

Representative Vos
Representative Colón
Representative Kestell
Representative Stone

NATURAL RESOURCES -- STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Stewardship Earmarks

[LFB Paper #556]

Motion:

Move to adopt Alternative 1. In addition, provide up to the following amounts from the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship 2000 program. Require the recipient to provide \$1 for each \$3 in state funding. In addition, authorize the Department to expend bonding authority from either the land acquisition or the property development and local assistance subprogram.

- a. \$500,000 to Vernon County to restore Jersey Valley Lake.
- b. \$1,000,000 to The Conservation Fund for property acquisition for the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District Greenseams flood management program and for habitat restoration for lands acquired under the program.
- c. \$875,800 to the City of Green Bay for the acquisition of property to be developed into a recreational trail.

Further, require DNR to submit a report, by November 15 of each year, to the Joint Committee on Finance and the legislative standing committees responsible for natural resources issues, identifying each stewardship grant awarded for the acquisition of development rights during the preceding fiscal year. Require the report to identify the county and municipality of the acquisition, the acreage under easement and a summary of easement terms.

Note:

Jersey Valley Lake, located in Vernon County, was drained in response to a March, 2005 incident where manure runoff resulted in the death of many of the lake's fish. Further, the lake's dam is in need of repair and the lake's structure may be leaking. The County has hired an engineering firm to estimate the cost of repairing the dam and sealing the fissures in the lakebed so that the lake could be refilled. The project includes installation of a grout curtain on the dam as well as monitoring wells downstream that record water levels and determine the effectiveness of the repair and continuing dam function. The preliminary estimate of the project cost is

approximately \$700,000.

Greenseams is a flood management program aimed at conserving water and preventing flooding through land protection. To implement Greenseams, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) chose The Conservation Fund (TCF), a national non-profit conservation organization dedicated to land and water resource preservation. TCF helps MMSD acquire land along river corridors (such as the Menomonee, Milwaukee, and Root Rivers) containing hydric soils that can rapidly absorb water. To date, the Greenseams program has acquired 41 properties from willing landowners, totaling approximately 1,300 acres in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area. To acquire these properties, MMSD and TCF secured grants from a number of sources including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and a grant from the North American Conservation Act, which provided \$130,000 for land purchases in 2005. In addition, TCF has received approximately \$700,000 in grant funds from the stewardship program in fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06 for land acquisitions associated with the Greenseams program. Stewardship funds were used to purchase approximately 150 acres in Ozaukee and Washington Counties.

The City of Green Bay intends to use this funding to purchase approximately 25 acres from Wisconsin Central Railroad. The property runs diagonally across the Westside of the City of Green Bay, and was formerly used for shipping freight to and from the Port of Green Bay. The city would construct an off-street multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trail separated from the city street grid. Pending purchase, trail construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in May 2008, with completion in October, 2008. Wisconsin Central has offered to sell this property to the City of Green Bay prior to offering its ownership to private landowners. However, if the property is not bought by the city, it could be divided and sold as multiple separate parcels.

Under section 23.0917(4) of the statutes, the Department may obligate moneys from the property development and local assistance subprogram of the stewardship program for grants to governmental units and nonprofit conservation organizations to acquire development rights in land for nature-based outdoor recreation. The grants are limited to no more than 50% of the acquisition costs of the development rights. Nature-based outdoor recreation is defined under administrative rule to mean "activities where the primary focus or purpose is the appreciation or enjoyment of nature." These activities may include but are not limited to hiking, bicycling, wildlife or nature observation, camping, nature study, fishing, hunting, picnicking, cross-country skiing, canoeing and multi-use trail activities.