - socialistic, idealistic Canadian approach
- either play within the institutional rules or play outside of them or acknowledge doing both

Fred:

- co-ordinate and give weight to local actions, RAPs. Rouge River example.

Wayne:

- GLU has been down the RAP road and it didn't work.
- someone has to have the umbrella information to bring reality to the PAC and RAP process - GLU