

THE CHAIR C R E R

The spring business meeting of the National GLCI Steering Committee was held in Washington, DC from March 19-21. All of the national member organizations were present. The reception on Capitol Hill from such key supporters as Senator Conrad Burns, Representative Joe Skeen, and Representative Frank Lucas was extremely favorable. We are pleased with the support of these and other congressional friends for GLCI and the proposal for a Conservation of Private Lands Act (CPLA) stand-alone bill.

The DRAFT version of CPLA contains these five essential elements:

1. Restore NRCS staffing for field level technical assistance to pre-1985 levels.
2. Increase research in soil, water, plant, and wildlife science...the need for science-based data for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) is an example.
3. Establish short courses for both producers and agency personnel in soil, water, plant, livestock, and wildlife management.
4. Provide cost-share assistance for installation of conservation practices and systems based on the development, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive conservation plan for a five to ten year period.
5. Ensure confidentiality of conservation plans as a private agreement between the landowner and the conservation district, not as a public record that is subject to open records access.

I want to personally thank the steering committee members for their hard work on behalf of GLCI, their support of the Conservation of Private Lands Act concept, as well as the funding of the Conservation of Private Grazing Lands provisions of the 1996 Farm Bill at \$60 million, and the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative earmark of \$20 million.

The National GLCI Steering Committee also approved a motion to hold the Second National Grazing Conference in December 2003. Stay tuned as we move forward with this next grazing conference. Send your suggestions for conference themes, session topics, and speakers to Dennis W. Neffendorf, National GLCI Coordinator at P.O. Box 6567, Fort Worth, TX 76115 or through the GLCI website at www.glci.org.

Bob Drake, Chairman
National GLCI Steering Committee

GLCINews

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Visit the GLCI homepage at <http://www.glci.org>