

First, I want to thank all the presenters, panel members, and all of you for contributing to the Summit these past 3 days. Special thanks go out to the Conservation Federation of Missouri and the Missouri Department of Conservation for partnering to make this gathering possible. I will refrain from mentioning individuals because so many were involved that I would surely leave someone out.

In my opening comments and those of others, there were references to Missouri's wetland conservation efforts as "The Missouri Model." The principle components of this Model that have contributed to past successes in wetland conservation include citizen support, partnerships, adequate funding, and programs founded in science. The future of wetland conservation in Missouri will be determined by continuing and expanding attention to these components.

Each of us probably is critical of one or more aspects of today's wetland conservation efforts in our state. I know that I am. Hopefully, this Summit has relieved some of those concerns, but the primary product I hope each of us takes away is increased knowledge that allows us to contribute to a stronger and more inclusive version of The Missouri Model going forward. I feel strongly that is our responsibility collectively to make sure that happens. This responsibility was well illustrated in a couple of emails I saw recently from internationally renowned wetland professionals, one a researcher/manager from Canada and the other a professor from Mississippi and Clemson. When they saw the agenda for the Summit, they noted. "It looks like Missouri has once again taken the lead in advancing wetland conservation to new heights."

Missouri's wetland program began more than 75 years ago with establishment of national wildlife refuges and state conservation

areas focused on waterfowl. It should be noted that private landowners began similar efforts decades before.

In the 1960s, the Missouri Conservation Commission, at the suggestion of the Edward K. Love Foundation took a major step that ultimately led to expansion of Missouri's wetland conservation program. They appointed a 3-person team led by Starker Leopold and including Charles Callison and Irving Fox to review MDC's conservation efforts in relation to the constitutional mandate. Their conclusion was that management efforts were narrowly focused on game species and production forestry instead of ALL fish, forest and wildlife in the state as directed by the constitution. Since most of the Commission's revenue was from hunting and fishing permit sales, federal revenues provided by taxes on hunting and fishing equipment and timber sales of state-owned lands. The Commission challenged Department staff to consider ways to generate the funding to completely fulfill the constitutional mandate. These efforts, in concert with CFM led to passage of the 1/8th% Conservation Sales Tax in 1976 that greatly expanded funding for all conservation programs including wetlands. This meant that wetland management decisions must consider more than waterfowl and include consideration of all species of fish and wildlife along with a broad range of aquatic systems. We must remember that a large percentage of endangered species depend on wetlands. In addition, it is more than providing hunting opportunities. We must consider those who like to birdwatch or just enjoy the special contact with nature that wetlands provide. Finally, The next stage of The Missouri Model must incorporate the message that wetlands provide benefits for all people by reducing the impacts of floods, improving water quality, and providing other ecological services. In Missouri, everyone pays for conservation and everyone benefits!!

In closing, I have been bullish on conservation in Missouri since I joined MDC in 1970 and I readily admit to an affinity to wetlands probably due to my Arkansas DNA and graduate work in Coastal Louisiana, That affinity was only enhanced as I was privileged to be a part of MDC's expanding wetland base until I retired in 1997. I also witnessed the expanding partnerships with the USFWS and the NRCS which obviously continue today and they should be an even more significant component of The Missouri Model going forward. The partnerships that all government agencies, state and federal, along with not-for-profit organizations have with private wetland owners will continue as a vital cog in the conservation wheel.

As we leave this conference, let's celebrate the past of The Missouri Model of wetland conservation and thank those giants that laid the foundation and paved the way for success, but let's focus primarily on the future with these guidelines

*** We must recognize that we conserve wetlands for people and they determine whether that will continue and expand as we know it must.

*** Science, both biological and social, must be the basis for our decisions.

*** Leadership is crucial for success. While that leadership must come from many sources, I believe the leadership of the Conservation Commission through actions of MDC has been vital to success and that must continue into the next iteration of The Missouri Model.

*** Partnerships in Missouri have resulted in a wetland conservation effort that is the envy of many states. It has taken decades to get us where we are today, but it could be lost in a heartbeat if we are not careful.

*** Wetlands are among the most altered landscapes in North America and Missouri has not been spared. In most instances, wetlands must be restored (there are few to protect) and intensively managed, which is very costly. Of course, we cannot restore and manage all of Missouri's historical wetlands. Choices must be made.

*** Continued success in wetland conservation under the banner of The Missouri Model, just as in the past, will depend on having a well-trained and dedicated staff of professionals. Creation of the Institute of Fisheries, Wetlands and Aquatic Systems through a partnership among UMC, MDC and MCHF in the very near future is a major step in ensuring the needed work force. Stay Tuned!!

*** As I noted at the beginning of this Summit, we have had the luxury of seeing a long way into the future as we stood on the shoulders of Giants. It is now our turn to be those Giants upon future wetland conservationists will stand. These past 3 days have given me great optimism that those Giants are among us.

Thank You!!