4. PUBLIC POLICY DIALOGUE

Basic format: Advisory committee, working group, task team and group consensus process.

Purpose: Do in-depth, detailed work with variety of stakeholders to achieve consensus on diverse views, interests and values.

Uses: Problem solving, policy development, planning, development of legislation and regulations, and value and interest clarification.

Duration: Two days to two years, commonly two days/month for three to 12 months.

Participants: Inclusive representation of key stakeholders, often including the sponsor; up to 24 recommended, can go higher.

Key factors: General focus on broad issues.

End result is often in the form of recommendations to decision maker(s).

Participants develop ground rules that specify principles (code of conduct), operational details and provide a confirmation of the purpose (terms of reference, mandate, etc.)

Process is inclusive and representative.

To the extent possible, Interest-based negotiation is used to work toward meeting the interests of all participants. Usually the group will attempt to reach consensus.

Process is facilitated or mediated by skilled, impartial third parties.

A variety of process paths may be followed, including problem solving, decision making, strategic planning, and policy development.

Participants require patience and discipline, as well as the ability to use excellent communication skills (especially listening).
Pre-process training may be provided.

Often results in improved relationships among participants.