

**STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING NOTES**

February 13, 2007

State Laboratory of Hygiene Building, Board Room

ATTENDANCE: Vicki Elkin, Kimberly Gleffe, Rick Gauger, Jan Zimmermann, Bill Lecker, Laura Guyer, Mark Heil, Sharon Schmeling, Peter McKeever, Dave Ladd, Jeff Gaska, Tom Schrader, Sue Kinde, Jim Hlblank, Tim Jacobson, Ellen Genrich, and Todd Holschbach

Guests: Althea Dotzer & Michael Strigel, Gathering Waters

DNR Staff: Kim Wright, Leslie Gauberti, Bridget Nettesheim, Mary Rose Teves and Steve Miller

GET COPIES OF LFB STEWARDSHIP INFO PAPER FOR SAC
GET COPY OF JIM OTT'S BILL ON STEWARDSHIP SIGNAGE

1. Minutes of Dec 12, 2006 Motion to approve, Laura Guyer, second Drew Hanson
Approved unanimously.

**2. Briefing from DOA yesterday about Gov's Proposal for Stewardship
Reauthorization**

Keep the current program as is until it ends. For the Reauthorized program, total annual budget to \$105M, with \$14.5M to NCOs and \$14.0M to LUGs. The increase is based on equalized value to bring today's dollars up to the buying power of 1990 dollars.

County governments and County Forests will be eligible for portion that DNR will use to purchase properties.

NRB can authorize grants of up to 75%; criteria to be developed. SAC suggested allowing 75% match when Sponsor buys property and transfers to DNR.

3. Outreach Strategy Even though the group has confidence of the regard WI citizens have for the conservation achieved with Stewardship, the controversy brewing with the hunting community may cloud the issue for Legislatures who hear complaints from naysayers. The group decided the overall strategy should be to get a positive message out about the successes of Stewardship and how the fund has touched people's lives throughout the state.

What next? The Gov's budget goes to Joint Finance Committee. Expect hearings and deliberations to start in about 4 weeks and continue for several months.

Vicki has been coordinating with the Gov and DNR about outreach strategy. (See memo from Vicki to all SAC members about this.) A number of members plan to issue press

releases in favor of the Gov's proposal for re-authorization. No objection from members about SAC issuing a press release.

Questions that might come during re-authorization process:

How much has been protected? 480,000 acres protected or about 1.4% of the land in WI. How much is enough, when will protection be done? DNR is saying about 500,000 need protecting.

Benefits to the Northwoods? 100,000 acres in working forest easements. Land owned and managed for forest products; easement keeps land in forest production and open to public hunting.

What are the property tax implications as a result of the Stewardship program? Good deal for locals; DNR makes "payment in lieu of taxes" based on DNR purchase price of the land as opposed to land's current assessment. Covered well in LFB Info Paper.

4. Hunting

WI Wildlife Federation wants 3 things:

- A. Public Info about Stewardship-purchased sites (they want NCO & LUG grant properties to have signs at entrances stating allowable uses. They also want a paper version of the DNR websites for locating land. Sen Friske's bill from last year to be introduced by Rep. Ott.
- B. Public Hunting on lands purchased with Stewardship funding. They want all lands that are suitable for hunting to be open for hunting. They don't think deer hunting is enough and want all legal game species in as many places as possible.
- C. Land Management – They want 20 FTEs for the DNR dedicated to land management. This appears to be the issue they plan to dig their heels in on.

GEORGE MEYER ON CONFERENCE CALL

1. Good signage on properties and electronic and published document show properties. AB 187 should be part of the Stewardship Reauthorization bill. There appears to be no resistance to do this.
2. Public access including hunting when it's proper for the land. DNR has very high percentage of acres open to hunting. Complaints in the Door Co area about more hunting in state parks. Lands owned by NCOs: numbers reported by DNR rings true to members and they are mostly satisfied. Lands owned by LUGs: most negative comments in this area. Expect lower amount because of urban areas. 22% is still low. Most complaints about Dane and Waukesha counties; ordinance does not allow hunting. Hunting with fire arms on more rural lands. Does hunting include trapping? Focusing mainly on hunting.
3. Land mgmt (the toughest issue). 276,000 A under Stew since 1990; only a handful of positions. Decline of habitat quality. Fewer land manager positions now than in 1960. Wants 20 new positions = \$1.2M + \$0.5M for start-up equipment, etc.

Will WWF object to Stewardship Reauthorization if land mgmt is not addressed. Will not say what ultimate WWF position will be. WWF will push hard to have all 3 issues included.

George Meyer: What's the WWF's position on hunting on easement land? WWF has been focusing on fee-title lands. Stewardship Fund is not a hunters fund ... realize broad use of Stewardship land.

Can't give a threshold at which parcel is too small for hunting. Detail that needs to be worked out. What other circumstances exist in which public hunting should not be allowed? Safety issues, conservancy-owned land access... there may be other legitimate reasons to disallow hunting.

Rules should be inclusive of all kinds of access.

Will other groups agree with WWF and negotiate when rules are being developed? None have objected.

- Blue Ribbon Task Force to look at land management issue including how to pay for it.

Several ideas about how to gain capacity to manage lands came from the group. Friends groups for each area purchased?

Contract the work out rather than giving positions to the DNR. But this may cost more than having DNR employees do the work.

Staffing: contracting, Friends groups, Water Action Volunteers (as an example), paid internship during the summer, retired volunteers, corporate supports.

Remain positive on the matter of Stewardship Reauthorization. Be affirmative, but no prescriptive.

Conservation Lobby Day – Feb 21 – statewide Contact League of Conservation Voters to register if you are going. One of their 4 top priorities is Stewardship Reauthorization. Wanted: one person to each legislative office to talk about Stewardship Reauthorization.

Next meeting: March 14, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Specific focus on land management. Suggested discussion leaders and guests. Jin Hilban, Kimberly Gleffe, Kelly Kearns (DNR invasives), The Prairie Enthusiasts, Drew Hanson, UW- Ext.