

Conservation Innovation UPDATE

The Program on Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest

Dear Colleague in Conservation:

With the arrival of autumn in North America, activity in the land conservation community has hit full throttle. The high energy LTA Rally which took place this October in Nashville has come and gone, the 2006 elections have yielded significant conservation victories across the United States, and land protection deals that need to be finished by year's end are being vigorously pursued. In the midst of all of this activity, some long-term conservation plans are brewing, as described in



the article on Massachusetts forests, below. As always, we look forward to hearing from our

colleagues around the globe about emerging conservation efforts. If you have

news of a

landmark innovation, e-mail us at conservation_update@ksg.harvard.edu. Best regards, Jim Levitt and Deidre Peroff, Editor and Assistant Editor

FUNDING A VISION FOR MASSACHUSETTS FORESTS

The Report on the W&W Conservation Finance Roundtable is now available

In 2005 David Foster and his colleagues at the Harvard Forest advanced a bold vision, calling for the conservation of an additional 1.5 million acres of working forests and wild forestland on public, private and non-profit land in Massachusetts. In April 2006, a group of about 40 conservation finance experts gathered at the Harvard University Center for the Environment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to consider options for financing the realization of this vision. They reviewed a wide variety of methods for making capital available for the task. The results of their discussions are now available in the *Report on The Woodlands and Wildlands Conservation Finance Roundtable*.

The report findings are summarized in a press release, explained concisely in an Executive Briefing, and discussed at greater length in the full report. Each of these three documents is now online and ready for download at www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

Among the most intriguing of the ideas presented is one focused on aggregating small parcels for presentation to large funding sources -- sources such as the USDA's Forest Legacy Program that have typically only funded large parcel protection initiatives. The aggregated small parcels, if carefully assembled and protected, can provide landscape-scale conservation benefits. A recently approved Forest Legacy Program grant to the Mt. Grace Land Trust in Massachusetts is intended to do just that, providing funding for the protection of a total of 2,100 acres of forest held by 20 different land owners in close proximity to one another. This effort provides an interesting precedent for potential project aggregators across the nation.

For more on that topic, see the *2006 Update* for Wildlands and Woodlands initiative, also available at www.wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

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2006 ELECTIONS PRODUCE CONSERVATION VICTORIES

LandVote offers detailed results on an election-by-election basis

Every year, voters in hundreds of towns, cities, counties and states across the United States decide on conservation-related ballot measures. The voters have in their power, each year, the ability to pass or fail billions of dollars of measures that fund land conservation activities.

The Trust for Public Land maintains the remarkable LandVote database that provides the public with detailed information on each of 1,993 such votes taken since 1988. The LandVote website has recently been upgraded, allowing visitors to use Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to review voting patterns with the help of detailed, jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction maps. The news from LandVote (see www.landvote.org) for 2006 is very encouraging, indeed.

According to a late November, 2006 update of TPL's [November 9, 2006 tally](#), voters in this fall's Congressional elections "in 23 states approved 104 ballot measures to provide \$6.4 billion for state and local government funding for land conservation. The total is a record, eclipsing the previous local spending record of \$5.68 billion, set in the general election in November, 1998." For all local and state elections in the US in 2006 (including, for example, primary election dates) "the total approved for local conservation spending was also a record, reaching \$6.7 billion, compared to the \$5.86 billion approved in all of 1998." About 80% of all conservation ballot measures passed, in line with the strong support shown by voters across the nation in previous years.

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THE BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE COMES TO HARVARD

Innovations Award winning program to present at Kennedy School on December 5

As noted in the previous edition of the *Conservation Innovation Update*, the Blackfoot Challenge, a public/private/non-profit collaborative initiative based in Montana's Blackfoot River Valley, won a 2006 Innovations in American Government Award. The award, presented by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, includes a \$100,000 grant to be used to disseminate the Blackfoot Challenge's model to other jurisdictions in the U.S. and abroad.

At noon on December 5, 2006, Rancher Jim Stone and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Greg Neudecker will come to Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Taubman Room 301) to share the Blackfoot Challenge story with members of the Harvard community and interested visitors. Please join us for what should be a great session. Everyone interested in learning more about this precedent-setting initiative is

welcome. A complementary light lunch will be served.

Stone and Neudecker will describe in some detail how their initiative, also known as the Grassroots Conservation Program, has to date attracted more than 660 partners to voluntarily work together to conserve habitat for wolves, trout, grizzlies, and other wildlife. Rather than emphasizing regulatory threats, the program empowers local landowners to act in ways that improve resources on their lands and meet natural resource objectives while continuing to ranch, hunt, fish and harvest timber. For more information on the Grassroots Conservation Program/Blackfoot Challenge and the Innovations in American Government Program, please [click here](#). (Photo courtesy of Teri Garrison and the Blackfoot Challenge at www.blackfootchallenge.org)

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