

Coming Together for Clean Water

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

April 15, 2010, Washington, DC

Guidelines for Small Group Discussions

Some of our time at Coming Together for Clean Water will be spent in small groups of 8-12 participants working together to fully explore specific issues and questions related to creating sustainable communities, restoring degraded waters and preventing impairment.

There are three small group discussion topics; each topic will be addressed by more than one small group. The three discussion topics are:

- Watershed approaches for the 21st century (Healthy Watersheds)
- Exploring the elements of an effective nutrient strategy (Healthy Watersheds)
- Tackling wet weather management challenges (Sustainable Communities)

Each of the three discussion topics has three specific questions as a starting place for small group discussions. The questions are described in the Discussion Document (provided in advance of the meeting and in your meeting packet), and the ones germane for your small group are reprinted on index cards that will be available on your tables.

The small groups will have from 11:00 until approximately 2:15 to discuss their questions, with a scheduled 1 hour and 15 minute break for lunch. We plan to use about 45 minutes at the end of the small group discussions for the small groups to share their conclusions with one another and to plan the plenary report out to the full group. ***This means there is about 45 minutes per question in the small groups.*** We encourage small groups to have lunch together to extend the amount of time they have for discussion.

It is important for everyone in the small groups participate in the discussions. To ensure this, we encourage you to take a few moments to jot down some notes about your thoughts and reactions to the question on an index card at the beginning of the discussion of each question. Then, each group can go around the table and each participant can share his or her thoughts. In the remaining time a more free flowing discussion can ensue. At the end of each question discussion, please take time to record some ideas your table would like to carry forward into the report out for that question. You can use the table top flip chart for this, if that is convenient. It will be necessary for your table to identify someone to make notes on the flip chart and lead the small group report out.

The key is to please discuss each question, help one another to support participation from everyone, and identify what points or ideas you want to carry forward into the report out.

At the end of the small group discussion you can take your index cards with you or you can leave them as a written record of your thoughts and ideas. The facilitators will collect and transcribe any index cards that are left for this purpose for EPA to use as they reflect on the event's outcome.

Table assignments were made prior to the event and we tried to achieve a diversity of backgrounds, roles, and experiences in each small table group. Each small group will include an EPA representative who will participate in the discussions. A facilitator will move from small group to small group to help with your discussions as needed. When small group discussions are complete and the conclusions are shared, the facilitators will present that report-out to the full group at 3:15. The full group will then discuss what has been shared and continue to provide direction for EPA until the event concludes at 5:30.