

Civic Governance Policy Agenda

September 2014

In process of being developed and advanced

Civic: The work of citizens. “Civic” is a qualifier that indicates that our work is framed in the tension between democratic principles and develops the capacity of the *populous* to govern for the good of the whole within the tension.

Govern: To rule over by right of authority; to exercise a directing or restraining influence over; guide; to define problems, contribute to solutions and act as a policy maker.

Policy: Principled course of action. Policies provide a compass for governance; they are the result of taking bearing and setting direction. They provide the basis for rewards and sanctions. Policies require continual evaluation and feedback. Individuals and institutions have policies.

Agenda: Plan for action. “We believe in this principled course of action (policy) and therefore we do x, y and z (agenda).”

We believe

All Citizens Can Develop the Civic Capacity to Govern for the Common Good of Clean Water

Every individual has the capacity to know what is good, to grow in that knowledge, to govern for the common good and to be a co-producer of justice in the world. In a democracy, citizenship is the role individuals have to carry out this capacity.

Glossary

Common Good-

Found in the tension between what is good for the parts and what is good for the whole. The common good is found by organizing people with diverse interests to the common obligation of active citizenship and negotiating to find mutually acceptable agreements that advance the common good.

Justice-

The right relationship among us, in alignment with transcendent principles and values and respectful of human capacity and human dignity.

Self-interest-

Literally means “self among others.” Derived from the social connections and influences that form identity. All human beings have self-interest. It is understood to be the basis for action or non-action. Civic Organizing grows *enlightened* self-interest by linking self to transcendent civic principles.

Individuals must recognize how their decisions impact the welfare of others (the ability of others to have clean water) and see a need to develop their capacity to govern for the common good.

Societal institutions (family, faith, community, work, learning and governance) are all policy centers that should develop the identity and capacity of active citizenship to be the basis for governance in water policy making.

Therefore, we propose these policies:

1. Water quality restoration and protection work must be linked to active citizenship and a higher purpose (i.e., all citizens in communities and institutions have a central role in and obligation in a democracy to solve the challenge of water pollution and to work toward the common goal of clean water).
2. In order to ensure there are effective and sustainable local efforts to control water pollution within watersheds across Minnesota, we must develop the civic capacity of local leaders willing to engage in all aspects of the policy making process (including strategic planning, civic engagement, and transparent, accountable decision-making).
3. In order for active citizens and civic leaders to emerge and thrive within watersheds, all institutions collaborating toward the goal of clean water must establish internal policies that develop the identity of active citizenship, civic capacity and the civic infrastructure to have a meaningful governing role in the process. This requires a dedication of resources to civic development across time, sectors, and generations.
4. Advance recommendations 1-3 as a Civic Policy Agenda.