



Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Strategic Planning Session Report #3

August 23, 2012

Meeting process developed and facilitated by
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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress Strategic Planning Committee met for the third time on August 13, 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)
- Mike Murphy (District 9)
- Jayne Meyer (District 10)
- Andrew Limmer (District 12)

Dave Tupa (District 8) was excused. Also in attendance was Sharon Fandel of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

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. The committee by voice vote (all ayes) formally approved the ground rules.

The committee devoted most of the third session to identifying goals, the heart of any strategic plan. There was a great deal of consensus about what goals should be pursued, a byproduct of the rich discussions that took place in the previous two meetings and before goal setting during this third session.

Although there is more information on pages 7 - 11 of this report about the goals and the process used to identify them, they are listed here for the convenience of the reader. At this point, goals are not arranged in any particular order of importance. As strategies to achieve goals are developed, it is likely that it will become clearer to the committee in what order goals should be addressed. Goal statements were converted into questions. This makes it easier to develop action plans to achieve the goals as committee members will attempt to answer the questions by the strategies they recommend be pursued.

- How can delegates create greater awareness of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress?
- How does the Wisconsin Conservation Congress expand what it does?
- What must the Wisconsin Conservation Congress do to improve its organizational structure?
- What must the Wisconsin Conservation Congress do to foster a more engaged and accountable delegation?
- What methods should be used to recruit and retain more involved delegates?
- What must be done to make the spring hearings more effective?

DRAFT STAKEHOLDER STATEMENT

During the second session, 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, he developed the following summary statement.

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.

Discussion took place as to whether to formally adopt the statement with or without changes. The statement was formally adopted without changes.

REVIEW OF JULY 23, 2012 MEETING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The facilitator asked committee members how other delegates are reacting to the strategic planning and what was included in the July 23 report. Between July 23 and this third session, most committee members had attended their district meetings. The following input was provided by their fellow delegates at those meetings.

- Should be additional committee selection reforms. This perhaps can be accomplished through an Ad Hoc committee.
- District population should be one of the factors upon which committee representation is decided.
- Decide committee assignments during the spring meetings. Make certain those who have been active on a committee remain on that committee.
- Some committees should have more members based on what Congress initiatives/goals are being pursued at the time.
- Committee term limits should be established.
- When the Congress takes a position on an issue, those statements should be better communicated both internally and externally.

- This was the first time that district counselors were involved in determining committee assignments. This promotes a more “bottom-up” approach to making these assignments that should continue.
- Develop/update tri-fold brochure to help promote the WCC.
- There needs to be a better way to document excused and unexcused committee absences. Incorrectly recorded unexcused absences may mean that an individual who has faithfully attended and participated in committee meetings not be reassigned to that committee.
- More standard guidelines should be developed better describing what constitutes an excused absence.
- Committee minutes should come out sooner following the meeting.
- Why must wolves be managed? The WCC is in an excellent position to educate the public about this. It has the collective knowledge to do this effectively. WCC is in a good position to provide such education related to most controversial natural resources management issues.
- Statewide concentrations of wildlife should be taken into consideration when deciding who should sit on what committee. (E.g. If there are many more bears in the north, then primarily delegates from the north should sit on the Bear Committee.)
- Increase awareness of the Conservation Congress (how to measure?) We can do this by:
 - Have each county delegate “donate” one hour per month (12 hours annually) to promoting the Conservation Congress
 - Schedule listening sessions in various population centers. Locations could include restaurants (over coffee), sporting goods stores, etc.
 - Develop a one page flyer with County delegates’ names, bio-sketches and contact information. Post the flyers at various sportsman clubs, sporting goods stores, bait shops, etc.

- Attend a monthly meeting at least once a year of the various sportsmen's clubs and/or conservation organizations.
 - Make presentations at local education institutions that may have a conservation oriented class or club.
 - Conduct a "how to write" a local resolution for introduction at the spring hearings.
 - Develop and teach a 15 minute segment (about 7 PowerPoint slides) about the Conservation Congress for Hunter Education (WCC resolution passed in 2010) and Angler Education Instructor certification classes.
 - Develop a one page webpage as part of the WCC page in the WI DNR website. Could include information from the County delegate flyer.
 - Deliver a summary report to the WCC Executive Committee NLT the Congress Annual meeting in 2013.
- Set consistent time each year for committee meetings; perhaps just after annual conference - same time each year.
 - Committee selection changes; committee chairs should have input on the changes.
 - Consolidate committees that do not transact much business. Have fewer members on those committees.
 - Free patron's license - special WCC back tag for those delegates who are serving in good standing.
 - Develop clearer role definitions/statements for committee officers. Clarify the consequences of inaction, etc.
 - Document and communicate the outcomes of passed resolutions. (What were the results of them being passed? What happened if it failed?)
 - Code of Procedure should be made more verbally precise.
 - Executive Council should provide guidance on committee selection process. It should also encourage more open, internal communication.

- Need to create an “Alternative Funding Committee” that will suggest ways to alternatively fund initiatives through things like fees, etc.
- Delegates should be required to submit resumes or similar document showing that they are qualified to sit on the committees they are interested in.
- Make it better known how delegates can be appointed to committees of their choosing.

COMPLETE ISSUES IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION

Lersch asked committee members to identify any additional issues the WCC may need to address in the coming few years. There was some discussion about Act 21 and whether it is in the Conservation Congress’ influence to help bring about some changes to it. Although a few committee members believed that the strategic planning committee should discuss the issue further, most agreed that other groups both within and outside the WCC are working with state government to help find ways that organizations can more effectively work within the general parameters the act set. It was also pointed out that the act is currently undergoing some tweaking, and will likely be modified even further in the months to come. In summary, the strategic planning committee decided that Act 21 issues are something it should not spend time addressing.

Additional issues identified by the committee were:

- Spring Hearing format needs to become more effective.
- Evaluation of committee meeting outcomes is lacking.
- Need to develop evaluation/metrics for the goals identified within the strategic plan.
- Develop an archive of WCC policy statements and general organizational policies.
- Clearly define what is expected of delegates (education) to increase the organization’s accountability.

IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE GOALS

Lersch provided the following information and directions on how to develop organizational goals.

Goals are short statements that are vital and provide focus to the organization. These goals must be measurable. They must be grounded in the WCC mission statement and should help the organization make progress toward realizing its vision. Nearly every organization lacks the capacity to tackle many goals at once. This is why we need to prioritize. Prioritizing requires deep thinking about what goals if achieved will have the most positive impact on the organization and its stakeholders.

WCC Strategic Planning Report sections that will be the most helpful to you as you think about goals are:

- *Mission and Vision (pages 5 and 8 of report #2)*
- *Results (pages 15 – 16 of report #1)*
- *Issues (from today and pages 10 -11 of report #2)*
- *Challenges (pages 5 – 7 of report #2)*
- *Opportunities (pages 12 – 13 or report #1)*

Even though these report sections will be of most help, all other sections contain important information that should be considered.

Consider everything that has been discussed, what goals should and can the WCC pursue the next five years? Use something I call the “3/5/5 Exercise” to determine goals. This technique will help to build upon committee members’ collective knowledge. During the first two steps of the exercise, you will be placed in small work units. Throughout the process always be thinking about how the organization will measure progress toward achieving the goal.

Directions:

1. *On each sticky note that you have been provided, please write in large letters the most important goal you think the WCC must pursue. For action planning purposes, it is easier to write your goals in question format. Developing strategies and tasks can be facilitated by thinking about how to answer the question. An example of a goal question might be “How does the WCC encourage delegates to take more active roles in the organization?” Use your other sticky notes to write down two of your other priorities, one goal per note. (Each note has one goal, you write down three total.)*

2. *Within your small work unit, use the sticky notes to group similar ideas/goals. Attempt to have a total of no more than five goals. If the work unit ends up with more, that is okay. In order to consolidate, consider that there may be some goal statements that can be turned into strategies. The work unit will record their prioritized goals on sticky notes, one goal per note.*
3. *After completing the grouping, we will come together to arrange the roughly 15 goal statements, paying strict attention to their similarities. No more than five or six goals from this grouping will be chosen as priorities.*

The three work units, two of which went different places outside to work and the other which stayed inside, had remarkably similar conversations. Although this may in part be a function of some “group think,” in this case this is clearly much more a reflection of how well strategic planning committee members thought about, discussed, and came to understand during their previous discussions what are truly the most important matters facing the WCC. “Group think” was also largely avoided because each individual during the first step of the process above secretly wrote down their suggested goals.

Because committee members were thinking in very similar ways, it was relatively easy to group their draft goal statements/questions. The following groupings were established during discussion with the entire committee. The committee agreed that some of these goal ideas belong in more than one category.

WCC Awareness Building:

- ✓ How can we create greater awareness of the WCC?
- ✓ How do we make the WCC better known and used as a tool?
- ✓ How does the WCC expand and increase awareness amongst the public about what we do?
- ✓ How will the WCC use technology in the future? (Note: Committee members agreed that the primary use of technology should be to educate delegates, potential delegates, the general public, and stakeholders like the DNR about what the WCC does. They also acknowledged, however, that technology has the potential to be used by the organization in other, non-marketing ways.)
- ✓ How does the WCC expand and increase awareness about what we do?
- ✓ Increase outreach.
- ✓ How do we increase knowledge and participation of all stakeholders, especially delegates?
- ✓ How do we inform the public about what the WCC does?

- ✓ How can we do a better job of tracking what happens to resolutions advanced through the WCC? (Note: A major part of this is letting stakeholders know the outcomes and that WCC played a role in the issue.)
- ✓ How can we do a better job of tracking a proposed rule after a year of it being considered or passed? (This will increase our accountability to the public.)

Expanding the Scope of what the WCC does:

- ✓ How do we expand what we do?
- ✓ What can the WCC do to broaden its sphere of influence? (education, awareness, public relations).
- ✓ How does the WCC expand its mission into areas other than rule making?

Organizational Structure:

- ✓ What must the WCC do to improve its organizational structure?
- ✓ How do we best use our committee system?
- ✓ How will the WCC more effectively use delegates in committee functions?
- ✓ How can we improve the leadership election process and committee selection process? (all encompassing, terms, elections, structures)
- ✓ How should the WCC improve internal management/leadership?
- ✓ How do we improve internal processes so that they lead to better internal accountability?
- ✓ Leadership responsibilities and penalties spelled out in the Code of Procedure.
- ✓ How does the WCC make its annual convention more useful to delegates?
- ✓ How do we improve/streamline WCC committee structure and operation?
- ✓ How must the internal and external committee selection process be improved?
- ✓ What methods can we use to evaluate delegate participation in and opinions about (i.e. levels of satisfaction) the WCC?
- ✓ How can we do a better job of tracking what happens to resolutions advanced through the WCC? (Note: A major part of this is letting stakeholders know the outcomes and that WCC played a role in the issue.)
- ✓ How can we do a better job of tracking a proposed rule after a year of it being considered or passed? (This will increase our accountability to the public.)

Delegate Involvement:

- ✓ What must the WCC do to foster a more engaged and accountable delegation?
- ✓ What are our results and impacts? What are we accomplishing?
- ✓ Increase knowledge and participation of delegates.

Recruit and Retain Delegates:

- ✓ What methods should be used to recruit and retain involved delegates?
- ✓ How does the WCC improve the recruitment and retention of delegates?
- ✓ How do we diversify and recruit or retain delegates?
- ✓ How do we recruit new delegates?
- ✓ How do we retain existing delegates?
- ✓ How does the WCC attract and retain delegates?
- ✓ How can we improve the recruitment and retention of delegates?

Spring Hearings:

- ✓ What must be done to make the spring hearings more effective?
- ✓ How do we improve and promote the spring hearings?
- ✓ How can we do a better job of educating the public on spring hearing questions?
- ✓ How do we make the spring hearings more relevant?

After lengthy discussion, these themes were transformed into the following goal questions.

- How can delegates create greater awareness of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress?
- How does the Wisconsin Conservation Congress expand what it does?
- What must the Wisconsin Conservation Congress do to improve its organizational structure?
- What must the Wisconsin Conservation Congress do to foster a more engaged and accountable delegation?
- What methods should be used to recruit and retain more involved delegates?
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At this time, these identified goals are in no particular order. Strategy identification will help determine the order in which goals will be pursued and whether any of them will be worked upon simultaneously.

BEGIN IDENTIFYING STRATEGIES AND TASKS TO ACHIEVE GOALS

There was just enough time left over in the session for the committee to begin identifying ways that the first goal on the list can be achieved. It was explained that strategies will also have to be prioritized.

How can delegates create greater awareness of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress?

Suggested Strategies:

- Designate a person or small committee within the WCC to work on public relations. If an individual, this person should be known as a “public information officer” and should be assisted by a committee in developing and disseminating public relations materials
- Develop strategies and work on delegate retention/recruitment first. This will help bring more people to the WCC with public relations skills and make it more known within the organization who already has those skills and may be willing to do promotional work.
- Produce press releases centrally or at least develop a template for others to use. If a template is developed, it should be adaptable enough so the release fits the requirements of local newspapers and other media outlets.
- A monthly press release should be distributed to every newspaper in the state, including Wisconsin Outdoor News. (What went on in the WCC that month?)
- Make it more known using various internal and external publications that the DNR frequently includes news about the WCC in its pamphlets and magazines.
- Each committee and county delegation should develop and distribute an annual report of accomplishments.
- Every delegate should volunteer one hour a month to educate the public about the WCC. Delegates should be required to report what they did.
- Create a County Conservation Alliance in each county. These entities should report directly to the Conservation Congress.

- Approach UW System, etc. to ask them to help create an informational DVD about the WCC.
- Work to have a WCC delegate on every county Land Conservation Committee.

There was some discussion about how to format all the information on goals, their strategies, when they should be completed, and who will be responsible for completing them. Overall, the committee is leaning toward asking the Executive Council to be responsible for overseeing plan implementation, although it reserves the right to request that oversight be accomplished in some other way. For purposes of summarizing the strategic plan in an easy to read format, Lersch will develop a table outlining how goals should be accomplished and progress on them evaluated.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the WCC Strategic Planning Committee is scheduled for Saturday, September 8, 2012, 10:00 a.m. (location to be determined).