

Development for Conservation

Five Fresh Ideas for Building the Board you Need

Presented at

Rhode Island Land & Water Conservation Summit - 2020

March 2020

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**DEVELOPMENT
FOR
CONSERVATION**

An Important Starting Premise

Not everything that happens in Board Meetings is actually board work.

Sometimes it's:

- Volunteer organizing
- Event organizing
- Information dissemination
- Information gathering
- Social time



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Job Responsibilities of a Board

- Governance
- Management
- Fundraising
- Celebration



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Common Complaints

- Our Board is getting older; we need to recruit younger people
- We approached people to be on the Board, but they have turned us down
- We need a lawyer and a CPA, but we can't find either one
- We need rich people on the Board for fundraising, but we don't know any rich people



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Five Things

- Rethink the Recruitment Process
- Rethink the Orientation
- Become a Standard Bearer
- Board Evaluations
- Schedule and Conduct Fewer “Board Meetings”



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1 Rethink the Recruitment Process



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What do Board Members Do?

- Board Directors
 - Attend all board meetings and events.
 - Serve on at least one committee.
 - Give money.
 - Raise money.
 - Advocate.
 - Adopt major gift prospects to cultivate.
 - Know the projects. Know the finances.
 - Go on a monitoring visit each year.



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Ideas

- Recruit from your existing donors
- Recruit LEADERS - people others will respect, take seriously, and follow.
- Consider Board service as a major gift – after all, it is for the donor



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Ideas

- Approach Board recruitment as you would major gift donor cultivation:
 - The people you need most are probably not available to you right away.
 - They might need to be introduced to the idea, wooed, and ultimately solicited.
 - Sounds like donor development.



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Rethink the Orientation




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Re-Think

- Re-Think in terms of showing new board members what you want them to know.
- Re-Think in terms of practice.
- Re-Think in terms of the story they will tell others.



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Checklist Items

- Sit in on one meeting of each board committee,
- Visit a project site,
- Develop and practice an “elevator speech,”
- Call a donor to say thank you,
- Get to know a set of donor prospects,
- Attend an organizational event.



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Become a Standard Bearer



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Job of Standard Bearer

- One report on a land trust standard at least every four years.
 - Are we compliant?
 - Are we consistent?
 - Do we know what to do?
 - Are we sustainable?



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Job of Standard Bearer

Without reservation, I believe this organization is compliant with both the letter and the spirit of the standard. The By-Laws, mission, plans, and policies are all internally consistent, and we apply them consistently as needs and opportunities present themselves.



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Board Evaluations



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The Job – Board Director

- Board Directors
 - Attend all board meetings and events.
 - Serve on at least one committee.
 - Give money.
 - Raise money.
 - Advocate.
 - Adopt major gift prospects to cultivate.
 - Know the projects. Know the finances.
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Board Evaluations

- Chair
 - Know, follow, and manage as needed the work of ALL the other committees.
 - Hold other board directors accountable.
 - Annually conducts one-on-one interviews with each board director to discuss current committee assignments, other board related activities, general thoughts and opinions, and his/her own giving for the current year.



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Schedule and Conduct Fewer Board Meetings



"Everyone here? Good. Meeting topic: Setting world record for shortest meeting. All in favor say aye. Ayes have it. Meeting over."



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Q: Why do we meet so often?

- Meeting is the way we all stay on the same page; it's the way we stay organized
- Meeting is the way we all stay informed; it's the way we communicate



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One Possible Meeting Structure

- Board meets four times each year in February, April, September, and November
- Every third year a fifth meeting is held in July for strategic planning. This meeting is in the form of a two-day board retreat.



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Ideas

- Arbitrarily eliminate one Board meeting each year.
- Have all Board decisions arrive on the agenda in writing as seconded motions out of committee. The Chair asks for discussion (with a time limit) and then a vote.



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Ideas

- Have the board meet six times a year and have committees meet during the “off” months.
- Gather at a specific time for information sharing, committee reports, and social time. Then “start” the meeting at some later time, and limit the agenda to board business.



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Ideas

- Gather every month on a set schedule, but only call every third such meeting a “Board meeting”
- Other??



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DAVID ALLEN

I am a non-profit organizational development consultant. I work with nonprofit organization boards to help their members learn how to be better leaders and advocates.

My background includes 30 years working in membership fundraising, major gift development, communications, and marketing. I worked for about half that time for Nature Conservancy (TNC) chapters in Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. In addition to my duties for the individual chapters, I served TNC as an internal fundraising consultant and major gift development trainer.

In 2000, I served as the vice-president of operations for the Wisconsin-based, international conservation organization Sand County Foundation, a position I held through mid-2009.



Gathering Waters Conservancy, a land trust service agency based in Wisconsin, called me in 2004 to ask whether I would be interested in teaching a seminar for Wisconsin land trusts on major donor development. From 2004, then, through 2009, I consulted on a nights and weekends basis with just a few clients each year.

In March of 2009, I launched my consulting business full-time using the name **Development for Conservation**.

Also in 2009, I partnered with Nancy Moore to form **Conservation Consulting Group**. Together we help land trusts prepare for accreditation by providing assessment, strategic planning, and leadership coaching services.

I consider myself a strategic thinker, problem solver, facilitator, educator, and program developer who brings a particular passion for conservation and the environment.

Practice Competencies

Fundraising

- Development Audit
- Strategic Fund Development Planning
- Staff/Board Training and Development
- Major Gift Coaching
- Capital Campaigns: Feasibility, Planning, Management

Organizational Development

- Strategy Development
- Practice & Process Assessment
- Problem Solving Facilitation
- Marketing

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