

Esteemed Ctte Members

The bottom line of this ramble is that there probably isn't a need to hash out a decision rule in advance of the November "let's get down to 4 or 5 alternatives" extravaganza. Read on if you want to know the reasoning.

Thanks--

Carie

Decision Rules

There are several sets of decision rules you will use, even in Recon. The SIAC Subcommittee will propose the ones you use for the first cut after the Convention. I had originally thought you needed some decision rules for the next cut, in November, but now I am backing off that.

The Small Stuff

Rick has worried about a situation where the small projects that are cost-effective and sensible get crushed by the big projects that can produce huge quantities of water. Since a Committee member worries about it, so do Nicholas and I. (And I suspect Rick is not the only one who would want to make sure sensible cost-effective ideas are preserved.) I propose a simple decision rule that says "small projects that make sense should not be crushed." I am a bit fixated on putting them in a package separately from the big projects, partly to protect them from the crushing and partly to keep our other discussions from being hideously complicated. Maybe that separation doesn't need to happen in the first SIAC/Ctte sorting, but I hope it happens before we come together in November.

With respect to the little stuff, cumulatively it is probably more than little. You'll need to decide how you want that to affect your estimate of the "gap" between supply and demand. Do you estimate what the small, no-brainer¹ projects can accomplish, estimate the uncertainty and then reduce the gap by that much?

Think about that.

Leap Forward

Now I want to leap forward to the near-end of your process when you might converge on one alternative. To do that, you will almost certainly start grabbing bits and pieces and making what Philip and I refer to as a 'hybrid.' (I forget--Rosemary has an equally good term--would really like to get this terminology settled!) You are going to cherry

¹ Oh yes I am well aware that "no brainer" contains a lot of nuance. But hang in with me here. I think a subgroup could figure this out and not take up Ctte time except as a review.

pick. I hope you will resist doing this until quite late in the process. Keep your alternatives as sharp and crisp as you can. Up until a certain point, keep working harder to explore the decision space than to come up with the one right answer.

Karen will help you keep distinctly different character among alternatives by focusing you on scenarios, because the scenarios evoke distinctly different answers.

November Recon

So now... what about the mid-point, when you narrow to 4 or 5 alternatives (plus the little guys) to carry forward from Recon to the Real Deal? You know you want to use the alternatives like probes that go out into the decision space. But that's too vague. What else? How do 14 people decide?

I naively thought in old terms where there was just one problem statement. You run the decision model; you feel its weaknesses; you run it some more; you feel your weaknesses; you run it some more. You talk talk talk. You come to a place of rest about the model and you see pretty clearly that there are some obvious strong candidates.) And then there are some other contenders that you just don't want to throw to the side. So you throw in a bit of this and that, maybe you ignore my advice and do a leeeetle cherry picking and you are done. A lot of hard work and a pinch of magic: 4 or 5 alternatives to carry forward.

But that's not right. Because you have scenarios. Leaving out the baseline, you will have 3 or 4 scenarios and each of them constitutes a different problem statement. If you are in the 'Max Fish Health' scenario you have a different problem to solve than if you are in the 'Santa Cruz is Prepared for Climate Change' or 'Sustainable Santa Cruz' scenario. The amount or timing or reliability of water you need may be different. So may other parameters.

Therefore, there won't be one ranking of alternatives that you all more or less agree about: there will be 3 or 4. It is very possible that each scenario will have a different top contender. And then, as importantly, you may have an alternative that is second best for all scenarios. That one is certainly worth sitting up and looking at!

What does this mean, then, for your decision rule? Well, I was a good girl to think ahead and ask you to decide how you are going to decide. But after all it doesn't really make sense in your case. I think your decision process for carrying forward a small number of alternatives will be "organic." That is facilitator-speak for "hard, disciplined work and an even larger pinch of magic."

Since this is a complex problem it only makes sense that your answers should be emergent properties. I think we have stoked the emergence quite well up to now--and I include you in that 'we'--but I don't think we need to belabor a decision rule.

Ha! One less @#! process issue for the agenda!