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Following Leopold's caution and Attracting a Broad Range of Citizens to the ELECTION (2009)

THE PROBLEM:

When Aldo Leopold and others set up the Conservation Congress in the 1930's, Leopold warned that the landowners and environmentalists should be as valued a part of the process as the hunters. This has never been the case. With announcements only in the Outdoors Pages across Wisconsin, people who do not kill wildlife do not know that the annual "hearings" are also an ELECTION, and that the ELECTION is the only important part of the process. Since delegates (2 up for election of five in every county every year) can vote any way they want, ignoring the public will, the important part is to elect delegates EVERY YEAR.

Now at a time of severe threats to the environment and wildlife from global warming, species losses, invasive species, and destruction of habitat, natural predators, and water systems, it is more important than ever, that the process and election be opened to the scientific community and the general public for the good of the state.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the Department to take action to correct the situation by introducing a brochure about the annual election to offer at State Parks and camping grounds, at schools and churches, to non-profits and any interested groups in the state, since all of the public has the right to know about, and participate in the election. Also, the notice of the hearings should include the fact that it is an <u>election</u>, and be put outside of the Outdoors Pages of the newspapers to attract new citizen participation. A committee should be formed to facilitate broadening the attendance of this election in Wisconsin so that the usual special interest 6 – 9 thousand attendees are joined by a variety of the five and a half million citizens of this state. This should be done, in good conscience, for the good of Wisconsin, the legacy we leave to future generations, and for democracy itself.

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