

Sustainable Natural Resources Funding for Iowa

Tuesday, September 2, 2008 -- Committee Meeting Agenda
Wallace Building 4th Floor Conference Rooms – Des Moines, IA
Wallace Bldg, 502 East 9th Street, 4th Floor, Des Moines, IA 50319

Welcome, Introductions

Iowa Trails Presentation: Stuart Anderson, DOT

Trail benefits:

- Every dollar spent on trails produces three dollars in economic benefits (Lincoln, NE, study)
- Trail users spend on average \$4-\$11 per day in local businesses (Dubuque 1992)
- Each trail averages \$1.2 m to \$1.8m in annual economic impact (Dubuque 1992). This trail returns annually what it cost to build.
- Estimate \$18m for Iowa trails in FY2009 through grants only. Add 20% match provided.

Discussion held identified DOT has some funding for river trails but all administration is through the DNR's program. Equestrian trails, which the DNR receives many requests for more, are eligible for trail funding through DOT. The DOT receives well crafted applications but it is a competitive process. Trail connectivity is the main goal. There was an estimated \$10-\$15 million in damage due to the floods of 2008, which occurred mostly on the Cedar River Nature Trail. The cost of obesity in Iowa is \$1 billion. The insurance industry trying to reach out for connectivity and the Department of Public Health has two staff persons devoted to sedentary lifestyle changes. Wellmark just invested a significant amount in central Iowa trails.

Watersheds/Water Quality Presentation: Richard Leopold, Director, DNR

Partners in watersheds and water quality issues are DSC/IDALS, NRCS, etc.

Rich provided information re: assistance to soil and water issues through DNR:

- Water Quality Bureau:
 - Monitoring: \$3,000,000/year for past 10 years. Also includes beach monitoring, IOWATER.
 - Assessment: Clean Water Act: 303d – impaired list, if it is an impaired water, then a TMDL (totally maximum daily load) is completed. A TMDL determines the sources of pollution in a watershed.
 - Combined Sewer Overflows/ Sanitary Sewer Overflows: Cities have crumbling infrastructure and commingled and overwhelmed plants are forced to send sewage into basements or bypass.
 - Floodplains: The state has good laws, but very minimal resources devoted to actual floodplain management.
 - Water Quality Standards: All waters have aquatic and recreational protection unless evidence proves otherwise.
- Land Quality Bureau: Geological Survey: Hydrologists, Hydrogeologists, Geologists.
- Field Services Bureau: 18,000 complaints for 90 staff. Enforcement for AFO, Air Quality, Open Burning.
- Engineering: Work with unsewered communities

- REAP: 2/3 of REAP is pass through. \$18m in FY09
- Watershed Improvement Review Board: Administered by IDALS, \$5m/year
- Water Trails: \$1m/year – second year of program
- ReCAT: \$55m for 5 years.

Jim Gillespie, IDALS, provided information re: \$17-18m/year in infrastructure for IDALS. The benefit of working with the Watershed Resources Council was discussed.

Funding Vehicle Detailing

Dan Cohen discussed ideas on how SF would be administered.

- 1) Grant program: 100% grants program or like REAP. There would need to be a match, but that can be determined. We could consider having a sliding match to accommodate financially strapped or underserved communities.
- 2) DNR to be active oversight and administration. Provide 1% administration. Responsibilities include review, audits every 5 years and outreach/tech assistance. Funding be provided for public outreach and marketing.
- 3) Breakdown of funds: 60% - infrastructure, 25% - education, 20% - management: for CCBs, NGOs and communities.
- 4) Unused funds would still be used each year.
- 5) Grant Review Committee: could break out the cities. But for simplicity, there would be 1 committee to oversee the grant process. That might work well with the groups, for instance have 3 CCB with expertise in various areas.

Additional suggestions/comments:

Discuss the ranking or distribution to land acquisition projects.

Promote a competitive grant proposal, rather than having a formula.

Include more city (small, medium, large) representatives and a representative from agriculture.

Education (CCB, DNR, etc.) could be coordinated by a statewide education coordinator

Evaluate allocation ratio between urban and rural areas.

Consider higher grant values for those with more partners.

Have wide representation in scoring committee; appoint 3 county, 3 city, 3 NGO/agriculture representatives.

An audit process should be set up.

Identify operating details in rule or some other administrative guidance.

Trails: The SF funding for trails should be rolled into existing efforts at DOT, since they already have the infrastructure.

- 1) DOT's business is corridors, so they are uniquely qualified;
- 2) Transportation component which is the next big demand for trails.
- 3) There are existing rules for trails in DOT.

Primary focus should be on land trails.

Trails improve/address economic development and health issues.

Federal match will bring in 20-25% more on top of the SF allocation.

Next meeting: October 21, 2008 (time tbd)