

Report Out for 2010 Conservation Congress
Funding Panel and Delegate Breakout Session

Panel Discussion and PowerPoint Presentation Covering Model Conservation Funding Options from Other States and Recommendations

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Peter Murphy – Illinois Association of Park Districts

Beth White – Trust for Public Land

Matt Zieper – Trust for Public Land

Recommendations Review from Partners for Parks and Wildlife (PPW)

Aaron Kuehl presented a list of “To Do’s” for partners interested in supporting conservation funding. The list included the following:

- Get your local organization to be actively involved in the PPW.
- Help build a quick network response for communication needs.
- Participate in a post card campaign through any and all local meetings.
- Participate at this summer’s State Fair booth for dedicated funding.
- Consider phone banks, bumper stickers and other means of outreach and education.
- Take your legislators to a park or natural area that state funding supported.

Discussion, Comments and Recommendation from Attending Delegates

Following the discussion and PowerPoint presentation, the panel fielded and responded to questions and recommendations from the delegates in attendance at the breakout session. The following is an overview listing of these comments:

- The PPW has no permanent staff so the coalition needs to be made stronger through the efforts of more groups joining the coalition.
- The PPW is not at the point yet of defining a strategic action plan but has identified some key potential participants for putting the plan together.
- One suggestion was an additional fee of one dollar per student registered to be used for outdoor education.
- Take a look at a tonnage tipping fee (“trash to treasure”) for funding such as Pennsylvania’s fee which is \$4.55 per ton. An Illinois report stated that \$16 million could be raised with a tipping fee at \$2.22 per ton.
- We are behind in these funding efforts since politicians are already looking at tax increases for other purposes.
- We need to use the local press more such as the sports-writers data base if available to get our message out.
- State Government in Illinois needs a “citizen oversight” committee.
- How much funding in new dollars is really needed – this must be defined.

- Liked the C-2000 program method of setting values for rating funding proposals.
- Need measureable successes to indentify incremental improvements.
- Need to clearly define the next steps - first short term and then long term.
- Must clearly define the “ask” to present to each politician.
- Need to clearly define the “cause and effect” of our campaign such as last years Conservation Congress user fee increase that passed in the Fall Veto Session. This example should be applied again to something else needed such as a good land acquisition “cause and effect” that is very visible.
- Consider California’s add of a \$20 fee for driver’s license renewal for funding a pass to enter State parks.
- Question was asked as to whether there was any consensus at this time in the PPW for the main objective for a funding need?
- Does the PPW have a “now goal?” Response was the PPW is in the middle of that dialogue.
- Should consider again the broad based polling of public attitude for funding similar to what was done last May.
- For the next steps we must identify and/or recruit four key legislators for support – 2 House and 2 Senate.
- Really just need a long term funding source so just identify a need to cover 1/8th of 1 cent or 3/8’s or whatever, but do it quickly!
- Must clearly work to build public support to protect wildlife and habitat.
- Must have a grass roots base with a clear and simple message.
- Must have a specific vision in terms of a clear political concept
- Need to identify the steps to get to a final vote or at least a rough plan of action.
- Need to clearly identify “**the ask.**” This is what the politicians need to know in simple terms and numbers.
- What does the “Brain Trust” at DNR think should be the proper “asks?”
- The PPW needs to outreach more with contemporary venues like the chat list on YAHOO, etc.
- Need to find entries into the private sector also, not just working with the not-for-profits.
- Need to identify a coordinator for the messages and coalition building.

Summary Ideas and Actions from the breakout Session

- 1) Continue to Build the PPW Coalition which is off to a great start for identifying long term funding.
- 2) Need to follow-up current efforts with a Public Relations/Public Education Campaign to clearly articulate the need for funding recreational land acquisition and habitat preservation.
- 3) Need to identify a clear “collective ask” that fulfills a simple and specific vision or a very visible and useful political concept and message.