Community Interaction and Public Perception
Enacted In 1971, MEPA significantly expanded the public right to participate in the decisions of government ... *look before you leap*” - *A Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act, 2013*
Here are a few models ......
The “Highly Regulated” model

The project where the agency folks (greatly) outnumber members of the public who are interested
The “Golden Sunlight” model

- Public meetings are Company pep rallies
- Everyone shows up
- Small community
- Local interest
- Local political interest
- Concerns/substantive comments are registered through written comments
The “Angry Mob” model

Picketers, organizing, yelling

Otter Creek Coal Mine
statewide, regional, national and even international implications and interest
The “Who Woulda’ Thunk” model

“Acid Mine Drainage”

“Tributary of the Smith River”

Proposed Black Butte Copper Project near White Sulphur Springs draws thousands of comments
Comments

• NGOs hiring professional consultants

• Form letter campaigns

Obama flooded with 1M comments slamming fracking

August 26, 2013 | By Barbara Vergetis Lundin

The public comment period for the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) second version of its Proposed "Oil and Gas; Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands" rule, which apply to more than

• Never underestimate the amount of time this is going to take

• Don’t be afraid to adapt
Listen

Even if you’re not listening, pretend to listen – even if you don’t care, pretend to care
Support Groups

If this is all too touchy feely for you – get in line

*Mantra*

patience, professionalism, and perseverance
6 steps to recovery

• Step 1 – We admit we cannot (completely) avoid public processes

• Step 2 – We understand that public perception cannot be ignored and can be shaped by our actions

• Step 3 – We admit that, maybe in the past, we have feared or loathed public processes and discounted public perception
6 steps to recovery

• Step 4 – We make a decision that embracing public input and community involvement might actually be a good thing

• Step 5 – We acknowledge that, often, public processes actually improve the project and help us understand it better

• Step 6 – We help each other embrace public processes and value public perception
Thank you

Questions