



JOURNAL

Serving the Needs of Land Professionals

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1999-2000 Officers

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ELRC Exists to Serve States; Contributes in Many Ways

By Ed Meadows, Manager, Exchanges and Special Services, Land and Mineral Services Division, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

The Eastern Lands and Resources Council (ELRC) has one purpose: to assist state public land managers do their jobs better.

ELRC is the affiliation of public land agencies of the states east of the Mississippi River and those states that border the Mississippi River on the west. This includes 31 states, representing millions of acres of publicly-owned land and a population of almost two hundred million people.

Programs emphasize keeping land managers on the cutting edge of new technologies, laws and strategies for meeting the challenge of balancing the sound stewardship of public land with the need to achieve their fiduciary responsibilities, while addressing the desires of a growing population. Conferences focus on enhancing the skills of public land managers, increasing their professionalism, and providing professional development opportunities.

These are some of the ways ELRC has delivered service to public land managers recently:

◆ The annual Fall Conference presents workshops and discussion groups on contemporary issues in the administration of state-owned land. Topics have included automated lands information systems, environmental education, public land acquisition, wetland management, remote sensing and GIS, Federal Government policies, minerals exploration and development and other issues of major concern to professional land managers.

◆ Members meet their counterparts from other states who work on similar issues. They learn from each other, avoid having to reinvent the wheel, obtain examples of documents, procedures and fee schedules used by other states for similar land administration matters. This enables them to save time and money, while doing a better job.

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Get Well Soon, Jim!

ELRC members send best wishes for a speedy recovery to President Jim Lawler who underwent bypass surgery in January.

First Vice President Ed Leary will lead the organization during Jim's absence.

The ELRC ...fostering responsible public land management policies for tomorrow

The ELRC is an organization comprised of highly trained public land professionals in the eastern United States which provides a collaborative and unique forum for enhancing land stewardship and conservation.

The ELRC fosters communication, strengthens professional development, and promotes sound policies and practices among those involved in the management and administration of public lands, records, and natural resources.



For more information, write:
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or call Ed at (802) 241-3683

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◆ ELRC provides the opportunity to interact with those Federal agencies that can often seem so amorphous. The bureaucracy of Government melts away when you have a “name and a face” to contact.

◆ States have formed “alliances” to work together on issues such as how a Federal policy affects State programs and to cooperate on multi-state projects affecting several jurisdictions.

◆ State officials have traveled to other States to see first-hand how their counterparts are implementing programs. Such “traveling team clinics” can save significant time and costs for States starting new programs or implementing changes in statute.

◆ The annual Spring Conference, held jointly with the Western States Land Commissioners Association, brings together all State land agencies to discuss cutting-edge land management issues. The States are joined by senior officials of the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, and Congressional members to discuss policy, budget and legal matters affecting public land nationally. This key meeting is the only such gathering of its kind. The joint meeting of the ELRC and the WSLCA, in effect, functions as “the National Association of State Public Land Managers.”

ELRC is a “virtual organization,” with no boundaries or limits on the way it can provide service and benefits to its members. The ELRC and its counterpart, the WSLCA, comprise the only such organizations of their kind. No other organization focuses on improving administration of State lands, encompassing techniques for better acquisition, leasing, conveying rights in public lands, valuation, exchanges, recreation, revenue administration, and other matters of critical importance to sound stewardship of managing the public trust.

If you are not taking advantage of the ELRC to help your State meet its objectives or improve your professional knowledge, you may be missing opportunities to not only do a better job, but also make it easier for you to do so successfully.

Learn more about ELRC's upcoming conferences, and the goings-on in member States from the articles in this newsletter.



Eastern Lands and Resources Council Hosted By BLM in Virginia

By Terry Lewis, BLM, Eastern States

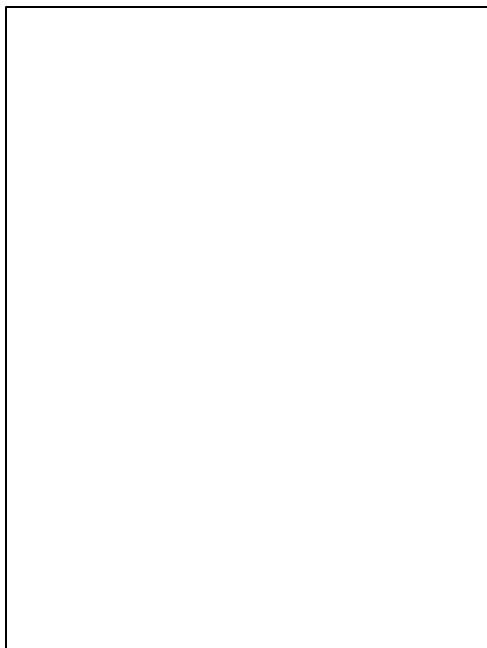
The 1999 fall conference of the Eastern Lands and Resources Council (ELRC) was held in Springfield, Virginia, hosted by BLM Eastern States. Representatives from 12 State Governments participated in the 4-day conference to discuss topics ranging from urban sprawl to land office records. A futurist predicted what could lie ahead and suggested several impacts we should all expect on public lands and resources.

Guest speakers at the conference included BLM Deputy Director Nina Hatfield, Eastern States Director Gayle Gordon, California Deputy State Director Carl Rountree, and Founder and Chairman of The Great Outdoor Conservancy Kenneth Oden.

The main topic of discussion, however, was the need for a clear direction and mission for this key organization. As ELRC President Jim Lawler of Minnesota said, "This was a real nuts and bolts conference . . . to steer the course into

the year 2000 and beyond." Work groups tackled ways to attract and maintain participation by 100% of State, Federal and other land and resources managing and administering entities to generate a commitment and lead to the success of this organization. The mission and vision statements were redrafted, marketing plans were developed to involve more members, a revised directory is being developed, and plans were made for conferences for the next 3 years.

While all work and no play makes for a dull conference, after a hard day's work there was dining on a Potomac River boat one evening, and many of the participants attended the Manassas Battlefield Tour to see the historical sites as well as the survey work completed by BLM Eastern States. After the tour there was an introduction to some of the many other important programs at BLM Eastern States, and an in-depth look at the General Land Office Records and Automation Project.



Dan Wisniewski, Mike Paus, and Elinor Schwartz examine an historic Federal land patent at BLM's Eastern States Office.



A Civil War cannon held the attention of several ELRC members during a field trip to Manassas Battlefield Park in Virginia.

Agenda Set for ELRC's Fall Conference



The Fall meeting scheduled for September 24-28 in Tennessee promises to be a good one. Bob Ward from the Department of Environment and Conservation has arranged for an exceptional group of individuals to speak to us on a wide variety of topics. If you attended the previous Tennessee meeting in 1996, you'll remember that it was NOT all work and no play. We're going on the road! Bob has sprinkled a lot of fun into his agenda, so plan on a great time!

Speakers and Issues include:

Nashville

- .. **Rob Webber** from the Tennessee Trails Association discussing the development of the Cumberland Trail State Park Concept.
- .. **Mike Countess** from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture discussing Forestry Management Practices.
- .. **George Hemingway** from the U.S. Forest Service will talk about Federal Energy Regulation Commission's Hydro Power Relicensing.

West of the Tennessee River

- .. **Fred Proudy** from the Tennessee Historic Commission will discuss Battlefield Preservation and **Stacy Allen** from the National Park Service will give us a tour of the Shiloh Battlefield.
- .. **Reggie Reeves** from the Department of Environment and Conservation, and **John Gregory** from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency will join us for a Float Trip down the Wolf River; **Larry Smith** from the Wolf River Conservancy will talk about Partnerships during our stop for lunch.

Memphis

- .. **Mike Lipsey** of the Lipsey Company will help us create Power Point Presentations that Win! Mike's presentation was a big hit at the 1996 conference. Don't miss this one.

Nashville

- .. **Terry Lewis** from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will give us an overview of the BLM in the East, host a tour of the BLM's wild horse and burro adoption/holding facility in Cross Plains. We'll also enjoy a brief stop in the historic town of Cross Plains where we'll visit an old fashioned Soda Fountain at the town's drug store.
- .. For those who desire, there will be an optional brief tour of Nashville's Opryland Hotel.

We'll definitely be on the move—but hey! ELRC is going places!

Plan on it. For more details, contact Bob Ward with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation at (615) 532-0051 or e-mail him at bward3@mail.state.tn.us

Critical Fiscal Issues Facing State Land Agencies will be Focus for Annual Joint Conference April 9-12



“Contemporary Topic in Public Land Management: MAXIMIZING OUR FIDUCIARY OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVING THE PUBLIC TRUST”

The joint conference of the ELRC and the WSLCA will be held April 9-12 at the Radisson Barcelo Hotel, Washington D.C.

Conference sessions will include:

- ◆ Presentations by the senior management of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- ◆ Strategies for implementing the Endangered Species Act while meeting revenue objectives
- ◆ Increasing cooperation between states and the USFWS on land administration
- ◆ Setting values and terms for utility easements crossing public lands
- ◆ Effective strategies for resolving encroachments and trespasses
- ◆ Third Party Certification of land management practices
- ◆ Impact of EPA’s pollution control regulations - TMDLs
- ◆ Current issues in oil and gas royalty management
- ◆ Update on BLM and U.S. Forest Service policies
- ◆ The Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA)

High level Federal agency and Congressional leaders are among the speakers. Emphasis on increasing professional development skills was used in developing the workshops and panels. Discussion of ways to increase the effectiveness of the associations and increase collaboration between ELRC and WSLCA will be discussed. Time is allocated for association and work group working sessions.

To register, contact Dave Bergman, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (414) 265-6410, e-mail dave.bergman@dnr.state.oh.us A complete agenda has been mailed to everyone currently on the mailing list. If you have not received an agenda, contact Dave to make sure your name and correct address are on our list.

All public land managers are invited. Space is very limited; first priority will be given to ELRC and WSLCA members.

Reserve now to hold hotel rooms at the conference rate at the Radisson Barcelo at 202-293-2100.

Champion Lands Project in Vermont

By Mike Fraysier, Lands Administration Specialist, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

The acreage of conserved lands in Vermont increased by a whopping 133,000 acres in 1999, thanks to the combined efforts of several non-profit conservation organizations and State and Federal land managing agencies. More remarkable still, all of this newly conserved acreage represents only one (albeit massive) project – the Champion Lands project.

By any standard, the Champion Lands project was immense. It was the largest and most complex land conservation project in Vermont's history and one of the largest projects of its kind in the nation. The final disposition of these lands resulted in 48,000 acres going into public ownership and 84,000 acres protected as working forest subject to conservation and public access easements.

As background, in the fall of 1997 Champion International Corporation announced that it was putting 295,000 acres of land in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire on the market. The Vermont lands were comprised of 133,000 acres in the northeastern part of the state – an area noted for its vast forest resources, outstanding wildlife habitat and important ecological resources. Under Champion's ownership, these forest industry lands were open for hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and other traditional recreation uses. There were no guarantees, however, that such uses would be allowed to continue under new ownership.

In December of 1998, The Conservation Fund of Arlington (a national non-profit conservation organization) announced it had signed a contract to acquire the Champion lands. The purchase price for the Vermont lands was \$26.5 million. In undertaking this project, the Fund's conservation goals were threefold: (1) provide for sustainable forest management; (2) protect important wildlife and ecological resources; and (3) maintain traditional recreation

access and use. Thus began a frenzied process to secure necessary acquisition funding and to develop a politically acceptable disposition plan that delineated those lands most appropriate for public ownership from those that were more suitable as working forest lands.

Funding for this project was ultimately provided by the Mellon Foundation, the Freeman Foundation, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act Funds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the resale of 84,000 acres of former Champion land to a timber investor. The Vermont Land Trust, the Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (primarily through its departments of Fish and Wildlife, and Forests, Parks and Recreation) also provided substantial support and assistance on this project.

The lands with the greatest concentration of ecological and wildlife values were ultimately acquired by public agencies. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquired 26,000 acres in the Nulhegan Basin as a new unit of the Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. This is an ecologically unique area that contains many significant natural communities, nearly all of the state's largest deer wintering area, and perhaps the state's largest concentration of moose.

The State of Vermont acquired 22,000 acres of forest land immediately adjacent to the new Fish and Wildlife Service holdings. This vast area contains 10 pristine ponds, several remote mountaintops, numerous headwater streams, significant wetlands and other natural communities, and important wildlife habitat. This new holding is now called West Mountain Wildlife Management

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Vermont Completes New Lands Conservation Plan

By Mike Fraysier, Lands Administration Specialist, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources recently completed work on a new “Lands Conservation Plan.” The plan, developed over the course of 3 years, will guide Agency land acquisition efforts and related land conservation activities for the next 10 years.

The plan is composed of two separate volumes: Volume I serves as a policy document and identifies Agency land acquisition priorities, describes the criteria and process the Agency uses to evaluate potential acquisition projects, and contains related policies and recommendations, along with pertinent inventory and background information. Volume II serves as a technical appendix to the plan and is a compilation of public involvement activities, work group reports, and other “products” of the planning process.

Two important shifts in the Agency’s land acquisition priorities are highlighted within the new Lands Conservation Plan. One important change concerns the Agency’s involvement in protecting the state’s biological diversity. Traditionally, the Agency’s role in this regard has been to focus on the protection of individual species and special natural communities. While this is still an important element of the Agency’s land acquisition program, the Agency now recognizes that the protection of viable, high-quality examples of native species and natural communities must occur at a landscape scale and can best be accomplished through the use of a limited natural reserve system.

The Agency’s increasing use of conservation easements to protect large tracts of privately-owned working forest land is another new priority that is reflected in the Lands Conservation Plan. In the past, the Agency’s approach to conserving large forested tracts was often to acquire them in fee and manage them for forestry and other uses (recreation, wildlife habitat, etc.). Under the new plan, fee acquisition will no longer be used as

extensively for such properties by the Agency unless it can be demonstrated that there are compelling ecological, wildlife, or recreation values at stake or there are other extenuating circumstances present that would preclude the use of a conservation easement.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of Vermont’s new Lands Conservation Plan, please contact Ellen Hinman at the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671 (802) 241-3693; email: ehinman@fpr.anr.state.vt.us.

Champion Lands Project continued from page 6

Area and is managed cooperatively by the Vermont departments of Fish and Wildlife and Forests, Parks and Recreation.

The Federal and State lands are nearly surrounded by 84,000 acres of working forest land now owned by the Essex Timber Company. A conservation easement on this property co-held by the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board assures forest resources will be managed in a sustainable manner and that ecological resources will be protected in perpetuity. A separate public access easement on these acres (co-held by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) provides for continued public access for dispersed and corridor-dependent recreation activities.

This was truly a landmark conservation project for Vermont. It is not likely that the State will ever see another land conservation opportunity of this scale come along. For more information on the Champion Lands project, visit the Vermont Land Trust Website (www.vlt.org).

Are You MIA? (missing in action)

Is your State a member of ELRC? Have you represented your State at an ELRC meeting? Are you and your fellow lands professionals grappling with environmental issues? Are you keeping up with technology?

Join us! Take advantage of the benefits and camaraderie available through membership in the ELRC. Our work groups offer new perspectives on dealing with the many issues facing state land managers. Meet your counterparts in other states, share ideas. You'll save time, money and you'll do a better job.

Contact Ed Leary at (802) 241-3683 for information about the ELRC.

Eastern States Land and Resources Council - ELRC - Serving the Needs of Land Professionals

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