Opportunity for Facilitated Collaboration

Presented by Denise Bevington

***Purpose: Inform ESAB about an opportunity to step back and evaluate its past accomplishments and future direction via a situation assessment and facilitated collaboration.***

**Why am I presenting this opportunity**? I am taking a course with NC State’s Natural Resources Leadership Institute to develop my skills in group facilitation. My working as a facilitator for ESAB would fulfill a requirement for me to complete a practicum project.

**What is a facilitated collaboration and how is it different from ESAB’s usual meetings**? A facilitator is trained to develop a specific process that meets the needs of a group to most efficiently and effectively explore and address a specific issue or problem.

**Does ESAB have a problem it wants to solve**? This is up to ESAB to determine. ESAB is a new Board with a new charge, and the one-year mark might be a good time for ESAB to step back and think big picture. Examples of issues that ESAB might identify are: (1) a need to review its charge and evaluate its implementation of that charge; (2) a need to evaluate how it has acted outside its charge (i.e., outreach) and consider options; (3) a need to develop review criteria for selecting outreach activities.

**How would a facilitated collaboration benefit ESAB**? The collaboration would help the group define, explore, evaluate, and reach consensus on how to address an identified issue. The process can help build a group’s confidence and trust (e.g., that ESAB is making the right decisions, moving in the right direction), which in turn makes members more vested in the group.

**What is the first step**? I would conduct a situation assessment and provide recommendations based on the assessment. The assessment involves me: sending you a list of questions focused on identifying issues and your perceptions about application of a collaborative approach to address the issues; scheduling meetings with you individually; meeting with you individually (by phone or in person) to discuss the questions; providing recommendations to ESAB based on the meetings.

**What steps follow**? The group reviews my recommendations and decides if it wants to proceed with a facilitated collaboration to address a specific issue. If the group decides to proceed, then the following occurs: the meeting is scheduled; I develop a process to address the identified issue and draft an agenda; I work with an appointed member of ESAB (possibly the Chair) to revise and finalize the process and agenda.

**What role would I play throughout the process**? As facilitator, I would play a neutral role (not an ESAB member) throughout the facilitation process, interested in mirroring and furthering members’ interests.

**What is the timing of the process**? The following represents a possible schedule, depending on ESAB’s needs: ESAB would discuss and vote on the need for a situation assessment in its May or June meeting; the situation assessment would occur in July; recommendations would be distributed in early August; in its August meeting, ESAB would discuss the recommendations and vote on the need for a facilitated collaboration; any such collaboration would be scheduled in October.

**Any questions**? Feel free to email me at denisebevington@gmail.com or call my cell at 919.477.3442.