

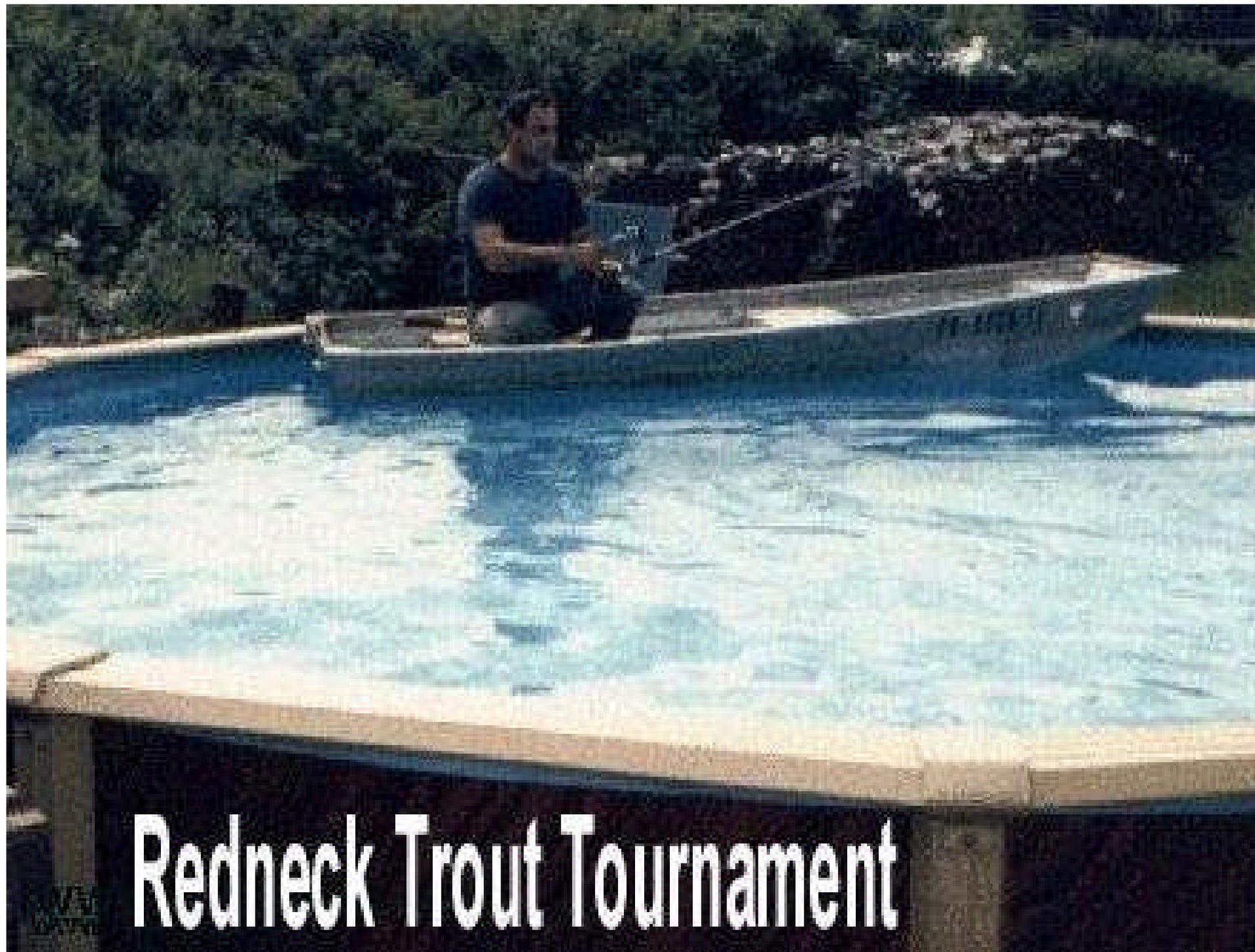
Public Deliberative Forums: Harvesting the Public's Thinking on Critical Issues

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Redneck Trout Tournament

Singapore relies on its neighbour for about half of the 300 million gallons of water it consumes every day, but the two sides have been trading verbal punches before next month's negotiations on setting a new price after current agreements expire. "We don't want to sell water to them," Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Tuesday. "We are losing money selling to them."

Resource-parched Singapore countered by saying it would need less from Malaysia in future because it could fill some of its requirements by turning waste water into so-called "Newater".

TalkingCock, which means "spouting nonsense" in Singapore slang, had its own version of the government campaign to sell the idea of "Newater" to the city state's four million people.

"It's totally natural, like **Evian**, except that it doesn't come down from snowy alpine rivers but from your very own kidneys," it quoted a fictitious official telling sceptical (**sp?!!**) residents of a housing estate.

In reality, "Newater" has been certified cleaner than tap water by a panel of international experts. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong gave it his seal of approval by swigging a bottle for the local press after a recent game of tennis. Singaporeans will get to taste it for themselves when 60,000 bottles are handed out at the National Day parade on Friday.

LIKE FINE WINE

Only government officials know to what extent Singapore intends to cut its reliance on Malaysian water, but the heavy emphasis on the possibilities of "Newater" clearly is designed to be a bargaining chip over price.

Singapore now pays three Malaysian cents (less than one U.S. cent) for every thousand gallons of raw water piped in. Malaysia said last month it was ready to rework the pricing formula after a proposal to make the city state pay 100 times more by 2007 was rejected. One joke e-mail doing the rounds envisions a novel solution to the long-standing tensions over water.

"In the landmark deal, Malaysia has agreed to divert its vast sewerage network across the peninsula into Singapore so that the island republic can have unlimited supply of human waste for recycling into Newater," it reads.

But TalkingCock said Temasek Holdings, Singapore's powerful state investment agency, had other plans - collecting the urine of high-ranking politicians to bottle and age like fine wine.

"We believe that the pee of our highly gifted leaders is not ordinary urine and should be treated as such," a fictitious official said. "It's tentatively called Cabinet Sauvignon."

Story by John O'Callaghan

REUTERS NEWS SERVICE

**“Without the people’s will,
the people won’t.”**

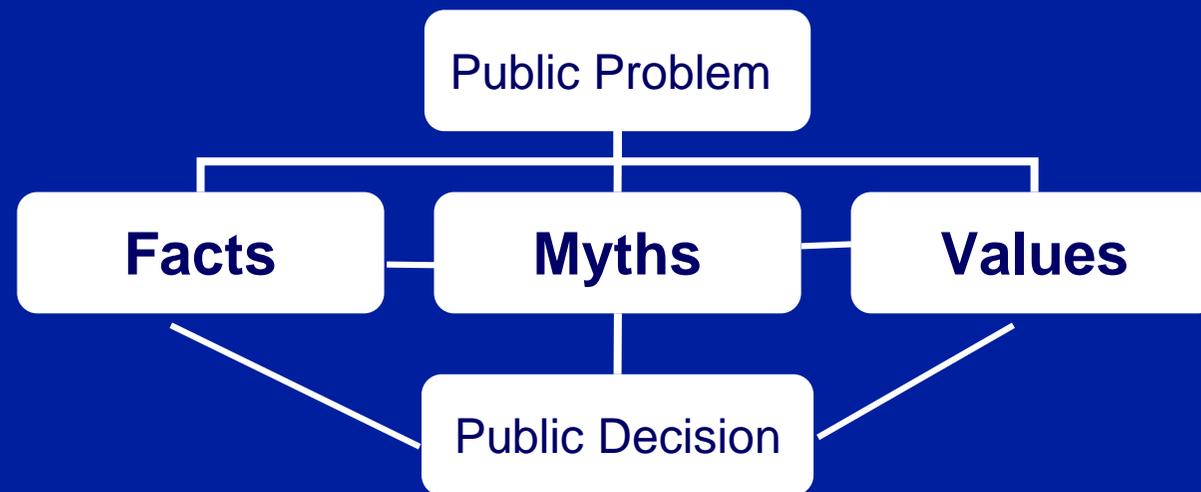
Harry West

Role of Public in Policy

*. . . The people must be actively involved in making public judgments . . .
. . . To preserve American democracy, there is something for everyone to do – average citizens, institutions, people in positions of leadership, experts, government officials, the media – all of us*

Yankelovich, 1991

Public Decision-Making Model



**Public Deliberation helps people
weigh alternative policies . . .**



. . . to solve challenging public problems

Public Deliberation – Forums

- A public problem
 - Complex, no simple answers
 - Time available for deliberation; not an emergency
- Beyond debate or simple discussion
- Structured dialogue / issue guide with 3-4 possible approaches
- Public understanding/knowledge of issues
- Learning the concerns people have
- Means to make tough choices about policy directions

Public Deliberation, cont'd

- A way of reasoning and talking together
 - Weighs the views of others
 - Considers consequences, costs and benefits
 - Challenges people to identify trade-offs
 - Respects the perspectives and values of others
- Requires that people:
 - Interact peacefully.
 - Share knowledge and perspectives on issues.
 - Organize to act publicly on these issues.
- A means to find common ground for action

What Does a Public Deliberative Forum Look Like?

- Participants & moderator in a circle (15-25 people)
- Diverse participants and perspectives
- Facilitated by a trained moderator and recorder
- Issue guide with 3-4 approaches
- 2 to 2½ hours
 - Opening
 - Deliberation of approaches
 - Reflections/closing
 - » Common ground for action
 - » Trade-offs
 - » Understanding others' perspectives



What Happens after a Deliberative Forum?

- Nationally through NIF
 - Moderators from multiple forums report outcomes (such as common ground, trade-offs, etc.) via web
 - NIF prepares national reports (3 or 4 per year)
 - “A Public Voice” – one-hour PBS special
 - Presentation at National Press Club in Washington, DC
 - Presentation to Congress and/or staff

What Happens after a Deliberative Forum, cont'd

- In Oklahoma or locally:
 - Forum outcomes compiled into a final state or local report
 - Report is shared:
 - A public community meeting
 - News releases
 - Printed materials, etc.
- Public action
- Connecting citizens & officeholders

Studies of Public Deliberation

■ Deliberative Forum Participants:

- Come from every part of society
- Reconsider their own opinions and judgments
- Approach issues more realistically considering costs, consequences and trade-offs associated with policy options

Studies of Public Deliberation

■ Deliberative Forum Participants:

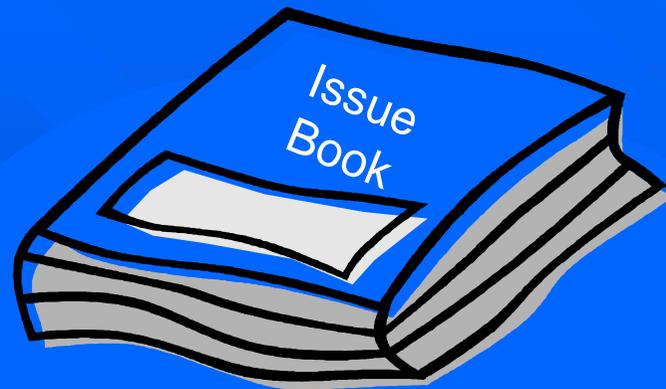
- Reconsider & develop greater understanding for the views of others
- Define their self interest more broadly
- Develop greater sense of confidence in what they can do politically
- Become more interested in political and social issues

The Roots of Public Deliberation

- Tribal decision making
- New England town hall
- Kettering Foundation – National Issues Forums (nifi.org)
- Study Circles Resource Center (studycircles.org)

National Issues Forums (NIF)

- Non-partisan, non-advocacy
- Nation-wide network (about 40 states)
- Issues identified each year
- Issue books/videos
- Local issue forums and study circles



- 3-4 issue books developed each year
- Over 50 topics currently available
- For list of topics:
 - nifi.org

Community Efforts

- **Norman NIF Network**
- **Stillwater SPEAKS** (Stillwater People Expressing Attitudes and Knowledge): *"In Search of Common Ground"*
- **Other possible communities:**
 - Muskogee
 - Antlers

Norman NIF Network

- Diverse committee, including newspaper
- Deliberative habit
 - Formed 2002
 - 2 forums twice/year
- Framed a local issue (health of elementary-aged children in Norman Public Schools)

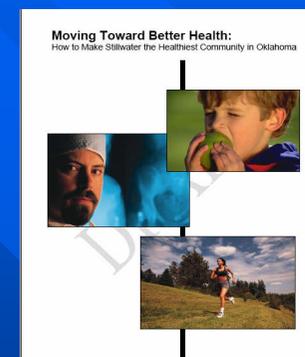
Stillwater SPEAKS: Overview and History

- Founded in 2002
- Group of Stillwater citizens giving their time to . . .
 - . . . foster citizen involvement in public decision making through deliberative forums

Stillwater SPEAKS, cont'd

A Beginning...

- Moving Toward Better Health framework
- Forums held in 2003
- Report to community
- 4 action committees formed



Stillwater SPEAKS, cont'd

Additional Forums

■ September 2004

■ October 2004

The Question of Gambling in Oklahoma

Information Packet
Stillwater SPEAKS

September 2004

Sponsored in part by:
League of Women Voters
Stillwater Community
Business Committee
VOICE



OSU Service Learning
Whisper Center
OSU Leadership Institute
OSU Residence Hall
Association

Same Sex
Marriages

Traditional
Values

DEFINING MARRIAGE

This November, Oklahomans will be asked to vote on a state question concerning the definition of marriage. Come join us as the Stillwater community discusses the many issues surrounding the topic. This is NOT a debate nor is it a panel of experts, these are Stillwater citizens discussing their views. ALL opinions and views will be given equal weight. Participants will be expected to treat opposing viewpoints with courtesy.

WHY DELIBERATE?

To discuss the strengths and weaknesses of multiple approaches to an issue.
To examine an issue from several different and often conflicting viewpoints.
TO SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND AMONG THE COMMUNITY!

Date: **October 7th**
Time: **7:00pm - 9:00pm**
Where: **OSU Campus
413 Student Union**

Date: **October 12th**
Time: **1:00pm - 3:00pm**
Where: **Stillwater
Community Center
8th and Duck St.**

Deliberation: The kind of reasoning and talking we do when a difficult decision has to be made, a good deal is at stake, and there are competing options or approaches we might take. It means to weigh possible actions carefully by examining what is most valuable to us.

Visit our website at <http://www.okstate.edu/speaks/>

Stillwater SPEAKS, cont'd

Alcohol Project

- March-April 2006
- Mayor's Wellness Committee, including Red Ribbon Committee
- Alcohol: Controlling the Toxic Spill
- 3 deliberative forums
- Written report at Town Hall Meeting



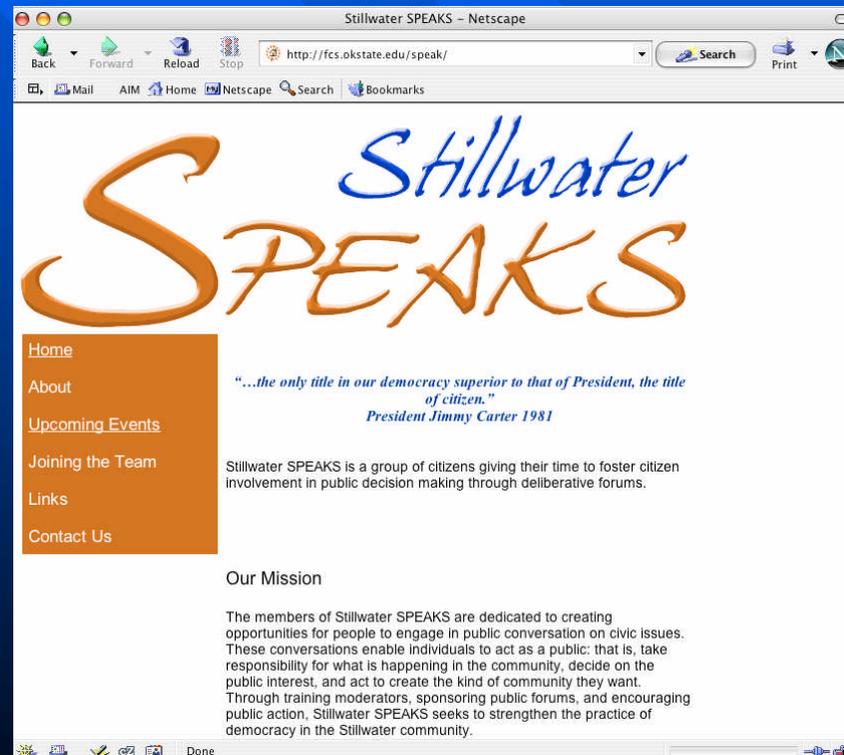
Stillwater SPEAKS, cont'd

Information Sharing

- Information brochure

- Website

<http://fcs.okstate.edu/speak>



So *What* Has Happened?

- Williams and Daugherty studied people who took the training in Oklahoma:
 - Telephone interviews with approx. 100 persons
 - In-depth personal interviews with 12 persons

Findings: Activities People Conducted

Community task force	37%
Contact office holders	64%
Participant network	83%
Study group	32%
Additional forums on same topic	44%
Featured in local media	67%
Issue on public agenda	53%

***Findings:
Use of Public Deliberation
Principles and Concepts
in Everyday Life***

Work	79%
Family Life	55%
Civic Life	75%
Religious Community	35%
Dealing with Public Issues	76%

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

--Margaret Mead

Happy Easter!

