

Communities at Waters Edge

Keys to Success and Collaboration
Over the Long Term

Shawn Grindstaff
Senior Mediator, The Forrester Group

Focus/Orientation of this discussion

- Communities, stakeholders, government- how and when they react, and how to move ahead
- Shawn- The process design of a sea dumped munitions strategy that offers chances for success
- Robin- Effective community relations as it relates to unexploded ordnance and munitions

Here is what we know

- There is no template or policy for widespread process on coastal sea dumped munitions issues.
- There is an increasing, compelling need to find a cost-effective and thorough process to educate and coordinate on this issue in coastal areas.

Tips for long term success

- Affected coastal areas must receive flexible information and communications methods to ensure success (realities of rural practice)
- Truly listen to the public and interested parties on the best way to help them be informed and mutual in the education process
- Personality and background should be figured into staff dealing with the public.

The Psychology of Water and How it Relates to Munitions Risk

- The giver of life and death
- Aesthetics and recreation/hobbies
- Spiritual value
- Safety
- Clarity versus that which cannot be seen
- What lies beneath- the correlation between lack of information vs. fear

Why this is important

- 2005 discussion- fears of the unknown
 - * Fishing industry- economics and safety
 - * Recreational safety
 - * Shoreline impacts- economics, tourism, children and public health
 - * Environmental and ecological impacts

What this means for the future

- Requires more than a mere government response
- Requires a community response
- For this to occur, a basic, realistic and inclusive approach should be utilized to maximize success

What are the design options?

- Communication methods of engagement
- Consultation methods of engagement
- Consensus methods of engagement

A possibility for a process

Stakeholders and some recommended realistic pursuits:

Defense agencies and federal governments- communication and consultation

Provinces, states, regional units of government- consensus attempts

Private landowners or those critical for access- consultation

Public, non-profits, associations, First Nations/tribes- consultation and consensus

Question should always be: What method will most benefit this community or region?

A possible way to move ahead

- Recommend the development of coastal advisory boards (or similar appropriate wording) on the “shallows” that captures the following triple purpose:
- Citizens, interest groups, non-profits working closely with governments and authorities
- Truly advisory services that seize on alerting the local public on alerts, information, or projects
- Provide cost-effective way to coordinate attention and knowledge when it is needed.

Additional thoughts on a path forward

- This collaborative group won't preclude any participant from their power/rights available to them otherwise
- Could be convened by anyone (government, communities, private, other entities)
- Provides a long-term “eye on the ball” while promoting good communication, education, and coordination through continuity of mission and purpose. Everyone has a role to play.

Similar ways to approach the dilemma?



Similar ways to approach the problem?

- Finding pollution by assumptions



Experiences in Rural Communities

- Hope versus reality, here vs. away
- Sometimes a culture of pride, sometimes a culture of despair
- The role of “context” for urban practitioners eager to help (go beyond...)
- One size, one solution does not fit all (amazing differences in each region or community)

Tips for the Road

- Quit assuming. You already will miss issues in a rural community, so don't make it worse.
- Listen to the layers of the community. For real.
- Know that politics and human behavior are always bigger than the science.
- Celebrate even the smallest of successes.
- Measure progress in decades, not years.

Thanks!

Shawn Grindstaff

Senior Mediator and Managing Principal

The Forrester Group

(636) 728-1034 ext. 216

shawn@forrestergroup.com