

Public Support for Conservation



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
OF WASHINGTON STATE
your window to healthy lands



Washington State
Conservation
Commission

The following is a summary of tips from a talk by Dave Murphy — Commissioner of the Missouri Dept. of Conservation and chair of the campaign for Missouri's voter-approved sales tax to fund parks, soil, and water conservation — given at the Washington Association of Conservation Districts 2017 Annual Meeting. His talk focused on how to run a successful campaign to fund resource conservation.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE :

*There may never be an "ideal time" to undertake a funding campaign...
Start now. Do your best. Never stop.*

FIRST THINGS FIRST:



Identify and commit to a common vision.

WATCH OUT FOR:



Developing opposition.

Listen to misperceptions, confusion, and opposition, and address immediately with facts. There is no "us versus them."



Talking more than you're listening; tendency to oversell.

Listen to people as much as you talk. Understand why they came to hear you and what they expect from your organization. It's about the person you want to engage.



Belief that when the goal is reached the work is done.

Securing funding is step one. Reinforcing the importance of the funding must become a permanent and persistent part of your job.



Sweeping the truth under the rug.

If you're talking about a tax, don't pretend that it's something else or that it'll go away. Paying for healthy natural resources is something that that no one can live without or individually afford. It's a vital investment.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MISSOURI MODEL:

- ▶ [Design for Conservation Sales Tax Summary](#)
- ▶ [MO Sales Tax for Parks and Conservation, Amendment 1, 2016](#)
- ▶ [Article: Conservation Day at the Capitol emphasizes state's appreciation](#)
- ▶ [Article: Conservation Dollars Support the Economy](#)
- ▶ [Article: The MO Design for Conservation Sales Tax](#)
- ▶ [Video: MO DNR – Parks, Soils, and Water Sales Tax](#)
- ▶ [Video: MO Farm Bureau – Sales Tax Renewal](#)
- ▶ [Video: MO Farm Bureau – Parks, Soils, and Water Sales Tax-Good for Agriculture](#)

TOP THREE RECOMMENDATIONS:



I. Focus on salesmanship skills. Cut to the chase. Use simple, strong messages.



II. Talk about contentious issues in the third person. Avoid sounding defensive or critical.



III. What happens between the meetings is where the work gets done. Have a clear action plan. Get out and engage people with your idea. Make your goal and vision part of every conversation.

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION:

How are we going to use what we've got, where we are, to get what we want?



There's no limit of ideas.

There are limits on time, money, people, and capacity.

Keep perspective.

IDEAS FOR ELEVATOR PITCH:

Relate talking points to...

- ▶ **Public trust.** The public has entrusted us with managing natural resource conservation. Healthy natural resources are important and relevant to all.
- ▶ **Return on investment.** Identify specific, anticipated economic benefits of your proposal. *Missouri example: Missourians invest \$100 million in conservation through less than 1 percent of state tax. Each year, natural resource-based industries generate more than \$10 billion in economic activity for the state. What investment portfolio has a return on investment that good?*
- ▶ **Clean water.** Not everyone thinks about soil or forest health, but studies show that most people see the importance of clean water. *Missouri example: On average, one million gallons of rain fall on every acre of our state per year. This funding allows us to decide what happens next with that water. Do we let it wash away? Or will it percolate into the water table where it's a benefit to us all?*
- ▶ **Empowerment and ownership.** Talk about how your proposal makes every single citizen an owner/operator of natural resources.
- ▶ **Cultural legacy.** Many people relate to the idea of leaving resources in good condition for future generations. How will your proposal help them achieve this?

