

Notes from Conservation Congress Regional Meetings

Bloomington, IL February 27, 2013

Extraction

- Keep coal mines out of streams
- Buffer zones need to be respected by OMM approved projects
- The presence of T&E species near coal mining operations should automatically require increased pollution control technology
- No mining companies should be granted a new permit until problems with existing permitting is rectified
- Coal washing is very water intensive; phase out coal slurry and phase in dry technologies
- Extractive industries pay too little for the permit process; adjust fees to more reasonably reflect costs to OMM staff and resources required for a time consuming process
- Pilot the use of myco-remediation on mined land study the removal of heavy metals in soil
- Aquatic buffer zones near mining operations need to be adhered to and enforced by IDNR
- OMM and ORC need to communicate better on aggregate/coal permit requests

Harvest

- Timber companies should have a sustainable forestry plan in place in order to operate
- Fill State Forester positions
- Track fish populations with sonar; increase accuracy of counts/diversity
- Continue dam removal in the State to improve fish habitat
- Invasive plants that degrade water quality and fish habitat need to be eradicated

Protection

- Increase compliance with the Exotic Weed Act. The Act as written is inadequate and needs revision
- Educate the public about natural resource protection and their role in this effort
- There is not enough staff to remove invasives. Use volunteers 3-4 times/year to assist.
- Tax and fee structures should better reflect the cost of the recreation to the land /agency
- Charge out of Staters more to use our resources
- Outfitters should kick back more revenue to IDNR. They pay no maintenance cost but profit greatly from our land

Access

- Employ community gardens/native gardens near State parks as a draw for visitors
- Organize/facilitate a free group event at parks
- Have staff onsite when public is present
- Improve marketing of events at parks/natural areas
- Employ 2-3 volunteer Master Naturalists at busy sites to educate public
- Continue to breach liability issues on private lands. Work with other public agencies to increase access
- Work with corporations to develop/expand recreational opportunities (I.e. REI day at a park)
- Sponsor more free fishing days
- Pilot geocaching at State Parks
- Use QR codes at State parks for nature interpretation

Building Bridges

- Sponsor an IDNR discovery Day at the Capitol when elementary and secondary teachers are in town
- Division of Education needs to market better to teachers across the State
- Develop Webinars that can be viewed by teachers and students
- Work with DOA/U of I Extension to better educate the public about invasives
- Innovate conservation with Urban Gardens across the State
- Educate Legislators about IDNR at Conservation Day at the Capitol