



## Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) Evaluation Education & Planning

### Session #1 Report

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#### Introduction

Four members of the Strategic Plan Review Ad Hoc Committee met to discuss what has and has not been implemented from the organization's first ever strategic plan. If something has not been implemented, they also discussed why. The group was officially charged *"to review the Conservation Congress' Strategic Plan that was approved and adopted in 2013, review and discuss the responses from the delegate survey on the Strategic Plan, and make recommendations on how to proceed with implementation of those areas within the plan that have not been implemented."* As part of the charge, the Committee will report its findings and recommendations to the Executive Council in January.

Group members also began discussing ways how to better carry out strategic plan implementation and evaluation. One method they emphasized for helping to bring greater accountability to the implementation process was for the Executive Council to more regularly review progress made. For this, the Council would have to meet more frequently than three times per year. Technology, including basic teleconferencing could be used to accomplish this. A meeting every other month would perhaps be needed to achieve the level of accountability the plan implementation process demands. The group began the session by talking about a key strategy contained in the plan that if implemented will allow the WCC to measure long-term and ongoing success.

### **Tracking Legislation and Rules Changes**

Those in attendance agreed that this strategy is vital to achieving two of the four goals outlined in the strategic plan and now must be done. At present, the WCC does not have a system in place to effectively carry out the strategy, especially to tell the impacts of the WCC's work over time. (E.g. How did a rule change affect hunting practices over months and years?) Discussion ensued about how this could be accomplished. Those in attendance saw both the Executive Committee's historian and public relations officer as being important point people in getting the initiative going. Other partners in the tracking effort will have to be the Rules and Resolutions Committee, the Outreach and Public Relations Committee, and possibly the Department of Natural Resources.<sup>1</sup>

Group members also discussed the possibility of establishing an ad hoc committee to develop a tracking plan and to begin implementation. They admitted that the task might be too involved for just one or two people. Key to implementation would be finding those who have an interest in and the skills for doing such work. Those in attendance indicated that they would be seeking formal approval from the Executive Council to get the initiative underway.

The primary evaluation question that would be answered through this effort is "Have the legislative and rules changes that have gone through the WCC process and that have been formally passed improved natural and wildlife management practices?" Follow-up questions might be "If so, then why?" or "If not, then why not?"

Group members agreed that the first step in the tracking process, once sanctioned by the Executive Council, would be to create and begin maintaining a spread sheet that accurately tracks what happened to a proposal after being passed at the annual WCC Convention. They suggested that the Executive Council would have to ultimately hold people accountable on whether the initiative is being done well. Part of the tracking initiative being done well would be providing regular impact reports (quarterly perhaps or at least annually at the Convention) to the entire delegation and external stakeholders.

Another topic of discussion was how best to help advisory committee chairs be better informed about what they need to be passing on to committee members. Consensus was that the Rules and Resolutions Committee should take the lead in this and that it should also become more active in addressing any committee member's complaints about the ways committees are functioning.

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<sup>1</sup> Group members asked the facilitator to contact the DNR liaison to the WCC to see if she knows whether the DNR is already doing some tracking and if so how that might be applied to the WCC's own tracking effort. The DNR liaison stated that no such effort is currently occurring.

**Strategic Plan Implementation Accomplishments**

Group members chose to identify accomplishments by assessing progress made toward implementing each task listed under the various strategies. If those in attendance agreed that a particular strategy is not being pursued or is being pursued in a limited fashion, then a general statement is made to that effect.

**Goal #1: Improve the WCC organizational structure**

Strategy	Tasks	Accomplishments
<p>1. Improve the process of study committee selection and how study committees function</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop an application process for committee delegate selection.</li> <li>B. Executive Committee should develop and communicate a list of committee openings.</li> <li>C. Develop an election process for committee assignments at the district level.</li> <li>D. No more than two people per district can be nominated to sit on a particular committee.</li> <li>E. Executive Council and the Executive Committee should decide each year how many members particular committees should have.</li> <li>F. Develop and distribute surveys that evaluate committee leadership performance.</li> <li>G. Increase Executive Committee from three to five members.</li> <li>H. Create a clearer process of how delegates are chosen to sit on external committees such as DNR committees.</li> <li>I. Better communicate what external committee positions are available, when those committees meet, and what is on the meeting agendas.</li> </ul>	<p>A, B, and C: District councilors receive list of openings. In some districts, a list of openings is passed around and delegates sign – up for what they want. Other districts talk through the process. It is being done in various ways. Narrowing of committees and a tighter election process is the result. Discussion about who fills the open positions is happening, which is something that did not occur before. Having decisions made at the district level is a better process that is helping to improve delegate morale. Those in attendance expressed that the WCC should seek to promote more uniformity in the methods used rather than each county doing something different. Overall, they expressed satisfaction with the direction things are headed.</p> <p>D. Is taking place.</p> <p>E. Is happening for the most part. There are more ad hoc committees now that are addressing specific issues that advisory committees used to address and that did not often relate very well to their</p>

		<p>missions.</p> <p>F. Is happening to a degree. There is an evaluation on the website but it should be strengthened. It is not truly confidential. There also needs to be better communication informing delegates that the questionnaire exists and should be completed. More needs to be done to inform delegates that they are expected to complete and return the surveys.</p> <p>G. This occurred (Code of Procedure change). Delegates are still getting used to the new structure. New members are still learning how to take part in decision making processes and in general their roles.</p> <p>H. and I. This is starting to happen. Openings can be better publicized. Possibly list the openings with their responsibilities on the WCC webpage. The process of how people are chosen for these positions needs to be less top down. We need to also strengthen the liaison role of delegates who sit on these DNR committees (better reporting to the WCC and vice versa). Did the liaison properly express the WCC view during the DNR committee meetings?</p>
<p>2. Modify standing committee structure to create greater efficiencies, improve</p>	<p>Reduce the number of study committees and change their structures,</p> <p>Specific tasks related to the above were:</p>	<p>The committee structure was modified using Code of Procedures changes made during the 2013 convention. The number of committees was reduced from 22 to 16. Committee names and missions were</p>

<p>internal communications, and save money</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The current Outreach Committee should be expanded and renamed the "Outreach &amp; Public Relations Committee."</li> <li>B. The Forestry, Parks &amp; Recreation Study Committee should be merged with the Private &amp; Public Land Access Committee.</li> <li>C. Establish an Environmental Study Committee</li> <li>D. Merge the Turkey and Upland Game Committee Committees modify mission statements to reflect new scope of work</li> <li>E. Eliminate the Hunting with Dog Study Committee.</li> </ul>	<p>changed to better reflect their roles in the organization. The DNR's liaison to the WCC states in a synopsis written in November of 2013 that the new committee structure is working very well. "It [committee restructure] shifted the responsibility from the Executive Committee [five officers of the organization] to the Councilors [24 statewide Executive Council members] who have a better understanding of their area's concerns and their delegates."</p> <p>A.– E were completed. There are more ad hoc committees now that are addressing specific issues that advisory committees used to address and that did not often relate very well to their missions.</p>
<p>3. Establish a recording stenographer position allowing the organization's Secretary to refrain from taking notes during important discussions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop budget.</li> <li>B. Develop and initiate a hiring process.</li> <li>C. Develop a job description for the position</li> </ul>	<p>This strategy has not been pursued. There are currently no dollars to support the position. Having this done on a volunteer basis would likely be impractical. The DNR has said that neither of its liaisons to the WCC will be able to do this. If resources become available in the future (perhaps using technology such as Dragon Dictation, etc.), then this should be pursued.</p>
<p>4. Improve information &amp; communication flow related to all WCC activities (Note: This is an ongoing initiative.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Create statewide broadcasts used by the media to inform public of WCC activities.</li> <li>B. Delegates increase their volunteer activity in order to better educate the public about the WCC.</li> <li>C. Designate person or small committee within the WCC to work on public relations.</li> </ul>	<p>A. Some of this has been related to the new county deer advisory committees (CDAC) that have been formed. (See the WCC/CDAC Officer Training Video and CDAC promotional video posted on the WCC webpage). Also, there is a new WCC informational video that will soon be posted on</p>

		<p>the webpage. More needs to be done to promote the Spring Hearings. The DNR is currently working on developing more uniformed press releases. Delegates need to be trained on how to better develop press releases. They also need more information about media deadlines, what publications/websites, etc. are available for the WCC to submit to, and how to properly submit information pieces and press releases. Focus on having delegates communicate what is going on with the WCC at the local level.</p> <p>B. In process, primarily through outreach.</p> <p>C. There is no evident vehicle through which to do this. The Public Relations officer on the Executive Committee may be a starting place. There is a list at the DNR of what other affiliations delegates have. Compiling voluntary hours of delegates spent assisting other organizations should be part of this. Ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Foster a more engaged and accountable organizational leadership and delegation</p>	<p>A. Change the times during the annual state convention when the Executive Council and the Executive Committee are elected.</p> <p>B. Create and document clear rules on what is and is not an excused absence.</p> <p>C. Code of Procedures - <b>VII (A2)</b> - and/or other documents should list the consequences when delegates take a public position opposite of the Conservation Congress' position on topics</p> <p>D. Develop and distribute clearer delegate job descriptions.</p> <p>E. Develop and distribute a Wisconsin Conservation</p>	<p>A. Done. Should continue to be this way.</p> <p>B. and C. This has not been documented. Rules and Resolutions has discussed this. WCC chair has begun to communicate what the consequences will be if there is an unexcused absence. He is attempting to more clearly define what an excused absence really is. If there are warnings, they should be formally documented.</p>

	Congress Code of Ethics.	<p>D. Some measures were taken, but more needs to be done. Determine what needs to be clarified, especially related to delegate responsibilities.</p> <p>E. This needs to be created, refined and defined. Tracking this is a priority that must be explored and furthered.</p> <p>Rules &amp; Resolutions needs to further discuss both D. and E. above and make recommendations on how to proceed.</p> <p>The Code of Procedures-primarily Section VII- indicate in general what consequences there may be for delegates that take a public position contrary to the WCC position and do not make it clear that it is their own opinion. This, along with for example the failure to attend advisory committee meetings without excused absences (also generally addressed under Section VII(8)) are dealt with on a case by case basis by the Congress chair and if warranted the Executive Council. The Rules &amp; Resolutions Committee may wish to discuss whether it is necessary to more specifically define in the code consequences for such infractions.<sup>2</sup></p>
6. Restructure the 12 districts (should be done based on geography or population)	A. Survey entire delegation at the annual convention.	Organization is not ready to discuss at this time. Dane County did attempt to put forth a resolution but it went nowhere.

<sup>2</sup> Clarification provided by the WCC Chair.

**Goal #2: Create greater awareness about what the WCC does**

Strategy	Tasks	Accomplishments
<p>1. Designate person and/or a committee (Outreach &amp; Public Relations Committee) within the WCC to work on public relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Produce and distribute monthly press releases</li> <li>B. Collection of data on how well WCC is known</li> <li>C. Approach UW System, etc. to ask them to create a DVD about the WCC.</li> <li>D. Organize and disseminate committee and county delegations annual report of accomplishments information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Monthly releases are not being done/distributed at present.</li> <li>B. No method currently in place to accomplish this. Not sure how it would be done.</li> <li>C. This could be a tool for county delegations that are struggling. The benefits may not outweigh the time and effort it would take to get it done.</li> <li>D. According to the DNR liaison, accomplishments are not being tracked or reported.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Help create County Conservation Alliances where they are desired</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Work with the DNR to continuously update the contact list.</li> <li>B. Develop and show a standard WCC informational presentation.</li> <li>C. Develop and show presentations on hunter, boat, rifle, and pistol safety.</li> <li>D. Help the Alliances find funding to provide per diems, and mileage, meals and hotel room reimbursements</li> </ul>	<p>In general, this is a valuable tool that has not been pursued. The Outdoor Heritage and Education Committee needs to start taking the lead. Perhaps create an ad hoc committee to define the method of how to accomplish this. Recruit local hunting and fishing clubs to be part of the alliance. Offer them something they don't have to get them involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. DNR working with WCC on this, but no real alliances have been formed. DNR and WCC should work with other entities to create lists of local organizations, including environmental coalitions and sportsmen's clubs, to contact.</li> </ul>

		<p>B. The PowerPoint presentation is posted on the WCC website but is not being used to the extent possible.</p> <p>C. This is being done, usually using short blurbs. Congress informational brochures, etc. are also being distributed at many of these events.</p> <p>D. Not happening because alliances have not yet been created.</p>
3. Work on delegate retention and recruitment methods	<p>A. Seek funds to provide monetary incentives that help keep good delegates and to help cover expenses incurred while on WCC business</p> <p>B. Develop a standardized brief outlining requirements about how to become a delegate and delegate responsibilities.</p> <p>C. Develop and show to perspective delegates a standard WCC informational presentation.</p>	<p>A. Has been discussed. It was decided that current resources will not allow this to be done.</p> <p>B. Outreach presentation is completed and posted on website. Video still needs to be done.</p> <p>C. The morning breakfast at the convention helps orient new delegates. WCC informational pamphlets are handed out at the Spring Hearings in the effort to recruit new delegates. Perspective delegates along with the general public are also directed to the WCC webpage and Facebook page for information.</p> <p>Note: It was suggested that exit interviews be done with delegates leaving the organization. This could be accomplished online, by the county chair, or by a questionnaire that is included in the Spring Hearing packet.</p>

<p>4. Work towards having a WCC delegate on every county Land Conservation Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Educate county committees about the WCC and where financial support comes from for various land conservation efforts.</li> <li>B. Determine whether county appoints non-County Board supervisors.</li> <li>C. Give presentation at annual conference about past/current efforts related to this strategy and what might be done in the future.</li> <li>D. Ask those who do the appointing whether appointments are available</li> <li>E. Identify delegates to sit on those committees</li> <li>F. Go through county process to have them appointed.</li> <li>G. If the county appoints non-supervisors, determine who does the appointing.</li> </ul>	<p>Overall, little progress has been made on A, B, D, E, F, or G. The consensus among those participating in this evaluation planning session was that this could be very important but it depends largely on how receptive counties are, something that may for the most part be out of the WCC's control. If the atmosphere is favorable in a particular county, then the effort should be made there. It would be useful to have a question on the annual PDQ asking whether delegates have attempted to work with their land conservation committees on this, if so how, and how successful were their efforts.</p> <p>C. was accomplished at the 2014 state convention.</p>
<p>5. Delegates increase their volunteer activity in order to better educate the public about the WCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop and show a standard WCC informational presentation.</li> <li>B. Delegates show presentation to various stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>Some of this is taking place, but ongoing encouragement is needed to make certain delegates continue this effort. Perhaps make the online general presentation about the WCC even more accessible.</p>
<p>6. Track and communicate the outcomes of resolutions advanced through the WCC process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. If this was a legislative issue: How does the author find out that is the situation?</li> <li>B. Chair of Rules &amp; Resolutions notify author(s) of disposition of resolution.</li> <li>C. Once a resolution passes committee it goes to Executive Council then to questionnaire then to convention then to the Natural Resources Board then to the DNR. The resolution must pass each of these steps to proceed in the process. If it requires legislation then the department can send (it is not obligated to send) to the legislature as a packet to see if a legislator is interested in sponsoring with department favored items.</li> </ul>	<p>See discussion above on pages 1 and 2.</p>

	<p>E. Rules &amp; Resolutions Committee should be charged with coordinating how the resolutions, etc. are tracked.</p> <p>F. Inform delegates and other stakeholders through newsletters, etc. what happened to the resolutions.</p>	
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**Goal #3: Expand what the WCC does**

Strategy	Tasks	Accomplishments
<p>1. Take advantage of new programs on a county level created as a result of the Kroll report</p>	<p>a. Play a significant role in the development and implementation of D-Map. <b>Note: The organization established a committee to address this issue. This committee will determine how the WCC gets more involved in this.</b></p> <p>b. Become involved in helping to determine county deer management strategies. Take part in county deer management meetings.</p>	<p>A. D-Map exists but still has some issues. The WCC will not likely help to address those issues as determined by the Rules and Resolutions Committee.</p> <p>B. CDACs now exist with WCC delegates acting as chairs. Other WCC delegates are members. WCC is currently the primary facilitator of the meetings. County participation in these advisory committees varies. The CDAC's work is just beginning. CDACs are currently not involved in the D-Map initiative. Rules and Resolutions should report to the Executive Council and strategic plan evaluation group on a regular basis to discern how effective the CDACs are.</p>
<p>2. Working with partners, take an active role in coordination of citizen – based research</p>	<p>a. Assign members of similar interests to key positions.</p> <p>b. Seek out individuals and potential partner organizations within the DNR and the UW System that have interest in expanding citizen based research.</p>	<p>In general this has been assigned to the Executive Committee. The evaluation group is not aware of any progress being made on this initiative. Those in attendance intimated that there is no evidence that the WCC is currently attempting to get citizens</p>

		involved. It is possible that the CDACs can be used as a vehicle to promote citizen – based research related to the deer population.
c. Provide educational program and information to youth groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a list of partner organizations that can help provide educational programming for youth.</li> <li>b. Contact those potential partners to arrange the educational programming.</li> <li>c. Identify Conservation Congress members with educational/teaching backgrounds; people who can help provide the education.</li> <li>d. Create new ways to gather information that can be used in educational programming and to recruit youth to attend programs (social networking)</li> <li>e. Work with partners to develop and schedule educational programming.</li> </ul>	<p>Much is being done primarily through the establishment of the Youth Congress. Group members were not aware that any of the specific tasks are being pursued. Under task C., they suggested that delegates be asked about this in their PDQs. The Outdoor Heritage &amp; Education Committee should be taking the lead on this.</p> <p>The Evaluation Committee suggests that the WCC provide more opportunities for the Youth Congress to get together either in person or via technology.</p>

**Goal #4: Make the WCC's Spring Hearings more effective**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
1. Track and communicate the outcomes of resolutions advanced through the WCC process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Rules &amp; Resolutions Committee charged with coordinating the tracking of resolutions.</li> <li>b. Inform delegates and other stakeholders through newsletters, webpage, website, etc. what happened to the resolutions.</li> </ul>	See discussion above on pages 1 and 2.
2. Modify voting procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop online voting method.</li> <li>b. Establish an online polling system.</li> </ul>	This has been discussed by various groups. Not enough checks and balances can be provided at

		present to ensure the integrity of the voting process. Polling, if done, could be misconstrued as voting, which would likely damage the voting process in the long run. If polling is done using social media, who would maintain and monitor that site? The organization has determined that online voting and polling are not plausible at this time.
3. Increase interest surrounding and participation in the hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use online polling to generate interest.</li> <li>b. More clearly define the purpose of the hearings.</li> <li>c. Create incentives to attend.</li> <li>d. Develop and maintain a blog/discussion board on key issues coming before the WCC.</li> <li>e. Market the hearings more widely.</li> <li>f. Educate youth on how they can have more impact on the resolution process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Will not be done at this time.</li> <li>B. This is being done through various venues/media.</li> <li>C. Not being done at this time. Needs to be discussed.</li> <li>D. It has been determined that at present no one in the organization or the DNR has the time to maintain such a blog. The WCC Facebook page helps to inform delegates and public what issues are imminent.</li> <li>E. The hearings are being marketed more widely using various means.</li> <li>F. This needs to be done. Outreach Heritage &amp; Education Committee could work with Youth Congress members to get this accomplished.</li> </ul>
4. Determine to what extent members can advocate for legislative changes (Can the WCC request sponsorship of a bill?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Work with Natural Resources Board to determine parameters.</li> <li>b. Define more clearly the parameters within the Code of Procedures and other documents meant to guide delegates' work.</li> </ul>	<p>The following answer to this was provided prior to the 2014 WCC Annual Convention. The response was given by former WCC legal counsel Tim Andryk.</p> <p><b><i>“The Congress role is that of official advisory body to the State Natural Resources Board. However, even though it is not the main role or responsibility of the Congress, the Congress can lobby legislators on official positions approved by the Executive Council and/or Executive Board in the manner as directed by the</i></b></p>

		<i>Executive Board and invoke their representation on behalf of the Congress in that capacity.”</i>
5. Provide attendees with short educational seminars/presentations on relevant topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assign specific committees to examine most relevant topics of the day.</li> <li>b. Committees work with knowledgeable resources (DNR, UW-Extension, hunting/fishing groups, etc.) to locate or to develop seminars.</li> <li>c. Designate presenters from these groups or the WCC.</li> <li>d. Schedule seminars during appropriate times during the hearings.</li> </ul>	Most of this is not being done. Members of the group were unclear about who should take the lead.
6. Foster more discussion during the hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Encourage more debate on questions before they come to a vote.</li> </ul>	Time/question answering limits are imposed.

**Negative Unintended Consequences**

Group members were asked what negative unintended consequences have occurred during the initial stages of plan implementation. The only specific item they mentioned was that there has been some pushback against the changes that have been made at the district and committee levels. A few delegates have left the WCC because of those changes. Also, as is the case with most plan implementation processes, there is some but not particularly widespread resistance to change being expressed.

**Positive Consequences (Intended or Unintended)**

Group members stated that they feel most of the positive consequences have been intentional. They mentioned that the plan and the initial attempts, sometimes successful and sometimes not, to implement it in general has helped encourage delegates to participate more in the Congress. They also stated that some good additional ideas about how to improve Congress operations and effectiveness were mentioned in the evaluation results collected during the 2014 WCC Annual Convention. Also, the new way of selecting committee members takes pressure off of the WCC chair and county chairs to make these selections.

Evaluation group members also emphasized that an evaluation form should be used during the Annual Convention throughout the life of the plan to gauge how much progress is being made toward implementing it.

### **Progress toward Mission**

Group members were asked whether implementing the plan is helping the organization fulfill its mission. The general answer was “yes.” Specifically, they said:

- The process of having delegates think more about what it means to be a delegate and what their role in the WCC is has been considerably strengthened.
- The plan has created endless possibilities and in its early days has had an overall apparent approval rating.
- The plan has created greater discussion which has resulted in:
  - Discovering more things the WCC does well.
  - The WCC becoming more of a ground-up organization.
  - Increased ability to identify things we cannot or should not be doing.
- Realization that we have had some significant accomplishments.
- Discovering through discussion that we cannot do something is just as important as realizing and communicating what has been accomplished.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, December 20, 10:00 a.m. to approximately 4:00 p.m. The location was tentatively set as the Mead Wildlife Center. The primary purpose of this meeting will be to develop a specific evaluation approach. Evaluation method tools and examples will be reviewed. A review of expected outcomes will also occur. More discussion will take place on how to insert strategic plan related items into appropriate committee and Executive Council agendas.