

Wicked Problems Homework

Board of Forestry

Background:

The purpose of this homework is to have you as Board members think about a situation in your professional career where you have worked through a wicked problem. Wicked Problems are complex, transdisciplinary, emotionally charged, involve stakeholders with competing interests and engage partner agencies with corresponding missions. The inherent complexity of and competing interest in these issues are why they are termed *wicked problems*. Most natural resource policy problems are wicked and the Board will regularly encounter and seek solutions to these problems even as our understanding of the problems change and the information and science evolves.

This homework assignment will help us prepare and frame a Board discussion at the November 7 Science, Values, and Policy workshop. As a collective group, you will discuss how your Board member peers have been successful in dealing with wicked problems.

Please submit the completed assignment to Jennifer Erdmann by October 25, 2019. If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Erdmann at 503-934-8150

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Assignment:

We have set up this assignment as an after-action review (AAR). The purpose of an AAR is to retain strength and improve upon weaknesses. In the space below please think about a time you have worked through a wicked problem in your career. List three things that went well and three things that could have been improved upon for dealing with wicked problems in the future.

List the wicked problem you dealt with:

List three things that went well and why:

1.

2.

3.

List three things that could be improved upon:

1.

2.

3.

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Overview: The examples of wicked problems that were given were very different in content, but they still had common themes in both successes and improvements.

Common theme for success: It was not a surprise at all that the need for transparency is key to what went well in the examples for dealing with wicked problems. Transparency helps create better relationships, alignment, and engagement amongst the parties that are involved. Also noted were the need for clear constraints on solutions, characterizing the different types of risk, and the use of third-party resources to bring information to all parties involved.

Common themes for improvement: Engaging amongst public/neighbors/advisory groups sooner would allow for more meaningful interactions and give the other parties a chance to have a voice in the outcomes.

