

Minutes
Meeting of the Sustainable Natural Resources Task Force
10:00 a.m., November 10, 2011
The Nature Conservancy –Effroymsen Conservation Center, 620 E. Ohio Street

Members present: Senator Richard Young; Representative Mike Karickhoff; Representative Phil Pflum; Ray McCormick (IASWCD); Robert Woodling, (IFWOA); Bill Weeks (ILPA); Mary McConnell (TNC); and Steve Cecil (IWF).

Others present: Chris Smith (DNR); Megan Ritter (IFB); Barb Simpson (IWF); Lynn Dennis and Angela Hughes (TNC); Ray Chattin (IASWCD); A. Force (CBBEL-IN); Jeff Wells (ICOO); Steve VanZant (IWF); Chuck and Kathy Brinkman (IWF); Jennifer Boyle Warner (IASWCD); Mitch Marcus (DNR/DFW); Tim Maloney (HEC); David and Jane Savage (INPAWS);

1. Introductions.

Chairman called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda: Biodiversity and Wildlife presentation and discussion, as well as time to talk about strategy. The Chairman mentioned that he would like the Task Force to give the legislators some information to take back to their caucuses and fellow legislators to start discussing what our task force is doing. The Chairman will send out the minutes from all three meetings in an email to all the members.

2. Presentations

A. Mary McConnell (TNC) presented about biodiversity and gave an overview of Indiana's ecoregions and the places and species found there. PowerPoint attached.

Discussion:

- Task force members discussed how, from an objective point of view, the statement that there is not enough public land is supported. Ideas included the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP); economic importance of amenities that contribute to the quality of life and place, thus attractive potential employees; the importance of quality of life and quality of place in attracting employees by making Indiana a more attractive state. Other ideas: the term "loved to death" as a description of our state parks, how far in advance you need to reserve rooms at some state parks; trails overused. The Chairman mentioned that we should use these points in the recommendations.

B. Allen Pursell (TNC) presented on the Wabash, the species and biodiversity, flooding and inputs impacting water quality. PowerPoint attached.

Discussion:

- Question was posed about the correlation between Indiana having a lot of headwater streams and species intactness. Response from Mr. Pursell was that a correlation was possible, but

there are still many headwaters in other states without this level of intactness. It was noted there is more rainfall in Indiana than Iowa and that might correlate slightly with species intactness, particularly in times of drought.

- Questions were asked about two stage ditch technology. What types of plants/seeds are used? Are the species native to Indiana? Could it be improved in that sense? Mr. Woodling provided observations from visiting the Shatto Ditch in Kosciusko County. The landowner noted the benefits he has seen from the construction of the ditch. Mr. Woodling thought both warm and cool season grasses were used and perhaps improvements could be made in that composition.

C. Barb Simpson, Indiana Wildlife Federation, presented about fish and wildlife, including game and non-game species, hunting and trapping. Power Point attached.

Discussion:

- The Chair recommended for the final report that Ms. Simpson pick an area in each region of the state (including the Goose Pond example she had shared) and potentially show us where the concept of green infrastructure would be practical.
- The Chair asked both Ms. McConnell and Ms. Simpson to prepare a first draft of a report for the committee to begin discussions around. The report should include recommendations from their presentations, comparisons with other states and a report card.

Afternoon discussion:

- Discussion began with the statistic that Indiana is higher in the loss of phosphorous per acre than any other state. (Source: USGS NAWQA: Nutrient Delivery to the Gulf of Mexico.) Mr. Pursell referred to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's belief that phosphorus was pivotal to the U.S. economy and well-being, and proposed the idea of a strategic phosphorus reserve.
- The task force members went on to discuss soils, technology that can improve phosphorus application to ensure less waste and the correlation between the combination of extremely high levels of nitrogen and high levels of phosphorus resulting in algal blooms. Problems with technology acquisition across full spectrum of farming operations must be addressed. One member asked if Indiana is at a critical stage. Response was Indiana is at an alarming stage.
- Discussion on funding issues and lack of funding. There was significant discussion about potential sources of revenue for conservation. There was discussion about other states' funding mechanisms and ballot initiatives and bonding. It was noted that polling in Indiana showed that citizens support conservation and are willing to pay for it.
- The Chairman recommended that the task force identify our top three funding mechanisms and delve into those. Then the Task Force can push the knowledge and the scope of knowledge about these mechanisms. Chairman asked Ms. McConnell and some others to identify and provided detailed information on three mechanisms.
- The chairman asked task force members to think about various options of funding to be considered, both the pros and cons of those sources. A broad array of ideas, the pros and cons and the impacts of the economy on funding were discussed. There were also innovative ideas,

one member pointing to the corn check off, a voluntary program which seemed unlikely to pass but did.

- Blending ideas might be needed. Looking at the comparison of others states we see that Indiana is not funded as well, but that is not enough. It must be demonstrated that programs are underfunded and how that relates to the overall public policy.
- Legislators agreed that finding a coalition of partners is a good direction. Missouri is one of the best in funding historically. The political/economic climate might not be right today, but the task force's finding and recommendations will be forward looking.
- The discussion turned to structure of the meetings going forward. The Chair again reiterated providing the legislative members of the task force with information to share with their colleagues about the work of the task force. To substantiate the case, it was suggested the task force needs grounding in how broad the problem is. One member commented that a strategic plan of sorts be created, bringing all natural resources together. The plan would set up goals and priorities
- The chair said the task will proceed with presentations on the topic matters, so that all members are at the same level of understanding. Topics may include: forestry, soil, water, and air.
- Some of the points discussed included: 1) it is cheaper to take care of our natural resources now than to do it later; 2) the state's Bi-centennial provides an opportunity to achieve a goal for our natural heritage, such as a new state park or forest; and 3) adding to that thought, consistency verses a one-time action is important because the long term goal can only be achieved with long term, consistent funding.
- Once through the topical presentations and a draft report is created, the task force can then host properly-advertised public meetings.
- It was noted there has not been any discussions on flooding. There may be particular points that the Task Force might be able to touch on drainage, and inevitably get into that issue in discussions about reservoir siltation and dredging. The Chairman did not however, think that was going to be a focus.
- Task Force agreed that they would plan on approximately 8 more meetings, including 2 more presentations, then 3 or 4 meetings on the recommendations. There could also be 2 public meetings (north-central and south-central Indiana).
- It was agreed presentations would be emailed out before hand (even a couple of days before) so they can prepare for questions.

Next Meeting

Next meeting date will be Thursday, December 8th at a location TBD. As for future scheduling, the House will be in session on Fridays. For legislators, morning meetings are the best and the earlier in January the better.

Adjourn