

2004 Citizen-based Monitoring Conference Attendee Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations forwarded by conference attendees in their afternoon workgroups. Attendees agreed on a mission and vision for citizen-based monitoring in Wisconsin and voted on their top recommendations.

Vision: By 2010 the network will disseminate and use information to educate residents to influence decisions that protect and improve our natural resources.

Mission: The WI monitoring network functions as a comprehensive stakeholder collaboration designed to improve the effectiveness of monitoring efforts by providing communications, resources and recognition in order to build and maintain the dynamic picture of our natural resources.

Top Recommendations:

- Create an umbrella organization/network that includes an advisory board made up of stakeholders. The network would advocate for monitoring funds, share data, protocols, standards, training, etc. and work in conjunction with DNR to address priority monitoring needs. The advisory board would represent the network, working with the DNR to set monitoring priorities, identify funding sources, solicit legislative support and ensure agency responsiveness to network needs. DNR should identify staffing and support for the network and advisory board.
- Create a “neutral” citizen-based monitoring website to serve as a clearinghouse for access to and integration of inventory and monitoring data, information on programs, standards, protocols, and training, and links to member organizations, etc.
- Identify DNR’s data gaps, i.e. what questions are we trying to answer and what is the quality of data needed to fill the gaps. Which gaps could be filled by citizen groups? What are the priorities among these? Utilize the information we already have for gap analysis. Don’t reinvent the wheel.
- Review administrative rules, Department policies, etc. with regard to citizen-based monitoring programs and the use of citizen-collected data in order to better support and expand involvement.
- Just do it. In lieu of a lengthy study and design phase, gather information on existing successful citizen-based monitoring programs, e.g. New Jersey’s tiered system, pilot and tweak – short timeline. A one size fits all program might not work for all media, get the general infrastructure in place and let different taxa/media areas evolve individually.