

Minnesota Governor's Conservation Legacy Council Report



MAY 2007

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GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION LEGACY COUNCIL

The Honorable Governor Tim Pawlenty
Governor, State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 26, 2007

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

As chair of the Conservation Legacy Council, I am pleased to present to you the Council's report. The report reflects the work of the Council over ten meetings which began on November 30, 2006, and concluded on April 26, 2007. Its recommendations are consensus-based and embody the broadly shared perspective that hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation are important parts of the state's heritage, and that creating a sustainable system for natural resource management is essential to Minnesota's quality of life.

Your charge to the Conservation Legacy Council when it was appointed last fall was to provide advice and recommendations on how the state can better govern and fund the protection and enhancement of its natural resources. We believe the new conservation model we are recommending will do just that. This new model is built upon the following three strategic elements.

- **Dedicated Conservation Funding.** The Council recommends an immediate increase in funding for the conservation and management of Minnesota's natural resources. The Council also recommends dedicated funds be appropriated by the Legislature to the Conservation Commission to fund the priorities identified in the Conservation Compact, and that this funding should supplement, not supplant, existing conservation funding.
- **Minnesota Conservation Commission.** The Council recommends that a citizen-based Conservation Commission be established to lead state conservation efforts. Among its recommended duties, the Commission would oversee the development and implementation of Minnesota's Conservation Compact, provide strategic direction and oversight to the DNR on policy and budget matters, identify needed state conservation policies and programs, and coordinate intergovernmental delivery of state conservation policies and practices.
- **Minnesota Conservation Compact.** The Council recommends a Minnesota Conservation Compact as the focal point for identifying and funding needed conservation practices. The Compact would establish measurable conservation goals and identify statewide and regionally based conservation priorities and strategies required to address the most critical threats to the state's natural resources. The Compact would emphasize partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental entities, landowners, and others to achieve specific improvements in the state's water, fish, wildlife, forests, soil, and outdoor recreation resources.

The Honorable Governor Tim Pawlenty
April 26, 2007
Page 2

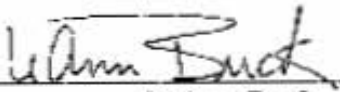
In making its recommendations, the Council stresses the urgency in addressing the state's conservation challenges. The Council also recognizes its pivotal opportunity to recommend a conservation model that will inspire greater stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources. To that end, it considers the report's recommendations to be bold, yet achievable actions toward making Minnesota the nation's leading conservation state.

Sincerely,

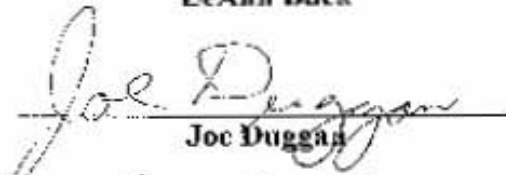
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Kilgore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

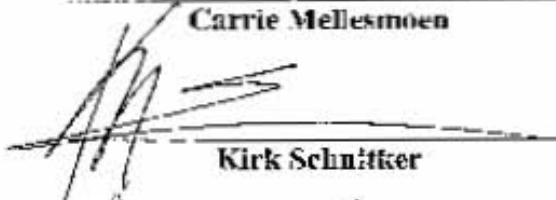
Michael A. Kilgore, Chair
Conservation Legacy Council

The following signatures reflect the signatory's general agreement with the direction and substance contained in this Report of the Conservation Legacy Council


LeAnn Buck

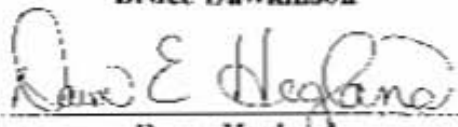

Carrie Mellesmoen

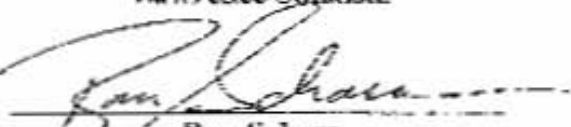

Joe Duggan

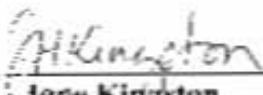

Kirk Schnittker

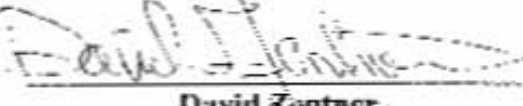

Bruce Hawkinson

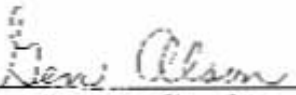

Lawrence Sukalski


Dawn Hegland

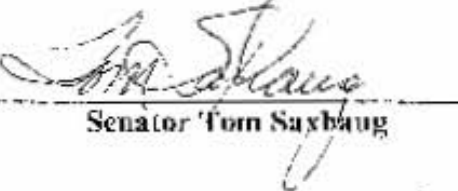

Ron Schara


Jane Kingston


David Zentner


Senator Gen Olson


Representative Tom Hackbarth


Senator Tom Saxhaug


Representative Aaron Peterson


Michael Kilgore, Chair

FOREWORD

This report – and the people who put it together – is proof that Minnesotans can rise above parochial interests and agree to do what is necessary to care for Minnesota’s treasure of natural resources. In drafting its report, the Conservation Legacy Council also discovered a new way for Minnesota to realize a better future for its natural resources.

The facts are undeniable. When it comes to our natural resources, we have lost too much, too fast. The continuing pressures on our lands and waters, our changing climate, and other emerging threats to natural systems call for immediate action. No longer can we rely on the status quo. It has become evident – and the evidence is now mounting – that our way of managing and maintaining Minnesota’s natural resources in decades past is a prescription for failure.

Despite the best efforts and good intentions of many talented and committed Minnesotans – including elected state leaders and professional resource administrators and field staff – we continue to lose ground. It may be a cliché to say, but the cliché is true: Government cannot address the challenges alone.

The time has come for Minnesotans to come together and make a compact to protect and preserve our beautiful lakes, streams, forests, prairies and other natural resources. This compact must be real. It must be based on a shared vision, and a common understanding of what we must do to live in harmony with our natural world.

What is the shared vision? The Council believes the following vision is shared by the majority of Minnesotans:

We, the people of Minnesota, hereby approve a conservation vision that seeks a balance between the protection and utilization of the state’s natural resources – its water, soil, air, forests, prairies and wildlife – in harmony with the state’s continued economic growth and expanding population. We hereby:

- *Believe the wise use of Minnesota’s natural resources is the responsibility of its state agencies, its businesses and its citizenry.*
- *Believe the management of natural resources should be free of partisan politics.*
- *Believe the management of natural resources must be sustained by a source of funding that is reliable and commensurate to achieve the vision.*
- *Believe that all Minnesotans for all time have the inalienable right to clean water and air, to healthy forests and wetlands, to prairies and abundant wildlife.*
- *Furthermore, we believe the health, welfare and spirit of all Minnesotans depends on continued access to outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, parks, trails and a oneness with the natural world.*

This report recommends a way to develop and reach a conservation compact, including a new model for governing, funding, and delivering conservation outcomes. Finally, it offers a practical and actionable guide for making Minnesota the nation’s leading conservation state.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governor Tim Pawlenty created the Conservation Legacy Council (Council) to provide him “advice and recommendations ... [for a] sustainable governance and funding model which will create a lasting legacy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the state’s natural resources and which will establish Minnesota as the nation’s leading conservation state.”¹

The Council held ten meetings between November 30, 2006 and April 26, 2007, during which time it met with the Governor, state agency leaders, and a wide array of conservation and natural resource stakeholder groups and coalitions.

Council Findings and Conclusions

In examining the current state of our natural resources and current stewardship efforts, the Council believes that:

- Minnesota’s conservation efforts are inadequate.
- Current funding strategies fail to match the challenge.
- Tax policy influences conservation and land use practices on private lands.
- Payments in lieu of taxes impact conservation and land use practices on public lands.
- Future conservation efforts must be based in sound science.
- All Minnesotans must play a part.
- Existing conservation efforts are vastly complex and unfocused.
- States use a variety of citizen-based governance models.
- A citizen-based commission should set strategic policy and provide direction and oversight.

Recommendations

The Council’s recommendations are built upon three integral elements of a new model for conservation governance, funding and delivery. They include:

1. Immediately increase funding for natural resources conservation;
2. Create a citizen-based Conservation Commission to lead Minnesota’s conservation efforts; and

¹ Executive Order 06-12, signed by Governor Pawlenty on August 18, 2006.
<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/priorities/governorsorders/executiveorders/2006/august/PROD007767.html>.

3. Develop a “Conservation Compact” – an agreed-upon plan of action for making critical improvements to Minnesota’s water, fish, wildlife, forests, soil, outdoor recreation resources.

These three elements are interrelated and interdependent. The following summarizes the detailed recommendations included in the Council’s report.

Immediately Increase Funding for Conservation

Action must be taken immediately to increase funding for natural resources conservation purposes. Even with the increases and reauthorizations proposed by the Governor for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, total spending on the major conservation agencies will have declined by \$100 million – a drop of 18 percent – in inflation-adjusted dollars from FY2001 to FY2009.² The continuing pressures on our lands and waters, our changing climate, and other emerging threats to natural systems call for immediate action.

To expedite an immediate increase in conservation funding the Council recommends that:

- The Legislature approve a constitutional ballot question regarding the dedication of a portion of a state general tax as a means for funding natural resource conservation priorities.
- The Legislature dedicate funds to the newly created Minnesota Conservation Commission and authorize it to allocate and administer the funds according to the priorities identified in the Conservation Compact. Funding that is dedicated to implement Conservation Compact strategies must supplement, not supplant, existing conservation funding.
- The Legislature should increase bonding for conservation projects beginning in the 2008 Legislative Session. Bonding could be used to accelerate investments in natural resource management and protection efforts.

Create a Citizen-Based Conservation Commission

The Council recommends a citizen-based Conservation Commission (Commission) be established in law to lead the state’s conservation efforts. The Council recommends the Commission be composed of 4 – 9 members who are appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the Senate. Members should serve at large, rather than be appointed to represent specific political affiliations or interest groups. Consideration should be given to geographic representation across Minnesota. The Council recommends that the primary duties of the Minnesota Conservation Commission are statutorily defined with respect to the following.

- *Minnesota Conservation Compact.* The Council recommends the Commission have primary responsibility for overseeing the development and implementation

² Conservation Minnesota, *Minnesota by the Numbers*. Subtitled: *Treading Water: Governor Pawlenty’s Proposed 2008-09 Budget for Conservation & Environment*, February 27, 2007, page 2.
<http://www.mnvotercenter.com/userfiles/Analysis%20of%202008-09%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf>.

of Minnesota's Conservation Compact. Particularly important roles of the Commission are to allocate funds appropriated by the Legislature for identifying and addressing the state and regional conservation priorities and periodically reporting to the people of Minnesota on progress toward achieving statewide and regional conservation goals set forth in the Compact.

- *Strategic Direction and Oversight to Minnesota DNR.* The Council recommends the Conservation Commission recommend to the Governor candidates to serve as the commissioner of the Minnesota DNR, as well as advise the Governor when the DNR commissioner should be removed from office. As one of its major functions, the Commission would provide strategic direction to the DNR commissioner in implementing the agency's mission. The Council also recommends the Commission develop the DNR's legislative policy and funding priorities for consideration in the Governor's policy, biennial budget, and capital budget proposals.
- *Conservation Policy.* The Council recommends the Conservation Commission recommend to the Governor new state conservation policies and programs needed to ensure stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources. It should also review existing state conservation laws, rules, programs and funding, and recommend needed changes in each to the Governor.
- *Interagency Coordination.* The Council recommends the Conservation Commission coordinate the efforts of state agencies in implementing policies and programs affecting the state's natural environment, as well as foster coordination among federal, state, and local governments in implementing conservation-related policies and practices.
- *Connecting Citizens/Stakeholders to Conservation.* It is recommended the Commission periodically hold public listening sessions on conservation issues across Minnesota. It should also actively seek citizen perspectives in the development and implementation of state conservation policy, and encourage local governments, organizations, and individuals to implement sound conservation practices.

Develop a Minnesota Conservation Compact

The Council recommends the statutory requirement that a scientific-based strategic Conservation Compact be developed for Minnesota. The Conservation Compact would emphasize partnerships between governmental entities, non-governmental entities, landowners, and others to achieve specific improvements in the areas of water, fish, wildlife, forests, soil, and outdoor recreation resources. It would also be built around a long-term vision for conservation and contain both statewide and regional components.

More specifically, the Compact would provide the means by which the Commission would:

1. Establish measurable state conservation goals;
2. Identify statewide and regionally-based conservation priorities and strategies to achieve state conservation goals;

3. Allocate funds to implement the practices required to address the most critical threats to the state's natural resources; and
4. Monitor and report progress toward achieving Minnesota's conservation goals.

The Council fully recognizes the many excellent, ongoing planning efforts directed at Minnesota's natural environment (for example, LCCMR's Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, DNR's Conservation Agenda). The intent of the Conservation Compact is to build upon these efforts and develop a more inclusive and cohesive conservation strategy for Minnesota.

Organization and Delivery of Conservation Programs

The Council believes organizational changes will be needed to equip state and local agencies to more effectively address state and regional conservation needs and priorities. The newly-formed Conservation Commission should assess and recommend ways to eliminate interagency conflict and duplication of effort in delivering the state's conservation programs. More specifically, the Commission should:

- Investigate ways to simplify and reduce duplication of effort in delivering policies and practices affecting the state's natural resources that are administered by state agencies.
- Recommend ways to strengthen the regional offices of state agencies with conservation expertise and responsibilities to more effectively and aggressively monitor regional resource conditions, support local and regional decision making, and guide and monitor the effectiveness of local strategies – all of which are essential components of the recommended Conservation Compact
- Have a close working relationship with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) that results in a stronger enhanced local government delivery system. The Conservation Compact should include measurable outcomes for BWSR.
- Work with the Legislature to simplify the eleven different types of local watershed management entities that operate in Minnesota.

Concluding Thoughts

The Council believes the proposed conservation model will promote new working relationships among government agencies and the citizens and communities they serve. The Council believes that a Conservation Compact overseen by a citizen-based Conservation Commission and supported with adequate funding for conservation practices, can position Minnesota to become the conservation success it has long imagined. And, most important, Minnesotans will realize the successful stewardship of our natural resources that we have always known possible but have yet to fully realize.

THE IMPERATIVE

*“Our beautiful lakes, streams, prairies and forests help define who we are as a state. They bring great pride and enjoyment to our people. We need to take proper care of them for future generations.”*³ Governor Tim Pawlenty

Minnesota’s natural resources: extent and importance

Minnesota is synonymous with water. Minnesota’s more than 11,000 lakes, 90,000 miles of rivers, and 9 million acres of wetlands create over 13 million acres of surface water. We border the world’s largest freshwater lake (by area), and the Mississippi River, one of the world’s longest, begins its journey to the Gulf of Mexico here.

But our natural resources are much greater than just the lakes and rivers. Minnesota’s location on the continent makes it the only state in the nation to have three major biomes: prairie grassland, hardwood forests, and boreal forests. Minnesota’s great natural resource diversity can be seen in some statistics:⁴

- 84 native mammal species, including 1.5 million deer, 6,600 moose, and over 20,000 black bears. Minnesota has the largest wolf population in the lower 48 states: over 2,450.
- 311 native bird species. Common loons number 12,000 (the largest population in the continental U.S.) and eagle pairs are over 700 in number.
- 147 native fish species.
- 1,600 native flowering plants. Minnesota is the only home to the Dwarf Trout Lilly.
- 16 major forest cover types, covering one-third of the state’s land area.

Enjoying the outdoors has long been a part of many Minnesotans’ life. In a given year, the percentage of people over 15 years who engage in some form of outdoor recreation is the following:

- 29 percent of Minnesotans fish.
- 14 percent of Minnesotans hunt.
- 30 percent of Minnesotans visit a Minnesota state park.
- 41 percent of Minnesotans boat, including fishing from a boat.
- 33 percent of Minnesotans boat, excluding fishing from a boat.
- 52 percent of Minnesotans watch wildlife within a mile of home.
- 13 percent of Minnesotans go over a mile from home to watch wildlife.

³ Office of the Governor, “Pawlenty creates conservation legacy council,” Press Release, August 18, 2006. <http://www.governor.state.mn.us/mediacenter/pressreleases/2006/august/PROD007764.html>

⁴ Unless noted, the statistics in this section were obtained from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Web site, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/faq/mnfacts/index.html> and <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs/index.html>, and <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/news/releases/index.html?id=1174680827>.

The state has the highest per capita number of boat registrations in the nation (853,000 total watercraft registrations) as well as the highest number of fishing licenses per capita (870,000 total resident licenses). Over 8 million people visit state parks annually. Total hunting licenses (firearms and archery) number 715,000. Minnesota has over 26,000 miles in state, local, and private trails for snowmobiling, off-roading, horseback riding, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and other trail activities.

Minnesota's natural resources provide significant economic benefits, too. Total outdoor recreation expenditures are an estimated \$4.2 billion, creating 57,000 jobs and contributing over \$227 million in state taxes.⁵ The forest products industry is a \$6.9 billion sector.⁶ Minnesota's agricultural economy is \$30 billion and employs almost 200,000 people; it is the state's second largest economic sector after manufacturing.⁷ Tourism is a \$12 billion-a-year industry that supports 286,000 jobs and provides almost \$2 billion in state and local taxes; 40 percent or more of tourists engage in some type of outdoor activity.⁸

Threats to the State's Natural Resources

The risks to our state's natural resource treasures are significant. Some of the most pressing natural resources issues include:⁹

Degradation of water quality from the effects of land development, economic activities, and consumption. Increased demands on water resources threaten both water quality and quantity. The small percentage of lakes and rivers assessed for water quality degradation show that approximately 40 percent are considered "impaired," meaning the water quality does not meet federal standards (many due to mercury levels). Currently, Minnesota has 2,250 listed impairments on 1,300 lakes and streams. Once all lakes and rivers have been assessed, Minnesota may have more than 10,000 impairments statewide.¹⁰ At the same time, increasing pressures associated with population growth, increased water consumption rates, emerging water demands, and other factors will continue to threaten sustainability of the state's water supply. For example, during 1990 –

⁵ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Web site, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/faq/mnfacts/economy.html>

⁶ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: *Minnesota's Forest Resources*, 2006. http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/um/2006mn_forest_resources.pdf

⁷ Minnesota Department of Agriculture, <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/maitc/agprofile.pdf>

⁸ University of Minnesota Tourism Center, <http://www.tourism.umn.edu/products/MNStateEconomicImpactJun05-May06.pdf>, <http://www.tourism.umn.edu/research/2005SummerTravelerProfile.pdf>, and http://www.tourism.umn.edu/research/2005-06_Winter_Quarter_Traveler_Profile_Report.pdf.

⁹ Summarized from state agency presentations to the Conservation Legacy Council and Environmental Quality Board, *Agency Responses to LCCMR Request for Information*, September 2006.

¹⁰ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, "Why impaired waters are a priority for Minnesota," *Water Quality/Impaired Waters* 3.10. March 2007. <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/wq-iw3-10.pdf>

2000, water consumption increased nearly twice as fast as the state's population.¹¹ Urban, rural and shoreline development create new sources of water pollution, with the cumulative effects of individual actions resulting in significant water quality problems.

Loss of productive agricultural lands from soil erosion and conversion to development. Agricultural lands account for approximately half (49 percent) of the land area in the state and are almost entirely in private ownership. Preventing soil erosion keeps farmlands productive and reduces water pollution. The quality of our waters also depends on the effective management of nutrients and pesticides as well as water drainage systems. As urban areas continue to grow, farmland prices and property taxes increase, creating pressure on farmers to sell for urban development.

The spread of harmful, invasive species and diseases. Invasive species and diseases threaten our natural resources and economic livelihood, impacting agriculture, forestry, and recreational uses of the state's land and water resources. They pose a serious threat to native plant and animal communities, degrading fish and wildlife habitat, displacing native species, and reducing productivity. Controlling them can be extremely challenging due to their rapid spread and lack of natural enemies or constraints. Preventing their introduction and spread is important, since once established, invasive species rarely can be eliminated.

Contamination of the air, land, water, and fish that is harmful to human health. Contamination can originate from human activity but can also be naturally occurring. A significant risk is greater reliance on groundwater for public water supplies: drawing ground water moves contaminants toward wells and increases concentration levels. Surface waters used for drinking also need protection. Additionally, the cumulative exposure effects of many different toxins on human health are not completely understood.

The loss and degradation of habitat. Urban development, agriculture, and other activities have resulted in the loss and degradation of natural habitat. Native prairie, the Big Woods forest, and oak savanna cover less than one percent of the area covered prior to settlement by people of European descent, while old-growth forest covers less than four percent of its original extent, and less than half of the historic wetlands remain in the state.¹² The Twin Cities Metro Area alone is projected to grow by over 1 million people by 2030, and approximately 60 acres of undeveloped land is converted to urban use daily. The number of homes per lakeshore mile has increased fivefold in fifty years, putting development pressure on many water bodies. Significant habitat loss and degradation threaten native fish and wildlife, and are the leading causes of species endangerment in the state. Nearly 25 percent of the 1,155 animal species known to occur in Minnesota are

¹¹ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, DNR Division of Waters "By the Numbers."

¹² Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. DNR "By the Numbers." June 2006.

identified as species in greatest conservation need because their populations are rare, declining, or vulnerable to decline.¹³

The fragmentation of large forest tracts. Large private forest land holdings are changing ownership and use. While wood-based industries manage forest land for timber production, wildlife habitat, and provide public recreation opportunities, investment companies are purchasing these large tracts often resulting in subsequent resale for subdivision and development. Almost one million acres of forest land are at risk for development in Minnesota, potentially resulting in ownership parcelization, habitat fragmentation, and reduced recreational access.

Reduced public access to and enjoyment of natural resources. Habitat loss, land fragmentation and impaired waters reduce both the public's access to natural resources and the quality of their recreation experience. At the same time, population growth increases recreation demand on natural resources.

Citizen disconnection from the natural environment. The percentage of Minnesotans who participated in fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching declined between 1991 and 2001, particularly among young and urban residents. Participation in fishing and hunting in Minnesota continued to decline between 2000 and 2005.¹⁴

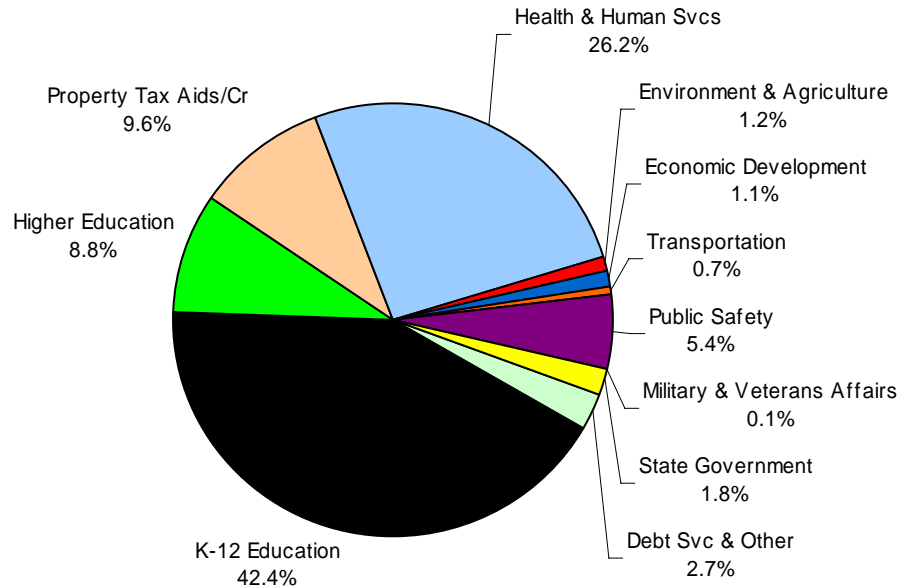
Climate Change. Climate change is projected to have major consequences for Minnesota, including movement of the state's three major biomes and altered fish and wildlife populations. Expanding renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, and carbon sequestration programs could limit these consequences. For instance, meeting the increased energy demand from biofuels that are properly managed and harvested has the potential for significant environmental benefits.

¹³ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2006. *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife*, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Division of Ecological Services, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwcs/strategy.html>

¹⁴ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *A Strategic Conservation Agenda 2003-2007: 2007 Update*. April 2007, page 93. <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/aboutdnr/reports/conservationagenda/fulldoc.pdf>

Funding for Conservation – Falling Behind and Falling Short

The state's current two-year budget for agriculture and environmental agencies is 1.2 percent of the state's general fund for the 2006-07 biennium.¹⁵



This figure includes spending not directly benefiting the environment. For example, much of the Department of Agriculture's General Fund budget is for ethanol payments (\$34 million), marketing and promotions (\$12 million) and food and plant protection services (\$22 million).

Short-term cyclical funding

Funding for Minnesota's conservation efforts is too often shaped by the short-term cyclical nature of legislative appropriations. For example, the boom or bust nature of funding for the BWSR's Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM – conservation easements) program has resulted in the following consequences:¹⁶

- Loss of opportunity to leverage annually funded federal conservation programs such as the USDA Wetland Reserve program.
- Inability to capitalize on unique partnerships, such as the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program designed to protect a three-mile buffer around Camp Ripley. With more funding predictability, the state could have leveraged Department of Army funds with RIM to expand the easements to include protection and preservation of critical fish and wildlife habitat lands and corridors.

¹⁵ Minnesota Department of Finance, *Where the General Fund Dollars Go*, February 2007 Forecast. http://www.budget.state.mn.us/budget/summary/charts/070228_piecharts.pdf

¹⁶ Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources, *Agency Overview for Conservation Legacy Council*, December 2006.

- Readjustments of programs and delivery systems with each new appropriation. Marketing and technical assistance for the RIM program needs to be modified as appropriations vary from one funding cycle to the next.
- Inability to leverage local conservation efforts in a timely manner, such as open space and shoreland protection programs.

Similarly, most state conservation-related agencies offer some type of conservation grant program, often small and usually each with slightly different procedures. At times, local conservation efforts can become grant dependent, resulting in continually shifting focus and less effective delivery of effective conservation practices.

Falling behind

Repeated budget cuts have prevented Minnesota's conservation agency budgets from keeping up with inflation. Even with the increases and reauthorizations proposed by the Governor for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, total spending on the major conservation agencies will have declined by \$100 million – a drop of 18 percent – in inflation-adjusted dollars from FY2001 to FY2009.¹⁷

Falling short

According to the Campaign for Conservation, estimates of current and future conservation funding needs show a funding gap of \$319 million dollars.¹⁸ This includes funding for programs recently authorized by law, such as the Clean Water Legacy program. It also includes funding to meet unmet demands for well-established, successful programs such as conservation easements, stream restorations, and forest stewardship.

A sales tax increase of .025 percent is estimated to generate \$187 million dollars. Even with an additional \$187 million in revenue, bonding would be required to meet current and projected needs.¹⁹ Finally, even if the Legislature approves putting a constitutional question of dedicated funding for natural resources on the November ballot, funds could not be dedicated any sooner than 2008.

¹⁷ Conservation Minnesota, *Minnesota by the Numbers*. Subtitled: *Treading Water: Governor Pawlenty's Proposed 2008-09 Budget for Conservation & Environment*, February 27, 2007, page 2.

<http://www.mnvotercenter.com/userfiles/Analysis%20of%202008-09%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf>.

¹⁸ Campaign for Conservation, "Key Points – Great Outdoors Minnesota Campaign Proposal," February 7, 2007.

¹⁹ Ibid.

THE GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION LEGACY COUNCIL

Governor Pawlenty's Charge to the Conservation Legacy Council

Governor Tim Pawlenty created the Council to provide him “advice and recommendations ... [for a] sustainable governance and funding model which will create a lasting legacy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the state’s natural resources and which will establish Minnesota as the nation’s leading conservation state.”²⁰ The executive order creating the Council can be found in Appendix A.

In his executive order, the Governor specifically requested that the Council:

- Focus “on developing recommendations that provide for a sustainable governance and funding model for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the state’s water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources;”
- “Emphasize developing a strategic plan for the state to achieve the recommended governance and funding models;”
- “Consider in its recommendations governance and funding models that incorporate partnerships between governmental entities, non-governmental entities, organizations, land owners and others;” and
- “Consider governance and funding as to all current and recommended future state government operated or managed activities relating to natural resources; including, fish game and wildlife habitat protection and restoration, water quality protection and enhancement, forestry activities, prairie restoration, and biological diversity.”

Summary of Council Work

The Council consists of 15 members – 11 citizen members and four state legislators. A listing of Council members and a brief bio-sketch of each is listed in Appendix B. Staff from the Department of Administration’s Management Analysis & Development provided meeting facilitation, research, report writing, and staff support to the Council.

The Council held ten meetings from November 30, 2006, to April 26, 2007, during which time it met with the Governor, state agency leaders, representatives of other state natural resource and conservation departments, and a wide array of conservation and natural resource stakeholder groups and coalitions. It also reviewed written materials from several other states, had individual Council members interview experts in the field from

²⁰ Executive Order 06-12, signed by Governor Pawlenty on August 18, 2006.
<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/priorities/governorsorders/executiveorders/2006/august/PROD007767.html>.

Minnesota and across the nation, and reviewed a wide array of research literature and drew upon their considerable knowledge and experience. Details of this work are as follows.

The Council began its work by hearing presentations from the leaders of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Agency leaders presented information on their agency structure and operations, budget, key issues, and challenges. These presentations and subsequent question-and-answer discussion provided a wealth of information and excellent grounding in Minnesota's current governance, delivery and funding mechanisms.

The Council reviewed a limited number of other states' governance and delivery models as a way to stimulate its thinking about future options. Council members reviewed basic information from an initial list of seven states²¹ that have ecosystems and natural resource issues similar to Minnesota, are known for their conservation ethic, or provide a unique or different model. Council members voted to invite representatives from Colorado, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin to meet with the Council. Representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation came to St. Paul to discuss their state's natural resource management and conservation models with the Council.

Council members devoted one meeting to hearing from representatives of various organizations involved in conservation matters in a listening session. The Council sought perspectives from organizations in the following three areas:

1. Strengths of Minnesota's current approach to conservation governance, delivery, and funding.
2. Opportunities to improve governance, delivery, and funding of conservation in Minnesota.
3. Suggestions on how to address the opportunities to improve governance, delivery, and funding of conservation in Minnesota that were identified.

Organizations making presentations to the Council were the:

- Campaign for Conservation.
- Fish and Wildlife Legislative Alliance.
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- Minnesota Conservation Corps.
- Minnesota Farm Bureau.
- Minnesota Farmer's Union.
- Minnesota Forest Industries/Timber Producers Association.
- Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance.
- Office of the Legislative Auditor (report on Watershed Management).
- The Nature Conservancy.

²¹ Delaware, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Council members also contacted individuals with extensive knowledge and experience in the conservation arena to obtain their opinions on the above three areas or other information. Council members shared the responses verbally at a council meeting and/or in written summaries. Individuals contacted by Council members included the following affiliations (past or present):

- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Minnesota Farm Service Agency State Office.
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- Clean Up the River Environment.
- Minnesota farmers.
- American Soybean Association.
- U.S. Department of Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Minnesota Waterfowl Association.
- Wildlife Management Institute.
- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed Initiative.

The Council also received written communications from the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota and several interested citizens.

Council meeting time was also spent developing a vision for conservation in Minnesota, identifying barriers and obstacles to achieving that vision, and defining principles that guided the recommendations in the areas of conservation governance, delivery, and funding. The Council's last four meetings were devoted to developing the recommendations contained in this report. A table of the Council's meeting dates and topics is included in Appendix B.

A number of reports were provided to and/or consulted by the Council. Appendix C provides a complete bibliography of the materials considered by the Council in its deliberations.

Council's Vision and Strategic Goals for Conservation

The Council developed a common vision for conservation and identified strategic goals and principles to guide the development of a new conservation model. The Council's conservation vision and a complete list of strategic goals and guiding principles for action are contained in Appendix D. The following summarizes the Council's vision statement as discussed on March 9, 2007.

Our vision is for Minnesota to become the nation's leading conservation state by:

- *Promoting the public's understanding and acceptance of a conservation vision that aligns conservation goals and economic interests;*
- *Encouraging conservation efforts that are responsive, coordinated, and effective, and making funding commensurate with conservation needs; and*
- *Creating and preserving quality habitat that is abundant and diverse, to ensure that Minnesotans have continued access to the legacy of outdoor recreation, quality hunting, fishing, sustained use of clean waters and forests, and to enjoy Minnesota's natural resources.*

The following overarching goals were developed based on the Council's vision and provided a basis for evaluating alternative conservation models and related recommendations.

To reverse the loss of valuable natural resources, the Council believes Minnesota must:

- Empower citizens to guide the allocation of resources and hold state and local government efforts accountable to measurable goals;
- Establish reliable, long-term, funding that is flexible and responsive to the ongoing need for investment; and
- Coordinate state and local efforts so that they are responsive and effective in meeting the diverse needs of the state's ecological-regions.

The ultimate goal of the Council's recommendations is to foster the will of all Minnesotans to exercise the stewardship that will inspire state pride in our lakes, streams, prairies, and forests and to take care of our natural resources for future generations.

Council Findings and Conclusions

In examining the current state of our natural resources and stewardship efforts, the Council believes that:

- **Minnesota's conservation efforts are inadequate.** While there are many examples of success, we have lost – and continue to lose – critical natural assets. The facts indicate that the extent and rate of this loss is staggering and will require urgent and accelerated investments to slow the rate of loss and to assure the sustainability of our natural resources.
- **Current funding strategies fail to match the challenge.** Minnesota's conservation investments are too often shaped by the short-term cyclical nature of legislative appropriations and shifts in ideology or partisan control. The long-term and continually growing pressures on our natural resources are simply too great to rely on short-term funding cycles. Furthermore, relying on diminishing

user fees limits the ability to respond in a flexible and long-term manner and is ultimately a prescription for failure. The Council believes that all Minnesota citizens should share in the responsibility for providing the revenue needed to manage the state's natural resources. As such, the Council endorses dedication of a portion of a state general tax as the means for funding the state's conservation practices.

- **Tax policy influences conservation and land use practices on private lands.** There are a variety of taxes that often have bearing, sometimes directly, on whether land is held in conservation or developed, held as farmland or forest land, or sold. Property taxes, estate taxes and other taxes influence landowner behavior. Minnesota has not fully utilized tax policy as a way to encourage sound conservation practices among private landowners. For example, a current bill in the legislature calls for property tax reductions for shoreland property that is left undeveloped. This bill has been introduced and failed in several previous legislative sessions. Considering how tax policy influences private landowner decisions is part of a comprehensive approach to promoting better conservation in Minnesota.
- **Payments in lieu of taxes impact conservation and land use practices on public lands.** Local government can play a significant role in shaping conservation practices on private lands. County boards face pressure to sell public lands that provide wood products, wildlife habitat, and public recreational opportunities if it perceives the economic benefits to the county would be greater if the lands were transferred to private ownership. The adequacy or inadequacy of payments in lieu of taxes to local governments with significant public land holdings within their boundaries can influence county decisions regarding the ownership of these public lands and ultimately impact state conservation efforts.
- **Future conservation efforts must be based in sound science.** Future investments in conservation must be guided by scientific information about the threats to our natural resources. Specific and quantifiable conservation targets are needed and the land and water practices necessary to meet these targets must be based on the best-available science.
- **All Minnesotans must play a part.** To address the many pressures on our natural resources, all Minnesotans must play a part. Policymakers must continue to legislate laws and govern the use of – and public investments in – natural resources. Similarly, professionals must administer those laws and use science to inform both the law and the administration of it. Needed, however, is a new compact for conservation – an agreement among all Minnesotans that will inspire state pride in our natural resources and guide our stewardship efforts.
- **Existing conservation efforts are vastly complex and unfocused.** Current governance structures, funding mechanisms, and delivery systems for conservation are extremely complex and insufficient to adequately manage and

protect the state's natural resources. In recent years, Minnesota has added to this complexity by creating new groups without clarifying their roles and responsibilities relative to existing boards and commissions. Additionally, efforts to protect and preserve our natural resources, at times, lack sufficient focus and coordination to be effective. Today, there is no formal mechanism for focusing and coordinating the development of a state conservation vision, identifying conservation strategies, or coordinating the efforts of multiple agencies and private landowners to effectively implement conservation practices.

- **States use a variety of citizen-based governance models.** In reviewing other states' approach to governance, the Council found that there are fundamentally three different types of citizen-based governance models. The first type of governing body is purely advisory; the second type provides oversight and direction on strategy and policy; and the third type directs day-to-day operations. More specifically, each model's roles and responsibilities can be characterized as follows:

Advisory Bodies

- Advise the Governor and/or Legislature on strategies to address important natural resource issues and/or funding.
- On request, advise the DNR commissioner on agency matters.
- Report annually to the Governor and/or Legislature on conservation issues, priorities, and strategies.

Strategic and Policy Direction-Setting Bodies

- Establish overall policy direction for agency.
- Recommend agency operating/capital budget to Governor/Legislature.
- Recommend conservation priorities to Governor/Legislature.
- Oversee statewide and regional conservation planning efforts.
- Recommend to Governor DNR Commissioner appointment.

Operational-Level Direction and Oversight Bodies

- Promulgates administrative rules for agency.
- Allocate agency funding among divisions/bureaus and/or specific programs.
- Authority to hire/fire DNR commissioner.
- Set hunting/fishing/trapping season lengths and bag limits.
- Issue permits under responsibility of agency.
- Approve sale/disposal of state natural resource lands.
- Authority to reorganize agency divisions/programs.
- Identify agency legislative priorities.
- Hold public hearings on proposed agency actions.
- Act as formal point of contact for citizens on state conservation matters.
- Adjudicate conflicts between agency and citizen(s)/interest groups.
- Facilitate agency coordination with other government/non-government entities.

A citizen-based commission should set strategic policy direction and provide oversight. The Council believes that a citizen-based conservation commission, with strategic policy-setting and oversight authority is the most appropriate for Minnesota. Such a commission should develop a conservation vision and oversee the development of a conservation compact which should provide the framework for conservation strategy and policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council recognizes its pivotal opportunity to inspire greater stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources. Acknowledging the breadth and complexity of its charge, the Council's recommendations focus on the most strategic and essential steps that are needed to make Minnesota the nation's leading conservation state.

The recommendations are built upon three integral elements of a new model for conservation governance, funding and delivery. They include:

1. Immediately increase funding for natural resources conservation;
2. Create a citizen-based Conservation Commission to lead Minnesota's conservation efforts; and
3. Develop a "Conservation Compact" – an agreed-upon plan of action for making critical improvements to Minnesota's water, fish, wildlife, forests, soil, outdoor recreation resources.

These three elements are interrelated and interdependent. Adequate funding for conservation practices is urgently needed to effectively address the state's conservation challenges identified through the state Conservation Compact. A citizen-based Conservation Commission is necessary to oversee the development and implementation of a state Conservation Compact and champion citizen leadership for addressing conservation issues in Minnesota. A state Conservation Compact provides the blueprint for future investments in our natural resources. Together these three elements create a cohesive strategy for making Minnesota the leading conservation state.

Citizens, natural resources professionals, and policy makers have important, yet distinct, roles in the conservation model being recommended. Conservation practices have to be grounded in the best available science and technology if the state's natural resources are to be sustainably managed, used, and protected for present and future generations. Additionally, the new conservation strategy being recommended by the Council has to be citizen led. Resource management professionals provide the knowledge required to sustainably manage the state's natural systems. Policymakers decide the legal framework that governs the use and management of – and public investments in – natural resources. Citizens foster the will and commitment to land and water stewardship, identify conservation goals and priorities, and hold decision-makers accountable for their actions affecting the condition and uses of natural resources. Minnesota already has the resource management expertise; the conservation model being recommended is intended to substantially elevate citizen participation in state conservation efforts.

Finally, through its recommendations, the Council hopes to make Minnesota's conservation governance more understandable to the average citizen who, while having a passion for the outdoors, often has very limited understanding of which agency has responsibility for a particular aspect of natural resource and environmental management. Similarly, the Council hopes that its recommendations provide increased opportunity for the state's citizens to connect with government on conservation matters. Engaging the

public in state conservation efforts is a daunting challenge, and important to assuring that the Council's recommended conservation strategy is going to be successful.

The following describes the Council's recommendations with respect to these strategic areas of conservation.

Immediately Increase Funding for Conservation

Action must be taken immediately to increase funding for natural resources conservation. Even with the increases and reauthorizations proposed by the Governor for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, total spending on the major conservation agencies will have declined by \$100 million – a drop of 18 percent – in inflation-adjusted dollars from FY2001 to FY2009.²² The continuing pressures on our lands and waters, our changing climate, and other emerging threats to natural systems call for immediate action.

Stable and Adequate Funding

The Council believes that all Minnesota citizens should share in the responsibility for providing the revenue needed to manage the state's natural resources, and that relying extensively on diminishing user fees limits the ability to respond in a flexible and long-term manner. As such, the Council recommends a stable and reliable source of funding be established to maintain ongoing and long-term investments in Minnesota's natural resources.

Immediate Increases in Conservation Funding

To expedite an immediate increase in conservation funding the Council recommends that:

1. The Legislature approve a constitutional ballot question regarding the dedication of a portion of a state general tax as a means for funding natural resource conservation priorities.
2. The Legislature dedicate funds to the Commission and authorize it to allocate and administer the funds according to the priorities identified in the Conservation Compact. Funding that is dedicated to implement Conservation Compact strategies must supplement, not supplant, existing conservation funding.
3. The Legislature increase bonding for conservation projects beginning in the 2008 Legislative Session. Bonding could be used to accelerate investments in protection and preservation efforts, such as conservation easements.

²² Conservation Minnesota, *Minnesota by the Numbers*. Subtitled: *Treading Water: Governor Pawlenty's Proposed 2008-09 Budget for Conservation & Environment*, February 27, 2007, page 2.
<http://www.mnvotercenter.com/userfiles/Analysis%20of%202008-09%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf>.

Create A Minnesota Conservation Commission

The Council recommends a citizen-based Conservation Commission (Commission) be established in law to lead the state's conservation efforts. The Council believes Minnesota desperately needs, but currently does not have, an identified "champion" for state conservation efforts. This lack of a science-based conservation advocate, composed of deeply credentialed citizens who care passionately for the state's natural resources, has been a major impediment to addressing Minnesota's natural resource management challenges. A citizen-based Conservation Commission would facilitate increased ownership and involvement in conservation throughout the state, would enforce a robust long-term strategy, and would raise conservation's visibility and government's transparency.

The Council recommends the primary duties of the Minnesota Conservation Commission be statutorily defined as follows.

Minnesota Conservation Compact

The Council recommends the Commission be responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Minnesota Conservation Compact. The Commission's specific duties include.

1. Direct and support a process for conducting state and regional assessments of conservation priorities; define the major ecological regions of the state within which regional conservation planning can occur; engage citizens, interest groups, and government in developing the Compact; and allocate resources to develop and implement the Compact.
2. Identify specific and measurable conservation goals for the state's water, fish, wildlife, forest, soil, outdoor recreation resources, and emerging threats to these resources in each of Minnesota's major ecological regions.
3. Periodically assess and report to the people of Minnesota on progress toward achieving statewide and regional conservation goals set forth in the Conservation Compact.

Strategic Direction to the Minnesota DNR

The Conservation Commission shall have the following responsibilities with respect to the DNR.

1. Recommend to the Governor candidates to serve as the commissioner of the DNR. The Council believes hiring the state's conservation CEO and leader is one of the most important decisions with respect to state conservation efforts. It also believes the Commission should recommend to the Governor when the DNR commissioner should be removed from office.

2. Set strategic policy, direct, and oversee the DNR commissioner in implementing the agency's duties pursuant to MS § 84 and carrying out the agency's mission in conformance with Commission's powers and duties.
3. Approve the DNR's legislative policy and funding priorities for consideration in the Governor's policy, biennial budget, and capital budget. The Governor's proposals presented to the Legislature should convey the Commission's recommendations and how the Governor's recommendations concur with or vary from them.
4. Ensure that the DNR will use limited financial resources wisely, manage matters involving the State's resources expeditiously and openly, and deliver optimum conservation outcomes.

Conservation Policy

The Council recommends the Conservation Commission have the following responsibilities with respect to state conservation laws, rules and programs.

1. Recommend to the Governor new state conservation policies and programs needed to ensure stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources.
2. Review existing state conservation laws, rules, and programs and, where appropriate, recommend needed changes in each to the Governor to ensure stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources.
3. Examine the range of grant programs and other funds that support current conservation efforts and recommend consolidation and refocusing of resources on priorities in the Conservation Compact.
4. Recommend to the Governor new tax and funding policies needed to ensure stewardship of Minnesota's natural resources.

Interagency Coordination

The Council recommends the Conservation Commission have the following responsibilities with respect to intergovernmental coordination of policies and programs affecting conservation in Minnesota.

1. Coordinate state agency implementation of conservation policies and programs toward desired outcomes. The Commission may assemble an interagency team of advisors to assist with this function.
2. Coordinate among state and local governments in implementing conservation policies and practices. Establish explicit mechanisms for seeking input from and coordinating with local units of government involved in state conservation efforts.
3. Coordinate with federal agencies and resources in implementing conservation policies and programs.

Connecting Citizens/Stakeholders to Conservation

The Council recommends the Conservation Commission be the focal point for engaging individuals and organizations in state conservation efforts. To do so, it recommends the Commission:

1. Periodically hold public listening sessions on state conservation issues across Minnesota.
2. Assure citizen perspectives are included in the development and implementation of state conservation policy.
3. Assure that local governments, organizations, and individuals are engaged in state conservation efforts.

Commission Composition and Appointment

The Council recommends the Commission:

1. Consist of 4–9 members.
2. Members are appointed to serve at large, rather than be appointed to represent specific political affiliations or interest groups. Consideration should be given to geographic representation across Minnesota.
3. Members have considerable education and/or practical experience in the physical or natural sciences, or natural resource management; have demonstrated experience in and commitment to state conservation or natural resource management causes; and have previously demonstrated their ability to work effectively with a diverse group.
4. Members are appointed by the Governor, with advice and consent of the Senate, for 4–6 year terms.
5. Member terms be staggered such that Commission turnover does not exceed one-fourth of the total membership in a given year.
6. Chair is initially appointed by the Governor for a two-year term. Thereafter, the chair is elected by the members of the Conservation Commission for a two-year term.
7. Members are given per diem and reimbursed for expenses as specified in MS 15.0575.

Develop A Minnesota Conservation Compact

The Council recommends the statutory requirement that a scientific-based strategic Conservation Compact be developed for Minnesota. The Conservation Compact would be just that – an agreement among Minnesota’s citizens about how to address the greatest threats to the state’s natural resources. Minnesota’s Conservation Compact would emphasize partnerships between governmental entities, non-governmental entities,

landowners, and others to achieve specific improvements in the areas of water, fish, wildlife, forests, soil, and outdoor recreation resources. It would also be built around a shared vision for conservation among its citizens and contain both statewide and regional components.

More specifically, the Compact would provide the means by which the Commission would:

1. Establish measurable state conservation goals;
2. Identify statewide and regionally-based conservation priorities and strategies to achieve state conservation goals;
3. Allocate funds to implement the practices required to address the most critical threats to the state's natural resources; and
4. Monitor and report progress toward achieving Minnesota's conservation goals.

In making this recommendation, the Council emphasizes the Compact is not an end – it is the *means* by which continually evolving science is brought together with growing public understanding of, and support for, conservation practices. The Council fully recognizes the many excellent, ongoing planning efforts directed at Minnesota's natural environment that are carried out by the state's public, private, non-profit sectors and individuals (for example, LCCMR's Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan, DNR's Conservation Agenda). The intent of the Conservation Compact is to build upon these efforts and develop a more inclusive and cohesive conservation strategy for Minnesota.

The uniqueness of the Conservation Compact is that it represents Minnesota's first attempt to develop a state conservation blueprint that: 1) is not developed by or directed at the actions of a specific agency or level of government; and 2) brings together scientific and citizen leaders and engages a wide range of conservation partners (public, private, and nonprofit) in identifying conservation needs and carrying out needed conservation practices.

Conservation Compact Framework

The Minnesota Conservation Compact would be the overall responsibility of the citizen-based Conservation Commission. A state Conservation Compact would provide the blueprint for addressing the state's most pressing conservation issues. More specifically, the Compact should:

1. Provide a long-term perspective and a common vision for addressing the state's conservation challenges – the Council recommends a 20-year horizon.
2. Provide a framework within which statewide and regional resource planning occurs.
3. Identify both statewide and regional issues, priorities, and strategies with respect to the state's water, fish, wildlife, forest, soil, and outdoor recreation resources.

4. Establish specific and measurable goals for each of the major resource areas identified in number 3 above.
5. Be formally revised and updated on no more than a five-year basis to reflect changing natural resource conditions and conservation priorities.
6. Require significant participation from local government, conservation groups, and citizens in the development and implementation of the Compact.
7. Be used to guide the allocation of resources to address priority statewide and regional conservation needs.
8. Be supported by aggressive monitoring of: conditions affecting the management, use, and protection of Minnesota's natural resources; the use of funds for conservation; and the effectiveness of the strategies for addressing the statewide and regional conservation priorities and achieving state conservation goals.

Role of Minnesota DNR in Conservation Compact

The Council recommends the following roles for the DNR in the development of the Minnesota Conservation Compact.

1. Provide lead staff support to all aspects of the Conservation Compact planning process.
2. Provide venues for engaging public, private, and nonprofit partners in developing the Compact and its implementation. This is a particularly important role with respect to the regional conservation components of the Compact.
3. Coordinate efforts among public, private, and nonprofit partners to effectively monitor natural resource conditions and progress towards achieving the goals identified in the Compact.

Organization and Delivery of Conservation Programs

Given its charge to develop a new conservation model, the Council did not conduct an exhaustive review of the vast array of agency divisions, programs, and local entities that deliver conservation services, nor is it recommending specific organizational changes. Yet, the Council believes organizational changes will be needed to equip state and local agencies to more effectively address state and regional conservation needs and priorities. The newly-formed Conservation Commission should assess and recommend ways to eliminate interagency conflict and duplication of effort in delivering the state's conservation programs. More specifically:

1. The Commission should investigate ways to simplify and reduce duplication of effort in delivering policies and practices affecting the state's natural resources that are administered by state agencies (e.g., Minnesota departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, Health, and the Pollution Control Agency). The Council

found no compelling evidence to combine Minnesota’s environmental regulatory and natural resource management functions into one agency at this time. However, regulation of and financial/technical assistance to private landowners are complementary tools for achieving the resource goals that will be specified in the Conservation Compact. The Commission should assure that regulatory and technical assistance functions work together to encourage and complete conservation practices on private lands.

2. The Council believes opportunities exist to strengthen the regional offices of state agencies with conservation expertise and responsibilities to more effectively and aggressively monitor regional resource conditions, support local and regional decision making, and guide and monitor the effectiveness of local strategies – all of which are essential components of the recommended Conservation Compact. As the Commission oversees the development and implementation of the Conservation Compact, it should recommend ways to strengthen the regional offices of all state agencies with conservation expertise and responsibilities.
3. The Council believes that there should be a close working relationship between the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the proposed Conservation Commission that results in a stronger enhanced local government delivery system. The BWSR has formal and statutory functions with local units of government that implement soil and water conservation practices, plans and ordinances. The BWSR membership includes local government officials that implement and fund soil and water conservation programs as outlined in state statutes 103B and 103C. The Council believes local units of government are critical partners in delivering conservation practices and assistance to the state’s private landowners. Local units of government need to play an important role in developing and implementing state conservation policy. The Commission’s role with developing the Conservation Compact will include measurable outcomes for BWSR.
4. The Council supports simplification of Minnesota’s current watershed management governance. The patchwork and overlapping nature of watershed management organizations in Minnesota is inefficient and extremely complex.²³ The Council acknowledges the political reality that wholesale reorganization of all water-related local planning organizations in Minnesota will be difficult. However, the Council believes the Commission should directly address the concerns raised in the Office of the Legislative Auditor’s report²⁴ and work with the Legislature to consolidate the eleven different types of local watershed management entities that operate in Minnesota. While many might say this is an impossible task to successfully undertake, the Council believes it is doable. The state of Nebraska was successful in combining 154 special purpose districts into 23 Natural Resource Districts with common boundaries based on the state’s major

²³ The legislative auditor describes a “complex and confusing network” of local entities involved in watershed management in its report, “Watershed Management,” January 2007.

<http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/watersheds.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid.

watersheds.²⁵ The Council believes the Nebraska model for watershed management should be given serious consideration for its application to Minnesota.

Concluding Thoughts

The Council believes the new conservation model it is recommending will promote new working relationships among government agencies and the citizens and communities they serve. Sadly, the model appears to be a novel idea. It shouldn't be. The Council believes that a Conservation Compact overseen by a citizen-based Conservation Commission and supported with adequate funding for conservation practices, can position Minnesota to become the conservation success it has long imagined. And, most important, Minnesotans will realize the successful stewardship of our natural resources that we have always known possible but have yet to fully realize. The time to act is now.

²⁵ See: <http://dnr.ne.gov/databank/nrd/histnrd.html>

NEXT STEPS/IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Council’s recommendations will require several steps be taken in the coming months. Action must be taken immediately to promote adoption and action on the recommendations. Delays in implementing the recommendations will delay development of the Conservation Compact and other improvements in the governance, funding, and delivery of conservation efforts. The Council is recommending the following activities and timelines.

Timeline	Action Step
May 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish report (Council) ▪ Hold Governor’s press conference. (Governor’s Office)
June through December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote Council recommendations among stakeholders (Council working with the Governor’s Office) ▪ Incorporate recommendations into the Governor’s budget and policy proposals for 2008 Legislative Session (Governor’s Office)
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce Legislation to create the Conservation Commission (Legislature)
July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate appointments process (Governor’s Office)
October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission holds its first meeting (Conservation Commission)
December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publication of the first Conservation Compact (Conservation Commission)
December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commission and Governor’s Budget directed at achievement of the Compact

The Council is prepared to assist the Governor’s Office and other interested groups in facilitating broad understanding and acceptance of the Council’s recommendations.

APPENDICES

A. Executive Order Creating the Conservation Legacy Council

Governor Pawlenty signed Executive Order 06-12 on August 18, 2006, creating the Governor's Conservation Legacy Council:

I, TIM PAWLENTY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, do hereby issue this executive order:

WHEREAS, Minnesota's lands, waters, fish, wildlife and other natural resources are critical assets that benefit all people of the State and preserving these assets requires development of a comprehensive, long-term and sustainable model for the governance, management and funding of the State's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Constitution was amended in 1998 to recognize that hunting and fishing are a valued part of our heritage that must be forever preserved for the people and managed by law for the public good; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Constitution dedicates a portion of the State's lottery proceeds to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and assets of the Fund are dedicated to the "protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources;" and

WHEREAS, existing government programs and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund represent an important source of funding for the protection, enhancement and improvement of our State's natural resources; however, the current funding and delivery structure may not be sufficient to ensure that Minnesotans will be able to have continued access to the legacy of quality hunting, fishing, and enjoyment of Minnesota's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the input and advice of knowledgeable citizens with natural resource expertise and experience will provide valuable insight into developing long-term and sustainable strategies for the future governance, management and funding of Minnesota's natural resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby order the creation of the Governor's Conservation Legacy Council ("Council").

1. The Council will be comprised of up to 15 members appointed as follows:
 - a). The Governor will appoint up to 11 public members.

i). Public members must be residents of Minnesota who are outdoor enthusiasts and who represent a wide range of Minnesota's outdoor interests including, but not limited to, hunting, fishing, conservation and recreation.

ii). Public members will include residents from geographically diverse areas of the State.

b). The Legislature may, at its discretion, appoint four legislators to serve as members of the Council:

i). The Majority Leader of the Senate may appoint two Senators, one from the minority and one from the majority caucus.

ii). The Speaker of the House of Representatives may appoint two Representatives, one from the minority and one from the majority caucus.

c). The Governor will designate a public member to serve as the chair.

d). The Governor will fill any vacancies in the positions for public members. The Majority Leader will fill vacancies for the legislative members from the Senate and the Speaker will fill vacancies of members from the House of Representatives.

e). Council members will serve a two-year term. Council members will serve on a voluntary basis and are not eligible for per-diem or payment of expenses. The Senate or House of Representatives may allow for per diem or other payment of expenses to legislative members from legislative funds.

2. The Council's responsibilities include providing advice and recommendations to the Governor on matters relating to the development of a sustainable governance and funding model which will create a lasting legacy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the state's natural resources and which will establish Minnesota as the nation's leading conservation state.

a). The Council's focus must be on developing recommendations that provide for a sustainable governance and funding model for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the State's water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources.

b). The Council should emphasize developing a strategic plan for the State to achieve the recommended governance and funding models.

c). The Council must consider in its recommendations governance and funding models that incorporate partnerships between governmental entities, non-governmental entities, organizations, land owners and others.

d). The Council should consider governance and funding as to all current and recommended future state government operated or managed activities relating to natural resources; including, fish game and wildlife habitat protection and restoration, water quality protection and enhancement, forestry activities, prairie restoration, and biological diversity.

3. The Council will meet beginning in October 2006, following the completion of the open appointment process.

B. Conservation Legacy Council

In August 2006, Governor Tim Pawlenty signed an executive order creating the 15-member Governor's Conservation Legacy Council. Citing the state's critical natural resources and Minnesotans' history of supporting them, he charged this council with recommending actions to create a "sustainable governance and funding model which will create a lasting legacy for the conservation, protection and enhancement of the state's natural resources and which will establish Minnesota as the nation's leading conservation state."²⁶

List of Council Members

Governor Pawlenty believes strongly in providing opportunities for citizens to play an active part in enhancing Minnesota's environment and natural resources, and this Council represented another opportunity to broaden citizen involvement in the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources. The Council's eleven governor-appointed members are:²⁷

- LeAnn Buck of St Paul is the Executive Director of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Ms. Buck has served in that role since 1999. Local soil and water districts provide technical and financial resources to assist private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices. She has been active in a broad-based stakeholder group that successfully advanced clean water funding and policy implementation at the state capitol. Ms. Buck is also active with the National Association of Conservation Districts to address provisions of the federal farm bill conservation programs and with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.
- Joe Duggan of Bloomington is Vice President, Corporate Relations and Marketing with Pheasants Forever. He has been named "Man of the Year" by Outdoor News and "Minnesota Conservationist of the Year" by the Minnesota Conservation Federation. Mr. Duggan has served on a number of state and federal task forces and committees relating to wildlife conservation and natural resources. He was a member of the Upper Mississippi Great Lakes Joint Venture Board, founder of the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance, officer of the Executive Committee Environmental Trust Fund Coalition and Minnesota Public Lands Task Force. He also served on the Governor's Trust Fund Citizen Selection Committee for the LLCM.
- Bruce Hawkinson of Welch is a conservation consultant that has worked extensively with other states and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He has been

²⁶ Executive Order 06-12, August 18, 2006. See Appendix A.

<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/priorities/governorsorders/executiveorders/2006/august/PROD007767.html>

²⁷ Office of the Governor, "Governor Pawlenty announces appointees to conservation legacy council," Press Release, October 31, 2006.

<http://www.governor.state.mn.us/mediacenter/pressreleases/2006/october/PROD007833.html>

developing strategic plans, strategies and performance management structures for the protection, restoration and enhancement of natural resources. In Minnesota he has been an area fisheries manager on the Mississippi River, a lake management planner, and a strategic and operational planner for fish and wildlife.

- Dawn Hegland of Appleton co-owns a family farm in Lac qui Parle County with her husband, Ed Hegland. She is the Director of the Transportation, Recreation and Tourism Division for the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development commission. Hegland also serves as the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Coordinator and has extensive experience with recreation and tourism planning and funding. Ms. Hegland and her family enjoy camping, birding and biking.
- Mike Kilgore of Lino Lakes is an Associate Professor of Natural Resources Economic and Policy at the University of Minnesota and serves as the Director of the Center for Environment and Natural Resources Policy, Department of Forest Resources. Kilgore is the former Executive Director of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council, and an avid outdoorsman.
- Jane Kingston of Eveleth is a self-employed consultant and a Trustee with The Nature Conservancy - Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. She is a member of the Trout Lake Association and the Deer Lake Watershed Association, both of Itasca County; the Iron Range Resources Partners Advisory Committee; the Fayal Township Planning Commission; the Itasca Water Legacy Partnership; Ducks Unlimited; and the Ruffed Grouse Society. Ms. Kingston also served on the Canisteo Overflow Task Force and the Governor's Trust Fund Citizen Selection Committee for the LCCMR.
- Carrie Mellesmoen of Minnetrista is a real estate attorney. Mellesmoen is also active with the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance, North American Bear Foundation, the Minnesota Chapter of the Safari Club International, and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association. Ms. Mellesmoen has been a hunter education instructor for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and served on the agency's Game and Fish Fund citizen's oversight committee.
- Kirk Schnitker of Champlin is an attorney. He worked on the ballot initiative for securing the right to hunt and fish in the Minnesota Constitution. He is a member of Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance, Sportsmen for Change, and Pheasants Forever. Mr. Schnitker also served as Metropolitan Parks and Open Space commissioner from 1992 – 1996, Champlin City Council from 1990-1996, and the Champlin Planning commission from 1990-1992.

Lawrence Sukalski of Fairmont is a family farmer and the recipient of the 2006 National Conservation Legacy Award from the American Soybean Association. Mr. Sukalski is the Secretary of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and a member of the Minnesota and National Corn Growers Association. He is a member of the Natural Resource Conservation Service State Technical

Committee and Martin County Conservation Club. Mr. Sukalski and his family practice 100 percent conservation and minimum tillage on their 2,400 acre family farm. He has enrolled 67 acres of his land in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and restored 24 acres of wetlands.

- Ron Schara of Ramsey is an outdoor writer and owner of a television production company. Schara's Minnesota Bound TV show is in its 13th year and airs in the Twin Cities, Duluth, Rochester, and Fargo markets. He is also an award-winning outdoor columnist for the Minneapolis Star-Tribune.
- David Zentner of Duluth works in the insurance and financial services industry and has served as the Co-chair of the Environmental Natural Resource Trust Fund Task Force. Mr. Zentner served as Chapter, State and National President of the Izaak Walton League, receiving the organization's Sigurd Olson Award.

The Senate and House majority leaders appointed legislators from the Senate and House majority (DFL) and minority (R) caucuses. The four legislative appointees are:

- Senator Tom Saxhaug (DFL), Grand Rapids, was first elected to the Senate in 2002. He serves on the Senate Finance - Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Budget Division (Vice Chair), Environment and Natural Resources, Finance - E-12 Education Budget Division, and Finance - Economic Development Budget Division committees. Senator Saxhaug's special legislative concerns are natural resources, economic development, and education.
- Senator Gen Olson (R), Minnetrista, was first elected to the Senate in 1982. She serves on the Senate Finance - E-12 Education Budget Division (ranking minority member), Education, Environment and Natural Resources, Finance - Transportation Budget and Policy Division, and Rules and Administration committees. Senator Olson's special legislative concerns are education, property tax reform, cost of government, and environmental issues.
- Representative Aaron Peterson (DFL), Appleton, was first elected in 2002 and is an assistant majority leader. He serves on the Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division; Commerce and Labor; Energy Finance and Policy Division; Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division; Game, Fish and Forestry Division; and Rules and Legislative Administration committees and the Watersheds, Wetlands and Buffers Subcommittee.
- Representative Tom Hackbarth (R), Cedar, was first elected in 1994. He serves on the Energy Finance and Policy Division; Environment and Natural Resources; Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division; Finance; Game, Fish and Forestry Division committees.

At the request of the Governor's Office, Mike Kilgore agreed to chair the Governor's Conservation Legacy Council.

Staff from the Department of Administration's Management Analysis & Development provided meeting facilitation, research, report writing, and staff support to the Council. Project team: Ryan Church, project lead and meeting facilitator; Peter Butler, research; and Gen Swenson, note taker and clerical support. Judy Plante and Bill Clausen are the Management Analysis & Development director and assistant director, respectively. Laura Bordelon and Josh Gackle served as Governor's Office liaisons to the Council.

Conservation Legacy Council Meeting Dates and Topics

Meeting dates, times, and locations	Topics
November 30, 2006 Room 112 State Capitol 1:30-3:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome and introductions ▪ Discuss the Governor's executive order ▪ Review draft council work schedule
December 19, 2006 DNR Training Room, St. Paul 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentations by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources ▪ Discuss the review of other states
January 10, 2007 University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus – Skok Hall 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentations by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and discussion ▪ Council reflection on all agency presentations ▪ Discuss the review of other states
January 25, 2007 University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus – Skok Hall 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the Council's vision for the future of Minnesota's conservation efforts ▪ Identify barriers and obstacles to the vision ▪ Define the principles for action (governance, funding, delivery)
February 8, 2007 Room 318 State Capitol, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Testimony from invited organizations ▪ Discuss the presentations
February 22, 2007 Room 400 South, State Office Building 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentations by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation ▪ Discuss member interview results
March 9, 2007 Room 318, State Capitol 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review vision and guiding principles ▪ Identify preliminary list of recommendations
March 23, 2007 Room 318, State Capitol 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governor's visit ▪ Discuss the Council's recommendations and report
April 12, 2007 Room 318, State Capitol 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review preliminary draft of the Council's report and recommendations.
April 18, 2007 Telephone Conference 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review revisions to the recommendations section of the report.
April 26, 2007 Ladyslipper Room, Centennial Bldg. 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and adopt final draft of the Council's report and recommendations. ▪ Discuss implementation and timelines.

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This link is the organization’s 2007 legislative priorities:
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(<http://www.mnvotercenter.com/>)
- Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy: (<http://www.mncenter.org/>)

D. Conservation Legacy Council Vision and Guiding Principles

Governor's Conservation Legacy Council Summary Vision Statement

Prior to making its recommendations, the Council developed a common vision for conservation and identified strategic goals and principles to guide the development of a new conservation model. The following summarizes the Council's vision statement as discussed on March 9, 2007.

Our vision is for Minnesota to become the nation's leading conservation state by:

- *Promoting the public's understanding and acceptance of a conservation vision that aligns conservation goals and economic interests;*
- *Encouraging conservation efforts that are responsive, coordinated, and effective, and making funding commensurate with conservation needs; and*
- *Creating and preserving quality habitat that is abundant and diverse, to ensure that Minnesotans have continued access to the legacy of outdoor recreation, quality hunting, fishing, sustained use of clean waters and forests, and to enjoy Minnesota's natural resources.*

Following March 9th, a member submitted another version of the vision. The Council used this statement in developing its findings, conclusions and recommendations.

We, the people of Minnesota, hereby approve a conservation vision that seeks a balance between the protection and utilization of the state's natural resources---its water, soil, air, forests, prairies and wildlife--in harmony with the state's continued economic growth and expanding population.

We hereby:

- *Believe the wise use of Minnesota's natural resources is the responsibility of its state agencies, its businesses and its citizenry.*
- *Believe the management of natural resources should be free of partisan politics.*
- *Believe the management of natural resources must be sustained by a source of funding that is reliable and commensurate to achieve the vision.*
- *Believe that all Minnesotans for all time have the inalienable right to clean water and air, to healthy forests and wetlands, to prairies and abundant wildlife.*
- *Furthermore, we believe the health, welfare and spirit of all Minnesotans depends on continued access to outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing, parks, trails and a oneness with the natural world.*

The following materials summarize the working documents the Council used to develop its vision, guiding principles and strategic goals. These materials were developed on January 25, 2007.

To become the nation's leading conservation state:

- The public must understand and adopt a conservation vision that aligns conservation goals and economic interests (see columns 2 and 5 on next page);
- Conservation efforts must be responsive, coordinated, and effective, and funding must be commensurate with conservation needs (see columns 3 and 6 on next page); and
- Efforts must result in quality habitat that is abundant and diverse, and ensure that Minnesotans have continued access to the legacy of quality hunting, fishing, sustained use of clean waters and forests, and to enjoy Minnesota's natural resources (see columns 1 and 4 on next page).

Conservation Legacy Vision

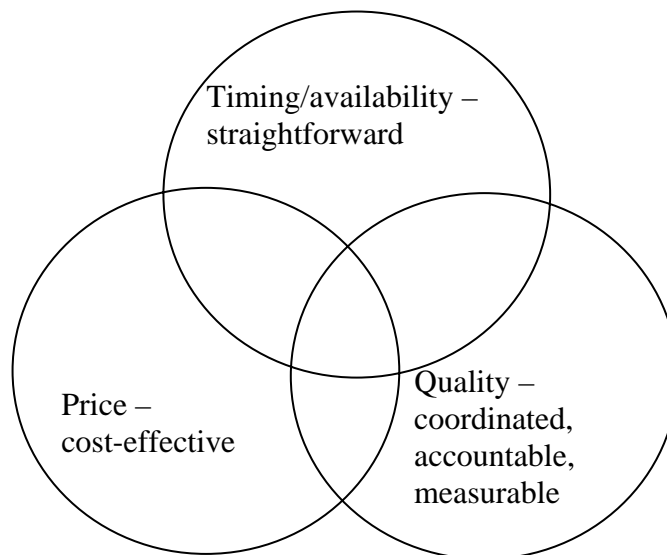
“Minnesota is the nation’s leading conservation state”						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Accessible for recreational use	Align conservation goals and economic interests	Funding commensurate with conservation needs	Abundant diverse quality habitat	Public understands and adopts a conservation vision for Minnesota	Conservation efforts and delivery system are responsive, coordinated, and effective	More efficient and conservation oriented energy use and production
Increased percentage of land available for non-destructive, compliant public access	Conservation on par with economic	Adequate funding	Preservation of existing wetlands	Need conservation plan and vision – adopted by state citizens	Streamline, unify government; eliminate and reduce redundant bureaucracy (state, federal, private, non-profit, citizenry)	
More land for habitat and compatible uses	Agriculture’s continued incentive to contribute, for example, CRP, RIM, etc.	Greater percentage of state-funded conservation	Water swimmable and fishable (clean water)	Public understands governance	Integrate all resource work among agencies, public and non-public	
Recreation abundant and/or high quality opportunities	Healthy environment with a thriving economy	Everyone pays fair share	Massive buffer network of grasslands in farm country	Buy-in across all sectors	An overhaul of our current governance and delivery	
	Increased private enterprise in resource work	Funding and expenditures free of partisan politics	Restoration of wetlands and habitat	Knowledgeable and engaged citizens motivated to conservation	Agencies set up to succeed	
		Long-term funding source			Establish environmental squads to fix large problems	
		Accelerated resource of funding				
		Funding decisions-based on goals and objectives				
		New funding will not supplant existing funding				

Factors working for and against the vision...

Factors Working For the Vision	Factors Working Against the Vision
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minnesota has a culture of organizations working together (state, local, federal, and volunteer collaboration). 2. Strong grass-roots power; need to help it along, build on that. 3. Challenge grants, RIM/CRP partnerships. 4. Dedicated field resource workers. 5. Minnesota ranks third in CRP participation. Federal dollars are leveraged. (Lawrence has statistics; need to emphasize that Minnesota needs to continue bringing in federal dollars). 6. Tradition of Minnesota outdoor lifestyle (10,000 lakes). 7. Recognition of our failures. 8. Citizen involvement (for example, citizen oversight committee – game and fish fund). 9. We have a lot to work with (largest freshwater body, etc.). 10. Conservation is a lot more effective than restoration. 11. Minnesota has history of leadership. 12. Minnesotans live longer. 13. Education and support works better than a hammer. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nobody likes change, especially agencies and organizations. 2. Money/funding. 3. Local consequences when you try to do something statewide. 4. Entities or individuals have a hard time giving up status quo, giving up turf. 5. Competing needs – health, education, transportation. 6. A lack of connection between citizens and state conservation policy. 7. 19th century agency structure. 8. Government is not the solution. 9. Overcoming partisan positions. 10. Resistance to the vision, especially from the Legislature. Don't want to give up power or purse strings. 11. Current decision makers have to give up power. 12. Property rights – people want to retain property rights. 13. Current mindset about what is 'pretty' in the landscape. Statewide education. 14. Perceive problems with some alternative models. Governance "commission" models. 15. Building support with stakeholders and lawmakers. 16. Regional recognition needs to be more explicit – differing strategies. 17. Consequences of changing climate are unknown. 18. Apathy and indifference of the public at large. 19. Inter- and intra-agency cooperation among agencies – government, nonprofit (across the board). 20. Philosophical opposition to changing the constitution; obstacle to amending our constitution; hard ghosts to overcome. 21. Governmental divisions and boundaries based on eco-systems. 22. Declining conservation advocacy base. (Background and interest of students today is so different.) Comment: Dave – bowling alone; problem across society. 23. Can this group agree?

Guiding Principles

Governance	Delivery (Delivery has three major themes: timing, quality and price. See graphic below).	Funding
<p>(1) Accountability of decision makers.</p> <p>(2) Stakeholder and citizen-based [decision making] input is broad-based and meaningful.</p> <p>(3) Appropriately qualified individuals are making decisions.</p> <p>(4) Decision making and decision makers are objective [scientific] and conservation grounded.</p> <p>(5) Conservation issues are discussed and the decisions made in a timely and open process.</p> <p>Stakeholders and citizens support Minnesota's conservation governance model.</p>	<p>(1) Coordinated – quality</p> <p>(2) Accountability – quality</p> <p>(3) Measurable outcomes – quality</p> <p>(4) Cost-effective – price</p> <p>(5) Availability – timing</p> <p>(6) Uncomplicated – timing</p>	<p>(1) Predictable.</p> <p>(2) Stable.</p> <p>(3) Dedicated.</p> <p>(4) Commensurate with conservation needs.</p>



Goals of the New Model

The following “Goals of the New Model” provide a synthesis of the Council’s discussions about the vision, guiding principles, strategies and goals. The strategic goals in the Council’s report were derived from this synthesis and the Council’s meeting on March 23, 2007.

Council’s Charge:	Governance	Funding	Delivery
<p>Goals of the new model:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Empower citizens and stakeholders in an understandable and accountable decision making process. ▪ Balance competing interests to ensure sustainability. ▪ Remove or reduce duplication, especially where governance involves water/wetlands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish reliable, long-term, funding that is flexible and responsive to the ongoing need for investment. ▪ Use objective data to guide the allocation of resources and to be accountable to measurable goals. ▪ Continually review funding and investment strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognize the differing needs of the state’s eco-regions and coordinate state, regional, and local conservation efforts (planning and delivery). ▪ Coordinate the investments of multiple funding sources (e.g., multiple agencies and private landowners). ▪ Promote new working relationships among government agencies and the citizens and communities they serve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “To protect, as far as legally possible, the administration of the state’s [conservation] resources from the influence of partisan politics.” ▪ Reverse the loss of valuable natural resources and achieve sustainability. ▪ Enlist the efforts of every Minnesotan to exercise the stewardship that will inspire state pride in our lakes, streams, prairies, and forests and to take care of our natural resources for future generations. 			