



Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Strategic Planning Session Report #2

July 31, 2012

Meeting process developed and facilitated by
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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress Strategic Planning Committee met for the second time on July 23, 2012 at the George W. Mead Wildlife Area, Milladore, Wisconsin. In attendance were the following committee members.

- Joe Weiss (District 1)
- Wally Trudeau (District 2)
- Laurie Groskopf (District 3)
- Mike Riggle (District 3)
- Ralph Fritsch (District 4)
- Bill Yingst (District 5)
- Doug Burrows (District 5)
- Greg Wysocki (District 6)
- Frank Reith (District 6)
- Dale Maas (District 7)
- Larry Bonde (District 8)
- Dave Tupa (District 8)
- Mike Murphy (District 9)
- Jayne Meyer (District 10)
- Andrew Limmer (District 12)

Also in attendance were Kari Lee-Zimmermann of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and citizens Bret Schultz and Emily Gilder.

After the call to order, roll call and introductions, committee members reviewed the following committee purpose statement which was developed during the first session.

“The purpose of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Strategic Planning Committee is to look into the future by developing a process of goals to pursue and standards to utilize for the Congress in the coming years.”

Ground rules developed during the first session were also reviewed. No other ground rules were added to the list.

REPORT CONTENTS

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DISCUSSION THEMES

Instead of a list of discussion themes similar to what was provided in the Session #1 report, topics that have been frequently mentioned during the first two strategic planning meetings are highlighted in yellow beginning on page 5.

DRAFT STAKEHOLDER STATEMENT

Committee members agreed that the facilitator should develop a draft stakeholder list based on its strategic planning conversations. Instead of creating one long list mentioning every organization the WCC interacts with, it may be possible to sum up what these stakeholders have in common with the WCC in one relatively short phrase. That phrase is:

Wisconsin Conservation Congress stakeholders (i.e. those who have an interest in or support the WCC's activities) include all people in Wisconsin who are interested in the responsible management of the state's natural resources.

The strategic planning committee agreed to review and if necessary make changes to this statement during its next meeting.

REVIEW OF JUNE 18, 2012 MEETING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Committee members indicated that they read the report and agreed that no significant changes needed to be made to it. A couple members stated that there were some grammatical and spelling errors that needed to be corrected. The facilitator mentioned that any mistakes will be corrected in the final strategic plan report.

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION (Continued Discussion)

During the committee's first session, it developed the following draft vision statement.

"The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is the only statutory vehicle for gathering, forwarding, and achieving the public's interests on all natural resources issues to the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board. The WCC will accomplish this through open, impartial, broad range and well organized actions."

Immediately after the statement was developed, several committee members stated that they thought it was too similar to the organization's current mission statement. In Session #2, they agreed by consensus that the statement should be modified.

Committee members were asked to review the core values list that they created during the last meeting and to identify other concepts that could be included in an inspirational vision statement. They listed the following additional ideas.

- Active, respected/having impact.
- Member views are more valued; the Congress enjoys comparable standing with the Department of Natural Resources because of its ability to work more directly with the public (but is still seen as an advisory body). – Respected and listened to.

- Statement should reflect a desire of the Congress to become more active at the local/county level as is suggested in the recently released Kroll Report.
- Relevancy/demonstrate change.
- Congress' work is valued.
- Recognized as impactful.
- Valued.
- Congress should take positions on natural resources issues year around, not just during the spring hearings. (But, an increase in attendance at the local spring hearings is much desired.)
- Education - creates awareness building externally and internally.
- Want to build overall awareness of what the Congress does with delegates and the general public.
- Express that the Congress desires enhanced accountability.
- Broader representation.
- Carry the wisdom, weight and influence of citizens.
- Vehicle/conduit to get the public's views to the Natural Resources Board.
- Advocacy.
- WCC will become the "go to" entity when there are questions about natural resources policies.
- Develop closer working relationship with the DNR, primarily the agency's division leaders.

After further discussion and wordsmithing, the committee created the following statement.

“The vision of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is to strengthen and enhance its ability to gather and convey the wisdom and influence of Wisconsin citizens in the formation of natural resource policy, research, education, and conservation.”

Debate took place about whether the committee should formally endorse the vision statement at this time. By consensus, committee members agreed that they should not do so, reserving the right to modify the statement if needed at some other point during the strategic planning process.

COMPLETION of SOAR+C ANALYSIS (CHALLENGES)

Committee members concluded their situation analysis of the organization by identifying the most pressing challenges currently facing it and ones most likely to become an issue in the near future. Highlighted items indicate ideas/concerns frequently mentioned in other discussions.

- The experts the Congress works with should dictate less and listen more to delegates and the public. (Less of a top down approach.)
- Technology and social media: How will the Congress use these resources in the future?
- Increase citizen satisfaction with WCC processes and progress on environmental issues.
- Influential in all areas of conservation not just policy.
- Ensuring that top level state officials have adequate knowledge of important natural resources issues facing the state.
- Creating awareness about what the WCC does.

- Retaining and recruiting interested delegates that want to make positive contributions to the organization.
- Obtaining additional funding; diversifying funding sources; increasing in-kind contributions.
- How does the WCC remain relevant and influential? (Note: Nearly everything the committee has discussed to date has included this very broad but very important question.)
- How does the WCC become respected/credible? (Note: Nearly everything the committee has discussed to date has included this very broad but very important question.)
- Strengthen the WCC's relationship with the DNR, both the NRB and DNR staff. This must be done while continuing to communicate to stakeholders how different the WCC's role is in comparison to what the DNR does.
- Maintaining WCC representation on other organizations' committees/boards.
- Increasing accountability. The organization needs to review disciplinary actions to help ensure that its leadership and delegates are appropriately responding to negative press and other challenges. This review needs to occur at every level of the organization.
- Awareness - outreach to educators, clubs, etc. needs to improve. Develop product (such as a WCC DVD) that we can provide to these groups.
- Garnering support for the implementation of this plan (overcoming resistance to change)
- Modifying the WCC organizational structure in such a way that will help the WCC make meaningful progress toward achieving its vision.
- Code of Procedure does not allow college youth who attend school most of the year outside their permanent residence area to run for delegate positions.

- Educate stakeholders that the WCC, as a quasi-government entity, has to follow state open meetings laws/procedures, etc. People need to understand that this at times helps or hinders what the organization is attempting to accomplish.
- Maintaining spring hearings. Developing new ways to conduct them.
- How do we accurately measure delegates' expectations about this planning process and the plan that is produced?
- Diversify and broaden research initiatives – who we communicate with, how committees develop their agendas, etc. Increase education of members on these matters.
- Conducting surveys at the committee level – e.g. Did committees receive reliable information, etc.?
- Bringing fresh perspectives from the DNR to WCC committees. (Perhaps changing DNR liaisons to WCC committees. The downside is that the committee could lose the experience and knowledge of a DNR specialist that has served as liaison to it for years.)
- Delegates often do not have enough background on an issue to make informed votes or to accurately convey to the public what the issue is about. This also prevents more discussion about these issues from taking place at the district level before the spring hearings. Can more information sheets be developed and distributed?
- **Local delegations need to better understand their roles and responsibilities.**

WCC MISSION REVIEW & MODIFICATION

By consensus, committee members agreed that the following current WCC purpose statement needed revision in order to more accurately reflect the organization's primary purpose.

"The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) is the only "advisory body" in the state where citizens of Wisconsin elect delegates to represent their interests in natural resources, both local and statewide, by working with the [Natural Resources Board](#) and the [Department of Natural Resources](#) to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy."¹

Committee members were asked to think about what key words, phrases, or concepts were missing from the statement. After much discussion and wordsmithing, the committee developed the following, revised WCC draft mission statement.

"The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is the only statutory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to advise the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources how to responsibly manage Wisconsin's natural resources for present and future generations. The Congress accomplishes this through open, impartial, broad ranged actions."

As was the case with the newly developed vision state, debate took place about whether the committee should formally endorse the new mission statement at this time. By consensus, committee members agreed that they should not do so, reserving the right to modify the statement if needed at some other point during the strategic planning process.

¹ This purpose statement is on the WCC webpage and does not exactly match the statement of purpose on the Code of Procedures.

ISSUES IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION

Based on all their previous conversations, committee members began identifying and prioritizing the key issues currently being faced by the WCC. They also identified issues that the organization may face in the near future.

To help frame the conversation, committee members were presented with the following diagram and were asked to focus their thoughts on the top two quadrants. (What issues fit into those quadrants?) They were also reminded that the organization has limited capacity to address all the identified issues all at once.

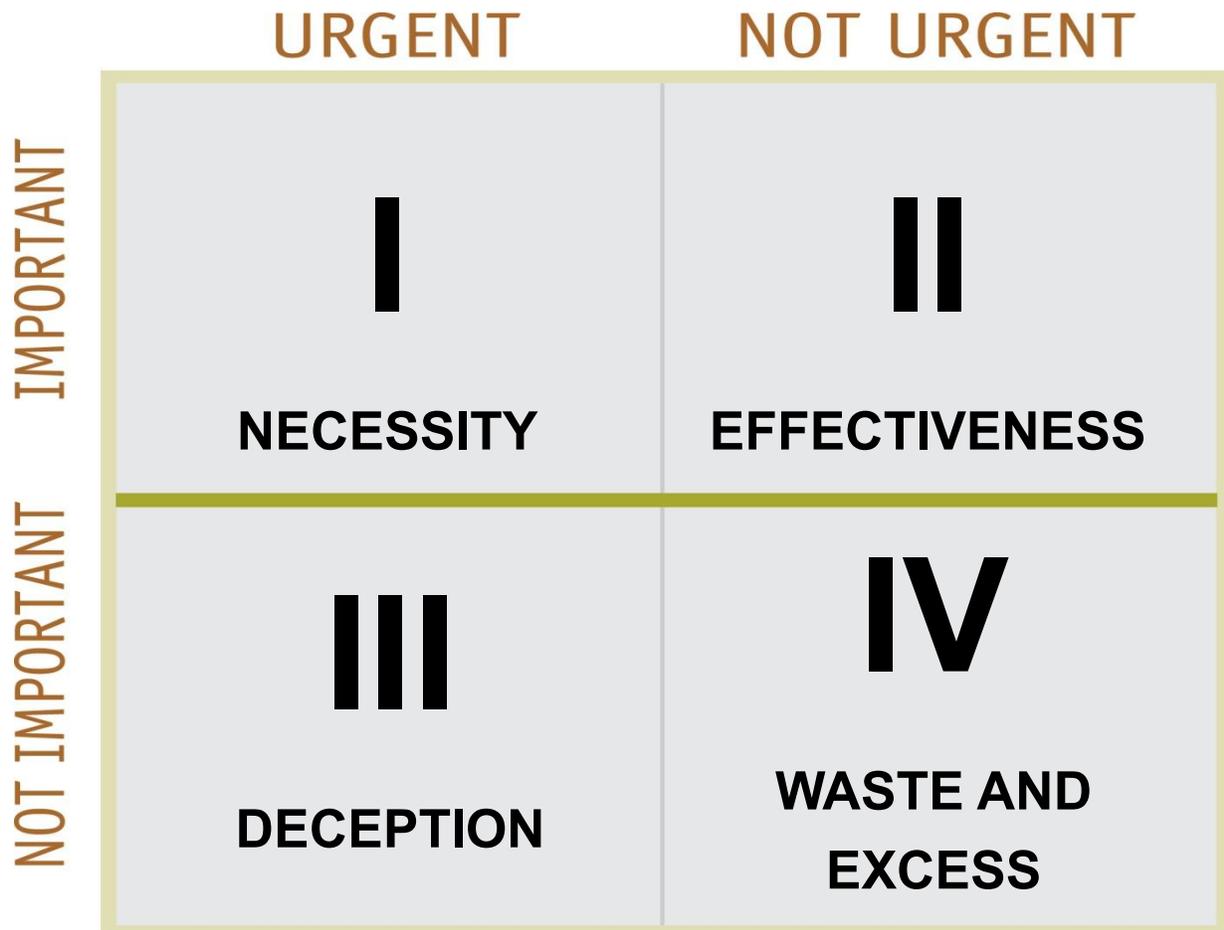


Diagram produced by the Franklin Covey Institute.

Primary Issues

Highlighted items were frequently mentioned in previous discussions.

- Leadership election process (terms and how people are elected).
- Looking at the number of delegates per county. What promotes effectiveness? What will help the WCC become more active and impactful at the local/county level?
- Must review and modify the internal and external committee selection processes. How can WCC Executive Committee members attend as liaisons all other WCC committee meetings?
- Budget (pay attention to future funding).
- Technology. How will the WCC use technology in the future? How can it be used to create more awareness about what the WCC does?
- Awareness building. How do we let people know what the WCC does? (media utilization); appoint some kind of a communication representative/spokesperson; DVD production)
- Kroll Report - WCC specifically mentioned as an organization that should become more involved locally. The organization must determine how to do this.
- Promote more discussion during the spring hearings.
- Expand the WCC's educational role.
- Recruitment and retention of delegates. Generate interest amongst the public.
- Improve internal accountability. Make this an even more professional organization at all levels.

- Difficult to track what happens to a rule after a year of it being considered or passed. Need to do a much better job of this.
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the WCC annual state convention. How does the organization encourage delegates to discuss at the convention how the WCC can be improved? It is important for committee chairs attending the convention to report on what their committees accomplished over the past year. Perhaps it would be appropriate to provide an overview of the Code of Procedures during the conference.
- Sometimes it is difficult to conduct relationship building with the DNR and other organizations. There needs to be more “institutional” meetings between the DNR and the WCC, using enhanced ground rules.
- Engagement of non-consumptive users.
- Engagement of other groups with interests similar to WCC interests.

The committee will continue its discussion about current and potential issues during its August 13 meeting at the Mead Wildlife Center.