External Revenue & Partnerships to Sustain a Forest Landowner Education Program

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A Successful Outreach Program & Support Structure

2003-2006 Changes in Woodland Advisor Class Structure

- Flexible class content and schedules are key to the new Woodland Advisor program structure. Classes are offered throughout the state year-round and target fixed needs. Participants can register for a single class of interest or choose if they prefer a one-time class or a whole series of classes.

- Program evaluations and feedback help to drive new class development. Examples of classes developed because of participant need include: "How to Use a GPS Reader," Intermediate and Advanced GPS, "Buckthorn Removal," and more.

- Program marketing has also been increased. Classes are promoted in the newsletter and on the Woodland Advisor website.

- Volunteer support has been increased by assigning volunteer-related duties to the program organizer and asking for host site volunteers.

Implementing Business Tools

Business tools have been utilized to help focus the program. Tools include: developing a vision statement, focusing activities, and identifying areas of potential growth as well as aggressive program marketing. We are also developing a strategic plan to continue this business approach.

Abstract Summary

The Woodland Advisor program around fifteen forest advisors in an open model in 2003. This created partnerships, expanded delivery, and increased external revenue. Classes now have flexible content and schedules, participant feedback helps to create new classes, and marketing and volunteer support increased. Business tools also focus on activities and identify growth areas.

Background of the Woodland Advisor Program

The Woodland Advisor program started in the late 1980s, it was:

- Intended to reach all segments of forest owners.
- Partnered with local woodland owner associations, Universities, MN DNR, and others
- Issues varied depending on (and among) interest, need issues, and impactful expertise

In 2003, Extension took a more active role in managing the program:

- Unified class content and format
- Trained one cohort per year
- Standardized 40-hour curriculum half consistent content, half location-specific and flexible

In 2003, the program went to open enrollment:

- Varied topics, locations, and path topics
- Hybridized curriculum (15 core, 10 class class); 5 elective (variable) classes
- Created woodland leaders and volunteers

Revenue Sources

- Participant fees typically $20 per 3-hour class
- Fee revenue generally covers class costs
- Volunteering or in-kind services
- Partnerships include Extension, Minnesota Forestry Association, and local partners
- Partners provide behind-the-scenes logistical work
- Sales of the whole program or a few

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Woodland Advisor Participation 2001-2006

Since the 2003 change from cohort groups to an open model format, individual participation numbers have steadily increased and class averages have leveled.

Woodland Advisor 2001-2006 Revenue

From both participant fees and partnership revenue have both increased substantially. Since the 2003 change from cohort groups to the open program format the revenue has grown from both participant fees and partnerships.

Vision Statement: To be Minnesota’s leading resource for citizens participating in forestry learning.