

# CREATING THE MODEL NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY FOR ILLINOIS



A report by the  
McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership

May, 2016



The mission of this report is to provide a vehicle of transformation for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, elevating the department to its rightful place of leadership, respect and trust in the eyes of the citizens of Illinois, the department's professionals and the nation.





# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Timeline for Implementation .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Historical Review .....	12
I. Executive Structure.....	13
II. Funding.....	15
III. Science, Public Lands, Resource and Constituent-Based Decision-Making .....	16
Summary: .....	23
<b>The Case for a Commission .....</b>	<b>25</b>
How to do it.....	29
<b>Hunter Education Reform and Recruitment Planning .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Modernizing Hunter Education Courses.....	32
Integrating Hunter Education, Technology, Licensing and Recruitment/Retention.....	35
<b>Dedicated Funds and How to Protect Them and Ensure Their Efficient Use .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Recommendations:.....	38
Dedicated Funds.....	39
Why Dedicated Funds Are Necessary .....	40
Long-term Effects of Lack of Maintenance on IDNR Properties Covered by Dedicated Funds .....	41
Bonding .....	42
General Revenue Fund Loss and Its Relationship to Dedicated Fund Use on Projects.....	44
Other Recommendations .....	46
Summary .....	49
<b>Appendix: .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>About the McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership .....</b>	<b>56</b>



# Introduction

This report was produced by the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation's Center for Conservation Leadership. The advisory committee that worked on this report consisted of senior federal and state natural resource professionals and conservation and business leaders from the private sector.

The goal is to provide a road map for creating the best department of natural resources in America. The report focuses on professional management, economic efficiency, innovation, public/private partnerships, communicating with constituents and improving and enhancing the resources over which IDNR has management responsibility.

To achieve the lofty goals delineated in this document, the governor should initiate a transition from IDNR's current management structure to one overseen by a professionally run, constituent-responsive governing commission dedicated to sustaining and promoting the state's natural resources. As described later in this document, a commission structure would significantly enhance IDNR's efficiency and provide a means to correct its largest problems while elevating its best programs.

Of the report's three leading recommendations, the formation of a commission will take the longest, require legislative change and be the most difficult. In the long term, it will reap the greatest benefits for Illinois, its citizens and the natural resources of the state.

The report's other two leading recommendations – the revamping of the hunter education program with the goal of creating a modern template for the rest of the country, and the protection and enhancement of the dedicated funds that are crucial to funding IDNR – could be implemented swiftly and administratively. The numerous other recommendations in this report should be addressed as quickly as possible.

The current IDNR director is ideally suited to lead this transformation. Successfully implementing the recommendations in this report will require knowledge of the IDNR, the General Assembly and the executive branch and a vision for efficient management – each of which the current director possesses.

The IDNR is in dire shape. The loss of professional leadership is widespread across the department's areas of responsibility. Constituents are being under served, and the IDNR has lost much of its credibility across the state and nation. The natural resources of the state placed in the public trust lack the professional management and financial resources to be well managed. It is time to modernize and deliver best management practices, thereby ensuring that the IDNR is positioned for the future while greatly improving its return on the investment provided by taxpayers to properly manage and protect Illinois' natural resources.

The implementation of the recommendations in this report will transform IDNR, deliver economic and program efficiencies, and transcend administrations, placing Illinois back on course to its place at the pinnacle of natural resource management.

## Timeline for Implementation

If achieved, the goals outlined in this report would return the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to its place atop the nation's natural resource agencies. Many of the recommendations in the report can be advanced without legislative approval, and two of them in particular – the modernization of the hunter's education program and the protection of dedicated funds for natural resources – can be implemented swiftly and efficiently.

The single most transformative recommendation, the conversion of the IDNR to a commission-governed agency, would require legislative action. But the work to begin that transition can begin now, and should.

Many of the other recommendations in the report would be suitably tackled by a commission once the commission is in place.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Legislative action needed?</b>	<b>Recommended timeline</b>
Modernize Hunter's Ed	No – executive action only	By October, 2016
Protect Dedicated Funds	No	By June 2017
Transition to commission	Yes	A transition committee should be appointed by June 1, 2016 and tasked with delivering its report by December 1

# A Road Map for Illinois to Create a World Class Natural Resource Agency

## Road Map Implementation

1. **New Governance:** Implement a new governance model similar to a cooperative business including a CEO, COO, CFO and an apolitical governing commission through administrative and legislative changes to the IDNR structure;
2. **New Funding Model:** Identify Private / NGO partners and engage in partnerships, cease purchases and leases from Central Management Services and secure long term dedicated funding sources;
3. **New Leadership:** Implement requirements for IDNR leaders to have natural resource experience and be professionals in their field; and
4. **New Decision Making Process:** Complete studies of IDNR services with close constituent collaboration and implement recommended changes and initiatives to enhance Illinois natural resources and drive economic growth.



## Expected Results

When implemented, the recommendations in this report will provide and foster:

- Economic efficiencies and growth
- Science-driven policy decisions
- Increased and improved outdoor recreational opportunities
- Greater constituent participation, representation and satisfaction

# A Road Map for Illinois to Create a World Class Natural Resource Agency



# Executive Summary

This report is focused on the following prioritized governing principles:

## I. Executive Structure

- a) Governance
- b) Management
- c) Subcommittees

## II. Funding

## III. Science, Public Lands, Resource and Constituent Based Decision Making

- a) Legally Dedicated Funds
- b) State Parks
- c) State Natural Areas
- d) Fish and Wildlife Management Areas
- e) Extraction Permits
- f) Recreational Permits
- g) Operational Purchasing and Leasing
- h) Hunter Education
- i) ENTICE
- j) Law Enforcement
- k) Firearm Owners Identification
- l) Public Access
- m) Resource Management
- n) Role of Legislature
- o) Science-based Management
- p) Clean Water
- q) Conservation Congress
- r) Public Relations
- s) Partnerships
- t) Threatened and Endangered Species

## Historical Review

In 2002, IDNR's budget and head count was significantly different. Today, IDNR is a shell of its former self. It has lost much of its experienced leadership, is not respected nationally and suffers from a lack of confidence among staff and the constituency it serves.

Its funding has been reduced to a level where essential services cannot be delivered; wildlife, fisheries and natural resource management suffer; research has been emasculated and the quality of the recreational experience on public lands has been degraded.

It is time to establish a new direction based upon innovation, economic efficiency, public/private partnerships, resource enhancement, and professionalism without political partisanship and patronage – all focusing on natural resource management, constituent service and economic efficiency.

IDNR should be restructured, both in terms of operations and philosophy. To regain constituent trust and its reputation as a national leader, IDNR can no longer function as a totally publicly financed enterprise operating through a politically influenced bureaucracy ignoring science, constituent desires and economics. Under the existing managerial model, IDNR will not have the financial resources or the trust of the Illinois citizenry to carry out its legislative mandates.

The department should use best management practices whether they exist in government or the private sector. Going forward, the IDNR should include public/private partnerships and institute desirable managerial components of a business structure rather than the typical government agency which is encumbered by inefficiencies and lack of accountability. IDNR restructuring will drive economic efficiency, resource management and constituent service.



## I. Executive Structure

a. **Governance** – Without exception, all reviewers nationwide strongly favored the establishment of a governing commission for IDNR. Several methods of selecting commissioners were discussed by the reviewers and should be considered, either in combination or as standalone protocols. They include but are not limited to gubernatorial appointments; selection of commissioners through a Conservation Congress; geographical distribution; or select representation of major nongovernmental organizations related to natural resources.

- Commissioners should be elected or appointed for up to two terms not exceeding four years each, with staggered terms so as to transcend election cycles. Ten to 12 commissioners are recommended to keep the number manageable and provide broad representation.
- The commission would be responsible for approving IDNR budgets, strategic plans, license and user fees, oversight of seasons and bag limits, land acquisition, and the selection of candidates for the department's chief executive officer. The commission would recommend to the governor a list of candidates for CEO. The chosen candidate would then enter a performance-based contract that will be for a term of five to seven years, reviewed annually with the option of renewal. The appointment should not be of a political nature.
- Recommended requirements of commission membership: A majority of gubernatorial appointees should have held a hunting and/or fishing license for the previous three years, ensuring that crucial constituent groups that provide significant funds to IDNR are represented. Consideration through gubernatorial appointment should be given to large user groups that pay significant license or permit fees.
- All elected or appointed commissioners must have been involved in conservation and or management of natural resources as a part of their business or philanthropic background and not been engaged in state government as an employee or lobbyist for the previous five years nor should they be a paid staff member of any non-governmental organization that may seek funds from IDNR.

This should be a leading priority in any effort to improve IDNR. A separate report outlining the advantages of a commission is attached.

b. **Management** – The department should have a chief executive officer, a chief operations officer and a chief financial officer. The CEO represents the department's vision – a strategic minded individual with the ability to think long term. This person must be a strong communicator, marketer and relationship builder with deep ties to the conservation community as well as the outdoor industry, recreation and land management arenas.

Implicitly, the CEO must have a strong natural resource and management background and be dedicated to the future of hunting, fishing, land stewardship and outdoor recreation. The CEO should be a well-known conservation leader, either nationally, in this state or in the state of his or her previous employment. The COO must have a natural resource background as well as strong experience and disciplinary skills related to the job's responsibilities and be a strong administrator. The COO and CFO must have a close relationship with the CEO. The COO and CFO require a sound background in financial management, familiarity with special funds and knowledge of governmental and non-governmental funds that complement the IDNR's mission.

Beyond these three leadership positions, IDNR needs a federal aid coordinator reporting to the CFO who is very experienced in how federal dollars flow to states for natural resources. Other key positions are very experienced and talented disciplinary Division Leaders respected for their knowledge and service in their respective fields.

**c. Subcommittees** - The commission should have several discipline-related subcommittees, consisting of commission members and selected constituents with expertise in respective disciplines. The subcommittees should be charged with making recommendations on those issues as assigned by the commission chairman.



## II. Funding

Illinois' system for funding its natural resources agency is one of the nation's most complex and fails to provide the foundation for good natural resource management. The IDNR should receive a consistent base amount of funds annually to conduct its business for the people.

Funding now comes from a variety of sources. Dedicated funds are revenues that are dedicated to a specific purpose and usually have a predetermined source. Special funds are defined much in the same way, though the funding sources may not be predetermined. General Revenue funds come from the taxes all constituents pay and are normally used for resources that all have an opportunity to enjoy, such as state parks. Bond funds normally are used for maintenance of existing capital such as roads, buildings and levees, and the bonds are paid down from General Revenue allocated through the General Assembly.

In the last decade many of the state's dedicated and special funds have been "swept" and used for purposes for which they were not intended. This action by the General Assembly has made it impossible to professionally manage and plan. Many of the funds have experienced roller coaster-like management, making it difficult if not impossible for programmatic implementation.

Contrast this with the Natural Resource and Damage Assessment Fund, managed through a consistent and forward-thinking chief of environmental enforcement for the Attorney General's Office. It has made dramatic improvements for Natural Resources in Illinois. This money could have been squandered but instead it has been statutorily protected and used to the benefit of Illinois.

Dedicated and special funds should be made untouchable from this point forward. Poor fiscal management and planning is no reason to cause for the degradation of Illinois natural resources.

Some funds such as the Wildlife and Fish Fund are protected by federal statute; a state statute could protect Illinois' dedicated and special funds in much the same way. A separate set of recommendations on dedicated funds is included.

General Revenue funds have been similarly mismanaged without the consistent thinking that is desperately needed for long-term natural resource planning. In 2002, IDNR managed 550,000 acres of sites, wetlands and waters; today it manages slightly more but its General Revenue dollars have dropped by \$76 million, or 19 percent. It also has approximately half the staff as it did 14 years ago.

Illinois should develop a General Revenue funding model similar to those states that lead the nation in natural resource management, such as Missouri, Arkansas, or Minnesota. Many models exist, and each of them should be considered by a group empowered by the governor to suggest the most appropriate version or combination for Illinois. This group should be bipartisan in nature, involving people with backgrounds in natural-resource management and fiscal management from both the private and public sectors

Illinois should also focus on philanthropic efforts to help fund IDNR. The Illinois Conservation Foundation holds this potential. It is responsible for raising money for needed yet underfunded IDNR programs. During its first eight years of operation it raised more than \$16 million.

The foundation once again has a professional executive director and a board that is willing to help. It needs direction, focus, targeted projects and leadership to regain trust and restore credibility. Illinois is rich in history as well as natural resources and cultural diversity. Raising money for natural resources and very importantly championing our rich natural heritage linked to history can be accomplished by an innovative and forward-thinking Conservation Foundation.

### III. Science, Public Lands, Resource and Constituent-Based Decision-Making

**a. Legally Dedicated Funds** – A thorough review/audit of the expenditure of all dedicated fund accounts should be conducted immediately, including but not limited to Fish and Wildlife; Open Space Land Acquisition and Development; Pittman-Robertson/Dingell-Johnson; Waterfowl Stamp and Habitat Stamp funds. This review should go back to 2002 and determine if funds were expended per the purpose of the enabling legislation and if the state received the required reports from those who were awarded such funds. (Please see IDNR’s Dedicated Fund Review under separate cover).

**b. State Parks** – Illinois State Parks and Fish and Wildlife areas are underfunded with a huge maintenance backlog. An Illinois State Parks and Lands Committee should be established as a subcommittee of the IDNR Commission. This subcommittee would oversee IDNR lands and report to the commission as to budgetary needs, management requirements, and potential for privatization of service, public/private partnerships and the selection of the optimal management structure for each state-owned facility. Some state lands should be considered for operation through privatization such as the World Shooting Complex in Sparta.

**c. State Natural Areas** – An updated study of the condition of the state’s natural areas as defined by the State Natural Area Inventory should be undertaken. The Illinois Natural History Survey should chair the task force and ask for participation of the Illinois Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Openlands Project. The report should be drafted for review to the IDNR Commission and a deadline for completion set by the governor. The charge is to provide an executive overview of the natural areas’ conditions; propose budgets to return them to appropriate standards of management; and

prioritizing areas for protection . As part of the recommendation, the Natural History Survey, TNC and Openlands should suggest funding sources including public/private partnerships.

**d. Fish & Wildlife Management Areas** – Numerous areas available for public consumptive recreation are now poorly managed due to insufficient operating funds, lack of management expertise and lack of equipment. Each state wildlife management and public hunting and/or fishing area should be evaluated with recommendations for improving economic efficiency, user opportunity and quality of experience. A task force for each site should be established that includes the local user group organizations, such as the Lake Carlyle Waterfowl Association and the Rend Lake Waterfowl Association. Representatives of these groups would serve in concert with state managers on review committees. Their reports should be presented to the department CEO, within a stipulated time period designated by the CEO, and should include ways in which public/private partnerships can serve each area.

As with state parks, consideration should be given to having private entities assume the management of areas or specific responsibilities in areas. Review of the current practices for public hunting, fishing and wildlife watching should be undertaken to determine if increased economic efficiency can be gained by using private entities or public/private partnerships to provide game birds, fish stocking, habitat management and constituent services.

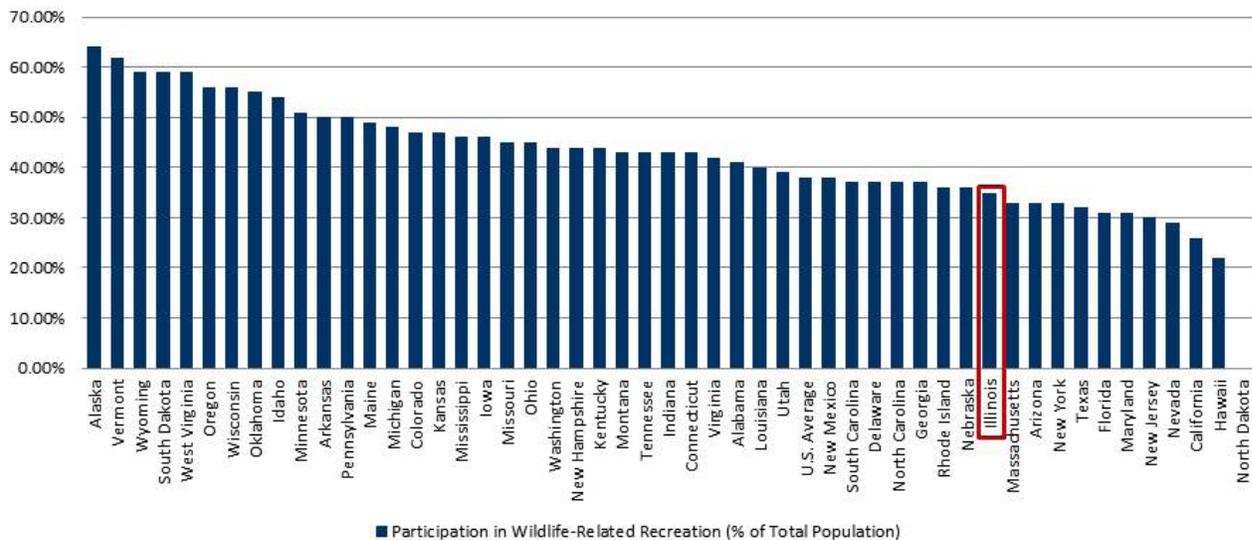
**e. Extraction Permits** – IDNR must improve permitting review and issuance services. Simplification and expediting requests while still protecting the environment is a must especially for energy (coal, oil, natural gas). To achieve a more efficient process, the department should maintain appropriate staffing levels for permit issuance and empower individuals experienced in the discipline as well as knowledgeable in protecting the environment.

## Participation in wildlife-related recreation

Illinois ranks 39<sup>th</sup> in participation in wildlife-related recreation  
(e.g., fishing, hunting or wildlife-watching)

This is the result of failed leadership and is causing an economic loss and  
constituent disenfranchisement

### Participation in Wildlife-Related Recreation (% of Total Population)



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014. 2011 National Survey of Fishing, hunting, Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Available at: <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/about/Documents/FHW11.pdf>

**f. Recreational Permits** – A review and report to the governor as to the recommended cost of licenses and user fees should be conducted, with the deadline determined by the governor. Boat registration, deer, turkey, landowner, trapper, commercial fishing, outfitter, guide, off-road vehicle fees and all permits need constituency review in regard to cost, complexity, efficiency of issuance and enforcement. Permits should be a method of developing dedicated funds for the agency while remaining convenient for the constituency. Increases in permits or fees should be tied to an improvement in program performance or an adjustment due to the economy. Ideally these increases would be reviewed and justified by the IDNR commission.

**g. Operational Purchasing and Leasing** – As an overriding guideline, IDNR should not own equipment beyond that deemed essential. Instead, equipment should be leased, preferably from Illinois manufacturers, or the services required to operate such equipment should be contracted with third parties for work such as levee repair of waterfowl management areas, mowing of state parks, planting of wildlife food plots, repair of boat docks and ramps. All equipment purchase and leasing, as well as building leasing, carried out through Central Management Services should be terminated immediately.

There should be an independent Leasing and Procurement Committee for IDNR reporting to the CEO. This committee should be comprised of individuals with experience in building leases, heavy equipment, maintenance and purchasing, ideally appointed by and reporting to the department CEO. Each site should have an economic efficiency review to determine the best management practices for that location and local partnerships (including utilization of heavy equipment, mowing facility clean-up should be encouraged and emphasized).

**h. Hunter Education** – For a variety of societal and structural reasons, it is increasingly difficult to recruit and maintain new hunters and anglers. Hunter education, which stands at the core of hunter recruitment, can be an impediment when it limits opportunity for participation. A modern Hunter Education program should ensure a high level of basic hunter education and firearms safety while being user-friendly and support diverse opportunities for enhancing hunter safety and heritage programs. The program should embrace new technologies and delivery techniques and provide a viable alternative to taking the basic course in person.

The McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership has developed a set of recommendations that, if implemented, would place Illinois at the lead in America at facilitating Hunter Education Certification (A separate report on hunter education is attached).

**i. ENTICE** – The Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education in schools should be revived, utilizing public/private partnerships and enhanced through social media and a prescribed syllabus.

It can be a core example of how IDNR is advancing a holistic approach to outdoor education. Children need the outdoors and in the long term, our environment and all conservation will be well served by the involvement of many generations.

**ENTICE** should be the avenue of invitation for urban and rural children through the Illinois education system, providing leadership across Illinois and setting an example nationally.

**j. Law Enforcement** – Natural resource law enforcement has had to evolve with societal changes, many of which require a highly trained law enforcement background. The game warden of days gone by dealt only with fish and game issues such as overharvest, poaching, illegal methods of take, trespassing and many other violations on private properties and state facilities. They also served a very important educational function by helping outdoor enthusiasts they met in the field.

The modern conservation police officer deals with all of those issues in addition to maladies related to today's society. CPOs routinely make drug arrests, investigate accidents, robberies, rape, murder and gang activities on state-owned properties or on private properties in rural areas. They are first responders to hunting accidents as well as mishaps on the waters of Illinois including Lake Michigan, and are trained as responders to terrorism related threats. Recently a CPO outran others in the law enforcement community and apprehended an armed bank robber who had fled on foot to a rural area.

Yet it must be remembered that CPOs are often the only contact that the general public has afield with the IDNR. As more people are introduced to outdoor activities and society becomes more and more urban it is very important that CPOs play the role of emissary to those with little or no experience. In addition, the conservation police represent the only law enforcement agency with the knowledge and empowered status to protect the resource.

Therefore, a renewed emphasis should be placed on conservation education and the value of engaging the public in a non-threatening manner. Volunteer programs modeled on the successful "neighborhood watch" programs should be



encouraged to bring about more eyes and ears afield in the protection of our natural resources.

Management should continually emphasize and promote the concept of officer as educator, while striving to ensure that CPO ranks are fully staffed. Otherwise, public safety and fish and wildlife protection cannot be maintained.

**k. Firearm Owners Identification** – In recent years many positive changes have been made to allow individuals to participate in a hunting or shooting experience as long as they are accompanied by someone who possesses a valid FOID. But it remains technically illegal for an adult to participate in an informal target shooting session or go hunting with a FOID holder on private ground. Such outings introduced millions of Americans to hunting and the basics of the shooting sports. A simple change to the

law, in the same spirit as the previous changes, would prevent hundreds of honest citizens from unintentionally breaking the law each year and would be welcomed by hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts statewide.

**I. Public Access** – Illinois ranks near the bottom of the 50 states in public access for hunting and fishing opportunity and general outdoor recreation. The keys to public access are working with private landowners including corporations, power companies, agriculture, mining operations. Within a timeline established by the governor, the IDNR and the Illinois Department of Agriculture should provide proposals to create an access program for those who hunt, fish and watch wildlife. This would increase opportunity and also provide economic benefits to landowners. Ideally, an IDNR commission would take the lead.

**m. Resource Management** – Historically IDNR was set up to provide management of wildlife and fisheries as there were no nongovernmental organizations capable of doing so. This is no longer true. A review of the functions of each of the professionals employed and each division of IDNR should be undertaken. Where possible, these responsibilities should be carried out in strong cooperation with NGOs operating in Illinois who can assist in the execution of existing IDNR responsibilities. This includes native and natural lands management as well as each recreation user group (waterfowl, fish, upland birds, big game, furbearer, open space, hiking, etc.).

**n. Role of Legislature** – Illinois is among a very few states that depend upon its legislature to enact rules and regulations governing seasons for hunting, trapping and fishing and methods of take. These decisions should reside with professionals in the respective fields. An IDNR commission should have the authority and responsibility to determine game and fish seasons and license fees, including the issuance of lifetime stamps, hunting and fishing licenses, the pricing of annual and lifetime stamps, and licenses.

**o. Science-based management** – Illinois has two of the world's most respected natural resource research agencies in the Prairie Research Institute and the Illinois State Museum. The cornerstone of good management is good science; each organization must be integrated into critical decisions made by IDNR for the good of the agency and Illinois citizenry as a whole. As the Illinois State Museum is part of IDNR and the Prairie Research Institute has historically supported the IDNR as well as a plethora of other agencies, we suggest routinized consultation and a strong relationship based in science. Conservation education should be supported through traveling displays provided for and maintained by the Illinois State Museum at Illinois State Parks, the Thompson Center, the Southern Illinois Interpretive Center and the IDNR Headquarters.

**p. Clean Water** – Illinois is regrettably among the national leaders in adding nitrogen and silt loads to our waterways, creating water quality issues that likely will cause the federal government to increasingly regulate nitrogen and other water pollutants, potentially bringing serious economic harm to Illinois. The state and its IDNR must take action, leveraging available federal funds and actions from state and federal agencies. A forward-looking revitalization of initiatives to improve water quality and expand the state's habitat base is required.

Illinois must improve and expand its aquatic, terrestrial and wetland habitat base, which mitigates nitrogen. The state also should initiate cooperative agreements with state and federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and others including NGOs for all-inclusive cooperative comprehensive projects. Having IDNR identify ways to salvage and improve high quality waterways is vital in cooperation with a strategically based collaboration of all stakeholders. The governor should immediately convene a task force comprised of IDNR, Illinois Department of Agriculture, municipal interests, NGOs and all applicable Federal agencies to offer solutions to improving Illinois water quality and thereby our quality of life and economic opportunity.

In that Illinois through the IDNR once led the nation in cooperative strategic agreements focusing on river ways and streams, standards and protocols of already developed proven programs currently exist; federal and state agencies, nongovernmental organizations as well as landowners fully support and would welcome reintegration of existing sorely underutilized programs such as CREP. The timeline for delivering recommendations should be established by the governor. In that IDNR has responsibility for oversight of the state's waters, the IDNR CEO ideally would chair this task force.

This initiative will build upon Illinois Rivers 20/20 and other historically successful programs. This kind of leadership once distinguished Illinois DNR and can once again.

**q. Reinvent and reinvigorate the Conservation Congress** – The Conservation Congress was considered a great innovation and a means by which constituents could make a difference in the management and direction of the agency. By reintroducing the successful Congresses of the 1990s, utilizing modern techniques such as social media and hastening the process, the Conservation Congress can once again provide much-needed political support, direction and advice to a well-functioning commission. The Conservation Congress should be immediately revived, with the governor and IDNR CEO personally hosting and welcoming input from a long-ignored constituency.

**r. Public Relations** – As with any modern organization, public relations and public image are integral to success. IDNR should significantly improve its communication strategies and constituent outreach as well as education programs. IDNR's strategies should be revamped to take advantage of technologies that provide marketing analytics on site visitors, fostering improved customer service, data collection and constituent input. The agency should also follow the lead of several other states by developing an app to disseminate public information including news releases, parks, camping, hiking/biking trails, seasons, bag limits, fishing areas etc.

**s. Partnerships** – Public/private partnerships are key to successful management of natural resources and providing recreation to the public. Across the state there are examples of missed opportunities. Partnerships with federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, local units of government and private landowners are of critical importance in cleaning up our lakes, rivers and streams as well as putting more habitat on the ground and providing more recreational

opportunity. Partnership development, fiscally and otherwise, should be a priority in all opportunities at IDNR and a priority for the commission.

**t. Threatened and Endangered Species** – Illinois has historically had a strong division of Natural Heritage. That division should be maintained and enhanced whenever possible. Illinois should also lead the nation in revision of its endangered species act. Unfortunately the Federal Endangered Species Act (as does Illinois and all states) incorporates a method of listing Threatened and Endangered species of plants and animals that does not require a recovery plan or target for species recovery. (Wolves are a perfect example.) In the absence of legally established delisting criteria, lawyers and extreme animal rights groups have a field day in litigating recovery standards.

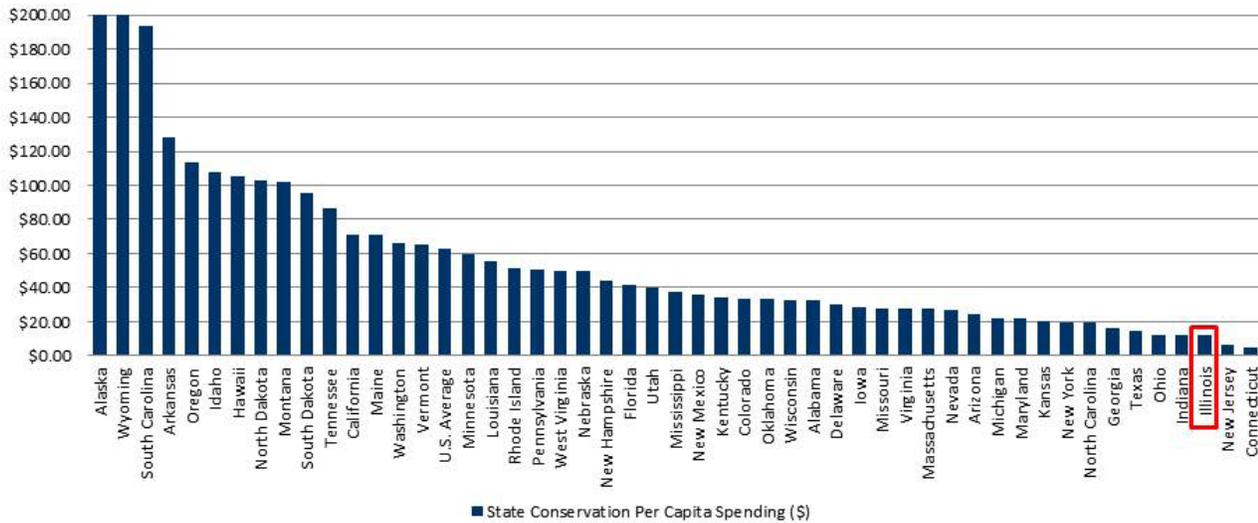
Illinois should be the first state to require recovery criteria establishment in its protocol as plants or animals are listed. Endangered species laws should not become a tool of special interests as we have experienced in the past. The Illinois Natural History Survey should begin developing appropriate legislative language immediately, in conjunction with the attorney general's office.

The success of Illinois' Endangered Species Act is not measured in the listing of species but in the recovery of those species to the point that they are delisted. It is common sense and good natural resource management that these benchmarks be established.

# In recent years Illinois has not been investing in its natural resources

Illinois ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in total conservation spending per capita

### State Conservation Per Capita Spending (\$)



*Much of what investment is being done has been largely independent of the IDNR and achieved through private landowners, conservation NGO's, and an open market economy for outdoor recreation.*

Southwick Associates, 2015. Data Compilation for Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

## Summary:

The IDNR's mission is to “manage, conserve and protect Illinois’ natural, recreational and cultural resources, further the public’s understanding and appreciation of those resources, and promote the education, science and public safety of Illinois’ natural resources for present and future generations.” This report encourages and complements IDNR’s written Mission Statement. Illinois is 48th in per-capita natural resource spending and at the bottom of states offering outdoor recreation.

Wildlife, fisheries, threatened and endangered resources and the public’s ability to foster a thriving outdoor-related economy based on recreation have been compromised.

Hunters, anglers and traditional outdoorsmen and women and their families across the state have supported wildlife and fisheries management for years through the payment of fees and purchase of licenses. Times have changed, and today people from all walks of life participate in outdoor activities and support politically the idea of a good, healthy and wholesome environment.

Wildlife watching is a close second to hunting and fishing in the amount of economic benefit to Illinois’ economy. Boaters contribute annually through boat registrations, while non-consumptive users are unified in their belief that natural resource management must be addressed.

In truth, birders, cyclists, canoeists, naturalists, hikers, cross country skiers, snowmobilers etc. all depend on IDNR to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Illinois. Study after study has shown that corporate leaders weigh and measure access to outdoor-related activities when looking to relocate a business or industry. Managed, enhanced and preserved natural resources offering a plethora of recreational activities are good for the financial health of Illinois and the individual wellbeing of its citizenry.

But for far too long, IDNR and its employees, programs and policies have been a political puppet. IDNR desperately needs to be restructured, respected and treated with purpose and vision to reach its full economic and quality of life potential in Illinois.

This report reflects the thinking of some of the best natural-resource managers in the United States. Leaders throughout the state and nation representing non-governmental organizations, business, industry, grass roots and the outdoor recreation community have all generously provided valued insight. This report is the blueprint for creating an exceptional, forward-thinking, economically efficient, resource and constituent-driven IDNR.

With the current leadership in Illinois, now is the time to create the best natural-resource agency in the nation.



## The Case for a Commission

This report suggests innovative and state-of-the-art methods of achieving a highly functioning natural resources agency that will once again be considered a national leader. In making these recommendations, one concept was universally suggested and rigorously championed by reviewers from Illinois and throughout the nation: The conversion of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to a commission form of governance.

The net result of this conversion would be the diminishment of politics as an influence on natural-resource management. The department leadership would be professional and no longer determined by political whim, subject to change with every gubernatorial election – and no longer liable to chicanery, such as appointing an untrained legislator as a “director” for a month and increasing his/her pension by more than 25 percent. Instead, a citizen-based commission would be charged with recommending to the governor the hiring of the department’s top executives – a process that will ensure professionalism, continuity and consistency in these vital roles.

This fundamental change would foster better constituent service and ensure that the department’s policies are rooted in science, economic efficiency and sustainability. It would streamline the decision-making process and make better use of taxpayer dollars. A well-run governing commission would also improve employee morale dramatically and ultimately position the department to attract the best and brightest employees.

The nation’s most respected and recognizably best natural-resource agencies are managed by commissions. Of these, Wyoming, Missouri and South Dakota are especially notable. Their commissioners are allowed to make decisions that are in the best interests of the resource while still accommodating interested citizens and constituencies.

## Many previous IDNR directors had minimal backgrounds in natural resource management and conservation leadership

### This stands in stark contrast to the directors and governing commissions of other natural resource departments

State	Leadership Experience
Missouri	The Missouri DNR is led by a director with a strong background in natural resource management and the majority of the commissions that report to the director have specific membership requirements to be staffed with professionals or practitioners.
Wisconsin	The Wisconsin Natural Resource Board must include among its members a representation of backgrounds in agriculture and individuals who have held hunting, fishing, or trapping licenses.
Michigan	The Director of the Michigan DNR has a strong policy background with a passion for hunting, fishing, camping and hiking.
Florida	The Florida Wildlife Commission's seven members are appointed by the Governor and all currently have strong backgrounds studying, advocating for, and working with natural resources.

***The IDNR Director now in place is very well suited to manage and oversee the changes we are suggesting, some of which may take years***

This change would allow the department's professionally trained managers to present ideas and concepts in periodic open public meetings – in other states with commissions, the meetings are held regularly on evenings and weekends, maximizing the potential for citizen input and participation. The commissioners act on all rules and regulations involving the department, taking into consideration the needs and desires of the public.

The authors of this report have led both commission-run and non-commission-run natural resource agencies. The accomplishments and constituency satisfaction through the commission system of governance was far more inclusive, productive and successful.

Reviewers of this report have served as presidents of the century-old International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, now known as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Based on their experiences, they believe that those few state agencies with politically appointed directors cannot function at the same high levels of professionalism and competency as those managed by commissions. Staffs from states with politically appointed directors were always in a "survival mode," while those managed by commissions could follow a career track where performance, responsibility and reward were interrelated.

By their very nature, commissions are able to plan strategically, addressing long-term goals and objectives. This is the proper method of managing fish, wildlife and land. Wildlife populations don't change overnight, and ecological changes of existing or planned critical habitat can take decades. Our current management system looks ahead only so far as the next election – an approach that is totally inappropriate and inadequate.

Historically Illinois had a place at the table in regard to national decisions about our natural resources. Illinois' conservation leaders have presented ideas and programs before Congress and even provided the stimulus for changing

the Migratory Bird Act Treaty with Canada and Mexico. Illinois presented the first comprehensive Conservation Reserve Enhancement program, was a meaningful leader in waterfowl decisions and set an example of cooperation with federal agencies, including the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Agriculture and the EPA.

Most important, the state has a rich tradition of citizens who are active in and concerned about the future of our outdoor heritage. Those citizens deserve the best possible system of managing the state's natural resources. They deserve a commission.

A transformation of the IDNR must address governance, funding, professional leadership, constituent representation and resource enhancement and stewardship.

### Guiding Principles of Premier Natural Resource Management

	Independent Governance	Sustained Funding	Professional Leadership	Constituent Representation	Resource Enhancement and Stewardship
Definition	Natural resource agencies need to be able to respond rapidly to emergent situations (disease, invasive species, etc.) and excessive legislative oversight can severely limit the ability of a natural resource management agency to adapt.	Ecosystem restorations require extended periods of time (>40 years). Funding sources must be available to support long term investments that result in economic growth.	Natural resource management requires a strong understanding of best practices and the science that support key decisions. Effective natural resource management agency leaders are professionals in the field.	There are many organizations across the country acquiring funds and implementing natural resource management initiatives. An effective natural resource management agency will leverage the expertise and support of the base of these organizations.	A department of natural resources should go beyond sustaining resources to enhancing a state's natural resources for recreation, economic development, and conservation of threatened species and landscapes.
					
Examples	The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has the authority to enact rules and regulations.	In 2008 the citizens of Minnesota approved a three-eighths percent increase in sales and use tax to improve water quality, drive outdoor recreation and advance the arts.	Wisconsin Natural Resource Board must include among its members backgrounds in agriculture and individuals who have held hunting, fishing, or trapping licenses.	The IDNR's conservation congress, when treated as a serious portion of IDNR's governance, allows constituent's expertise to be leveraged.	The Colorado Department of Natural Resource's mission is to develop, preserve and enhance Colorado's natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future citizens and visitors.

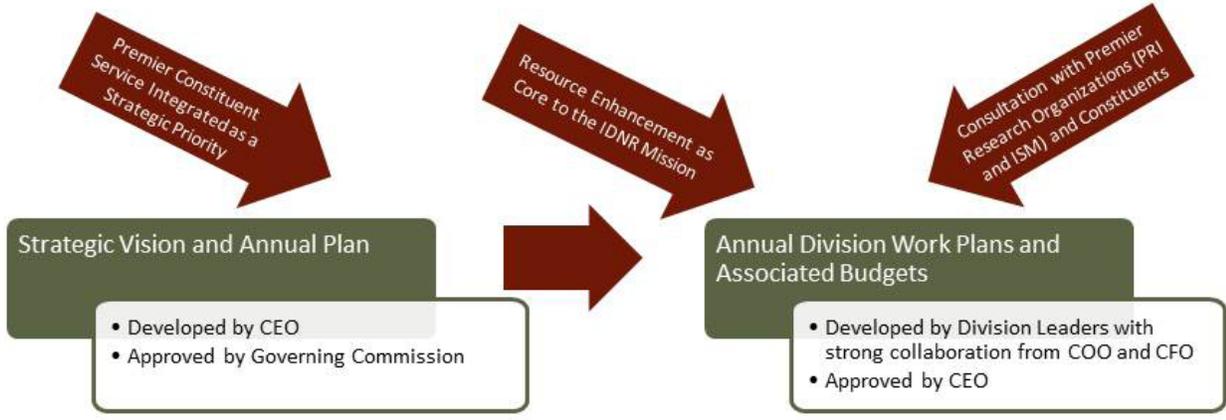


- Governing Commission**
- Selection**
- Selected through Gubernatorial appointment or via Conservation Congress or other major natural Resource NGOs
- Responsibilities**
- Select CEO candidates
  - Approval of budget, strategic plans, license fees and land acquisition
  - Oversight of the CEO
- CEO**
- Selected by Governor from the Governing Commission recommended candidate pool
  - Responsible for the strategic vision of the IDNR
- COO / CFO**
- Strong natural resource background and proven administrative and financial management experience

***This structure will enable the IDNR to execute its unique and important mission***

**This restructuring will require greater constituent representation and should be guided by a principle of natural resource enhancement and stewardship.**

Implement science, resource enhancement-focused, and premier constituent service based-decision making  
 A reestablishment of the conservation congress can be a strong source of public / political support, direction and advice to the new Governing Commission



Constituent representation and engagement will be driven through a state of the art **interactive and digital communications platform**  
 IDNR must remain vigilant in its use of traditional media and communications platforms but youth engagement will be driven largely by cutting edge social and interactive media

## How to do it

The transition from politically appointed leadership to a commission is complex and will take determination. It will require strong leadership from the governor's office, political fortitude and a willingness on the part of legislators to cede some authority. This is a step that many states have undertaken.

The people of Illinois do not trust the agency. It has been plagued by political nepotism, a downgrading of state parks, a lack of professional responsiveness, and overall, very negative press. The professional staff no longer believes they can advance on a career ladder, and morale is very low. Our national reputation has been badly damaged. As a result, Illinois can no longer recruit from the best of the best managers.

Change is needed, and it will take a dramatic effort to turn it around. As we all know President Theodore Roosevelt is not remembered for his dealings with Congress or other national leaders. He is remembered for the changes he made, through his strong will and leadership, for the benefit of America's natural resources. It's time for that type of leadership in Illinois.

An ad hoc committee appointed by the governor should be charged with leading the transition. A theoretical makeup would include:

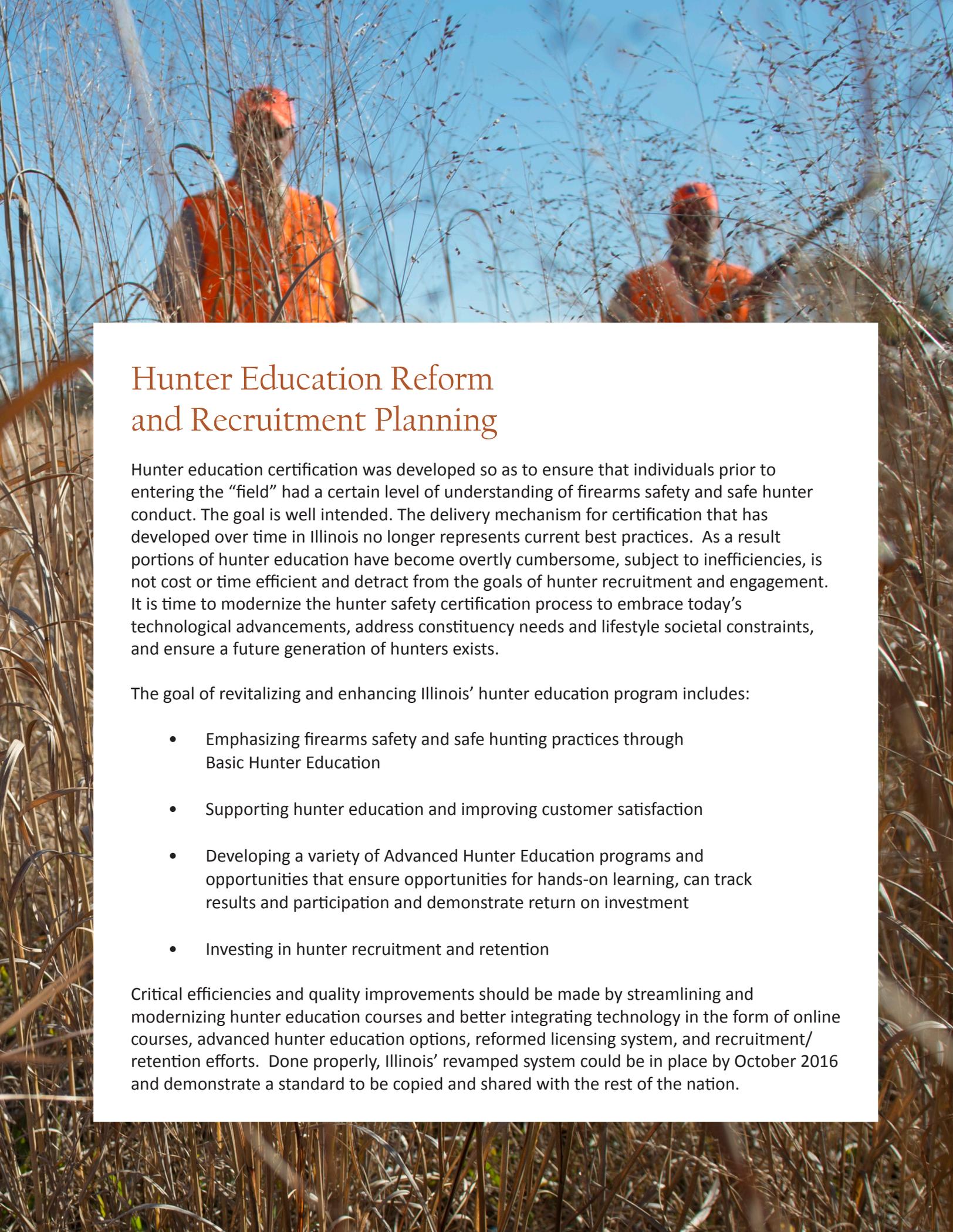
- A representative from the governor's office
- Two members of the existing IDNR advisory board
- One or two highly respected retired employees of the DNR
- One or more representatives of the business community
- The IDNR director or a designee

This board could be advised by selected and invited representation from major constituency groups as well as liaisons from the Illinois House and Senate.

The committee would be charged with the following tasks:

1. Determine the logistics of the transition.
2. Determine the selection process for commissioners
3. Identify and describe fully the duties and responsibilities of the commissioners
4. Identify the statutory changes needed to put a commission in place
5. Put together a timeline for that transition



A photograph of two hunters in orange gear standing in a field of tall, dry grass under a clear blue sky. The hunters are positioned in the upper half of the frame, partially obscured by the grass. The overall scene is bright and natural.

## Hunter Education Reform and Recruitment Planning

Hunter education certification was developed so as to ensure that individuals prior to entering the “field” had a certain level of understanding of firearms safety and safe hunter conduct. The goal is well intended. The delivery mechanism for certification that has developed over time in Illinois no longer represents current best practices. As a result portions of hunter education have become overtly cumbersome, subject to inefficiencies, is not cost or time efficient and detract from the goals of hunter recruitment and engagement. It is time to modernize the hunter safety certification process to embrace today’s technological advancements, address constituency needs and lifestyle societal constraints, and ensure a future generation of hunters exists.

The goal of revitalizing and enhancing Illinois’ hunter education program includes:

- Emphasizing firearms safety and safe hunting practices through Basic Hunter Education
- Supporting hunter education and improving customer satisfaction
- Developing a variety of Advanced Hunter Education programs and opportunities that ensure opportunities for hands-on learning, can track results and participation and demonstrate return on investment
- Investing in hunter recruitment and retention

Critical efficiencies and quality improvements should be made by streamlining and modernizing hunter education courses and better integrating technology in the form of online courses, advanced hunter education options, reformed licensing system, and recruitment/retention efforts. Done properly, Illinois’ revamped system could be in place by October 2016 and demonstrate a standard to be copied and shared with the rest of the nation.

Currently, Illinois' hunter education program is antiquated, struggles to keep up with demand and limits participation by requiring a field day to supplement the online hunter education course. In Illinois and elsewhere, traditional in-classroom courses are overbooked, difficult to attend, and are subject to inconsistencies in their instruction style, student makeup, and efficiency. This creates a very low customer satisfaction rate, hampers recruitment efforts, and greatly marginalizes the agency's role with its constituency base. A new approach should take advantage of existing technology to ensure a more consistent and participatory experience.

The hunter education experience should ensure a high level of safety from its graduates and a tailored, meaningful experience that is more than a "course and a card" handed out at mandatory attendance-based programs. Critical advancements extend beyond the hunter education program and include building the agency's capabilities to understanding customer engagement strategies, participation, and satisfaction rates. Doing so would empower the IDNR to be more efficient, recruit new hunters and anglers, and reactivate and engage existing customers.

Key areas of reform and advancement include:

## **Modernizing Hunter Education Courses**

An improved hunter education program should provide a high standard of safe firearm handling and hunting behavior that can be supported through testing. A "one size fits all" approach no longer meets the needs of a diverse constituency. Thus, course offerings should be incremental and oriented to the individual, their age, and experience level. This will create a unique, efficient and effective experience that can extend past the initial Basic Hunter Education certification process and engage hunters in future Advanced/Enhanced Hunter Education opportunities, field experiences, and specific safety communications.

The Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Act provides the following guidance on Hunter Education program development. Basic Hunter Education intends to provide "programs for the education of hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible hunters." Enhanced (Advanced) Hunter Education builds from the Basic course and provides "the enhancement of basic hunter education programs through hunter and sporting firearm safety programs and hunter development programs, and to introduce individuals to the shooting sports and increase opportunities for recreational firearms and archery shooting activities."

In accordance with that guidance, IDNR should reinforce the Basic Hunter Education program offerings to ensure ample opportunity for participation and that successful participants with an understanding of firearms safety and the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to become a responsible hunter. Basic courses focus on safe practices and how to further develop the skills required of a responsible hunter. Additional skills development, hands-on training, field conduct, and Learn-to-Hunt activities can then be offered as Advanced/Enhanced Hunter Education programs for those who desire such opportunities or have no access to the traditional mentoring networks of friends and family.

- **Development of a Basic Hunter Education online course** – Illinois should implement a functional “online only” hunter education option that does not require a mandatory field day to achieve certification. This course should lead the nation by building from the best current practices in online hunter education, instruction and video production while integrating a new approach that matches course material to the age, experience level, and interest of the person pursuing certification. This approach will shift the focus from a test based on arbitrary field safety demonstrations to engaged learning. Successful applicants will most importantly be able to demonstrate an essential understanding of safe firearms handling and hunting practices across a gradient of test material based on experience, familiarity with the material, and age.
- **Refine Traditional Classroom Offerings** – Traditional classroom-based hunter education courses should still be offered. But with an “online only” option now available, classroom courses can be directed at those individuals who most desire a face-to-face experience and in-person skill demonstration of basic techniques. These would be particularly appropriate for youth and service groups (Scouts and Future Farmers of America), as well as customized courses such as Becoming an Outdoor Woman, which may also be combined with recruitment and retention outreach.
- **Advanced Hunter Education, Field Skills and Learn-to-Hunt Programing** – Development strategies and programing beyond the basic offering of hunter safety certification course need to be planned and integrated into Advanced Hunter Education and recruitment programs. This should include field, classroom, and online programs that allow hunters to gain additional experiences, refresh their skills, and advance their understanding of safe hunting practices and techniques. These should reflect the need to teach at multiple experience levels from beginner to advance in a continuing education model approach. Specific improvements include:

i. Fully engage existing hunter education volunteer instructors to lead and assist with Advanced Hunter Education programs related to field skills, youth seasons, firearms safety training, learn-to-hunt programs, and other recruitment and retention projects. This empowers and highlights the skills of the existing hunter education instructors by utilizing unique knowledge and embracing their passion for teaching field skills, safety, and proficiency.

ii. Develop a certification process that recognizes an individual’s completion of specific Advanced Proficiency courses with the primary goal of demonstrated skills, safe hunting techniques, and desirable hunter ethics. Completion of Advance Proficiency Courses can be incentivized by allowing select permit, access, preference point or hunt day drawings for those individuals who attend and complete the courses. This could be broadly applied to all public land drawings and/or specific to properties or seasons.

iii. Engage with NGO partners to develop a unified and well organized approach to hunter education and recruitment retention programing in IL. Many of the single species conservation groups (National Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, etc.) have vast local chapters and national initiatives to finance and engage in hunter recruitment. There are efficiencies to be gained by working further with them at the local, state, and national level (see R3 planning below).

- **Hunter Accident and Safety Data** – Law enforcement and hunter accident safety data should be used as an essential tool to shape future hunter safety curriculum. Data should be annually collected, categorized, analyzed for trends and utilized in statistical models to inform outreach efforts, teaching objectives and annual learning updates. These updates will serve to communicate needed safe practices to existing hunters, refresh Hunters Ed graduates, and shape future Hunter Ed curriculum changes.
- **Create Multi-State Partners with Shared Objectives** – Illinois should reach out to and partner with other states that embrace a progressive Hunter Education Program and include online options to ensure reciprocal learning objectives, testing techniques and performance reviews. This will help to ensure quality, national hunter safety curriculum relevancy, and provide opportunities for sharing improvements in testing, recruitment and retention.
- **Budget** – There are a variety of online testing and certification options that range from doing it completely in house to contracted services through a third-party vendor. Contracting with an outside vendor is by far the most efficient and ensures a high degree of quality and economic efficiency. A \$25 per person fee paid direct to the vendor typically would be enough to cover the online offering. The net cost to the state is only that in preparation and retooling of its approach to hunter education.

If implemented as described, these plans will put Illinois in the lead in implementing a modern, progressive and highly effective hunter education program. It will be more economically efficient and improve resource allocation and opportunity for the hunters of Illinois.



# Integrating Hunter Education, Technology, Licensing and Recruitment/Retention

Improvements in hunting and fishing in Illinois should start with understanding customer engagement, satisfaction, and participation rates. In a modern agency this would include an integrated data management and customer identification system. Several high quality independent vendors exist that operate these system at a national and international level, and further consideration should be given regarding the economic efficiency and improved skills that can be gained by contracting with these businesses and NGOs.

The budget estimate will vary on the degree of reforms implemented and the parameters of any needed new contracts. It is assumed that the IDNR currently has the technical ability to perform web analytics and redirect existing recruitment and retention budgets in a more organized manner. Additional budget to merge the efforts outlined below and acquire the needed outside expertise range from \$90,000-\$120,000 annually to establish and maintain the systems as described.

- **Identifying and Tracking Hunters** – Individuals who buy licenses and/or complete hunter education represent the majority of current and future “customers” of hunting and fishing. It is critical that these two databases are integrated and managed to determine use rates, engagement opportunities, programing needs, and effective marketing. A standardized system would greatly improve tracking and documentation of returns on investment and offer insight into potential program improvements.
- **Reform Licensing Options and Offerings** – License sales play a primary role in generating revenue for IDNR, through direct income from sales and federal support through Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds. The entire licensing and permit system should be reviewed to ensure it maximizes recruitment and retention, hunter opportunity, and desired management needs.
- **Improve Use and Capability of Electronic Outreach, Web Analytics, and Social Media** – A strong web presence is critical to support online hunter education, license sales, permit-draw registrations, and social media and marketing strategies. The current practices being used should be reviewed and qualified; integrated into communication and marketing strategies; and refined to ensure utility towards the agency mission and economic efficiencies.
- **Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Planning** – In the long term, IDNR must develop, implement and manage effective strategies to recruit new hunters and anglers, maintain existing ones, and reactive lapsed hunters and anglers. Without these efforts we will continue to see a reduction in the number of hunters who participate and buy licenses over time – and as a result, license-driven income will dwindle. Effective initiatives require an integration of multiple disciplines within in an agency, including hunter Education, licensing, hunting access, NGO partnership development, and marketing. IDNR should invest in a planning process that embraces the recommended changes and integrates them into a results-based initiative.



# Dedicated Funds and How to Protect Them and Ensure Their Efficient Use

The authors were asked to review select dedicated funds for Illinois Department of Natural Resources, in particular the funds' genesis, utilization, reporting and efficiency.

The McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership asked five well-known and highly respected natural resources and accounting professionals with direct experience in dealing with state funds and funding to participate on a committee for review, analysis and suggested improvement. Their input is reflected in this report, which is solely authored by CCL staff.

## Key Findings:

1. Dedicated funds are critical to agency efficiency, ensure long-term management objectives, and directly account for services to the constituency.
2. Sweeps of dedicated funds are short-sighted and detrimental to the natural resources and quality of life in Illinois.
3. Because personnel expenses have been shifted from General Revenue to Dedicated Funds, constituents are not receiving the anticipated or expected benefit from "user pay" funds such as the Illinois waterfowl stamp.
4. The state is not pursuing innovative funding techniques such as bonding of funds, philanthropic partnerships and private-sector funding.
5. Project reporting for implementation and performance is antiquated and needs modernization.
6. The Open Space Land Acquisition and Development fund (OSLAD) should be removed from the annual budgeting process and the real estate transfer tax should be sent directly to the identified entities.
7. Currently no prohibitive statutory language exists preventing staff or state or national-level board members of non-governmental organizations eligible of receiving grants from being members of those committees designated to administer grants. To prevent any question of impropriety it is our strongest belief that amendatory language addressing this oversight should be added to each statute governing dedicated funds.

## **Recommendations:**

- 1. Dedicated funds should be continued and modernized.**
- 2. An audit of all dedicated funds should be conducted immediately to identify inefficiencies and overlap.**
- 3. Open Space Land and Development funds should be removed by statute from the state's annual budgeting process and allocated directly to the IDNR to expedite funding and efficiency.**
- 4. Bonding of projects should be pursued, allowing projects to be "front-loaded," making them more timely and cost effective.**
- 5. The governor and General Assembly should pay for all staff defined as Full Time Equivalent (FTE) working on dedicated fund projects through General Revenue. It is an ongoing breach of the public trust to have shifted personnel costs to dedicated funds.**
- 6. No more than 15 percent of the total project cost should be allowed for overhead either internally or externally. The Waterfowl Stamp Fund and Habitat Stamp Fund allocations are competitive in nature; therefore a weighted scoring system should be developed to provide an advantage to those organizations that operate at less than 15 percent overhead.**
- 7. An initial report should be submitted upon substantial completion of all projects, followed by a 1-, 5- and 10-year performance analysis.**
- 8. A matrix should be developed for tracking all projects, including but not limited to the currently identified metrics with future funding being competitive and tied to ranked performance and financial accountability.**
- 9. A preselection/prioritization process should be created for the Waterfowl Stamp Fund, the Habitat Stamp Fund and the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. We believe the OSLAD fund's selection process is effective, efficient and adjudicated appropriately.**
- 10. IDNR should pursue several test projects immediately using nongovernmental organizations for project implementation, maintenance, and oversight.**
- 11. The Illinois Conservation Foundation's executive director should attend, and where appropriate, participate in dedicated fund meetings and committee deliberations and be included in executive staff meetings.**
- 12. IDNR should focus on recruitment and retention of volunteers at any area under its control, not limited to those areas funded or developed through dedicated funds.**

## Dedicated Funds

The four funds under review represent large IDNR constituencies with significant interest and expenditures. They are:

**1. The Waterfowl Stamp Fund**, created at the behest of waterfowl hunting constituents and authorized by the General Assembly in 1975. The price of the waterfowl stamp was initially \$5. As needs and constituents desires grew the cost was elevated to \$15. Stamp sales have generated approximately \$22.5 million since inception, and over the last 10 years have generated about \$870,000 a year. Grants awarded through the Waterfowl Stamp Fund are allocated by a statutorily defined committee of IDNR employees and waterfowl constituents.

**2. The Habitat Stamp Fund**, created in 1992 at the behest of Illinois upland game enthusiasts and trappers. Since inception, stamp sales have generated more than \$20 million. The fund is allocated by statute; 64 percent goes to the Habitat Stamp Fund, 30 percent to the State Pheasant Stamp Fund, and 6 percent to the Furbearer Fund. If the license revenues in one fiscal year do not reach a defined threshold (\$500 thousand for the Pheasant Fund and \$100 thousand for the furbearer fund), the shortfall must be made up in the following year by additional transfers from the Habitat Stamp Fund. This is to ensure that habitat work reaches completion. Since inception about \$18.32 million has been deposited in the State Habitat Fund, and an average of about \$828,800 a year over the past decade. Grants awarded through the Habitat Stamp Fund are adjudicated by a statutorily defined committee of IDNR employees and upland game constituents.

**3. The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF)** was established as part of the Open Space Land Acquisition Development Act of 1990. As defined by the Act, 50 percent of the revenue goes to the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust fund, 35 percent goes to the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Fund and 15 percent to the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. Since 1998 through 2015, \$169.5 million has been generated for NAAF. Over the past decade, NAAF has averaged about \$9.52 million a year. During the last 10 years, appropriations from the fund have averaged about \$12.4 million annually, while expenditures have averaged about \$9.5 million a year. The difference is due to delayed hiring and land acquisition.

**4. Open Space Land Acquisition and Development fund (OSLAD)**, financed through real estate transfer taxes. It had initially been funded through the 1986 Build Illinois bond initiative but was so popular with local units of governments and constituents that it was reauthorized in 1990 through the Open Space and Land Acquisition Act. From FY1998 through FY2015, real estate transfer taxes have generated more than \$400 million for the fund. Over the past 10 years, the fund transfers have averaged \$22 million a year, and awards have averaged nearly \$19 million annually. By statute, annual progress reports must be submitted to the governor and General Assembly.

## Why Dedicated Funds Are Necessary

From the beginning of the American conservation movement, dedicated funds have been a key means of financing hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation programs. They are a way by which governments can ensure that their constituents' needs or wishes are addressed while not tapping into heavily burdened general revenue funds. Dedicated funds are referred to as the "user pay, public benefit model of conservation".

Most dedicated funds were initially developed through citizens' requests to address a need in regards to a specific discipline or desire, or a perceived void in the necessary funding for authorized, specific programs or projects. For example, early on the proceeds for fishing and hunting licenses were designated solely for the benefit of huntable or fishable species. The federal Duck Stamp program, launched more than 75 years ago, began the dedicated fund effort. Illinois' various funds are founded on this principle.

As time progressed, many user-driven projects or programs ancillary to "fish and wildlife funds" were recognized and established. These include some of the most successful conservation programs in U.S. history – the federal duck stamp, state waterfowl stamps, salmon stamps, and upland habitat stamps. These were created solely because anglers and hunters felt that the nation's fish and game populations were dwindling, and needed help. Only those most invested in the programs needed to pay.

Seeing those successes – and mindful that governments had a ravenous appetite for general revenue funds to finance politically expedient projects – other bodies followed suit. Across the country, parks, park districts, conservation districts and forest preserve districts saw the need for dedicated funds that would not be ravaged if the political winds shifted. Instead they would be governed by a strategic thought process that would carry on through the years.

While the protection afforded by dedicated funds is a prime reason for their continued existence, there are other reasons – including economic efficiency, accountability and responsiveness to constituent desires.

- The expenditures from dedicated funds should be easy to track, preventing crucial dollars from being lost in the government morass;
- Efficiency and impact are similarly easy to judge;
- Because dedicated funds address specific interests, they encourage and foster constituency participation in fund utilization, such as the choosing of projects;
- By their very design, dedicated funds are responsive to constituent needs and desires.
- In modern times dedicated funds have also evolved as a form of mitigation being derived from commercial or industrial activities with associated funds being redistributed to ensure future natural resources or specific social needs.

At a time when governments across the nation are struggling to find more dollars, dedicated funds ensure that crucial, well-supported programs continue to receive adequate funding and serve the constituents who depend on that funding. Ending dedicated funding – or worse, pilfering the funds for other purposes – is no less than a broken promise to the taxpayer and an erosion of user pay public benefit model.

**Dedicated funds should be continued and modernized.**

## The Illinois ecology is the Illinois economy

Illinois natural resources served to build the wealth and infrastructure that lead to Illinois's once prominent position of economic and political power.

- No prairies, no corn
- No rivers, no exports
- No wetlands, more flooding
- No clean water, no health

Through wise use and planning for these natural assets we can again ensure these resources will help to serve the great good of the state.



### Long-term Effects of Lack of Maintenance on IDNR Properties Covered by Dedicated Funds

When considering the long-term value of all funds, it must be understood that managing natural resources through protection and restoration is a long-term process. For example, oak trees are considered very desirable in wildlife management, but it takes at least 20 years for native oaks to produce acorns, one of the most valuable wildlife food sources in North America. White oaks often require even more time – at least 50 years, and they often do not become fully productive until they are 200 years old or more. Natural resources planning must be focused on the long term and not mired in the whims of short-sighted political or financial motives.

The funds chosen to be examined are biologically and sociologically important. The Waterfowl and Habitat Stamp Funds as well as the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund not only benefit natural resources as a whole but the economy and our overall well-being as a society. The rewards are obvious: Direct habitat protection and improvement for migratory waterfowl, upland birds and threatened and endangered species.

There are less obvious but equally critical returns. Little or no thought is given to the value of keeping plants and animals off the threatened and endangered species list by providing for a robust environment where industry and development as well as Natural Resources can exist. This is a key benefit of the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. Seldom has any consideration been given to the direct economic value that

hunting and fishing provides to local economies. In the late 1990s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that every dollar expended on fish and wildlife generated an additional \$8 for the economy, as individuals would buy gasoline, ammunition, bait, supplies and all else associated with their avocation. The economic roles these activities play in the overall quality of life and well-being of the citizenry of Illinois are understated and undervalued, especially in rural communities.

The Open Space and Land Acquisition and Development Program was begun in 1986 as a result of legislative advocacy efforts by the Illinois Association of Park Districts and visionary citizens to provide financial assistance to local government agencies for the acquisition and development of land for public parks and open space. The program grants are adjudicated by the Illinois Natural Resources Advisory Board and matching funds provided by park districts, municipalities, forest preserve districts and other local government entities. Those local governments are required to provide to provide at least 50 percent of the project costs to be eligible for OSLAD grant assistance.

OSLAD provides grants to park districts, forest preserves and city parks throughout Illinois to acquire open space and develop and improve park facilities. Nearly every county has a park and recreation agency that has benefited from OSLAD funding. OSLAD grants have improved the quality of life within Illinois communities, which have relied heavily on them to leverage local investment.

These parks, trails and open spaces have given rise to community activities energized through a healthy lifestyle. They employ local architects, engineers and construction workers to build the facilities, then in turn through municipal referendum and taxation provide staffing and maintenance. All in all, the fund is a significant economic stimulus.

OSLAD is financed by non-General Revenue Fund (non-GRF) dollars dedicated through a portion of the real estate transfer tax. Of every dollar collected through the real estate transfer tax, 35 cents goes for OSLAD (35 percent), NAAF (15 percent) and 50 cents goes into a fund for affordable housing.

OSLAD remains one of the most popular and successful programs Illinois has administered. It's a great investment because local communities must provide at least half of the project cost and the state is guaranteed a 100 percent return on its investment. Currently the OSLAD Fund is included in the annual Illinois Appropriation process.

**This unique and dynamic program should be removed by statute from the state's annual budgeting process and be allocated directly to the IDNR to expedite funding and efficiency.**

## Bonding

At a time when governments are hard pressed to find dollars, innovative funding techniques are imperative. We believe that the state's bonding authority should be considered as a way to stretch the dollars available through specific identified funds.

After discussions with the Illinois Capital Development Board, we determined that using Build Illinois bonds would offer much more flexibility in the nature of projects that can be considered or undertaken. Build Illinois funds are taxable so the state pays higher debt service; however, the flexibility of use would contribute to the overall utility. For example, Natural Areas Acquisition monies could be used to retire debt, thus creating an avenue to expedite projects avoiding "fund sweeps" and inflationary cost creep providing significant efficiencies. These efficiencies include but are not limited to escalating value of land, today's dollar may go

much further in land acquisition or wetland development than it will ten to twenty years in the future. (“Fund sweeping” is a technique used heavily by the Blagojevich Administration by which dedicated funds and other funds with an end of the year balance were taken through General Assembly action to fund politically expedient projects and programs that were desired by the General Assembly and Administration without properly balancing the overall state budget.)

Special language would have to be created linking NAA funds to debt service and increasing the bond limit of Section D of the Build Illinois Bond Act.

The Capital Development Board provided the following examples on types of projects and their eligibility to be funded through Build Illinois. These are for example only, as each project must be adjudicated on its own merits.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Can it be bonded?</b>	<b>Money source</b>
Pumps	Yes	Waterfowl Stamp Fund
Equipment	Yes	Waterfowl Stamp Fund and other specific applications in other funds
Levee repairs	Yes	Waterfowl Stamp Fund and other specific applications in other funds
Fuel	No	
Rip rap	Yes	Waterfowl or Habitat Stamp Fund
Contracting repairs	Depends on nature of repair	
Dredging	Yes	
Land acquisition	Yes	
Land access	Yes, if term extends beyond the life of bonds	

### **Leverage of federal funds**

While investigating the possible leveraging of existing federal funds, we received positive feedback from top-level representatives of the federal government suggesting that the idea of bonding for Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds has merit and encouraging us to proceed.

Bonding of projects should be pursued, as it offers the opportunity to “front load” projects, thus making them more timely and cost effective.

## General Revenue Fund Loss And Its Relationship to Dedicated Fund Use on Projects

In fiscal year 2002, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources spent \$130 million on personal services with a total head count of 2,091 employees. In fiscal 2015, IDNR spent \$141 million on personal services for a head count of 1,265. This means IDNR spent \$11 million more on personal services in FY15 despite losing 800 employees.

Year	Personal Services Expenditures	Head Count
FY 2002	\$130 million	2,091
FY 2015	\$141 million	1,265
<b>Change</b>	<b>+ \$11 million</b>	<b>-826</b>

In fiscal year 2002, the average bargaining unit employee cost IDNR \$58,477 (salary \$39,965, Social Security \$3,015, retirement \$3,996 and insurance \$11,500). In fiscal year 2015, an average bargaining unit employee cost IDNR \$133,170 (salary \$69,595, Social Security \$5,341, retirement \$31,734 and insurance \$26,500).

This means an average employee costs IDNR almost \$75,000 more per year compared to 14 years ago – an increase of 127 percent. The increase can be attributed to two main pressures – union contracts/ increased membership and drastic cuts to IDNR general revenue funding.

In fiscal year 2002, the IDNR's general revenue funding level was \$137.6 million. In fiscal 2015, that

Bargaining Unit Only	FY02 Average	FY15 Average	Difference
Salary	39,965	69,595	29,630
Social Security	3,015	5,341	2,326
Retirement	3,996	31,734	27,737
Group insurance	11,500	26,500	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>58,477</b>	<b>133,170</b>	<b>74,694</b>

funding is \$39 million. This has forced the department to shift more employee costs to dedicated funds, as opposed to being paid out of general revenue.

This has serious consequences. When an employee is paid out of general revenue, the General Revenue fund pays for benefits. When an employee salary is moved to a dedicated fund, the cost to the dedicated fund increases almost 60 percent. As an example, an employee making \$100,000 a year being paid from General Revenue costs the department \$107,000. That same employee costs the department \$179,500 if the salary comes from a dedicated fund.

This means that far fewer dollars from dedicated funds make their way to actual projects. This should be viewed as a broken promise to the supporters and providers of dedicated funds. Today, in the case of in-house waterfowl stamp projects, only 8 percent of dedicated funds go to projects while 92 percent go to pay staff salaries associated with projects. This phenomena is true of other funds as well.

In 2002 the IDNR employed a “Heavy Equipment Crew” (HEC) that was mobile, reactive and efficient at executing levee repairs as well as projects in wetland, waterfowl and upland areas. HEC’s existence skewed the percentage of dedicated funds going to pay employees. Since the crew was targeted at projects, employee costs and projects costs were considered the same and could not be segregated except for the materials, maintenance and fuel needed to complete waterfowl and upland habitat projects. The Heavy Equipment Crew existed of 5-6 professional heavy equipment operators who were available for IDNR projects and would fill up their annual schedules with routine waterfowl levee, trail, rearing pond, state park road, and access maintenance plus emergency response. Despite its tremendous value, the HEC has been decommissioned.

It is the duty of professionals in IDNR to see that projects are completed with dedicated fund dollars. The current funding process is crippling their ability to do so. The value of having dedicated funds available for match, leverage, and partnership development is strategically advantageous. As OSRAD proves, IDNR is much more likely able to leverage dedicated (nonfederal) funds with various other multipliers and show greater return on investment.

**The governor and General Assembly should fund all staff working on dedicated fund projects through General Revenue.**

## Other Recommendations

**Standard project overhead:** Overhead is a real and integral cost associated with delivering a quality project, and overhead is a legitimate expense in both the public and private sectors. But it should be controlled.

No more than 15 percent of the total project cost should be allowed for overhead, either internally or externally. In that the Waterfowl Fund and Habitat Stamp Fund are competitive in nature that a weighted scoring system be developed that provides an advantage to those organizations that perform at less than a 15 percent overhead level.

**Routinized reporting:** A review of project reports submitted by external and internal organizations found that there was a significant disparity in quality and timing.

An initial report should be submitted upon substantial completion of all projects, followed by 1-, 5-, and 10-year performance analysis.

The components of these reports should be determined and set in place by the volunteer committees assigned to the waterfowl and habitat stamp fund with input from staff. The OSLAD and NAAF funds should follow similar guidelines but be established by the department's Director and his reports.

**Project prioritization:** This needs to be pursued in awarding grants from every dedicated fund. Prioritization of the OSLAD fund has a unique blend of staff and volunteers (thru the Natural Resource Advisory Board) and works very well. The other funds need to be prioritized with similar constituent input, staff input and importantly, the history of long term follow-up provided by the prospective grantees. With prospective grantees that have had past grants, their ability to provide matching funds, maintain low overhead, project success, viability, longevity and reporting must be considered.

When applicable (almost always) Dedicated Funds should be awarded through a competitive based granting system that directly rewards financial responsibility, accounts for past performance history, and encourages a high return on investment (ROI). IDNR should support proven entities and reinvest in phases as progress is proven. Progress needs to be assessed by key Departmental "Chiefs of" who are accountable for the outcomes and can confirm ROI through meaningful reporting. This should hold true for both internal and external grants.

The Department of Natural Resources should develop a matrix for tracking all projects that includes but is not limited to the current metrics.

**Advantages of project annual pre-selection, including maintenance, potential of shovel-ready projects, and negotiation of projects in advance of presentation:** It would be advantageous if staff and volunteer committees could preselect and prioritize projects to be considered for future funding. The advantages of prioritization are obvious, including the fact that it dissuades political attempts to override the work done by professionals and constituents to select appropriate projects. It also will help potential contractors be flexible and creative in the utilization of best construction and management practices, with resulting cost-controlling benefits.

As an example, currently there is more than \$4 million in the Waterfowl Stamp Fund that could be used for much needed maintenance and repair on state waterfowl projects. Unfortunately it is locked until

the Illinois budget crisis can be resolved. Had there been preselected, competitively bid “shovel ready” projects much, if not all of the money could have been at work to benefit state constituents and the resource at today’s prices.

A project pre-selection/prioritization process could also lead to a more efficient annual pre-bid process in which the committee would know precisely what monies are available for future allocation. The pre-selection/prioritization process should apply to new projects as well as repair and maintenance.

This approach should be considered with three of the four funds under review. The OSRAD fund’s selection process is effective, efficient and adjudicated appropriately.

**Potential for increasing full project implementation with NGOs:** There may be opportunities for nongovernmental organizations to function as contractors for many species-specific projects. We realize that Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever and Ducks Unlimited historically have participated in state-funded projects. We are suggesting considering taking this activity to the next level, asking NGOs to bid on project completion, maintenance and stewardship. In essence, this would provide the constituency with a turnkey project without state participation other than oversight and approval. We believe this will provide overall efficiencies and be effective in today’s climate of diminishing personnel resources.

**Ultimately, a world class department of natural resources will improve the quality of life for Illinois residents and promote economic growth.**

The sustainability of natural resources equates to the sustainability of related economic growth, improvements to much needed environmental services (like flood reduction and clean water access ) and promotes education, health, and tourism.

Natural areas, open space and outdoor recreation are essential quality of life elements to attract and retain businesses and families

- 90% of Illinois residents live near a freshwater source;
- Illinois has some of the most fertile soils in the world; and
- Illinois’ prairies and woodlands are already important recreation areas for residents and tourists
- Wildlife-related recreation alone is a \$3.8 billion dollar industry in Illinois

Even with the current funding, governance, and leadership concerns the IDNR supports 90,000 jobs and \$32 billion dollars of economic activity in Illinois

- Smarter investment in these resources can drive economic growth

**A world class department of natural resources with independent governance, sustained funding and professional leadership will incorporate constituent representation to drive resource enhancement that improves quality of life and unlocks new opportunities for economic growth.**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2014. 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, 2015. Did You Know? DNR Facts and Figures.

IDNR should pursue several test projects immediately using this approach.

**Connect the Illinois Conservation Foundation to projects initiated by dedicated funds, project specificity, short time duration, and potential matching donations:** Historically IDNR had one of the most successful supporting foundations in the United States. In its first eight years of existence, the Foundation raised \$16 million to support of IDNR programs. In recent years due to lack of a long-term vision and questionable activities, the Foundation has lost the trust of many constituents.

The Foundation now has a trusted certified professional fundraiser and a board interested in healing its reputation. The many projects supported through dedicated funds, programmatic needs in various disciplines and state parks and fish and wildlife areas could effectively provide a menu of projects that the Foundation could support. It would be a healthy alliance. If successful, the Foundation could even provide the needed matching dollars for federally funded projects and programs.

The Illinois Conservation Foundation's executive director should attend and where appropriate participate in dedicated fund meetings and committee deliberations and be included in executive staff meetings. **Look at stewardship levels in other states and recommend a level for Illinois' IDNR:** Other states' programs seem remarkably similar. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency already has a successful volunteer program. IDNR has the legal right to create and utilize similar programs. We believe the program IHPA uses takes into account the issues with public unions and should work for IDNR.

IDNR could learn from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's program. The agency is more aggressive and operates sites and programs such as Lincoln's New Salem Historic Site with volunteer interpreters. There is no reason IDNR could not capitalize on a similar program at state parks and fish and wildlife areas.

The one success for IDNR is the many volunteers in the safety education program. Those volunteers go through a very structured signup and training protocol that is very similar to IHPA's programs. There is no need to reinvent a volunteer strategy; just find more aggressive ways to implement it.

IDNR should aggressively focus on recruitment and retention of volunteers at state parks, fish and wildlife areas and any other area under their control -- not limited to those areas financed by dedicated funds.

## Summary

The IDNR and the involved constituents have worked through honest yet outdated systems in the expenditure of public funds. Specific strategic planning and positioning including better metrics, innovative financial programs, focusing on partnerships and philanthropic giving, volunteerism, long-term planning with project prioritization, more constituent General Revenue funding and the exclusion of the General Assembly in regard to budgeting the real estate transfer tax will provide much greater efficiency.

Core to the central responsibilities of business and resource management for state natural resource agencies is efficient and prudent use of dedicated funds. Dedicated funding is derived from critical policies that identify and invest in specific revenue sources and associated resource improvements. With proper management and fiduciary planning dedicated funds can be the catalyst for growing financial resources, maintaining critical habitats, and growing strategic programs and initiatives.

Constituents should expect the best management practices in all situations but most significantly in the use of funds generated through self-taxation, such as waterfowl and habitat stamps. Illinois has seen financial corruption and many management debacles. Beginning an open, strategic planning process with staff and involved constituents focusing on the appropriate and expedient utilization of dedicated funds will set an example for all of state government.





## Appendix:

### IDNR Appropriations Comparison, FY 2002 to FY 2015

	<b>FY 2002</b>	<b>FY 2015</b>		
	<u>New Appropriations</u>	<u>New Appropriations</u>	<u>Change in dollars</u>	<u>Change in %</u>
<b>Operations</b>				
General Revenue	115,775,600	45,117,400	(70,658,200)	-61.0%
Aggregate Operations Regulatory	326,200	255,300	(70,900)	-21.7%
Coal Mining Regulatory	323,000	277,000	(46,000)	-14.2%
Conservation 2000	6,400,000		(6,400,000)	-100.0%
Conservation Police Operations Assistance		1,250,000	1,250,000	
Drug Traffic Prevention		25,000	25,000	
Explosives Regulatory	145,800	160,000	14,200	9.7%
Hazardous Waste Research	400,000		(400,000)	-100.0%
Illinois and Michigan Canal		75,000	75,000	
Illinois Fisheries Management		1,700,000	1,700,000	
Illinois Beach Marina	1,963,100	1,505,200	(457,900)	-23.3%
Illinois Forestry Development	1,596,300	1,660,000	63,700	4.0%
Illinois Wildlife Preservation	500,000	1,700,000	1,200,000	240.0%
Mines and Minerals Regulatory		8,000,000	8,000,000	
Natural Areas Acquisition	4,592,500	8,536,600	3,944,100	85.9%
Natural Heritage	80,000		(80,000)	-100.0%
Natural Resources	3,000		(3,000)	-100.0%
Natural Resources Information	323,200		(323,200)	-100.0%

Open Space Lands Acquisition & Development	1,011,900	1,571,400	559,500	55.3%
Park and Conservation	10,768,200	43,966,500	33,198,300	308.3%
Partners for Conservation		4,004,300	4,004,300	
Patent and Copyright	25,000		(25,000)	-100.0%
Petroleum Resources Revolving	375,000		(375,000)	-100.0%
Plugging and Restoration	821,600	1,294,600	473,000	57.6%
Salmon	244,900	333,700	88,800	36.3%
State Boating Act	8,195,800	11,362,300	3,166,500	38.6%
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp		250,000	250,000	
State Parks	7,852,600	11,175,500	3,322,900	42.3%
Toxic Pollution Prevention	90,000		(90,000)	-100.0%
Underground Resources Conservation Enforcement	661,100	1,889,600	1,228,500	185.8%
Used Tire Management	200,000		(200,000)	-100.0%
Wildlife and Fish	33,040,300	81,144,900	48,104,600	145.6%
Wildlife Prairie Park		50,000	50,000	
Build Illinois	2,000,000		(2,000,000)	-100.0%
Capital Development	5,250,000		(5,250,000)	-100.0%
Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council Federal Trust	3,536,900	8,605,900	5,069,000	143.3%
DNR Federal Projects	359,200	5,300,000	4,940,800	1,375.5%
Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation	3,425,400	5,742,600	2,317,200	67.6%
Mines and Minerals Underground Injection Control	431,500	343,900	(87,600)	-20.3%
National Flood Insurance Program	300,000	650,000	350,000	116.7%

Land Reclamation	350,000	800,000	450,000	128.6%
Natural Resources Restoration Trust	1,000,000	1,400,000	400,000	40.0%
<b>Total Operations</b>	212,368,100	250,146,700	37,778,600	17.8%*
<b>Awards and Grants</b>				
General Revenue	8,064,300		(8,064,300)	-100.0%
Fund For Illinois' Future			-	
Illinois Forestry Development	925,000	925,000	-	0.0%
Off-Highway Vehicle Trails	500,000	400,000	(100,000)	-20.0%
Open Space Lands Acquisition & Development	21,500,000	24,000,000	2,500,000	11.6%
Park And Conservation	3,300,000	1,000,000	(2,300,000)	-69.7%
Plugging and Restoration	110,000	110,000	-	0.0%
Snowmobile Trail Establishment	60,000	120,000	60,000	100.0%
State Boating Act	1,140,000	1,070,000	(70,000)	-6.1%
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp	300,000	500,000	200,000	66.7%
Wildlife and Fish	200,000	100,000	(100,000)	-50.0%
Build Illinois	7,000,000		(7,000,000)	-100.0%
Capital Development	10,000,000		(10,000,000)	-100.0%
Abandoned Mined Lands Reclamation Council Federal Trust	6,000,000	6,000,000	-	0.0%
Federal Title IV Fire Protection Assistance	161,900	325,000	163,100	100.7%
Flood Control Land Lease	600,000	900,000	300,000	50.0%
Forest Reserve	500,000	500,000	-	0.0%
AML Reclamation Set Aside	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	0.0%

Land and Water Recreation	6,200,000	2,500,000	(3,700,000)	-59.7%
<b>Total, Awards and Grants</b>	68,061,200	39,950,000	(28,111,200)	-41.3%
<b>Permanent Improvements</b>				
General Revenue	1,123,800		(1,123,800)	-100.0%
Conservation 2000 Projects	5,250,000		(5,250,000)	-100.0%
Fund For Illinois' Future			-	
Illinois Beach Marina	250,000	375,000	125,000	50.0%
Illinois Habitat	600,000	1,600,000	1,000,000	166.7%
Natural Areas Acquisition	5,369,000	6,000,000	631,000	11.8%
Park and Conservation	3,993,100	23,750,000	19,756,900	494.8%
State Boating Act	1,200,000	1,500,000	300,000	25.0%
State Furbearer	110,000	100,000	(10,000)	-9.1%
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp	300,000	300,000	-	0.0%
State Parks	150,000	150,000	-	0.0%
State Pheasant	550,000	550,000	-	0.0%
Wildlife and Fish	-	100,000	100,000	
Capital Development	89,000,000		(89,000,000)	-100.0%
<b>Total, Permanent Improvements</b>	107,895,900	34,425,000	(73,470,900)	-68.1%
<b>Highway and Waterway Construction</b>				
Capital Development	12,000,000		(12,000,000)	-100.0%

<b>Total, Highway and Waterway</b>				-100.0%
<b>Construction</b>	12,000,000	-	(12,000,000)	
<b>Refunds</b>				
General Revenue	1,600	1,400	(200)	-12.5%
Illinois Beach Marina	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%
Natural Resources Information	1,000		(1,000)	-100.0%
Plugging and Restoration	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%
State Boating Act	30,000	30,000	-	0.0%
State Parks	25,000	50,000	25,000	100.0%
Underground Resources Conservation Enforcement	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%
Wildlife and Fish	850,000	600,000	(250,000)	-29.4%
<b>Total, Refunds</b>	982,600	756,400	(226,200)	-23.0%
<b>Total, Natural Resources</b>	401,307,800	325,278,100	(76,029,700)	-18.9%

\* The operational increase of almost 18 percent in 2015 is misleading. It includes more than \$100 million from funds earmarked for specific purposes, including the Waterfowl Stamp Fund, the Wildlife and Fish Fund, and the Park and Conservation Fund. Most of the \$48 million from the Wildlife and Fish Fund came from an increase in Pittman-Robertson taxes on firearm and ammunition sales. In reality, true operational flexibility to address core agency functions has been reduced significantly since 2002.



## About the McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership

The McGraw Center for Conservation Leadership is the nation's leading advocate for creative and entrepreneurial thought in conservation. Nonpartisan and not for profit, the Center's work enables informed strategic decisions rooted in economic efficiencies and science.

The Center was born from the realization that more than \$20 billion in taxpayer and private sector dollars set aside for conservation each year can be expended more efficiently.

It is a natural outgrowth of the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, created more than 50 years ago by the visionary conservationist Max McGraw, founder of McGraw-Edison Co. The Foundation, headquartered on 1,250 acres in Dundee, Illinois, aims to secure the future of hunting, fishing and land management through science, demonstration, education and communication.

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