

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association Strategic Plan 2008 - 2013

August 6, 2007

Governance

Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association board of directors is ultimately responsible for the outcomes of this strategic plan, which will guide our actions for the next three to five years. The WLWCA executive director is responsible for implementing this plan with our guidance.

To achieve the goals described, the WLWCA will approve an annual plan, budget, executive director performance objectives, and annual executive director performance evaluation.

This plan is a flexible, fluid document, subject to our adjustments and improvements. However, this document will serve as our general guide for the direction of our association.

Signatories:

Date:

World Class

WLWCA will be “world class” at...

- Educating Land and Water Conservation Committee members on the importance of conserving natural resources and communicating with elected officials.
- Advocating for county level conservation funding and policy to legislators and agency officials.
- Educating legislators on the importance of water quality issues.
- Educating youth, through educators and programs, on the importance of conserving natural resources.

Statements of Intent

- We will advocate for adequate funding for conservation activities at the local level.
- We will secure adequate funding to accomplish our strategic goals.
- We will achieve financial support from 95% of our members.
- We will strive for consensus of our members.
- We will become the best resource for information on Wisconsin land and water conservation issues.

Vision: What We Want

WLWCA will be the consensus-building leader in conservation education and policy-making.

Mission: What We Do

WLWCA serves county Land and Water Conservation Committees and departments in their goal to conserve and enhance Wisconsin's natural resources.

We Value

- Coalition building
- Leadership abilities
- Thinking forward
- Our love of the land
- Resilience
- Opportunities to learn
- Opportunities to promote conservation
- Opportunities to develop public awareness

Trends Shape Our Strategies

- Local downsizing
- Diminishing budgets
- Unfunded mandates
- Increasing natural resource concerns

Opportunities Fuel Our Success

- Opportunities to educate the public and lobby elected officials
- Traditional and non-traditional funding sources
- Traditional and non-traditional partnerships
- Opportunity to improve the effectiveness of our organization

Challenges We Will Meet

- Building consensus among members
- Overcoming stereotypes and misconceptions of our organization
- Educating elected officials and the public

Critical Issues In Order of Importance

1. Play pivotal role in securing funding for county conservation departments including:

- strong advocacy for county conservation funding from state and federal agencies
- exhaustive search for county conservation funding through grants
- exploration of opportunities for the creation of partnerships, co-ops and other collaborative agreements to finance implementation of county conservation goals.

Goal: Ensure that public and private funding continues to flow to county conservation priorities

Measure: Increase in statewide conservation funding annually

2007 Baseline: \$520,000

Potential Strategies:

Lobby State Legislators for creation of a dedicated funding source for conservation priorities

Lobby State Legislators and agency decision-makers for increased funding

Solicit grants from private sources for conservation projects and programs

Assist landowners in leveraging existing assets to exploit new markets

1-Year Cost: \$30,000

Potential Partners: WALCE, Department of Natural Resources, DATCP, LWCB, NRCS, FSA, Utility companies, Electric co-ops, Dept of Administration, US DOE, Farm Bureau, Conservation Organizations

2. Educate land and water conservation committee members on their roles and responsibilities in natural resources conservation, including:

- an understanding of their role in speaking persuasively to elected and agency officials
- an understanding of current natural resource issues

Goal: Improve effectiveness of land and water conservation committees.

Measure: Increase number of local Land and Water Resources Management plan goals met.

Potential Strategies:

Provide training for newly elected committee members and staff after elections.

- Include training component on benefits of WLWCA and the need for members' state, regional, and national involvement and support.
- Include discussion of committee members' role in educating elected officials at local, state, and federal levels.

Provide and appropriately disseminate issue papers on natural resource issues.

Provide members with information on related public policy/legislative issues.

1-Year Cost: \$50,000

Potential Partners: Department of Natural Resources, DATCP, Natural Resources Conservation Service, county boards of supervisors, WALCE, WCA, UWEX, conservation groups

3. Educate youth on their roles and responsibilities in natural resources conservation.

Goal: Increase participation in youth conservation education programs.

Measure: Increase by 25% by 2009, and by 50% by 2013.

2006 Baseline: To be determined

Potential Strategies:

Encourage members and partners to promote youth education programs.

Work with appropriate organizations that represent educators.

Explore integration with educational standards.

Secure corporate and other non-traditional sponsors.

Provide full college scholarships for state Envirothon winners.

Encourage counties and/or Resource Conservation & Developments Councils to serve as fiscal agents for schools with grant funding for their program(s).

5-Year Cost: \$500,000

Potential Partners: Trout Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Whitetails Unlimited, Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Ruffed Grouse Society, Outfitter Retailers (Cabela's, etc.), WEAC, Department for Public Instruction, Timber Producers, Paper Companies, Cranberry Growers, Plum Creek, Energy Companies, Civic Organizations (Lion's)

4. Develop a public awareness campaign on ground and surface water issues.

Goal: Increase public awareness of water quality health issues.

Measures:

Increase in homeowner well testing.

Improvement in ground water quality test results (decrease in contaminants).

2006 Baselines: To be determined.

Potential Strategies:

A pilot project.

Make the public aware of actions they can take and actions they should not take.

Explore ways for land and water conservation committees to subsidize the costs for testing wells. (for example, encourage local cost share programs for testing)

Explore ways for land and water conservation committees to subsidize the costs for well-closings. (Explore state funding for well-closings).

Letters to the editor, op-eds and interviews extolling the health benefits of land and water conservation

Cost: \$60,000 first year

Potential Partners:

DNR, UWEX, DATCP, WALCE, Riverland Energy, State Health Dept./local health depts., State Hygiene Lab, AARP, WIC,

Wisconsin Aging Resource Council

3-5 years

WLWCA Board Member Responsibilities

At each meeting...

- Ensure that agenda focuses on strategic plan critical issues, not minutia that is better handled by committees, the executive director, or staff.
- Ensure that appropriate partners engage in critical issue discussions.
- Ensure inclusiveness. Do not allow any one person or group to dominate discussions or hijack meeting time.
- At each meeting of the board, request and hold staff accountable for detailed progress reports.
- Hold committees responsible for completing assignments and delivering quality recommendations.
- As a group, address any departure from the plan, such as a member's personal agenda.

Annually...

- Ensure that the Executive Director produces an annual program evaluation and report (annual report) based on progress toward strategic goals.
- As a group, evaluate, address, and improve board operating procedures.
- Conduct a productive annual performance evaluation for the executive director.
- Schedule a board planning retreat every three years, to include program evaluation.
- Ensure adequate funding to achieve goals.

Appendix A

Selected Actions for the Next Twelve Months

Ensuring Successful Plan Implementation

1. Present the strategic plan to members and partners; ask for feedback
2. Further develop plan
 - a. Staff (with guidance from board members if needed) will further develop:
 - Short-term benchmarks to measure and report progress toward each goal,
 - long-term budget forecasts associated with each goal,
 - additional or alternative strategies if needed,
 - lead staff assignments,
 - a long term implementation timeline,
 - an annual plan,
 - a detailed annual budget
 - Officers prepare performance objectives for executive director based on plan. Executive director will be evaluated on these performance objectives.
 - Executive Director, with each individual staff member, prepares staff performance objectives based on strategic plan assignments. Staff will be evaluated on these performance objectives.

These will be submitted to board for review no later than March 1, 2008.

- b. Board will adjust and/or approve staff recommendations by May 1, 2008.
 3. Review organizational structure
 - a. By March 1 2008, staff (possibly with guidance from board members if needed):
 - Recommendations for formation of committees and/or task forces to serve the strategic plan, to include specific strategic area, objectives and/or assignments for each.
 - A plan and schedule for evaluation of each WLWCA program (Annual Meeting, Awards Program, SOC, etc.) to include detailed recommendations for program adjustments and/or discontinuation.
 - Any recommendations for new programs to serve the strategic plan.
 - Review and update any needed financial policies and procedures, including purchasing policies.
 - Any needed by-law changes (mission statement needs to be updated in by-laws)
 - Procedures for board-executive director two-way communications, and executive director regular reporting.
 - Personnel policy review: vacation and sick leave, benefits, training and development
 - Recommendation for process to develop WLWCA policy handbook (policies and positions concerning natural resources conservation issues)
 - Address board vacancies (board takes lead).
 - b. Board will adjust and/or approve staff recommendations by May 1 2008.

4. Committees
 - Officers populate appropriate committees and task forces with board members, local committee members, and partners/advisors.
 - President appoints appropriate committee chairs (must be board members) and communicate directly with them, so each understands his or her specific charge and expected results.
 - Executive Director assigns one staff member to each committee *after* President has appointed chairs

By Date: May 1, 2008

5. Track Progress