

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission

ITEM

16

DECISION

TOPIC

Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources - NRC Resolution

The Natural Resource Commission's purpose is to guide the Department of Natural Resources in the policies and rules that protect, preserve, and enhance the natural resources of Iowa and related outdoor recreation.

The Commission finds that:

Our natural resources are one of Iowa's greatest assets, providing economic vitality and enhancing the quality of life for all Iowans;

Iowans value quality natural resource-related amenities, recreation, and the use of Iowa's natural resources contribute greatly to the state's overall economy and the well being of Iowans;

Studies recently conducted confirm that the economic value of Iowa's state and county parks, lakes and trails confirm that recreation is a large and vital industry in Iowa. The outdoor recreation activities and visits to parks, lakes and trails is estimated to achieve spending levels of \$2.6 billion and 50 million visits that implies that more than 27,400 jobs and \$580 million in income are being generated in the Iowa recreation industry (*The Economic Value of Iowa's Natural Resources*, December, 2007 Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, College of Agriculture, Iowa State University);

In 2006, 1.45 million residents and non residents participated in some form of fish and wildlife-related recreation in Iowa. These anglers, hunters and wildlife viewers spent \$974.2 million in retail sales creating \$453.9 million in salaries and wages, and supporting more than 17,800 jobs and with a combined multiplier effect of \$1.54 billion annually (*2006 Economic Benefits of Hunting, Fishing, and Wildlife Watching in Iowa*, November 16, 2007 Southwick Associates, Inc.);

Studies recently conducted confirm that outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resources are important factors that help to attract skilled workers in the state;

Iowa's natural resources and outdoor recreational infrastructure are vital to keeping Iowans healthy and active and provide immeasurable citizen wealth essential to sustain the quality of living through our outdoor heritage;

Iowa's legislature, in different, yet successive General Assemblies, overwhelmingly approved SJR-2002 (in 2008) and HJR-1 (in 2009); an act to provide sustainable funding for natural resources;

This legislative action allows Iowa's citizens an opportunity to vote on this measure through a ballot initiative in 2010;

A bipartisan and broad based group of stakeholders worked diligently for two and one half years to study how to protect Iowa's natural resources and enhance outdoor recreation. Their recommended model of using a 3/8 of one cent portion of Iowa's sales tax which would generate approximately \$150 million, annually, for these purposes;

Therefore, the Natural Resource Commission resolve their support for this historic and important opportunity to protect, preserve, and enhance Iowa's natural resources and related outdoor recreation.

Bill Bird, Chair
Natural Resource Commission
April 9, 2009