



# CONFLUENCE OF STATES EDUCATION SERIES SUMMARY

## BUILDING UNBEATABLE COALITIONS BEHIND OUTDOOR RECREATION INITIATIVES

MARCH 6, 2024

Hosted by:



### Overview

Will Abberger, Conservation Finance Director at the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance Program and Luke Metzger, Executive Director of Environment Texas joined Chris Perkins of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable to discuss strategies (both communications and tactical) to build successful bipartisan coalitions to fund outdoor recreation and conservation at the state level. Will has helped state and local governments and citizen groups throughout the United States gauge public support for conservation and craft ballot and legislative measures that generate new sources of funding for parks and land conservation. Luke was instrumental in the recent Proposition 14 campaign in Texas, which created a \$1 billion fund for Texas State Parks.

### Take-Home Advice

"Campaigns require a mix of timely ideas, coalition building, and resonance with all kinds of individuals, whether they be allies or detractors, to succeed." - Chris Perkins

"The key steps for successful ballot measures are conducting feasibility research and understanding what the finance mechanisms are, embarking on a public opinion survey, developing informed program recommendations, submitting the ballot language and campaigning." - Will Abberger

"It is important to identify your audience. If your audience is primarily outdoor recreation enthusiasts, absolutely you should lead with outdoor recreation but for the broader general electorate, you want to factor in what are the most compelling messages and core values." - Luke Metzger

"Messages that take our issue to a higher level, like some of the water quality issues, passing on a legacy to future generations, protecting our quality of life are the ones that move voters much more persuasively than messages around active recreation." - Will Abberger

"Land conservation is bipartisan. Seek out those alliances. Win the hearts and minds of people. Don't be afraid to say what you need and articulate a bold vision." - Luke Metzger

"We want to make sure that with little funding we have, we deliver the most compelling messages that take land conservation and recreation from a luxury to a need." - Will Abberger

"But when we're communicating with the electorate overall, or we're deciding what messages are going to move our most important targets, we want to go to those messages that we know are strongest based on the public opinion research we've done." - Will Abberger

"One important maxim that we always hold out in our work is we want our campaigns to be data-driven. We all have bring different assumptions and biases to our work about what is going to be important to voters. You know, Bill Clinton said "it's the economy, stupid", I say, "it's the voters, stupid." - Will Abberger

### Panel Speakers



**Will Abberger**  
Conservation Finance Director at the Trust for Public Land



**Luke Metzger**  
Executive Director of Environment Texas



### Moderated By:



**Chris Perkins**  
Vice President of Programs for the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable



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