

## Great Lakes United

### Burlington Focus Group Board of Directors

December 17, 1993

#### What are your Hopes and Concerns for Strategic Planning?

- what structure do we need in order to deliver what we want to deliver
- how do we creatively structure the E. D. role
- Strategic Planning(SP) can be a catalyst for change
- develop solid proposals
- get us thinking about the Board, its role, structure, its role, its relations with staff-I'm tired of the debate over who does what jobs.
- governance
- how the Board can function between meetings
- explore the possibility of one person committees
- figure out lake level alliances and how they keep falling out of GLU
- how to deal with the large geographic area & diverse interests
- look at how we serve our member organizations
- are we an activist group, a liaison group or a resource group? To some extent we are a reflection of Board member interests.
- decide what we work on and what we don't work on.
- are we bi-national, sometimes yes sometimes no. we are not clear.
- it is important to state we are all of these things and we may only want some of these things-our strength and our weakness.
- explore making the coalition more functional
- explore why issues didn't succeed-Gender?-Health TF, Lab & Envir. TF
- does the Board give direction to the E.D.?
- We need to examine our structural difficulties
- we need to clarify what we want to do-objectives and responsibilities and getting set up to follow through
- explore how the Board can be clearer about its direction
- explore a process for dropping things as priorities change that has an evaluation process for deciding whether the right priorities were set.
- explore accountability-what it is and how to attach it to plans
- define two different levels of leadership-staff and Board.
- integrate Canadian and US issues, information and successes
- explore staff managing volunteers
- explore dynamics of two budgets Cdn/US as the US/Cdn dynamic gets played out.
- explore changing the structure to have Co-Presidents, who; will represent both countries
- evaluate the role of president
- the E.D. needs to run the office, examine staff functional roles

- explore charitable status in Cd,
- acquire staff support on Cdn issues
- if legislation watch is not a focus then against Toronto as a Centre for Canada
- do Board members do legislation work?
- explore the field staff idea.

### **Internal Strengths**

- some committees have worked
- it is easy to work with people like myself. I have had to learn and stretch by working with people who have differing ideologies from mine
- staff jumps into vacuums as they arise

### **Internal Weaknesses**

- there is no recent strong work
- there are no gripping proposals for leading edge work
- we need more funding to facilitate more activity from directors-travel, time and money
- maybe we haven't tried hard enough to work together between meetings
- explore how GLU is off on its own unconnected to other organizations.
- legislative watch, we are not doing it in the US (Sierra Club is) and in Canada?
- we are rife with differences
- we have mixed agendas on the Board . Board meetings seem like a psychodrama.
- there is a lack of understanding of the three cultures
- we have been on the leading edge and were too slow and locust that lead by default
- we have too many issues
- we are spread to thin
- we need to set what our limits are at our retreats
- we need to budget money and work
- we have not been effective at making resolutions and work plan
- directors and staff are not producing
- we want strong leadership
- the president is now overwhelmed

### **External Opportunities**

- explore the possibility of establishing field staff around the basin. This would coalesce the Board members of that region
- explore GLU becoming a co-ordinating body and information source role
- explore value of regional conferences to facilitate interchange of ideas among groups and to facilitate networking-GLU has a facilitation role
- we occupy a unique space
- members want to work on international issues
- we have a unique set of relationship that we are and represent

- we are important to small grass roots groups
- retailer/wholesaler image for GLU
- big groups need us to help them get numbers behind campaigns.
- explore including members organizations on proposals as co-respondents

### **External Threats**

- we under scrutiny from our funders

### **What Direction Should GLU take in the Long Term-It is Five Years From Now?**

- cover the whole waterfront
- get a feel for people around the basin
- a fund raising and development committee is going
- make the AGM a network time -call it a conference and get funding for it.
- re-structure the AGM into a conference in order to energize people
- develop a workable resource centre for member organizations-a Board electronic bulletin Board
- have a referral number a 1-800 #
- we will have five field offices, one for each lake/river
- GLU is involve with other groups doing work in communities on health and environment issues.
- one half of program grants are done with member organizations
- we have a whole set of audio/video materials that bring in money.- we produce these and we sell these
- 50% of our revenue is not based in foundations
- we will have double the membership
- we will have another basin tour and these will continue on regular cycle
- the organizations is well known and preeminent in the Great Lakes Basin
- we have a solid fund raising base for operations
- build on our success and show progress
- we will always have a good issues campaign
- we will set up a communications network to serve member organizations with action alert and with response cards
- we will reassess the newsletter and what it does
- the executive committee will meet regularly and more frequently
- we will reduce the burden of responsibility on the President.
- look at the role of President and Vice-President with the intent of moving towards a co-chair model
- when people go off the Board we will have a way of recognizing them-we will have a more structured way in which we recognize people as they leave the board.
- we are truly beyond nations
- we are a model of diversity working
- there will be implementation of Great Lakes Water Quality
- Government commitment of 0 discharge

- Industry commitment to 0 discharge
- there will be a chlorine ban on Lake Superior
- strong labor and environment working on issues and on job security
- we will network with environmental justice groups
- need to put more moral spin on issues
- we are on top of legislative issues in Canada and US
- we address issue of popular life style of resource acquisition as fundamental to environmental issues.

## Great Lakes United

### Burlington Focus Group Member Organizations

December 18, 1993

#### Participants

Bill & Eileen Faust	Buffalo Audubon Society
Camilla Smith	GLU Board member
Robyn McClellan	"
Paul Muldoon	"
Jeanne Jabanoski	"
Sarah Miller	"
John Jackson	"
Pat Lupo	"
Sean Enright	GLU staff

#### Issues the member organization faces

- preservation of park land-Adirondack example
- lumbering issues in the North and North Western US.
- wetlands problems
- demise of bird species
- audabon looks at the whole eco-system
- Hydro Quebec-we were instrumental in the cancellation of the power contract in Up state NY.

#### General Comments

- we believe in what GLU is trying to accomplish
- we have not worked closely with the office, we don't phone the office for help, our own organizations provides support
- What could GLU do better? -organize meetings like this better
- Feedback on what GLU does. -
  - publication very good
  - periodic reports helpful
  - good work being done
- Ideas and issues for the Buffalo AGM-wetlands and pure water
- we support GLU because it is an excellent organization
- as a basin wide organization it can exert pressure on local governments
- GLU is an entirely different organization from other groups-Sierra, Audobon

Jack Mano-relayed by Robyn M.

- do what supports a coalition
- serve as an information clearing house
- present information and the IJC
- coalition members need to see that GLU isn't competing with other member organizations
- GLU can be a conduit for funds to member organizations by having member organizations sign on with funding projects
- do more with regional meetings
- facilitate member organizations-be a consultant to other organizations and share information
- encourage GLU to be a back ground group help other groups to be front and center

### More General Comments

- pay attention to organizational needs, i.e. Strategic Planning
- go more deeply into the Task Force process and have it driven by member organizations
- in the Task Force process identify any member organizations who would take a lead on issues- we become more of a network and facilitate the transfer on information
- GLU's strength as a transnational organization for example-GLWQA

### Paul Muldoon

- GLU needs to have a service function and an advocacy function
- GLU needs to be invisible and visible depending on the issues
- GLU needs to have a name and a profile in order to raise money
- our reputation was built around the water quality agreement during the 1984-88
- times have changed we need a new focus
- the nationality barrier is down-what is the next barrier, the next new challenge

### General Discussion

- GLU is losing momentum regarding round table discussions
- communication is not what it could be, this might be the cause of a loss in momentum
- develop personal relationships with members
- develop a process of regional meetings/multinational
- establish a yearly meeting in addition to the AGM
- set-up a member organization meeting schedule
- people are looking for solutions today
- viability of group will depend on the right issues and their solutions defined
- everyone is an environmentalist
- GLU has to define its niche

- environmental issues tend to be pushed off the table- GLU needs to integrate environmental issues with other social issues, -health, education, economy.
- GLU needs to show the link between environmental issues, as fundamental to social interaction issues.
- tie events like the Exxon Valdez to zero discharge, use the media.