



Community Involvement Plan

April 15, 1999

managed by Brookhaven Science Associates
for the U.S. Department of Energy
under contract no. DE-AC02-98CH10886

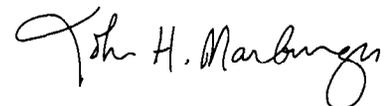


A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Brookhaven National Laboratory Community Involvement Plan is part of a systematic effort to increase awareness of the community in our operations. The plan spells out, in detail, the process the Laboratory will follow to ensure that the views of interested individuals are considered in its decision-making processes.

The overarching goal of Brookhaven's Community Involvement Program is to establish an effective partnership among the Department of Energy, the Laboratory, and a full range of community members to address issues that affect the community's quality of life. I am personally committed to making the plan work for both the Laboratory and the community. Success depends upon widespread application of the process described in the plan.

Like many other aspects of Laboratory operations, responsibility for community involvement is to some extent shared by every employee. The Plan assumes that responsibility starts with the Director and flows to each line manager and his or her direct reports. In this way, Laboratory activities that might have an impact on the community can be identified as they arise and conducted in appropriate interaction with interested community sectors.



John H. Marburger, Director
Brookhaven National Laboratory

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Because we are a public institution, the U.S. Department of Energy considers community involvement a fundamental component of our planning and decision-making processes. Even more fundamentally, I believe that it is the right thing to do.

Consequently, we fully support this Community Involvement Plan and look forward to partnering with the Laboratory and our stakeholders in its implementation. Through this partnership, our stakeholders can learn about, understand and participate in our institutions, and we can make better, more informed decisions. With this plan, we ensure that public participation is an integral and effective part of Laboratory activities.

I look forward to your participation.



George J. Malosh, Manager
Department of Energy, Brookhaven Group

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INTRODUCTION

This Community Involvement Plan has been prepared by the Brookhaven National Laboratory's Community Involvement Office with the input of the community, Laboratory employees and representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy.

The process to develop the plan began with the formation of a focus group consisting of representatives from:

- the community at large
- special interest groups within the community
- the business community
- Laboratory retirees
- senior and line management from the Laboratory
- the U.S. Department of Energy

The focus group reviewed an initial outline developed by the Office of Community Involvement, held in-depth roundtable discussions of community involvement needs, and created a draft plan based on their discussions.

A workshop was held to present the draft Community Involvement Plan to a wider audience for their input and insights on how Brookhaven should involve the community in decision making. This workshop was advertised in local newspapers and within the Laboratory. It was attended by community members, special interest group representatives, Laboratory employees and managers, U.S. Department of Energy-Brookhaven Group management, and members of the Laboratory's Community Advisory Council. The results of the workshop discussions are incorporated in this plan.

When finalized, the community involvement process described in this plan will coordinate a number of existing Laboratory programs along with new initiatives to produce an integrated, Laboratory-wide approach to community involvement. Programs already underway at the Laboratory that will be coordinated under the process include:

- the Community Advisory Council
- regulatory-related public involvement activities
- outreach programs (the Speakers Bureau, the Visitors Program, the Envoy Program, the Ambassador Program)

This plan describes, at the top level, the Laboratory's community involvement process. The plan will be implemented within the Laboratory through follow-up activities, including:

- Development of a Community Involvement Handbook for line managers that translates the plan into how-to instructions for identifying and addressing the need for community involvement.
- Training for line managers and Laboratory personnel on how to use the Plan and Handbook.
- Development of Program- and Project-level Community Involvement Plans – simple, straight-forward descriptions of the decision making and outreach activities that will be conducted for specific programs and projects.
- Incorporation of community involvement goals and requirements in organizational plans and individual performance agreements across the Laboratory.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AT BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

People have a fundamental desire to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Experience has shown time and again that decisions implemented without the involvement of those affected are likely to be ineffective, resisted, and rapidly overturned. Conversely, decisions that involve the full range of people impacted are much more likely to achieve broad-based support and long-term success.

This one fact about human behavior would be enough to justify a vigorous community involvement program at Brookhaven National Laboratory. But there is yet another reason. Experience has also shown that many minds, working together from a range of perspectives, can often come up with a better solution for any problem. It may take extra time at the beginning of a project to involve more people in decision making, but it will usually save time and money before the process is over.

Who is the community?

Simply put, the community is everyone who lives, works, or plays at or in the vicinity of Brookhaven National Laboratory, as well as any interested individual. Some of these people have a strong interest in and knowledge about the Laboratory and its operations. They often form groups with others who have like interests, for example:

- community organizations
- special interest groups
- educational organizations
- business organizations
- regulatory agencies
- workers
- retirees
- unions
- elected officials

Other people have a passing interest in the Laboratory – mainly what they see on T.V. news, read in the papers, or hear from their neighbors. Still others are focused elsewhere in their lives – they barely know that the Laboratory exists.

Every one of these people is a member of the Brookhaven National Laboratory community and has values which should be considered in decisions made at the Laboratory.

What is community involvement?

Community involvement is not a vote or a popularity contest. In the end, designated officials (the Laboratory contractor, the U. S. Department of Energy, regulatory agencies, or elected representatives) must make most decisions concerning the Laboratory. These decisions are often difficult because conflicting interests and values must be balanced. Sometimes the Laboratory will make decisions that the community – or a portion of the community – won't agree with.

Community involvement allows the breadth of interests and values from across the community to be heard by the decision makers in order to make the best possible decisions overall. Community involvement also allows the people in the community to hold the decision makers accountable for hearing their concerns and carefully considering them – one way or the other – in the decision-making process.

The Mission of Brookhaven National Laboratory

The decisions made at and about Brookhaven National Laboratory will almost always be associated with accomplishing the Laboratory's mission. Thus, it is important to clearly state – and understand – that mission:

Brookhaven's broad mission is to produce excellent science in a safe, environmentally benign manner with the cooperation, support and appropriate involvement of our many communities.

Specifically, the Laboratory creates and operates major facilities available to university, industrial and government personnel for basic and applied research in the physical, biomedical and environmental sciences, and in selected energy technologies. Brookhaven also helps educate new generations of scientists and engineers, and encourages scientific awareness in the general public.

Community Involvement Policy

It is Brookhaven National Laboratory's policy to ensure that the ideas, interests and concerns of its stakeholders are considered in program planning and decision-making processes that affect the community or the general public. This policy is intended to bring a broad range of viewpoints and values into program planning and decision making before decisions are imminent. This will enable the Laboratory to make informed decisions and build mutual understanding between the Laboratory, its stakeholders and the general public. To effect this policy BNL managers will:

- Actively seek and consider public input regarding Laboratory decisions which affect the community and the general public.

- Inform the public in a timely manner of key upcoming decisions, progress on ongoing activities, emerging technologies, and opportunities for economic diversity which may impact the community and the general public.
- Provide opportunities for the public to have input in an open, two-way exchange of information, knowledge and perspectives.
- Take into consideration the views of regulators, stakeholders, and the general public in making decisions.
- Provide a public account of decisions made and responses to public input regarding these decisions.
- Provide reasonable access to relevant reports, records and documents and seek to provide non-technical explanations on technical matters when requested by the community and the general public.

The Community Involvement Goal at Brookhaven National Laboratory

The goal of Brookhaven National Laboratory's community involvement process is straightforward:

To identify the public's values, priorities, and concerns and incorporate them into the activities conducted and decisions made at Brookhaven.

The Laboratory's community involvement process needs to be consistent in meeting this goal.

Core Values

The Laboratory's community involvement process needs to be founded on the following core values:

Accessibility: Brookhaven National Laboratory will be available, approachable, and open.

Accountability: Brookhaven National Laboratory will be responsible for involving the community in decisions and for providing explanations for the rationale behind decisions.

Accuracy: Brookhaven National Laboratory will provide timely accurate information related to its activities.

Communication: Brookhaven National Laboratory managers and staff will actively seek open, two-way exchange of information, knowledge, and perspectives between the Laboratory and the community.

Principles Underlying Community Involvement

Brookhaven has adopted community involvement principles that will be used to build and maintain a successful partnership with the community. Brookhaven's community involvement principles are listed under three categories:

Commitment

- Community involvement will be a management responsibility and will be incorporated throughout the Laboratory's projects and operations.
- The Laboratory will be accountable to itself and the U. S. Department of Energy, and both will be accountable to the community for performance in community involvement.

Decision Making

- Community involvement will begin early in any activity or decision-making process.
- Every community involvement process associated with decision making at the Laboratory will have a clear connection to a specific decision or decisions.
- How a specific decision relates to other decisions (especially higher-level decisions) will be made clear at the beginning of and throughout the process.
- The way and degree to which public participation will and will not affect the decision will be clearly stated at the beginning of and throughout the process.
- The segment of the community that will be affected by the decision will be clearly identified.

Outreach

- The Laboratory will establish relationships with the community through the Laboratory's outreach program.
- Brookhaven's community involvement program incorporates outreach to improve understanding between people at the Laboratory and people in the community.
- The outreach program will offer opportunities for educating the broader community on the Lab's mission, will provide direct educational and scientific support to the community, and will bring community resources and ideas into the Laboratory.
- The Laboratory will clearly distinguish between "decision-making community involvement" and "outreach programs."

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

A traditional and essential role for community involvement is the incorporation of community values and needs into decisions made at and by Brookhaven. A clear and effective decision-making process at the Laboratory is essential to success in this aspect of public involvement. Decision making contributes to success in community involvement when the community understands what the decision is, how the decision fits within the overall Laboratory program, and how community input will affect the decision, and then sees tangible, specific results from its efforts.

The three elements of the decision-making framework are:

- Brookhaven Laboratory decision-making structure
- levels of community involvement
- public information

A Hierarchy of Related Decisions

Brookhaven will adhere to a structure that relates how smaller decisions affect more strategic decisions, which finally affect the Laboratory's top priorities and direction.

The hierarchy of decisions is illustrated in Figure 1.

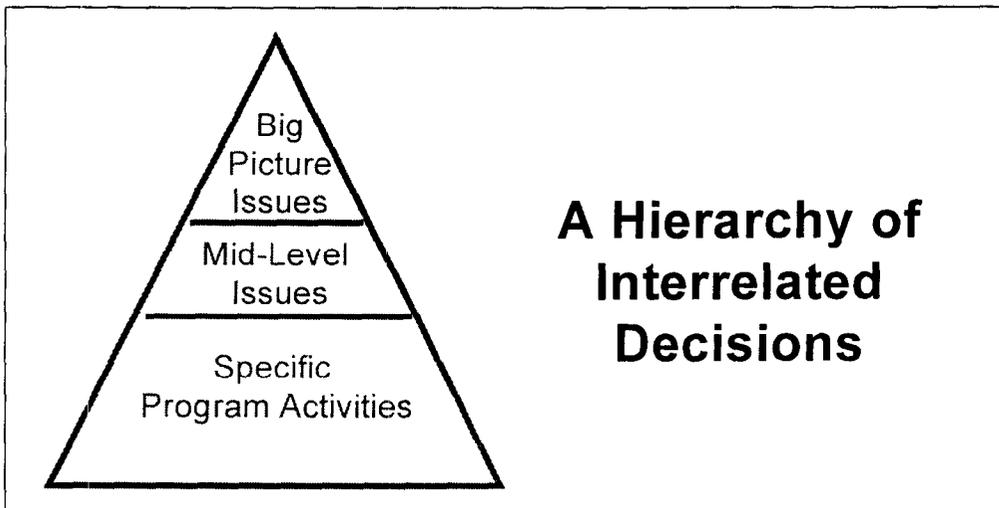


Figure 1.

Big Picture Issues are those policy-level decisions that directly involve the values and concerns of the broad community.

Mid-Level Issues are those issues best addressed by those in the community with a working understanding of the Laboratory, its operations, and the issue under review.

Specific Program Activities are issues and decisions that affect individual projects and programs. Input to these decisions requires an in-depth technical understanding of the subject activities. Input to these decisions is best conducted by the "expert public," those members of the community that by background, interest, or profession are sufficiently well versed to understand and comment on technical details.

Levels of Community Involvement

The level of community involvement in an issue will be related to the position of the decision within the overall decision hierarchy at the Laboratory. The relationship between community involvement and decision level is illustrated in Figure 2.

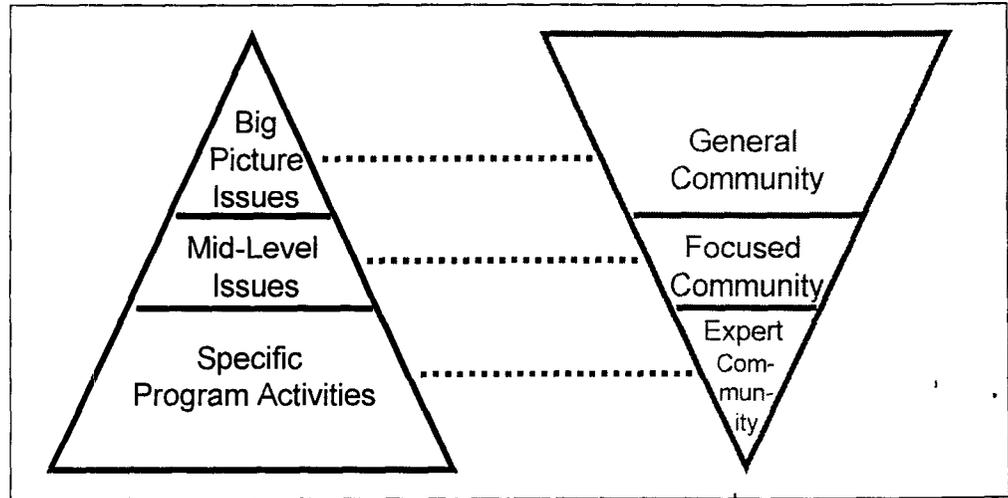


Figure 2.

Big Picture Issues are policy issues that can be influenced by community values. The input needed from the community is its values and desires rather than a technical evaluation. Brookhaven will work to involve the largest possible cross-section of the community in these issues.

Mid-Level Issues are both policy- and technically-related. A cross-section of the community willing to “dig in and get their hands dirty” is the ideal group to tackle these issues. The Brookhaven Community Advisory Council is an example of such a group.

Specific Program Issues might be addressed by detailed comments from special interest groups (for example, through the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] process), special workshops, or evaluations by specially-established Community Advisory Council subcommittees.

Public Information / Education

Brookhaven will differentiate between a need for community involvement (when a decision will be made with community input) and public information (when a decision has already been made and the community needs to be informed). The community may not always want to be involved in every decision, but it may want to learn about a range of internal decisions.

Community information and education is an important component of community involvement. Providing a balanced foundation of information and understanding is the joint responsibility of the Laboratory, external governmental agencies, and the interested community. This element of the decision-making framework is illustrated in Figure 3.

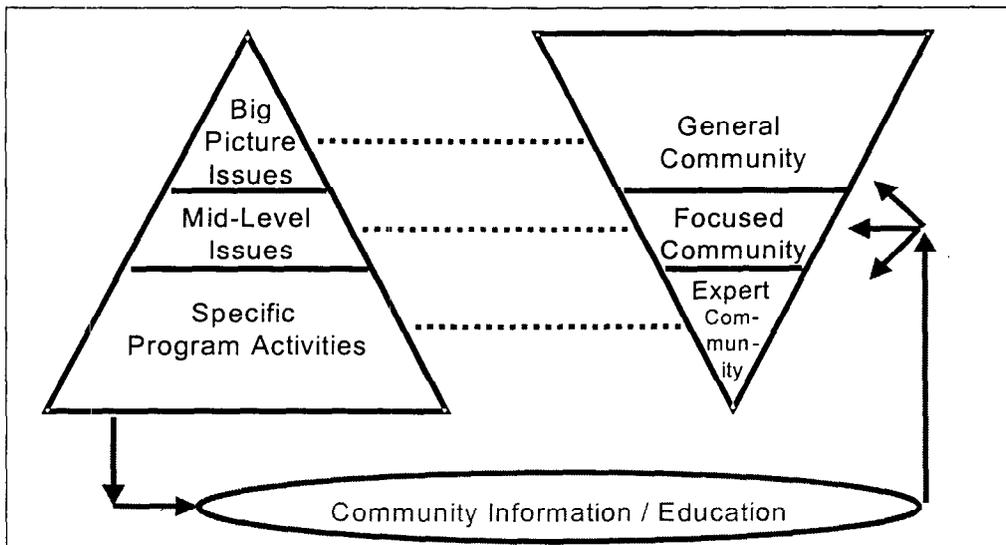


Figure 3.

SELECTING ISSUES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Fundamentally, the community should be involved in decision making at Brookhaven National Laboratory any time it is required or any time the community wishes to be involved. Issues of community interest will be identified in two ways:

- Brookhaven identifies issues that are likely to interest the community.
- The community tells the Laboratory about issues of interest to it.

Identifying Issues Within Brookhaven Laboratory

Understanding when the community will want to be involved in a decision can be a challenging task. The following checklist can be used to identify issues likely to be of interest to the community:

- Will the decision be a better decision with community discussion?
- Is the issue or activity already controversial? Are there already advocates of one outcome instead of another within the community?
- Does the issue / decision impact one or more community values? Does it imply a choice of one value over another?
- Will the issue / decision be strongly opposed?
- Does the issue / decision affect worker safety, public health and safety, or environmental protection?
- Does the issue / decision imply major and unexpected budget impacts?
- Does the issue / decision affect a site-wide planning assumption or previous programmatic decision?
- Is community involvement required by law or agreement?

Identifying Issues Within the Community

Big Picture, Mid-Level, and Specific Project-Level Issues in which the community is interested can be brought to BNL through the following community sources:

- Community Advisory Council
- local community groups
- special interest groups
- members of the community

- federal agencies
- state agencies
- local agencies
- regulatory requirements
- legal requirements
- Department of Energy – Headquarters
- Department of Energy – Chicago Office
- Department of Energy – Brookhaven Group
- Brookhaven Science Associates
- employees
- retirees
- client organizations
- individuals

These groups or individuals can bring issues of interest to the attention of the Laboratory through direct contacts with Laboratory managers and staff, through the Laboratory's Office of Community Involvement, Government and Public Affairs, and through government representatives and agencies.

HOW BROOKHAVEN WILL INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY IN EACH LEVEL OF DECISION MAKING

Brookhaven's Community Involvement Process for decision making includes the following components for each level of decision making:

- basis for community involvement
- community involvement goals
- target audience
- public involvement process.

Decision Making for Big Picture Issues

Basis for Community Involvement in Big Picture Issues

- There are people in the general community who care about and have opinions about Brookhaven issues. Not all of these community members are known to the Laboratory (for example, on existing mailing lists)

- Community input to Big Picture Issues will reflect the values held within the community.
- Big Picture Issues need policy statements rather than specific decisions.

Community Involvement Goals for Big Picture Issues

- Keep the broad community aware of current Laboratory conditions and decisions.
- Identify segments of the community that may be interested in Big Picture Issues.
- Involve the largest possible cross-section of the interested community in these issues.
- Provide appropriate and sufficient information to members of the interested community if they choose to participate in decision making.
- Identify values, concerns, and priorities from the interested community.
- Listen and respond to input from members of the interested community.

Target Audience for Big Picture Issues

- The broad and interested community.

Implementing Community Involvement for Big Picture Issues

The community involvement process for Big Picture Issues includes the following five steps:

- 1. Brookhaven** -- Conduct a focused information campaign targeting the broad public on the particular Big Picture Issue. Prepare and distribute information on the issue. The information should include:

Community Involvement Plan for Brookhaven National Laboratory

- a clear connection to a specific decision or decisions
- the way that the specific decision being considered will relate to other decisions
- the way and degree to which public participation will (and will not) affect the decision

Solicit participation and feedback. Develop a mailing list of interested members of the community. Establish a page on the Laboratory's web site for information on the issue. Ensure that all sides of the issue (including but not exclusive to the Laboratory's perspective) are presented through established mechanisms.

2. **Brookhaven** -- Establish one or more methods for the broad community to research and discuss the issue and recommend options and solutions. Examples of forums may include local focus groups, community meetings, or special study groups. If a formal study group is not formed, a community steering committee may be established. Use existing community advisory groups where possible rather than create new organizations. Invite members of the general public to join the existing community group for this issue. The Laboratory should also periodically compile a newsletter or information packet to post on the web site and send to mailing list members not directly participating in the examination.

3. **Interested community** (acting through the study group or steering committee) -- Investigate the Big Picture Issue to:

- identify important questions
- identify information / education needs of the community
- request applicable educational presentations
- request panel or roundtable discussions
- solicit input / comments from members of the community not inclined to participate in study group or meetings. Polls, surveys, electronic town meetings are examples of tools to use
- capture community positions / recommendations regarding Big Picture Issue

Brookhaven will provide assistance to the study group or steering committee in organizing and hosting these activities and events.

4. *Brookhaven* -- If a broader community input is needed, host a community workshop / "Community Summit" to develop a broader community position / recommendation regarding the Big Picture Issue.

5. *Brookhaven* -- Provide specific responses to the interested community's comments and recommendations showing how the community input was or was not used in the BNL decision-making process.

Decision Making for Mid-Level Issues

Basis for Community Involvement in Mid-Level Issues

- A more specialized or greater depth of knowledge about the issue is required to evaluate the issue.
- A commitment on the part of interested community members to invest the time and energy needed to conduct the in-depth investigation is required.
- The Big Picture (policy) decision relating to this issue should be made and communicated to the interested community before considering the Mid-Level Issue.

Community Involvement Goals for Mid-Level Issues

- Identify the segment of the community (e.g., a particular geographical area or a particular group within the population) that will be interested in the decision.
- For members of the interested community who have (or wish to gain) sufficient background knowledge about the issue, offer opportunities to participate in decision making at this level.
- Provide appropriate and sufficient information to interested members of the community if they choose to participate in decision making.

- Listen and respond to input from interested members of the community.

Target Audience for Mid-Level Issues

- Members of the interested community with some prior knowledge of issue or some history / background knowledge with similar issues.
- Members of the interested community willing to commit the time and energy needed to conduct the in-depth investigation.

Implementing Community Involvement for Mid-Level Issues

The community involvement process for Mid-Level Issues includes the following four steps:

1. *Brookhaven* -- Convene a study group to research the issue and recommend options and solutions. Use existing forums where possible rather than creating new groups. Invite members of the general public who wish to make the commitment for an intensive study to join the study group.

2. *Brookhaven* -- Prepare initial information on the issue. The information should include:

- a clear connection to a specific decision or decisions
- the way that the specific decision being considered will relate to other decisions
- the way and degree to which public participation will (and will not) affect the decision

3. *Study Group* -- Investigate the Mid-Level Issue to:

- identify important questions
- identify information / education needs of the study group

- host applicable educational presentations
- host panel or roundtable discussions
- solicit input / comments from knowledgeable members of the community not inclined to participate in study group or meetings
- capture community position / recommendations regarding Mid-Level Issue

4. Brookhaven -- Provide specific responses to the study group comments and recommendations showing how the community input was or was not used in the Laboratory's decision-making process.

Decision Making for Specific Project-Level Issues

Basis for Community Involvement in Project-Level Issues

- Requires a very specialized or in-depth knowledge about the Specific Project-Level Issue.
- Requires a commitment on the part of interested community members to invest the time and energy needed to conduct the in-depth investigation.
- The Big Picture (policy) and Mid-Level decisions relating to this Specific Project-Level Issue should be made before considering the Specific Project-Level Issue.

Community Involvement Goals for Project-level Issues

- Obtain input and advice from members of the broad community with the knowledge and expertise to address the Specific Project-Level Issue.
- Provide appropriate and sufficient information to interested members of the broad community if they choose to participate in decision making.

- Listen and respond to input from interested members of the broad community.

Target Audience for Project-Level Issues

- “Expert” community members with in-depth knowledge of the Specific Project-Level Issue.

Implementing Community Involvement for Project-Level Issues

The community involvement process for Specific Project-Level Issues includes the following four steps:

1. Brookhaven -- Convene a study group to research the issue and recommend options and solutions. Use existing forums where possible rather than creating new groups. Invite members of the general public who have an appropriate technical background and knowledge of the subject and wish to make the commitment for an intensive study to join the study group.

2. Brookhaven -- Prepare initial information on the issue. The information should include:

- a clear connection to a specific decision or decisions
- the way that the specific decision being considered will relate to other decisions
- the way and degree to which public participation will (and will not) affect the decision

3. Study Group -- Investigate the Specific Project-Level Issue to:

- identify specific technical questions to be addressed
- identify information / education needs of the study group
- host applicable technical presentations, work sessions, demonstrations, tours, etc.
- host panel or roundtable discussions

- solicit input / comments from knowledgeable members of the community not inclined to participate in study group or meetings
- capture community position / recommendations regarding the Specific Project-Level Issue

4. Brookhaven -- Provide specific responses to the study group comments and recommendations showing how the community input was or was not used in the BNL decision-making process.

Note: The community involvement process for a Specific Project-Level issue may be driven by or incorporate regulatory or other external requirements such as Comprehensive Environmental Restoration, Compensation and Liability Act and National Environmental Policy Act. The Laboratory will take care to address these issues from both broad community involvement and regulatory perspectives.

COMMUNICATING THE RESULTS OUTWARD

Not every member of the community will wish or be able to participate directly in community involvement processes at Brookhaven National Laboratory. However, a broad spectrum of the community will wish to be informed of decisions made and how community input was incorporated into the decision. Thus, it is important to communicate the results of community involvement as widely as possible. The Laboratory will have primary responsibility for this communication, but other involved groups (study groups, community organizations, governmental organizations) should participate as well.

Methods for communicating the results of community involvement may include:

- Brookhaven Lab Web page
- information sheets
- mailings
- newspaper articles and advertisements
- local cable TV access
- community newsletter
- radio

OUTREACH: ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Perhaps the most important action in breaking down barriers between the Laboratory and the community is the establishment of person-to-person relationships between people at the Laboratory and people in the community. When people know each other as individuals, they can talk with respect about needs, values, and concerns. The inevitable result is a better understanding and an ability to identify common ground and mutually satisfactory solutions to problems.

The process for establishing relationships with the community is straightforward – invite members of the community into the Laboratory to talk to Laboratory personnel and encourage Laboratory personnel to go out into the community to talk to their neighbors.

Examples of activities that can bring community members into the Laboratory may include:

- open houses
- public tours
- school field trips
- technology demonstrations
- open forum lunches, dinners, and receptions

Examples of activities that can take Laboratory personnel into the community include:

- Speakers Bureau
- science presentations and guest teachers in schools
- participation in civic and social groups
- participation in community volunteer activities
- educational partnering in science

In general, these activities ARE NOT issue- or decision-related so that the focus can be on mutual understanding, partnering and respect for each other.

THE ROLE OF THE BROOKHAVEN COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Brookhaven National Laboratory has established a Community Advisory Council as a key mechanism for providing community input on decisions made at the Laboratory. The Council includes more than 30 members representing diverse perspectives within the community.

The Community Advisory Council addresses Big Picture, Mid-Level, and Project-Specific Issues of interest to the Laboratory and to the community. It communicates the community's diverse perspectives and makes recommendations to the Laboratory Director.

The Community Advisory Council is a forum for community discussion of many decisions to be made at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

ACCOUNTABILITY: HOW BNL'S COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PERFORMANCE IS EVALUATED

Brookhaven National Laboratory and the U. S. Department of Energy are accountable for effectiveness in community involvement. The Laboratory is accountable to itself, its customer the U. S. Department of Energy, and both are accountable to the community.

Brookhaven National Laboratory will continually assess its performance in community involvement. Performance requirements for community Involvement, to implement this plan, will be placed in job descriptions and in the annual performance appraisals for managers at all levels.

The U. S. Department of Energy has placed performance criteria for community involvement directly in the Laboratory's contract and will evaluate the Laboratory's performance based on those criteria. The community will be asked to review the Laboratory's performance through evaluations forms and surveys. The Community Advisory Council will be asked to formally assess the Laboratory's community involvement performance each year.

FUNDING THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Effective community involvement costs money. Staff time must be committed. Materials must be prepared and distributed. Meeting facilities must be rented.

The funding for Brookhaven National Laboratory's community involvement process comes from the U. S. Department of Energy. Funding for community involvement is included in each year's budget for the Laboratory. Many of the community involvement activities are funded through the Laboratory's Office of Community Involvement, Government and Public Affairs. Regulatory community involvement activities and many project-level actions are funded directly as part of the budget established for a particular project or program.