

Sustainable Funding for Conservation Of Iowa's Natural Resources Meeting Summary

**Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge
Prairie City, Iowa
August 9, 2006**

Committee members present:

Mark	Ackelson		Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Dan	Cohen		IACCB
Dick	Dearden		IA Senate-Democrat
Barbara	Finch		Iowa Farm Bureau
Tammi	Kircher		Ducks Unlimited
Rich	Leopold		Iowa Environmental Council
Lola	Lopes		The Nature Conservancy
Pauline	Novotny		Izaak Walton League of Iowa
Marvin	Shirley		Farmers Union
Ken	Tow		Secretary of Agriculture
Dave	Van Waus		Pheasants Forever
John	Whitaker		IA House of Representatives-Democrat
Sarah	Kobliska	for Mary Lundby	Legislative Staff: IA Senate-Republican
Neila	Seaman	for Jane Clark	Sierra Club
Ken	Herring	for Jeff Vonk	IA DNR

Committee members absent:

Deb	Ryun	Conservation Districts of Iowa
Owen	Shunkwiler	Iowa Renewable Fuels Association
tba		Iowa House of Representatives-Republican

Public present:

Mary	Braun	IA House of Representatives-Democrat
Matt	Hare	The Nature Conservancy
Linda	Kinman	IAWA-DMWW
Deb	Kozel	LSA
Jace	Mikels	IA Senate
Tony	Phillips	Drake
Duane	Sand	INHF
Sharon	Tahtinen	DNR
Randy	Taylor	IBA

10:00am-10:30am Welcome and Introductions – Ken Herring

After the welcome and introductions, the committee was asked their thoughts and ideas on priorities for the group to consider regarding sustainable funding.

Sustainable Funding - Committee Member Priorities
Member
Tammi Kircher, Ducks Unlimited
1. Conserve, restore, and manage wetlands to benefit waterfowl, wildlife, and people.
2. Practices of water quality improvement is important.
3. Come up with way all Iowans can contribute and not just a few groups (citizens, corporations, etc.).
4. Need to come up with tax incentives or tax credits (ie for people who donate land - like CO and NE).
5. Once the money is set aside, use the money for its intended purpose.
Marvin Shirley, Farmers Union
1. Mining resource re tax is a good possible funding source.
2. Believe the legislature and State of Iowa is ready for strong conservation.
3. Re the funding re fertilizing and chemicals, thought this was a great way to create funds. Another idea would be to tax anything that's harming the environment (mining tax, land tax, etc.), i.e. coal coming into Iowa, exploding septic tanks, tax on bicycles and accessories, and horse trails, off road use/trails, etc. Look first to alternatives, then sales taxes.
Dan Cohen, IACCB Director
1. Important to keep our young people here with quality of life in Iowa.
2. MO model - explore sales tax possibilities
3. Recognize importance of water quality (ie water use surcharge or permit process, real estate transfer tax, surcharge on mining) - these all relate to conservation and water quality.
Richard Leopold, IA Environmental Council - Executive Director
1. Need to get something politicians can't touch (not just politicians but lobbyists)- something that does play into election year, unsecured funding,
2. New money - vs displacing old money
3. Engage a coalition: consumption use (anglers/sportsmen), ag community, and environmental community (ie: population that have the basic right to clean air and clean water).
4. Performance based - need to see where the money is going. Taxes are social contracts. Not afraid to ask public for a tax - if we can show them how it will be used.
5. Now is the time - it's been a difficult year or two re water quality standards. Nutrient standards are coming up. The timing is right for sustainable funding to happen.
Barbara Finch, Iowa Farm Bureau
1. Where does your money come from? Hunting and fishing licenses? What comes from the State, Federal, and county?
2. What programs might the DNR have that have outlived its time? What areas do we need to beef up? When we ask for money, people want to know where the money is going (ie staff, land acquisition, etc.)
Mary Lundby, IA Senate-Rep (Sarah Kobliska. representing for Mary)
1. (no comment)
Pauline Novotny, Izaak Walton League of Iowa
1. Clean water - struggling since ~1925 to clean up our water act and in cleaning up our water ways. We're also fighting to get back our wetlands.
2. Want to protect our valuable land from so much development. Would like to find more people to donate land.
3. Clean air - smog, acid rain, mercury pollution, greenhouse gasses.
4. Education - need to educate the public and our politicians about our resources and how they affect Iowans.
5. Believe a sales tax may be a possible solution such as MO's.
Dave Van Waus - Pheasants Forever Regional Biologist
1. Increase in sales tax and tie it into natural resources, soil and water issues, address REAP, along with public access and public lands.
2. Continue to educate our youth as we become more urbanized.

3. Pursue young adults (22yr+) into natural resources.
Ken Tow, Director - Soil Conservation Division: Secretary of Agriculture
1. MO system has been a successful program to review.
2. The sales tax will be interesting to review re what other states are doing.
3. Currently 1% of budget is for natural resources, which has dropped from 2% so this sustainable funding possibility is encouraging.
4. Look for ways to achieve quality objectives profitable to those involved.
5. Whatever we do should have a measurable outcome. Also, need to be aware of how our current funding is being spent so we are being efficient with our funds. Need to be careful where we target our funds.
Jane Clark, Sierra Club-Iowa Chapter (Neila Seaman representing Jane)
1. (no comment)
Lola Lopes, The Nature Conservancy
1. NE there is a non-game check off on taxes and funds that can be drawn on the lottery - think this is wishful thinking and not as directed as we should be thinking. Natural resources are not a luxury. MO sales tax has been mentioned. Whether it's through the sales tax or not, I like the idea of taxing things that harm the environment.
2. Don't think people see what they get for their taxes and we need to make sure they know what they are getting (ie Neal Smith Learning Center). Think we can get support of public funding.
3. Need to think about economic consequences of natural resources. Public needs to know the benefits of conservation issues. We need to explore all the different ways our groups are being successful in conservation issues (ie learning about easements vs buying land).
Dick Dearden, Iowa Senate-Dem
1. Make it so politicians cannot take the money
John Whitaker, Iowa House of Representatives-Dem
1. Need to create something that creates more public access.
2. Outdoor activities drive economic development.
3. Public access creates habitat.
Mark Ackelson, Iowa Heritage Foundation - President
1. Most Iowans currently spend about a penny on natural resources.
2. Re economic development and keeping our young people, we have to do more.
3. Education
4. Look at new revenue sources and revenue sources that already exist.
5. Explore what is going on in the states around us, along with MO's (1/8% current AND 1/10% just on ballot for parks and soils tax).
6. Along with looking at the revenue side, look at tax code: explore tax credits and incentives.
7. REAP works - touches many aspects re natural resources. Recommend this be fully funded.
8. Soil and water, parks and preserves, and add trails - rural or urban, there's a huge demand for trails (health and fitness and family activities, etc.)
9. Tackle public access issue.

10:30am-11:00am Review of legislative directive

House File 2797 was reviewed and discussed, with particular attention to Section 43 2a-d, noting the specified legislative directive to the committee.

House File 2797

HOUSE FILE

BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUCCESSOR TO LSB 6681YC)

22 28 Sec. 43. SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE FUNDING

22 29 STUDY.

22 30 1. There is established a sustainable natural
22 31 resource funding advisory committee for the purpose of
22 32 studying how to provide a sustainable source or
22 33 sources of funding for natural resources needs in
22 34 Iowa. The department of natural resources shall
22 35 provide staffing for the advisory committee. The
23 1 following shall be members of the advisory committee:

23 2 a. One representative from the following
23 3 organizations or entities to be appointed by the
23 4 governor:

23 5 (1) Secretary of agriculture.

23 6 (2) Iowa natural heritage foundation.

23 7 (3) Ducks unlimited.

23 8 (4) Pheasants forever.

23 9 (5) Iowa association of county conservation
23 10 boards.

23 11 (6) Iowa farm bureau.

23 12 (7) Farmers union.

23 13 (8) The nature conservancy.

23 14 (9) Iowa environmental council.

23 15 (10) Iowa renewable fuels association.

23 16 b. The director of the department of natural
23 17 resources, who shall be the chairperson of the
23 18 advisory committee.

23 19 c. Two members of the senate, one of which is
23 20 appointed by the majority leader and one of which is
23 21 appointed by the minority leader.

23 22 d. Two members of the house of representatives,
23 23 one of which is appointed by the majority leader and
23 24 one of which is appointed by the minority leader.

23 25 2. The advisory committee shall submit a report to
23 26 the governor and the general assembly by January 10,
23 27 2007. The report shall contain but is not limited to
23 28 the following:

23 29 a. Information on what surrounding states have
23 30 done to provide sustainable funding for natural
23 31 resource conservation.

23 32 b. Outline of a conservation funding initiative
23 33 agree upon by the advisory committee.

23 34 c. Outline of the amount of revenue needed and
23 35 what would be accomplished if the conservation funding
24 1 initiative is implemented.

24 2 d. Analysis of Iowa's citizens' willingness to pay
24 3 for identified conservation funding initiative.

11:00am- 12:00pm Process--How will committee function?

Doug Harr, DNR staff assistant to the committee facilitated the process and how the committee will function. Open discussion ensued and the following are the results:

Ground Rules and Communications:

Let's respect each other.
It's okay to disagree.
One person talks at a time; refrain from side discussions.
Be honest and open to the ideas of others. All ideas are good ideas.
Everyone participates; no one dominates – self-limit speaking time.
Everyone is responsible for the success of the group.
Air any concerns before leaving the table.
Be professional with comments.
Stick to the agenda (stay on task.)
Be on time.
To avoid interruptions, please put cell phones on silent or vibrate.

Subcommittees (based on the legislative directive):

The advisory committee shall submit a report to the governor and the general assembly by January 10, 2007. The report shall contain but is not limited to the following:	
a. <i>Information on what surrounding states have done to provide sustainable funding for natural resource conservation.</i>	[this section to provide information instead of being a subcommittee] DNR staff provide: Iowa's funding (and needs for natural resources and methods used to rationalize the needs) to be to the committee within 2 weeks from today, as well as what other states have done. <i>The Natural Heritage Foundation will provide information regarding analysis of surrounding states on sustainable funding.</i>
b. Outline of a conservation funding initiative agree upon by the advisory committee.	<i>To be determined as work progresses.</i>
c. Outline of the amount of revenue needed and what would be accomplished if the conservation funding initiative is implemented.	First: committee work as a whole and meet 10a-3p, August 30 th , 2006.
d. Analysis of Iowa's citizens' willingness to pay for identified conservation funding initiative.	<i>To be determined as work progresses.</i>

Role of staff – to facilitate and support the committee:

- provide information on income and expenditure streams
- provide information from surrounding states
- have 1 staff member work with each subcommittee
- provide a facilitator for committee meeting
- provide information to the subcommittee vs individual requests
- subcommittee requests for funds would be submitted to Doug Harr, facilitator, for processing
- communications – *to be discussed later in today's agenda*
- draft committee results into report for committee review
- committee members/staff to use email to communicate, when possible.

How will decisions be made?

It will be ideal to strive for consensus where favorable as consensus appears to be mandated. On particular issues, provide allowances for a minority report.

Public input

Public Input - Brainstorming
Will committee allow public input at this meeting (today or future) or will it be taken outside the committee by other means?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* A lot of time is used re public comments.* Sometimes greatest ideas come from an individual.* Electronic, hard copy, face-to-face – at a meeting/read at a meeting.* Have one person/spokesperson designated to receive these comments and compile them for committee review.* Time limit/be concise for input.* Website cost?* Recommend comments only on the website on sustainable funding only with preface explaining purpose.* Publicize website through individual organizations and news releases.* How/do we let non-committee members participate?* Committee to have a brief time prior to the meeting to have public input* Encourage public to attend meetings with input via website comments or written comments submitted.* Public input: limit time (min 3 – 5 minutes) and # who can speak.* Committee can/will determine the time limit at the start of the meeting.* Committee minutes should be posted on the website* Determine who to choose? Have them on the agenda* Have some of the meeting public and some closed* Public input is beneficial and may occur after the committee meeting.* Have a common website for committee members to access/review comments before meeting.* Website to offer a section for frequently asked questions.* Allow face-to-face or written communication as an option, also.* Re website – can limit the number of characters they use and offer a mail address for submitting comments in writing.* How do we address/meet with individuals/groups to gather info for the committee? Can put them on the agenda and speak before the committee.

SUMMARY:

- Website for comments
- Committee works/meets on own, then have a public hearing, work more, public meeting, prepare and submit written report.
- Limit the number of characters for website comments and offer a mail address for submitting comments in writing.
- Have DNR staff begin to immediately begin work on setting up a website (ie see below re website on General Assembly page)

How should communications be made to the public?

News release – such as for today’s meeting, and inform of the purpose.

Have information posted on the General Assembly’s website.

Have staff/spokesperson create news/press releases to get information out to general public.

12:00pm-12:40pm Working Lunch (lunch provided for committee members)

12:40pm- 1:00pm Speaker: Ryan French – Iowans’ willingness to pay for natural resource funding

1:00pm- 1:30pm Continue discussions on Process (see above)

1:30pm- 3:00pm Meetings and Milestones

- **Task-oriented schedule for completing the report by January 10th**
- **Next meetings**
- **Subcommittee assignments**
- **Subcommittees meet, set up schedules**

Diane Ford-Shivvers, DNR staff assistant to committee proposed a draft timeline for task completion. After discussion and consideration, the following was determined:

The next committee meeting would be August 30, 2006, with subsequent meetings to be determined as needed.

The committee proposed working as a whole for Section 2c of the directive (noted above) versus breaking into subcommittees at this time.

The committee agreed to allow substitutions within the designated group/organization to sit in for them at meetings but the committee member is responsible for bringing that substitute up to speed before attending the meeting.

Closing remarks Ken Herring