

Development for Conservation

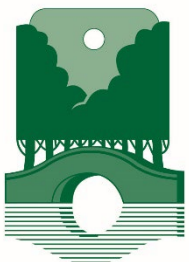
Three Different Events that Support Fundraising

Prepared for

Connecticut Land Conservation Conference

March 2026

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**DEVELOPMENT
FOR
CONSERVATION**

Agenda

- Fundraising Events
- Appreciation Events
- Engagement Events
 - Revenue Sources
 - Best Practices
 - Reasons NOT to do
 - Discussion



Fundraising Events Examples

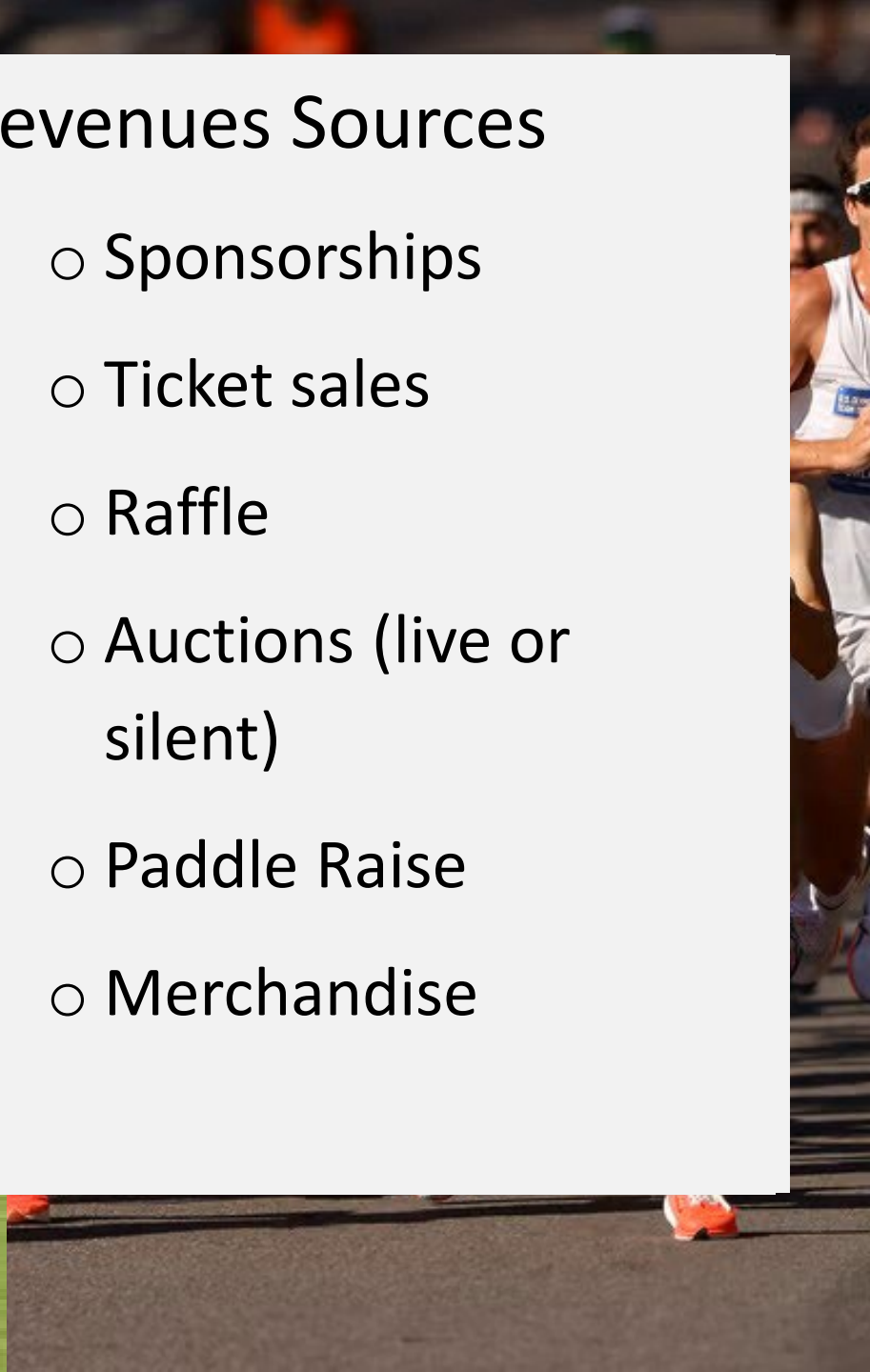
- Galas
- Runs, walks, hikes, bikes, triathlons
- Golf tournaments
- Rummage Sales
- Music Events & Dances





Revenues Sources

- Sponsorships
- Ticket sales
- Raffle
- Auctions (live or silent)
- Paddle Raise
- Merchandise





Helpful Best Practices

- Host or Committee
- Set dates and venues WAY in advance
- Save the date postcards
- Mailed invitations
- Personal invitations
- Sponsorships solicited following the event





Helpful Best Practices

- Two-seat and four-seat sponsors
- Name tags
- Centerpieces that can be taken home
- Keepsakes (etched champagne flutes)
- ALL Board members attend





Helpful Best Practices

- Calculate revenue excluding the Board
- Could be managed by a 3rd party





Reasons NOT to do

- FR Events do not raise enough money
- Difficult to scale
- Competition
- Some events “run their course”
- Inherently transactional





Reasons NOT to do

- Distracts Board and staff from activities that might raise more money (opportunity cost)
- Leaves donors (and some Board members) feeling like they have *“done their part”*



Acknowledgement Events

- PRIMARY Purpose – to show appreciation and showcase what is being accomplished
- Secondary Purposes
 - Raise money
 - Meet new people
- Success Metric – How many DONORS come

Acknowledgement Events Examples

- Donor Circle Events
(Dinners or lunches)
- Award Receptions
- Ribbon cuttings
- Retirement parties
- Anniversaries



Revenue Sources

- Sponsorships
- Suggested Donations
- Fish bowl
- Merchandise





Helpful Best Practices

- Host or Committee
- Set dates and venues
WAY in advance
- Save the date
postcards
- Mailed invitations
- Personal invitations
- Sponsorships solicited
following the event

Helpful Best Practices

- Name tags
- Centerpieces that can be taken home
- Keepsakes (etched champagne flutes)
- ALL Board members attend
- Program is relevant to land conservation



Reasons NOT to do

- Cost
(Time and money)
- Lack of critical mass
(more Board members
and staff than donors
or volunteers being
acknowledged)



Engagement Events

- PRIMARY Purpose – to meet new people and further engage current donors
- Secondary Purposes
 - Raise money
 - Show appreciation and showcase what is being accomplished
- Success Metrics
 - How many PEOPLE come
 - How many New Members join
 - Percentage of current donors attend

Engagement Events

Examples

- Field Trips
- Library Lectures
- Project tours
- Volunteer projects
- Living room get-togethers
- Backyard BBQs
- Networking events
- Briefings



Revenue Sources

- Sponsorships
- People joining at the event or paying small amounts to get in
- Merchandise sales



Helpful Best Practices

- Diversify event offerings to attract diverse audiences
- Registration
- Name tags
- Event Photos



Helpful Best Practices

- Use stickers to differentiate between members and non-members
- Identify and celebrate current members/donors at the event
- Deploy Board members with specific assignments



Reasons NOT to do

- Available time
- Multiple events that all look the same
- Preaching to the choir
- No clear vision; no clear commitment to evaluation



Helpful Best Practices for All Events

- Have a singular event GOAL or purpose
- Write down what you expect to happen
- Measure your results (evaluate) against what you expected
- Board members attend as Ambassadors and Hosts - and report back
- Photograph the event
- Plan Follow-up in Advance (includes Sponsors!)

Helpful Best Practices for All Events

Sponsors

- Consider the difference between being THE sponsor and being A sponsor
- Consider individuals as sponsors -
2-Seat and 4-Seat sponsors
- Report back to all sponsors immediately after the event - ask for next year's sponsorship at the same time

Helpful Best Practices for All Events

Follow-up

- People who registered and attended
- People who registered and did not attend
- People who did not register and attended anyway
- People who received an invitation and did not respond

DAVID ALLEN

I am a non-profit fundraising consultant. I work with nonprofit boards and staff to help them learn how to be better leaders and advocates. I work almost exclusively with conservation organizations because that is where my heart is.

My background includes more than 35 years working in membership fundraising, major gift development (including capital campaigns), 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.**

Most of my consulting work is related to fundraising, but I also help conservation organizations with strategic planning, Board training, and governance. 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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