Is transformation of state wildlife agencies compatible with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation?

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Public Trust Doctrine

- PTD the basis for both North American Model & Transformation
- North American Model focus: historical, preserving a 100+ yr-old system
- Transformation focus: futuristic, changing state agencies to maintain legitimacy
- Are these approaches compatible?
North American Model

- Wildlife a PT resource
- Eliminate markets
- Allocation by law
- Legitimate take only
- International resource
- Science-based mgt.
- Democracy of hunting
Agency Transformation

• 4 strategies—
  – Broad-based funding
  – Trustee-based governance
  – Multidisciplinary science
  – Diverse stakeholders & partners
Agency Funding

• Transformation:
  – Traditional, user-pay funding sources not consistent with PTD
  – All citizens should be stakeholders

• NA Model:
  – User-pays funding key to success of the model

• Effects on political influence?
Trustee-based Governance

- **Transformation:**
  - Commission/Board members should function absent demands of narrowly focused constituents

- **NA Model:**
  - Remember contributions of, protect interests of hunters
Science & Decision Making

• Transformation & NA Model:
  – Science—based mgt. recommendations should be free of bias from political values

• Science—what is possible

• Values—what is desirable
Science & Decision Making

- Values-science distinction not clear today

- Decreasing trust in science among political conservatives (Gauchat 2012)
- Hunters tend to be conservative
Diverse Stakeholders & Partners

- Have agencies been “captured” by traditional interests (iron triangle)?
- Are traditional interests threatened by inclusion of new partners?
- The VA example—HB 38, right to hunt
VA Wildlife Management Areas

- Assess recreational use
- Land-use management plan
- 39 WMAs, acquired primarily with P-R funds for habitat, wildlife-associated recreation
- Preferred options for new user fee
WMA User Surveys

- 12-month field survey of recreational use
- Follow-up mail (n= 553) & internet (n= 175) surveys of willing participants
- Assessed user opinions of potential fees, land mgt. practices (incl. co-orientation with DGIF managers)
- Wildlife value orientations
Survey Results

- Nearly even split on fee
  - Issues identified by Jacobson et al. (2010) evident
- 65+% would have paid annual fee of $25
- Supportive of most land management practices
  - Co-orientation differences between users & agency on timber management practices
Traditional partners threatened?

• “…hunters, shooters & fishermen have always been the primary funding source…The user fee being instituted…should not be looked at as conferring rights of ownership and consequently directing what activities are the primary recreation on any given WMA.”

  – Public comment on draft WMA plan
Wildlife Value Orientations: are users more adaptable than professionals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WMA Users</th>
<th>Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distanced</td>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<td>Utilitarian</td>
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<td>Pluralist</td>
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High----------Mutualism----------Low

Low--------Utilitarianism--------High
Challenges for Agencies

• Challenges from inside and outside agencies
• We are a long way from the tipping point
  – Forces of change (transformation) not yet able to overcome forces of stability & inertia in most agencies
• Few agencies are early adopters
  – They need examples before they will believe that transformation and NA Model are compatible