

Conservation Congress Notes from March 13 2013 - Chicago – Facilitator Steven Byers INPC – Nancy Williamson (Scribe)

TOPIC	IDEA/CONCERN/STATEMENT	Potential SOLUTION
<p>I. Sustainable Resource Harvest</p> <p>1. How can our hunting & fishing programs be improved to protect resources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very pleased with IDNR new permit system where site permits for hunting fishing can be obtained on website/Walmart other easy to use sites. • Deer population and damages to natural resources concern. Deer populations a problem to existing natural resource areas and much higher than pre-settlement • use sharpshooting • sharpshooting provides no public recreation • the only place you can discharge a gun in the city is at Wolf Lake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce population look into Wisconsin’s Urban Hunting program – allows hunting in more populated areas. • promote establishment of hunting in FPD lands • hunting only effective to a degree – use chemical sterilization and sharp shooting • Increase doe take • IDNR should study Mich/Wisc/ Indiana SP and how they decrease deer population and increase hunting in urban areas • FISHING - promote natives on riparian and pond areas to increase health of stream and fish habitat
<p>2. What types of additional recreational opportunities can DNR provide?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More bike trails needs within State Parks, to make “touring” areas. • invasive species overwhelming parks but present an recreation opportunity to recruit help • horseback riders don’t build their own trails and don’t contribute • canoeing - need more access points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better bike trail site design in state parks. • mountain bikers help to build their own trails which can be situated in appropriate areas of low resource value • Develop more Friends of Parks volunteers, who will recreate through helping on work days to remove invasives and recreational opportunity becomes a “Hobby” • Promote volunteer groups at SP sites. DNR can increase habit restoration by promoting volunteer recruitment
<p>3. What can DNR do to enhance conservation and habitat preservation and the availability of natural products from the land?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn more • Hard to burn in city areas due to / smoke management and air quality • natural areas education is declining • need better/ stronger leadership from IDNR to stand by natural areas management decisions on basis of scientific knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • burn more • provide more natural area management education • education is just “brain washing” – just do it and get them used to it • Re: Education – better partnerships with schools • site stewards need to be empowered to act when needed - provides “local economy” in action, more effective

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II. Sustainable Provision of Outdoor Recreational Access		
1. How do we engage new individuals and groups in outdoor activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDNR hunting programs for women are good • need more information available to people to connect with hunting/fishing programs • ecology is not just a “white people” thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good example of program that connects kids with outdoors/hunting etc. can be found in Michael Howard’s program at Midewin
2. How can DNR help provide more recreational activities on private lands or develop new opportunities on public lands?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marketing for cyclist opportunities could be much better • pull people back from cycling in Michigan and other destinations by advertising Illinois opportunities • Illinois corn/bean terrain over much the state serious detractor for cycling tourism opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work more closely with FPDs on biking opportunities • Illinois river paths are spectacular, promote them • Promote certain parks intensively on a regional basis by concentrating promotion heavily on one site/area etc. i.e. Vermillion area. (for a season or certain times frame)
3. What steps can DNR take to best enhance access to outdoor recreation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois water law need to be fixed, not good with private areas of river/streams • private landowner liability law needs to be fixed • FEE structure for out of state hunters too low and cheap, Illinois is known as a cheap permit state – not good • For 15-20 years DNR was known as a big leader with the Parks and Conservation Bikeway fund which provided local 50/50 grants. Great bike trails like Hennepin and I&M were developed but those funds have been diverted from original purpose to fund salaries for DNR. These diverted funds have crippled the effectiveness of IDNR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote inexpensive hunting leasing on private lands – also birding/fishing • increase out of state fees • stop diverting special funds to salaries and maintain use for original intent of funding – for capital purposes, not operational
III. Sustainable Resource Protection		
1. DNR is responsible for protecting the state’s natural resources, and aims to offer high quality experiences while sustaining natural environments. What is the DNR doing right? What improvements can be made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural heritage biologists are a big positive factor in IDNR compared to the hunting and fishing concentration of the past • Need more resource professionals • need to make going into resource jobs more important • Getting young people education to go into resource planning not enough-because they can’t get jobs. Scholarships are not enough. • What happened to conservation workers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a program that provides good entry level resource jobs • DNR should sponsor scholarships for young to go into Natural resource work • Foster and support student conservation corps – will put more boots on ground and be cheaper cost for DNR • provide some benefits to go along with entry level jobs to help young resource

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR sites are isolated from alternative transportation. DNR should develop more ways for people to get to State Parks • Public needs to know what's going on in IDNR – opinions need to be heard 	<p>professional get established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • look at Forest service programs that promote retired and others to go into resource work – doing this would avail DNR to skill sets that older people have • DNR should look to more ways to promote their sites in conjunction with Amtrak. • League of Illinois Bicyclists are working with Amtrak to promote Bike/train routes and partnerships – DNR should be partner • Provide term employment with some benefits attached (i.e. vacation days, even if there is not health care, etc.).
2. What are your ideas for improving:		
i. Natural areas acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • important small/rare populations may be lost because they are on small isolated areas • More funding needed to acquire/restore Nat Areas • Does DNR have established methods of partnering with Land Trusts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use greenways and linkages and buffering to increase viability to sustain - i.e., E & T insects • Buffer high quality areas and work with private landowners on easements ensure protection • Emulate Land Trusts with conservation easements
ii. Natural heritage protection,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of DNR sites poor, causes species to be lost • DNR has too many political appointees who do not have any resource knowledge weakening the agency • How prevalent are "friends of the parks"? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire more biologists, less superintendents and particularly less political appointees • political appointees should be to be educated - training to understand natural areas and management • "Friends" volunteers would extend the ability of DNR. Encourage and incentivize volunteers • VOLUNTEERS NEED EDUCATION TOO
iii. Endangered species,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small populations may be lost because they are simply too small 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use greenways and linkages • encourage roadway native planting to increase linkages – work with local DOTs and IDOT
iv. Natural diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does DNR consultation have fees? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR should establish fees for consultation • fees could be arranged to reimburse (on

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		scales) if they follow recommendations and depending on the degree they follow recommendations
3. From reasonable fee structures to innovative partnerships, what ideas do you have for funding sustainable resource protection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee costs for DNR are ridiculously low (seniors get away with half too) – INCREASE USER FEES FOR ALL TYPES OF USERS. • Some parks are being destroyed by too much foot traffic • Cost to man booth for fee collection can be expensive • There are inequities in Camp site fees – rustic sites cost same as sites for monster motor homes • motor home sites where they watch TV and make other noise are a disturbance to others who came to enjoy the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make all users pay – make birders pay! • have nominal parking fees, especially for large popular events (cited Starved Rock events particularly) • People will not object to \$1-2 to help mitigate foot pressure, they won't notice, they will understand it's for preservation • set up "honor system boxes" for fees • set up camp fees on sliding fees
IV. Sustainable Resource Development and Extraction		
1. Regarding the permitting process for extractive resources: what is DNR doing right, what is DNR doing wrong? What suggestions do you have for improving the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTE FROM DNR SCRIBE and FACILITATOR: This group stated collectively they know nothing about this issue • Is DNR involved when they start filling or rehabbing quarries, which is the mining common in Chicago are? • What are the mineral rights laws and can anyone (legally) do anything about this? • Does MWRD still dump slug into strip mined areas? • mined areas shouldn't be left to fill with invasives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring back habitat and recreation benefit and public access to mined areas • look to other states on how they reclaim mined areas
2. What are your ideas for best practices for protection of natural resources when developing extractive resources?		
3. What are your ideas for developing post-mining recreational opportunities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biking and mountain biking mention earlier for destroyed sites
V. Building Bridges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
1. What is the most effective means for DNR to communicate the benefits it offers with the public?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR does not get its messaging out to correct media. Get off print media - it's dying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on to TV shows, public affairs shows and mass media. • do shows that emphasize specific areas in doing "Discover Illinois"

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable shows that highlight large outdoor events, fishing tourneys like the Daley Tourney. • emulate hunting shows • target local people for local events like Rend Lake, Wolf Lake events
<p>2. What are the most effective ways for DNR to expand its outreach efforts to youth and minority groups in urban and rural areas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR has disconnect with young - foster more youth involvement • APPS are not good - too addictive for the young • Children don't go outside • kids are not allowed to touch or do anything in State parks • invest in ways overcome language barriers • immigrants frequently come from a "freer"(different) system and don't understand why they can't seine streams for fish or collect plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link up with HS teacher who are doing conservation work with HS, some even do fishing education/field trips • Mississippi has APPS for their sites • Talk to cell providers if reception is back and consider allowing towers on SP/state-owned sites • APPs are effective - my kids would love to be able to use an APP in a natural area, would get them to like the place easier. • provide more local opportunities for young – driving long distances doesn't work • make outside opportunity more walkable • make it OK to pile up rocks, build stick houses – make areas where FREE PLAY is allowable • Have lists of common species in bilingual visitor information (i.e.-bird and plant lists) • DNR site people should learn the basic names of common species in different languages for their multi-cultural visitors • provide multi-language signage
<p>3. How can DNR expand and enhance partnership opportunities with traditional constituent groups, land trusts and preservation organizations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people new to the area don't know how to find DNR sites or DNR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a DNR Roadshow that goes to the public and other big public events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beaches in the summer time ○ major shopping malls ○ at Midewin – big volunteer events. Show up at events to promote similar activities at DNR sites
<p>4. What improvements would you like to see in DNR's environmental education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNR does reach minorities/non-white cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target identified minority interest – i.e. African Americans like fishing • Midewin has a program "el Valor" that

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<p>programming? What ideas can you offer for developing partnerships with constituencies for the enhancement and advancement environmental education?</p>		<p>targets Hispanics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use “Gateway” science approaches – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ start with intensive work with one species such as monarchs move to prairies ○ look for examples from FPD Cook County – Camp FPDCC ○ gardening which is big in some cultures with the grandparent generation – good way to connect generations
<p>VI. We discussed five areas that cover much of the agency’s mission, but may not have covered your interests and concerns. What did we miss?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the conservation congress questions available ahead of time to your public. (Not just topic heading) Would help in being prepared for sessions. • Conservation Congress meetings site was not accessible to most of Chicago area. Needed to be held in three different areas around the Metro Chicago area, and in areas where public transportation was accessible • make DNR a more effective gateway between other groups and media • DNR needs better visual branding /logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use surveys to gather public opinion (more often) • utilize the sportsmen media more effectively, they have a vested interest in your agency • Sell DNR stuff at Cabella’s • IDNR is not on donation wall at Cabellas