



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AGENDA

Trout Unlimited Canada

BRIEF #3 – POLICY PROCESS

The Process Basis for Policy Development

September 26, 2006

This brief outlines the suggested processes necessary to develop policy, determine implementation approaches and communicate these policies to members, staff and public.

The Need for Policy

Policy is a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government or a political party (Cambridge Dictionary). Trout Unlimited Canada is an evolving organization. We wish to deliver our mission at a National, Provincial and Chapter level. Clear policy on substantive issues helps to guide all levels of the organization in the deliver of our Mission, Goals and Objectives.

Policy statements are short and decisive with a structure to then articulate them. The proposed policy structure template is identified in Brief #1. This structure should be used for all statements of policy developed by the organization, at all levels.

Authority and Responsibility

Policy development is an iterative process requiring input from all levels of the organization. Policy is intended to identify our position and direction on a particular subject for the entire organization. In effect, we wish to speak with one voice on specific issues, articulating where we stand, and the approach we wish to take to resolve them. Policy cannot be developed in a vacuum but requires the input from all levels of the organization, from member, chapter, Provincial Council to National office.

The National office of Trout Unlimited Canada is ultimately responsible for the development of policy. The need for a policy can come from a variety of directions, from the direction of the Board of Directors, from the CEO, recommendations from the National Resource Board, from professional staff, Provincial Councils, Chapters and members. It can be both a bottom-up process and a top-down process but is ultimately an iterative process (See Figure 1). Policy will then lead to potential programs and ultimately to delivery to resolve the issue generating the need for the policy. National must ensure that input to new draft policy is derived from existing Provincial Councils and Chapter Presidents.

Provincial Councils play several roles in policy development: identification of policy needs; identifying how National Policy should be implemented at the Provincial level; establishment of Province specific policy.

Provincial Councils may see the need to address issues unique to their area with a specific policy statement. Even under these circumstances, the confirmation and endorsement of a particular policy must come from the National Board of Directors to ensure that all policies are consistent with the Mission, Goals and objectives of Trout Unlimited Canada.

Chapters are responsible for two major roles in the policy process in Trout Unlimited Canada: identification of issues that may require a National policy; and implementation of National policy at the local watershed level through their programs and projects.

The National Office of Trout Unlimited Canada is ultimately responsible for the communication and explanation of policies developed for the organization.

Policy Development Considerations

Other than administrative policy, which is an organizational issue (See Brief #4), science based policies will fall under the fundamental policy areas of: water quality; water quantity; habitat management; and fish community management. Broad-based areas of policy needs, related to the four themes are outlined in the Proceedings of NRB Workshop #1 (December 2004).

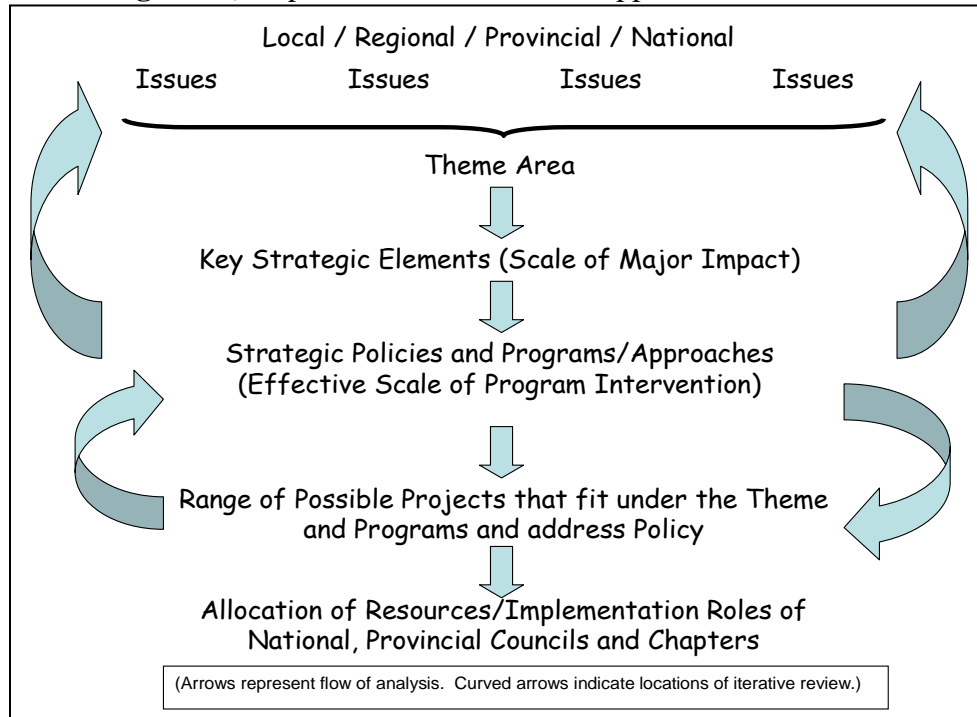
Policy development should begin with a review of the current state of knowledge on a specific subject and issue. The outcome of the review can be presented in several ways:

- Highly complex issues will require a technical synthesis of knowledge in order to create the foundation for policy considerations. These complex issues may require a White Paper outlining the assessed and synthesized information, implications of this information and suggested policy options.
- For less complex issues, a Position Statement may be developed. The proposed structure of a Position Statement would be: the issue; statement of principles; background information and facts; recommendations and proposed position/policy.

Once the Board of Directors reviews the White Paper or Position Statement and decides upon the policy recommendation they prefer, the affirmed position becomes policy and a policy statement is prepared. A policy statement should be specific and short with a punch. This should be followed by an elaboration of the statement including:

- Reasons for the statement;
- Principles used to support it;
- Objectives of the policy statement (as they relate to our Mission and the specific theme it resides within);
- Implications of the statement on each level of the organization (National, Provincial, Chapter);
- Delivery approaches (how we accomplish the intent of the policy and its objectives and the range of approaches from development of a set of projects, programs, activities); and
- Preferred Outcomes.

Figure 1: Conceptual Approach to the Development of the National Conservation Agenda (Loops demonstrate iterative approach with members and Chapters)



Implementation and Communication

This Policy Process provides a structure that leads from our Mission and Mandate, to the Substantive Themes of the NCA, to over-arching policies that accomplish several things:

1. Help us communicate our mission and focus to our members, partners and agencies.
2. Create a framework for subtopics, secondary policies, Provincial policy statements, white papers, etc. at finer scales of interest
3. Provide a focus for the inventory and monitoring of all substantive programs and projects at council, local and National levels.

There may occasionally be a disconnect between our National Policy vision at the NRB and Chapter and Local level views. Most of our members and Chapters are focused on specific, often local problems that need resolution. They rarely think of policy first, but rather try to determine the nature of the problem and then the action to solve or resolve the problem. Therefore, any policy and program development that occurs should ensure that we can demonstrate how bottom-up concerns can create policy and how broad policies can be applied to local issues. We need to ensure that Chapters understand that there can be flexibility in the application of any policy of the organization to local situations. We want to be more descriptive in our approach to policy implementation at the local level rather than prescriptive.

The strength of any grassroots organization is the ability to identify emerging local problems common across large regions and Provinces and to elevate those to a Provincial and National level for debate and development of corporate policies to help guide other chapters that will likely face these problems. For this reason, much of the

NCA document will tend to be descriptive not prescriptive. We will also need provisions and methods to reconcile competing views and interests.

As Trout Unlimited Canada becomes more and more active as an advocate for the conservation, protection and restoration of Canada's freshwater ecosystems, there will be a greater need to develop position statements and policy to help guide our staff and members.

Organizational Structure and Communications

The implementation of the National Conservation Agenda will require the support of TUC's Board, CEO, staff and members. This will require significant enhancement of the capacity and capability of the organization to do good work and to implement the policies, programs and plans of the organization.

Increasing funding to hire more staff is one method of increasing capacity, but this approach will still not create a substantive increase of good work across Canada. The most significant increase in capacity and capability of the organization will be in developing tools and training programs to increase communication, volunteer leadership, efficiency, effectiveness and capability.

Trout Unlimited USA has had great success in the development of a leadership program for Chapter executives through a leadership forum to enhance communication throughout the organization and distribution of a leadership manual.

The development of a leadership program for Trout Unlimited Canada is an essential component in the development of a more effective organization. Along with the leadership program should be tools and training of volunteers in a variety of administrative, scientific and technical areas to enhance their capability to develop meaningful projects, inform their local communities, monitor their local environments and assess the success of local projects. These tools and training programs will dramatically increase the capacity of the organization to deliver the National Conservation Agenda and magnify the input and capability of staff.

The Future Role of the National Resource Board

The future role of the National Resource Board will be determined by the Board of Directors. The NRB with its membership form across Canada and technical expertise could provide strong input in the ongoing development, review and establishment of position statements, policies and programs.

The NRB has already provided input to staff for one draft position statement placed before the Board this past spring. Issues will likely arise from the members and chapters; from staff; from other organizations; and from the NRB sparking the need for careful scientific deliberation, advice and the development of position statements and policy statements