

Sustainable Natural Resources Funding for Iowa
Wednesday, July 15, 2009 -- Committee Meeting Summary
Wallace Bldg – 4th floor Conference Rooms, Des Moines, IA
502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, IA (12p-4p)

Committee members:

Mark	Ackelson	Present	Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Merlin	Bartz	Present	Iowa Senate - R
Jane	Clark	Present	Sierra Club
Dan	Cohen	Present	IACCB
Dick	Dearden	Present	IA Senate-D
Jim	Gillespie	Absent	Secretary of Agriculture
Tom	Holm	Present	Izaak Walton League of Iowa
Jon	Kruse	Present	Ducks Unlimited
Richard	Leopold	Present	IA Dept of Natural Resources, Chair
Sean	McMahon	Proxy – Jan Glandening	The Nature Conservancy
Carol	Miller	Present	Iowa Farm Bureau
Eric	Palmer	Absent	IA House of Representatives-D
Jerry	Peckumn	Present	Iowa Rivers Revival
Henry	Rayhons	Absent	IA House of Representatives-R
Leo	Rieken	Absent	Land Improvement Contractors Assoc.
Marian	Riggs-Gelb	Absent	Iowa Environmental Council
Deb	Ryun	Absent	Conservation Districts of Iowa
Marvin	Shirley	Present	Farmers Union
Dave	Van Waus	Present	Pheasants Forever
Julie	Vyskocil	Absent	Iowa Renewable Fuels Association

The Chair provided opening remarks, a brief history of the role of the SFC and their charge, and a brief review of the current DNR and State budget issues.

Roz Lehman, coordinator of the Coalition, provided a summary of the SF Coalition's work, nka: Iowa's Water and Land Legacy.

The two SFC subcommittees (funding management and advisory oversight) assigned last month presented with group discussion.

Duane Sand, funding management subcommittee facilitator, reported their review of the funding managements (pgs 23-25 of 01/09/09 SFC report). The task was to determine if there is a need for more detail in how the funds will be distributed and provide suggestions to the SFC. In reviewing these points, four areas of distribution and accountability were identified:

1. The role of appointed commissions and boards can be acknowledged as an opportunity for oversight (i.e. Natural Resource Commission, Environmental Protection Commission, IA Transportation Board, County Conservation citizen boards). There are, also, other oversight bodies that may be beneficial (i.e. REAP Congress, Water Resources Council).
2. Annual appropriations would reflect requests from agencies regarding multi-year planning, priority setting, and public input. These qualities will help in setting a standard in projects.

3. The SFC should maintain an oversight role and guide funding management toward project planning. This will assist in reducing special appropriations. As stated in the 01/09/09 SFC report to the legislators, there would still be a financial audit to show the funding was used for the purpose intended and an annual report would be created showing what the funding was spent on (project related).

4. Most of the funding vehicles are, for the most part, established organizations, and with the LCPP (Local Conservation Partnership Program) being a new funding vehicle, are there clarifications that need to be made regarding the program being a grant or formula based allocation?

Jane Clark, advisory oversight subcommittee facilitator, reported on their evaluation of the role of the advisory oversight and review of accountability (how funds will be spent), mechanisms for public input, and transparency. The subcommittee identified that public input and transparency were interconnected. Mechanisms for public input could be a sustainable funding website, county conservation board websites, communication to the media (i.e. press releases). Also, the public always has the opportunity to speak at public meetings of boards and commissions or at REAP assemblies. Much of the subcommittee's discussion on accountability was included in the funding management subcommittee report and discussion.

Points of discussion for both subcommittee reports included:

- It should be reiterated that this new Trust Fund money will supplement and NOT supplant current allocations.
- The funds from the natural resource Trust Fund should be flexible and versatile to be able to adjust to disasters or opportunities (i.e. federal match programs).
- To provide an understanding of the benefits, it should be identified what is occurring to support Iowa's lands and waters (i.e. conservation practices implemented, cleaner water, healthier air). The SFC report should reiterate those benefits identified and previously reported.
- Projects should have criteria to evaluate performance (i.e. cleaner water, economic impact).
- Consideration should be made to reward long term planning.
- It is beneficial for legislators and the public to see the layers of accountability (i.e. state auditor, state and local boards and commissions, and the Advisory Committee). Duane created a chart, which should be included in the SFC report, showing the relationship between the seven funding vehicles, their board oversights, the Advisory Committee, and how the funding vehicles money is reviewed and/or approved.
- To adequately identify the advisory committee of the trust fund, it should reflect that it is a natural resource trust fund committee with representation of diverse organizations that nominate individuals for Governor appointment as in the diverse organizations of the sustainable funding advisory committee.
- The natural resource trust fund committee would create an annual report to the legislature after reviewing the seven funding vehicle reports (which would include information such as

project outcomes, public input, media communications, etc.). This committee would also provide input and guidance to the funding managers.

- The natural resource trust fund committee should review and monitor the status of annual State allocations to agencies to ensure existing appropriations are not being reduced upon receipt of natural resource Trust Fund dollars. A statement of their findings should be made in the annual report.
- There is value in the financial audit, report of activity, report of recommendations, and noting boards and commissions as level of public input, which should be included in our SFC report.
- Discussion was held on clarifications within the LCPP funding management language in the SFC report. The LCPP would be a grant and formula based program that would have a grant review committee of diverse individuals to administer the funds. A general summary of how the funding will be allocated should be reiterated in the SFC report. The benefits and downfalls of grant programs and a formula based program were discussed and it was identified that there is benefit to having a funding vehicle that uses both methods. The REAP formula was discussed as a possible model. The LCPP is a funding resource that can address urban and rural needs, be flexible, and encourage creative projects.
- The recent funding Minnesota received caused issues because they did not have in place who should receive the funding and how the funding should be spent. Iowa is ahead of the game by identifying the funding vehicles and specific areas within the funding vehicles that the funding should be used for. With the support of interested groups and the public, the original intent of the legislators would be difficult to change which would provide stability to the allocations and Iowa's resources.
- Methods of funding the administrative costs was discussed, whether to set aside a percent or establish a set amount. Both have their benefits and would need to be explored further.

Assignments:

Regarding the administration of trust fund allocations and report management, the DNR was asked to provide an estimated cost of what it would take to do this.

Duane Sand and Jane Clark will work to coordinate concepts and ideas to report at the next SFC meeting.

The next SFC meeting will be Wednesday, 08/19/09, 12:30pm-4pm at the IA Farm Bureau (5400 University Ave, West Des Moines, IA).

Upcoming Tentative SFC Meeting Dates:

Wed	09/16/09	12p-4p	Wallace Building - DSM
Wed	10/21/09	12p-4p	Wallace Building - DSM
Wed	11/18/09	12p-4p	Wallace Building - DSM
Wed	12/16/09	12p-4p	Wallace Building - DSM