“Letting the Past Inform the Future for Conservation Funding”

Animal Protection of New Mexico
Animal Protection Voters
Past History: Summary

For 7 years (1999-2005):
Concentrated effort to establish a NM conservation funding mechanism.

What prompted this?
Familiar refrain from NMDGF: no funds to do proper cougar conservation research.
NM Wildlife Alliance

Mission:
Strengthen and support the laws, institutions and practices necessary for the sound stewardship and management of all the state’s wildlife.

Goals:
1. Establish a reliable funding mechanism for wildlife conservation in New Mexico.
2. Broaden the mandate of NM Game Commission and NMDGF to include protection and management of all native wildlife.
Created/Implemented Phased Plan. Phase 5 remained elusive.

**Phase 1:** Comprehensive research on other states. Identified alternative funding sources for wildlife conservation funding.

**Phase 2:** Organized broad coalition to educate public about wildlife, conservation, and habitat preservation. NMDGF enthusiastic (Director Thompson, and some game commissioners).

**Phase 3:** Determined most viable (lucrative, supportable) funding option(s) for New Mexico. Conducted public education. Conducted public opinion poll to determine acceptable options.

**Phase 4:** Analyzed impact of wildlife recreation activities on state’s economy.

**Phase 5:** Establish wildlife diversity funding.
2003
• HB 943 (Coll): **Personal Income Tax Surtax for Wildlife Act**: Died in House Vote: 25-38
  (wildlife conservation surtax of $2 for each exemption on NM individual income tax return, with maximum of $12 per return)

• SB 581 (Romero): **Land Conservation Incentives Act**: Signed into law by GBR
  (providing tax credits for the donation of land or interest in land)
2004

- HJM 37 (Coll): **Funding Sources for Landscape Protection**: Passed (no Gov. sig required)

(requesting NMDGF/EMNRD study sustainable alternative funding measures to protect NM’s unique landscapes, open spaces, recreation areas, wildlife habitats)
2005 (Biggest outcome)
• Significant work on “big conservation funding bill” but GBR wanted HB 885 instead

• HB 885 (Sandoval): **Severance Tax Bond Projects**: Signed into law by GBR
($1M to purchase land/conservation easements to comply with federal ESA, and $4M to purchase property with unique ecological value and acquire conservation easements in forested areas to reduce wildlife risk, protect open space, and improve wildlife protection areas statewide)
2006

- HB 188 (Martinez)/SB407 (Sanchez): **Land, Wildlife, Clean Energy Act**: Died in HTRC (funding was “stripped” by HBIC committee sub)/Passed Senate 19-18, but with oil & gas conservation funding provision removed, establishing program with no money

(providing for distribution of proceeds from the oil and gas conservation tax; creating a board; creating funds; authorizing the issuance of bonds; making an appropriation)
2007 and beyond
Advocates “ran out of gas” on issue.

Now
Inspired and informed energy is encouraging!
Key Lessons

- Fully understand the universe in which you’re operating.
  - Where are key political leaders on initiative?
  - Timing of initiative?
  - Who else is seeking funding mechanisms? Which mechanisms for which issues?
  - Tie initiative to economic wellness because of NM poverty.

- Fully evaluate funding mechanisms. Listen hard to input you don’t want to hear.
  - Where’s the “sweet spot” (balancing stakeholders/fund recipients needed to succeed (wildlife, land, water, parks, open space, etc.) vs. how much funding wildlife need.
  - Poll the public, test messaging, pay attention to results.
  - Study/learn as much as possible from others states’ successes/failures:
    (School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan)
What will agencies commit to?

- Consider whether funding mechanism can be/should be coupled with broader wildlife oversight mandates for NM Game & Fish.
- Investment/full partnership of NM Game & Fish—and other recipient agencies like State Parks—is essential for success.
- Budgeting and accountability for spending new funds matters to the public.
Key Lessons, cont’d.

➢ Elections matter.
  o Who will be NM’s next Governor?
  o Who will be NM’s next Land Commissioner?
Animal Protection of New Mexico
Animal Protection Voters

lisa@apnm.org
lisa@apvnm.org