

**DEVELOPING LOCAL FUNDING TO
PROTECT DRINKING WATER SOURCES
IN NORTH CAROLINA**

**A GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS**

Prepared by
The Trust for Public Land

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help local governments and land conservation advocates in North Carolina develop and, when possible, dedicate funds, to undertake drinking water source protection activities. While we emphasize the steps needed to develop local funding for land conservation, many of the same principles can be applied in developing funds for other source water protection projects.

Local governments around the country protect their drinking water sources through a variety of mechanisms including forest and riparian land conservation, streambank stabilization, wetland restoration, and nonpoint source pollution control.

Often, these measures bring multiple benefits—besides protecting water, they help preserve wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive lands, as well as improve the quality of life for their citizens through increased parkland and recreational opportunities. In some cases, they may reduce flooding or even help meet regulatory requirements.

Even in financially trying times, drinking water protection and land conservation, in general, are highly favored by voters.

- In 2008—despite a dramatically sinking economy—voters in communities nationwide approved a record level of funding for state and local conservation.¹
- Since 2000, 74% of the more than 1500 proposed measures across the country have passed, raising more than \$36 billion for land conservation.²
- In a number of polls around the country, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) has found that the primary reason voters support open space measures is to protect water resources, and typically they are most interested in protecting their drinking water supply.

Steps 1-5 in this guide provide information on how local governments can adopt special funding measures, such as bonds, dedicated taxes and special fees to fund source water protection.

Public support is critical throughout the process, from envisioning how to protect drinking water sources to implementing source water protection and land conservation projects. Be sure to consider the *Pointers on Building Public Support* at the end of this guide.

We recognize that local governments face many pressures and have limited resources to meet all needs. While the time might not be always right to propose a new funding measure, it may still be a good time to build support for a future measure. One excellent way to begin is to develop priorities with community members, as described in the first step, on page 4.

¹ Will Rogers, President, The Trust for Public Land, in foreword to [The Conservation Program Handbook: A Guide for Local Government Land Acquisition](#), Sandra Tassel, Island Press, 2009

² For more information on North Carolina land conservation ballot measures see the Conservation Almanac at: <http://www.conservationalmanac.org/secure/almanac/southeast/nc/nc.html>

In North Carolina, TPL is one of many organizations working to develop more local government funding for drinking water protection. Some of the other organizations have been essential in creating this guide. We are especially grateful to:

- Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC).
- The Environmental Finance Center based at the University of North Carolina.
- North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Public Water Supply Section.
- Reviewers from Orange County and the City of Raleigh.

Besides tracking and analyzing land conservation finance measures across the nation, TPL also provides advice and technical assistance to local governments in designing these measures. We've condensed our experience and considered how the same techniques that we use for land conservation might also be used for other source water protection activities. We hope this information will help you proceed with more confidence and avoid common pitfalls that can imperil the success of your finance proposals.

Will Abberger, Conservation Finance Director will.abberger@tpl.org
Matt Zieper, Research Director, matt.zieper@tpl.org
The Trust for Public Land

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STEP 1: DEVELOP A COMPELLING VISION

- **Inventory the community's conservation resources and goals**
 - Create an inventory of natural resources (drinking water sources, other water resources, trails, riparian areas, wildlife corridors) that might be candidates for protection. It is possible that much of this information may be available from natural resource departments in local government or land trusts working in the area.
 - Use the NC Source Water Program online mapping tool to identify sources of drinking water that might be particularly in need of protection. The tool, found at <http://204.211.239.202/pws/help/index.htm>, provides an easy-to-use interface to look up drinking water assessment areas relative to landmarks such as roads and streams as well as county and municipal boundaries. It also allows the user to determine the water source's "susceptibility rating," a measure of potential contaminant risk.
 - One North Carolina Naturally provides an online conservation planning tool that helps identify and rank wildlife habitat areas, forest lands, water resources and farmlands for preservation. The tool can be found at: <http://www.onencnaturally.org/pages/ConservationPlanningTool.html>
 - Think broadly. Though drinking water protection may be the primary goal, many other objectives may be achievable, too. Examine the broad range of potential purposes that might be funded through a finance measure.
 - Parks, greenways, recreation lands, historic landscapes and features.
 - Lands that safeguard key environmental resources such as drinking water, wetlands, watershed and wildlife habitat.
 - Lands that support important industries - tourism, forestry, and farming.
 - Activities that reduce pollution or restore ecological functions.
 - Measures that protect and enhance the value of nearby private properties.
- **Assess the demand for source water protection--Listen to the people**
 - Design a process that encourages public participation and responds to the concerns of all interested parties.
 - Include a broad base of leadership from the community –government, business, neighborhood, agricultural, and environmental groups.
 - Meet with a variety of constituencies to help assess demand.
 - Identify priorities for land conservation and pollution abatement actions that if implemented would protect the resources of greatest concern to the community.
 - Determine how development patterns, existing land use plans, buffer requirements and existing policies relate to the identified priority lands actions.
 - Through its Conservation Vision service, TPL provides a framework for communities to prioritize goals and prepare to take action on land and water protection strategies. TPL's GIS tools for "greenprinting" engage community members in a thoughtful place-based planning process focused on developing short-term actions to meet the community's goals. To learn more about this process, see http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=3130.

THE UPPER NEUSE CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE

There are nine water supply reservoirs supplying eight municipalities in the 770 square-mile Upper Neuse River Basin. Fortunately, the municipalities in the watershed recognize that water throughout the basin is a shared resource, which requires a unified approach for its protection. With CTNC, Triangle J Council of Governments and TPL's support, they developed a Greenprint, a customized Geographic Information System (GIS) model, to identify parcels of land that the partnership might conserve to best meet their goals. With the generous support of North Carolina's natural resources trust funds, Wake, Durham and Orange counties, the City of Raleigh, and other government funding partners across the basin, the coalition has protected more than 53 miles of stream buffer and almost 5,262 acres in the Upper Neuse Basin as of August 2010. They continue to work with landowners and local governments on voluntary acquisition of additional stream buffer to protect drinking water. More information, including the full Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative Conservation Plan can be found at: http://www.ctnc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=prot_upperneuse.

- **Remember that drinking water protection is always a compelling reason to protect open space**
 - The number one reason that voters support open space measures across the country is to protect water resources, and typically they are most interested in protecting their drinking water supply. The Trust for Public Land has conducted dozens of polls that demonstrate that voters overwhelmingly support conservation for drinking water protection and the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams.
 - In a recent study of the impacts of declining forest cover on drinking water treatment costs, it was determined that there is a significant relationship among source water quality, percent land cover and drinking water treatment costs. An increase in agriculture and urban land use related to increased turbidity at the treatment plant, which resulted in higher water treatment costs. Increased forest land cover, however, was significantly associated with decreased turbidity.³
 - Financial resources are available from the State of North Carolina.
 - The NC Source Water Protection (SWP) Program provides assistance to local officials considering strategies to protect public drinking water, including land conservation. The SWP Program also maintains a low-interest loan program specifically for land conservation projects when such projects provide protection for drinking water sources. Loan terms include a fixed 1% interest rate and a 20-year repayment term. Contact the SWP Program for more information at swap@ncmail.net or call (919) 715-2633.
 - The Clean Water Management Trust Fund supports projects that (1) enhance or restore degraded waters, (2) protect unpolluted waters, and/or (3) contribute toward a network of riparian buffers and greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits. State agencies, local governments, and nonprofit corporations whose primary purpose is the conservation, preservation, and restoration of North Carolina's environmental and natural resources are eligible to apply for funding. For more information see www.cwmtf.net.

³ *Statistical Analysis of Drinking Water Treatment Plant Costs, Source Water Quality, and Land Cover Characteristics*, White Paper, The Trust for Public Land, 2008

- Local funds, described in this guide, could be used to repay low interest loans, such as the North Carolina SWP loans mentioned above. They can also be used to serve as a match for other state and federal funds. See <http://swap.deh.enr.state.nc.us/swap/pages/swp.htm> for more information on these funding sources.

STEP 2: CHOOSE FUNDING OPTIONS

- **Locally generated funds can be drawn from several different sources.**
 - Discretionary dollars can be set aside from the general budget.
 - A portion of taxes, e.g., sales or property taxes, can be designated for certain purposes .
 - Fees, e.g., real estate transfer fees, user fees, and fees related to development (including a payment-in-lieu program) also may be used.
 - Bonds and loans generate funds that can be used but also create debt that must be repaid through one or more of the revenue streams listed above.
- **North Carolina local governments have an excellent record of securing funds to finance land conservation through ballot measures.**
 - Since 2000, 85% of the proposed land conservation measures were approved.
 - Voters in 22 North Carolina counties and municipalities have voiced their support for land conservation by approving more than \$478.5 million through local bond referenda.
 - All of these referenda passed with wide margins, with an average approval rate of 65 percent.
 - Out of 33 proposed measures, only five failed during this period.
- **General obligation bonds are the primary mechanism for creating permanently *dedicated* funds in North Carolina.**
 - Funds are restricted to “capital purposes,” so they are ideal for land conservation and may be useful for some source water protection implementation costs.
 - Bonds allow for immediate purchase of open space, locking in land at current prices.
 - Approval by a majority of those voting in the referendum election is required.
 - Bonds must also be approved by the Local Government Commission (LGC), a state body.
 - Total general obligation debt is limited to eight percent of the assessed value of property subject to taxation by the county or city.
 - Time between conception and fund availability varies and can take anywhere from 6 to 18 months (or longer in some cases). The LGC recommends 90 –120 days to get a measure on the ballot (e.g. early August, for the November General Election).
 - NC Example: See box on Mountain Island Lake, next page.

MOUNTAIN ISLAND LAKE

The Mountain Island Lake reservoir provides drinking water for approximately 800,000 people. Concerned about potential impacts to water quality as a result of increasing development, a partnership of local government and nonprofit organizations formed in the late 1990's to protect the reservoir. The partnership received the first grant awarded by the newly formed North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). The City of Gastonia sold revenue bonds to fund some of the land acquisition, and this debt is being repaid with a \$1.20 Mountain Island Lake Protection Fee included in water bills. In 1999, Charlotte-Mecklenburg County passed a \$220 million Land Purchase measure (64% voted in favor of the bond). Of those funds, \$15 million was designated for land acquisition along the shoreline and tributaries of Mountain Island Lake. To date, local governments including Charlotte-Mecklenburg County and the City of Gastonia have effectively leveraged other funds, such as the CWMTF, to protect more than 6,000 acres of watershed land.⁴

- **Property tax is the single largest revenue source for most local jurisdictions in North Carolina**
 - Property taxes provide a steady source of revenue.
 - Funds may be used for other source water protection activities.
 - Expenditures are subject to the annual appropriations, however the governing body can stipulate funds be used for certain purposes, such as source water protection, in any given year.
 - Although there is no authority by which a portion of the tax may be permanently dedicated to specific activities, a local governing board may adopt a policy to this effect, which would not be legally binding but would show commitment.
 - These are relatively easily administered because no new process or structure is required. Increases are made to existing property tax bills during the annual budget process. The property tax burden is somewhat broadly distributed across the population.
 - Small increases can create substantial funding, depending upon the size of the tax base. For example, in Mecklenburg County a 0.01 percent increase in the tax rate (\$.01 / \$100 of taxable value) would generate more than \$9 million annually at a cost of approximately \$20 per year to the average homeowner.
 - Because it is the primary revenue source for most local governments, there are many needs competing for funding.
 - NC Example: See box on the Orange County Lands Legacy Program.

⁴ The Conservation Program Handbook: A Guide for Local Government Land Acquisition, Sandra Tassel, Island Press, 2009

THE ORANGE COUNTY LANDS LEGACY PROGRAM

The Orange County Lands Legacy program is a good example of the power of leveraging funds. Lands Legacy was established in 2000 to help protect, through voluntary means, some of the county's most important natural and cultural resource lands, including riparian corridors in water supply watersheds. During the first 10 years of the program, Orange County acquired 990 acres for new county parkland and nature preserves, and protected another 1,557 acres with permanent conservation easements. To fund Lands Legacy, the county uses a mixture of general appropriations (property and sales tax revenues), parks and open space bond funds, donations, and payment-in-lieu funds derived during the subdivision approval process. The county has used those local funds to leverage over \$5 million in state and federal grant funds for land acquisition and construction of public facilities.⁵ . When possible, the county matches agricultural and conservation easements with water supply protection plans.

- **Local Sales Tax—A less predictable but flexible source.**
 - Cities and counties maintain flexibility in how these funds, which are a portion of sales tax revenue collected by the state, are used. This is one of the largest sources of general revenues for cities and counties.
 - Local sales taxes distribute the tax burden across the population.
 - Due to variability in sales, however, the local sales tax is a less predictable source of funds.
 - As with property tax, there are many competing services that rely primarily on these general revenues, making it difficult to use this source for new programs.
 - Funds may be used for land conservation or other source water protection purposes, but cannot be permanently dedicated to those purposes.
 - Counties are authorized to levy an additional local sales tax (0.25 percent) following approval in a non-binding advisory referendum. In order to have the advisory referendum included on the ballot, counties must contact their local board of elections and the State Board of Elections. If a county is unable to get the advisory referendum on the ballot, it may call for and hold a special election. Counties may not also levy a real estate transfer fee.
 - NC Specifics: As of 2010, 44 counties have proposed an optional sales tax to the voters, 15 of which were adopted.

- **Real Estate Transfer Fees—A challenging source.**
 - A land transfer tax is imposed on real property—land and structures.
 - Counties are authorized to levy a land transfer tax (up to 0.4 percent) following approval via a non-binding advisory referendum.
 - Can be an unpredictable source of funds.
 - Can be used for, but not dedicated to, land conservation or source water protection purposes.
 - Homebuilders and realtors often oppose such fees in North Carolina.

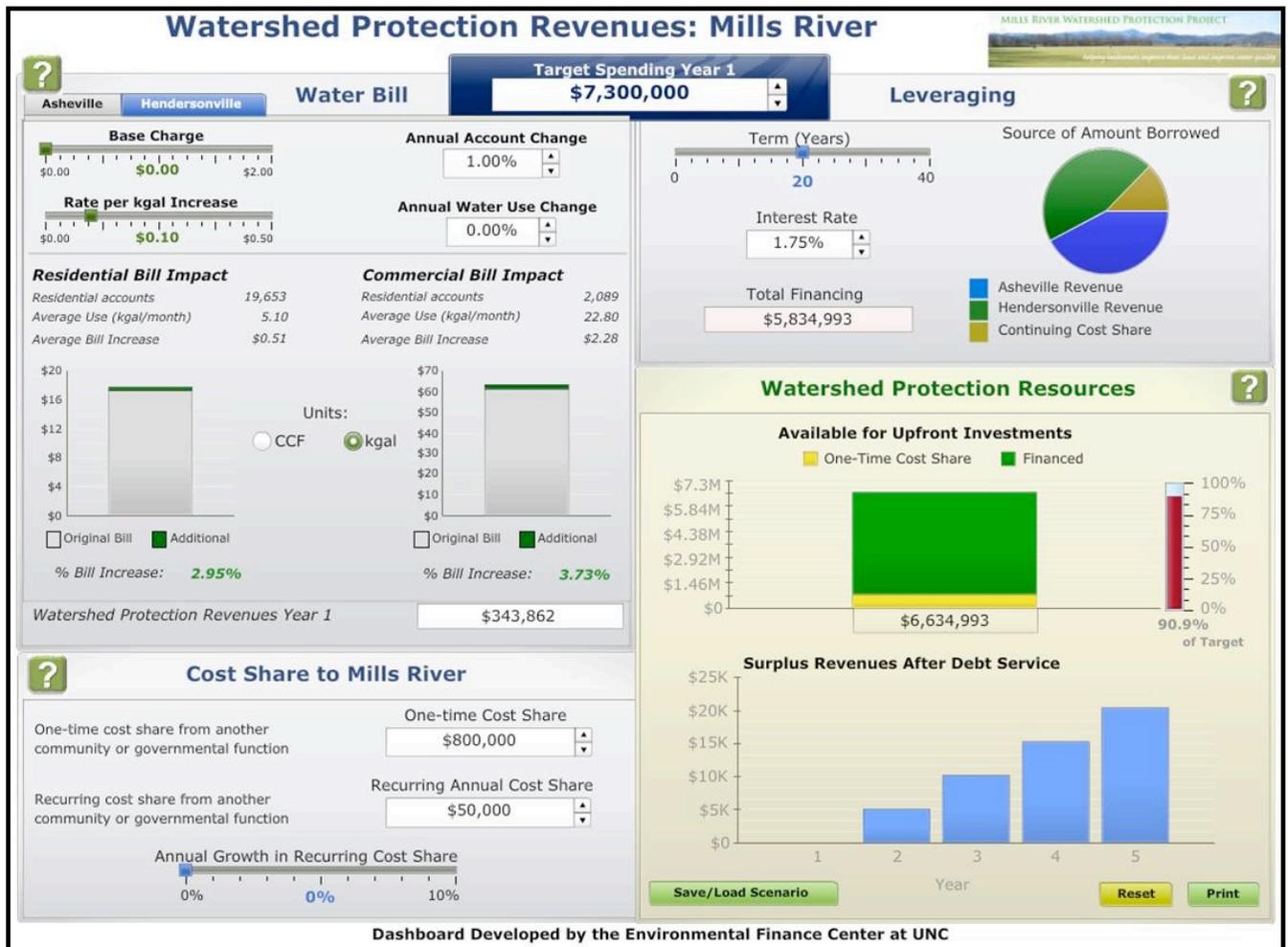
⁵ Information provided by Rich Shaw, Land Conservation Manager, Natural and Cultural Resources Division, Orange County Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation

- NC Specifics: As of 2010, 22 counties have proposed real estate transfer fees to the voters, and none of the referenda have passed.⁶
- **Impact Fees for Land Development—Limited opportunities.**
 - Currently, most local governments in North Carolina have very limited authority to impose impact fees for general services and projects.
 - Where authority exists, the funds collected may be used for land conservation and other source water protection activities, such as stream restoration or nonpoint source pollution control, and projects must be directly linked to new development.
 - Rather than establishing a general impact fee on all development, local governments may be able to charge a fee as payment-in-lieu of meeting open space or stormwater requirements on site. In such cases, the developer contributes funds towards meeting those requirements offsite. The local government might pool fees from several development projects in order to establish needed open space, for example, stream buffers.
 - NC Example: Since 2005, the city of Raleigh has devoted a portion of their water and sewer “nutrient reduction fees” on new developments to help fund the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative (see box above).
- **Utility Fees—An underutilized revenue source.**
 - Public water and wastewater treatment utilities may dedicate a portion of existing fees or increased fees in order to finance source water protection measures, including land conservation. This normally occurs by allocating a certain amount of funds in a given year to a particular project.
 - Utilities have the legislative authority to impose fees or surcharges for land conservation as long as it is related to the provision of drinking water, wastewater or stormwater services.
 - Funds can be used to pay for activities outright or to repay low interest loans, such as those granted by the NC Source Water Protection Program (see Step 1 above).
 - The fees are regularly charged to all customers (industrial, commercial and residential), so the burden is distributed widely.
 - When the ratepayer burden is tied to consumption, the fee can have the added benefit of promoting water conservation.
 - North Carolina government-owned utilities have wide discretion under NC law to modify their rates and charges to address costs related to water and wastewater management. Local governing body can modify water and sewer fees without any special hearing or public notice requirements. Stormwater fee modifications require a public hearing, which is often combined with the annual, local government budget hearing.
 - The Environmental Finance Center at the University of North Carolina created an interactive tool called the “Watershed Protection Revenue Dashboard,” that water utility managers and other water resource managers can use when considering options for generating local funds for source water protection. The tool includes a "slider" that can be manipulated to show how much revenue can be generated by raising water rates. It also includes other options such as creating a "watershed fee" through property tax bills instead of the utility bill. Funds generated by these options can be used as a match for grants that require a cost-share. Alternatively, the funds can be used to amortize a loan, since the tool demonstrates to lenders how the funds will be generated for loan repayment. See: http://www.efc.unc.edu/tools.htm#watershed_protection_dashboard.
 - Developing a straightforward name for the user fee can help ratepayers understand the purpose. Consider names such as “water quality protection fee” or “drinking water supply

⁶ Six counties have implemented a real estate transfer tax based on specific authority granted to them by the Legislature in the 1980s.

protection fee” or a name that actually identifies the source, as does the City of Gastonia with the Mountain Island Lake Protection Fee.

- NC Examples:
 - Recognizing the importance of source water protection to their customers, the Orange Water and Sewer Authority enacted a policy that targeted a certain percentage of its revenues each year to watershed protection efforts, including acquiring land surrounding their principal drinking water reservoir.
 - The City of Gastonia is repaying debts incurred for land conservation to protect the Mountain Island Lake reservoir through charges on the residents’ water bills (see box above).
 - Several communities across the state are investigating sustainable funding strategies that involve expanding the use of utility fees for watershed protection efforts. For example, water utilities that depend on the Mills River watershed in western NC are studying the impact of watershed protection charges. They have used the online tool developed by the Environmental Finance Center (referenced above) to compare various scenarios. The “dashboard” screenshot, shown on the next page, illustrates one scenario generated for the Mills River watershed.



STEP 3: DECIDE HOW LARGE A BALLOT MEASURE TO SEEK

- If a local governing board decides to seek funding through a general obligation bond measure, it must submit the proposal to the voters in a referendum. The first step is to determine the likely spending threshold for voters. Then continue through Steps 4 & 5, below.
- Choose a funding level (i.e., total bond issue sought) that doesn't unduly burden taxpayers. The Trust for Public Land has found that voter support in many jurisdictions drops off when the annual cost per household exceeds \$30.
- The funding level for a bond can be determined using the following method:

Step 1: Determine the annual debt service required for a range of bond issues. Using the pmt function in Microsoft Excel, it is possible to determine the annual debt service required based on the total amount of bonding sought (i.e., \$1m), the interest rate (i.e. 5%), and the term of the bonds (i.e., 20 yrs.).

Step 2: Determine the tax rate required to pay the debt service. Divide the annual debt service by the total assessed value ("the tax base") and multiply by 100. This provides the tax rate in standard terms. (In North Carolina, tax rates are expressed in \$/\$100 of assessed value). This is a conservative method of calculation since it does not anticipate increases in the assessed value, which are likely to occur.

Step 3: Determine the average annual cost per household, using recent figures for average assessed home valuation. Divide the Tax Rate by \$100 and multiply the result by the average home valuation.

Step 4: Redo steps 1-3 in order to find out the bond amounts that will yield the costs/household at different levels, such as \$10, \$20, \$30...\$100.

STEP 4: CHOOSE AN ELECTION DATE

- **Determine when the local governing body must take action to place a measure on the ballot**
 - Procedural requirements differ for counties and municipalities.
 - Confer with counsel to determine the steps required and timing needed to place a question on the ballot.
- **Set aside sufficient time to develop a ballot measure; ideally six months to one year before the anticipated election**
 - Actions needed differ depending on the level of government and the type of action pursued (e.g., bond measure, property or sales tax increase).
 - Requirements might include multiple notices of intent to take action in addition to holding public hearings.
- **Research voter turnout, election history, and potential competing measures**
 - Research historical voter turnout for all potential election dates.
 - Examine voter support levels for recent fiscal and environmental ballot measures.
 - Determine if there are potential competing measures likely to be on the ballot. Avoid elections with a competing measure that is complex or controversial.

- **Pursue a higher turnout election (November general election) rather than a special election**
 - From a public policy perspective, general elections provide the greatest number of voters with the opportunity to vote.
 - On a practical level, open space ballot measures have historically been more successful on general election ballots.

STEP 5: DEVELOP CLEAR, CONCISE AND COMPELLING BALLOT LANGUAGE

- **Drafting the strongest, most effective ballot language is critical to success.**
 - The ballot language may be the primary (or only) source of information for voters, and can have a significant impact on undecided voters.
 - Avoid unnecessary technical or legal language that is not required by law.
 - Include a ballot title that clearly conveys the essence of the ballot measure.
- **Effective ballot language should include information about the proposal such as:**
 - How the money will be used, e.g., for protecting drinking water. The purposes should reflect the interests of the voters as determined by the survey suggested in Step 1.
 - The estimated cost/household expressed in terms of voters’ spending thresholds.
 - Fiscal safeguards that reassure voters that money will be spent wisely. Consider using independent audits, sunset clauses, and citizens advisory committees.
- **Ballot language must conform to legal requirements for ballot language in North Carolina.**
 - For bonds, the form of the question on the ballot must be in substantially the following words:
 - “Shall the order authorizing \$ _____ bonds for (briefly stating the purpose) be approved?
 YES NO”
 - For property tax increases, the proposition submitted to the voters shall be substantially in one of the following forms:
 - “Shall _____ County, City, Town be authorized to levy annually a property tax at a rate not in excess of _____ cents on the one hundred dollars (\$100.00) value of property subject to taxation for the purpose of _____?”
 - “Shall _____ County, City, Town be authorized to levy annually a property tax at a rate not in excess of that which will produce \$ _____ for the purpose of _____?”
 - “Shall _____ County, City, Town be authorized to levy annually a property tax without restriction as to rate or amount for the purpose of _____?”
- **Base ballot language upon successful examples.**
 - An example of fairly good ballot language from a successful NC county initiative (lacks per household cost figures and information on accountability measures):
 - “Shall the order authorizing up to \$26,000,000 of GENERAL OBLIGATION OPEN SPACE BONDS of ___ County for financing, in part, the acquisition of real property by the County and the improvement of such real property or any other

County-owned real property for the conservation of open space, the protection of water quality, wildlife habitats, scenic areas and natural areas suitable for recreational or other public uses in ____County be approved?”

- An example of actual ballot language from a NC county initiative that is too wordy and technical:

“BOND ORDER AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$20,200,000 PARK AND RECREATION BONDS OF THE COUNTY OF _____. SHALL the order authorizing \$20,200,000 of bonds secured by a pledge of the faith and credit of the County of _____to pay capital costs of providing park and recreation facilities, including the acquisition and construction of new park and recreation facilities, the improvement and expansion of existing park and recreation facilities and the acquisition and installation of furnishings and equipment and the acquisition of interests in real property required therefor, and a tax to be levied for the payment thereof, be approved?”

POINTERS ON BUILDING PUBLIC SUPPORT

- In order to develop local funds for land conservation or for other source water protection activities, strong public support is critical. Reach out and provide meaningful opportunities for public engagement all along the way--from defining source water protection and other land conservation goals, to campaigning for ballot measures, to implementing the source water protection program.
- Form an alliance—Successful source water protection efforts are often lead by partnerships of watershed associations, land conservationists, public officials, property owners, and dedicated volunteers. The Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative (see box under Step 1) is a good example.
 - Engage the experts from local water treatment utilities. They may be able to provide valuable insight into the cost of adding more complex water treatment technologies compared to land preservation.
 - Consider regional partnerships, especially where a common water supply supports several communities, or where the water supply for one community is located in another jurisdiction.
- Focus geographically. For surface water supplies, make a connection between the ecological health of the watershed and drinking water protection. For groundwater sources, focus on the wellhead and recharge areas. As mentioned in the introduction, in survey after survey voters repeatedly cite drinking water and water quality protection as the primary reasons for supporting new land conservation funding. Making the connection between the two can highlight multiple benefits of source water protection efforts and thus improve chances of success. For example, in addition to source water protection, land conservation might be used to preserve wetlands that trap polluted runoff, reduce flooding, provide wildlife habitat and offer recreational opportunities. So, funding land conservation for source water protection may help communities meet many locally important objectives.
- Use a variety of public participation techniques to maximize involvement.
 - A task force made up of a diverse membership that reflects community values should be prepared to define source water and land conservation goals and developing a plan for action.
 - Community meetings and workshops can broaden participation and help to gather feedback on the work of a task force.

- Public opinion surveys can accurately evaluate voter preferences. Results can be used to improve actions taken, such as ballot measures.⁷
 - Interactive web sites provide access to maps, goal statements and strategy documents. They also provide a venue for public comment.
 - Newsletters and flyers enable the wide dissemination of information, as do newspaper, radio, television and Internet articles.
- Keep it legal—Under North Carolina law, local governments cannot advocate for a particular ballot outcome, but they are permitted to educate voters on the issues. Citizens who care about drinking water protection and land conservation, however, may form a campaign committee and raise money to run a campaign to support the measure. Elected officials may also take advocacy positions as individuals. The online Conservation Campaign Tool Kit provides tips and tools on how to create and run a political campaign to win public financing for land and water conservation. See <http://www.conservationcampaign.org/wizard/index.cfm?ID=125>.
 - Establish accountability mechanisms—Once you’ve succeeded in securing funds, it is time to effectively and efficiently conserve land or take other source water protection actions.
 - An advisory committee comprised of community members can assure the public that appropriate actions are taken and that the funds are used wisely.
 - *The Conservation Program Handbook*, published by TPL, provides information for conservation professionals to initiate or evaluate a local conservation land acquisition program. The handbook is available at: www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=23170&folder_id=188.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *The Conservation Finance Handbook* provides greater detail on developing successful land conservation initiatives, including public involvement strategies. The handbook is available at http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=11606&folder_id=188.
- TPL's Conservation Finance team advises governments on conservation funding and helps to design, pass, and implement measures that dedicate new public funds for parks and land conservation. See http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=3132.
- In addition, TPL’s Center for Conservation Finance conducts research on state and local funding for conservation, analyzes trends and best practices, and disseminates information via publications and training. See http://www.tpl.org/tier2_pa.cfm?folder_id=3148.
- *The Local Greenprinting for Growth Workbook: Using Land Conservation to Guide Growth and Preserve the Character of Our Communities*, developed jointly by TPL and the National Association of Counties, provides information on how to develop strategies to ensure quality of life, clean air and water, recreational opportunities, and economic health for the community. It is available at: http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=10648&folder_id=188

⁷ Surveys are expensive and require special expertise that is beyond the scope of this guide. If you think you might need a survey in your community, please contact us for advice.