ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 146th MEETING

MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE, WILMINGTON, IL

14 MAY 2010
(Approved at the 147th meeting, August 13, 2010)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Dan Gooch, Vice Chair Marilyn Campbell, Secretary John Clemetsen, Dr. Mike Retzer, Ms. Susanne Masi, Dr. John Taft, Mr. Glen Kruse, Dr. Joyce Hofmann, Dr. Jeff Walk, and Mr. John Rogner.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Jim Herkert and Mr. Joe Kath (Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Resource Conservation); Mr. Randy Heidorn (Illinois Nature Preserves Commission); Ms. Tracy Evans and Ms. Kathi Davis (Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Office of Realty and Environmental Planning).

146-1 Call to Order, Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Chairman Gooch called the 145th meeting of the ESPB to order at 10:00 A.M. and called the roll call of Board Members. He then noted that there was a quorum and asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

146-2 Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Gooch asked if there were any changes to the agenda. None were noted and Dr. Taft moved to adopt the agenda, Mr. Clemetsen seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

146-3 Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meeting

Chairman Gooch asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the 145th meeting. Dr. Walk moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Masi seconded the motion. Chairman Gooch asked if there were any changes to or discussion about the minutes. Mr. Kruse made note of a correction in item 2 of attachment A, the date of December 2010 should have been December 2009. Dr. Taft noted an error in the year being written as 1009 instead of 2009 in species update information about ornate box turtles and a spelling error using one “l” instead of two in Vermillion County, Indiana in a species update about whooping cranes. Ms. Masi noted an error in item 145.3 that cites Vice Chair Campbell as asking if there were changes to the minutes of the previous meeting, but Ms. Campbell was absent from the meeting; the text should cite Chairman Gooch instead of Vice Chair Campbell. The amendments were approved by the members making the original motions and the Board unanimously approved the motion with amendments.

146-4 ESPB Staff Report

Chairman Gooch noted that the Board’s director, Anne Mankowski, was not in attendance at the meeting, but had submitted her staff report to members prior to the meeting (Attachment A), and he asked if there were any discussion about Ms. Mankowski’s report. Ms. Masi asked if there was any word about approval for either of two project proposals submitted to the IDNR by Ms. Mankowski. Mr. Kruse responded that there had been no determination of any approvals to date.

146-5 IDNR Staff Report

Mr. Joe Kath, Endangered Species Manager of the Division of Natural Heritage, gave his report (Attachment B).

146-6 INPC Staff Report

Mr. Heidorn, Assistant Director of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, gave his report, (Attachment C).

146-7 ESPB Budget

Chairman Gooch noted that the Board has been without a budget since 2002. The Board's revised FY2011 budget request of $118,900 to fund an ESPB Director staff position and related expenses and travel currently remains in the IDNR budget request to the Governor's Office, however at a level of $118,000. Chairman Gooch thanked IDNR Director Marc Miller and Assistant Director John Rogner and the Governor's Office for supporting the Board's budget line in the IDNR budget request.

146-8 ESBP Member Appointments

Chairman Gooch stated that the Governor's Office had been very responsive to Board and IDNR recommendations for member appointments and reappointments with a notably quick turn-around. He went on to review that Ms. Masi's, Dr. Retzer's, and his own reappointments had recently come through as well as the new appointments of Drs. Hofmann and Walk. This brings the Board up to date with full membership.

Chairman Gooch then reviewed that the appointments of Mr. Clemetsen and Ms. Campbell were due to expire on May 15, 2010. He asked Ms. Campbell and Mr. Clemetsen if they wished to continue serving on the Board. Ms. Campbell indicated that she did not wish to continue serving and had withdrawn her self-nomination from the Appointments.Illinois.gov website. Ms. Campbell stated that she felt the bureaucracy of the appointment process had become too invasive of personal information for an unpaid appointed position to a Board that had limited fiscal, legislative, and political influence. She added that she remains supportive of the Board and its work. Chairman Gooch thanked Ms. Campbell for her years of service and asked if she wished to continue serving until reappointed, as prescribed in the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act. Ms Campbell indicated she did. Mr. Clemetsen indicated that he did wish to continue serving and to seek reappointment.

Chairman Gooch identified a nominating committee of Mr. Rogner, Dr. Walk, and himself to recommend an individual for membership to replace Ms. Campbell. All appointments to all state Boards and Commissions are administered via the Appointments.Illinois.gov website and the Board's process for recommending individuals is in addition to the web-based process. He asked the Board to provide to the nominating committee any recommendations for a new member and reviewed some of the Board's requirements for member composition (at least two ecologists, two zoologists, and one botanist) as well as the Board's desire to maintain a diverse institution, geographic, gender, and expertise representation across its members. It was noted that the Board currently lacked representation from southern Illinois and herpetological and invertebrate expertise.

146-9 Approval of Minutes from 02/18/10 Strategic Planning Special Meeting - ESPB Policy Manual revisions and Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015

Chairman Gooch asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting (Attachment D). Ms. Masi so moved, Mr. Clemetsen seconded, and the Board approved the minutes unanimously.

Chairman Gooch asked if there was any discussion about the Policy Manual. Dr. Hofmann moved that the Board's webpage should be used to post meeting notices, Dr. Taft seconded the motion, and the Board approved it unanimously. Vice Chair Campbell moved to adopt the Policy Manual with this amendment, Secretary Clemetsen seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Chairman Gooch asked if there was any discussion about the Strategic Plan. Mr. Kruse moved to adopt the revisions to the Strategic Plan and Secretary Clemetsen seconded the motion. Dr. Hofmann moved for an edit to change from two to three, the number of "significant un-met needs" in the first sentence of the introductory paragraph of the Un-met needs Section and Dr. Taft seconded the motion. Dr. Hofmann moved to approve to the Strategic Plan with this amendment and Dr. Taft seconded the motion. Ms. Masi suggested that the plan should include a statement that the Board will address these un-met needs during the planning period. Chairman Gooch suggested language at the end of the section that "During the strategic planning period the Board will discuss the un-met needs and consider how to address them." Chairman Gooch then moved to adopt the changes noted, Dr. Hofmann seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously

146-10 ESPB/IDNR MOU

Chairman Gooch explained that the ESPB and IDNR have an existing MOU that was struck in 1990 that was being reviewed by Ms. Mankowski and Dr. Herkert for possible revisions and updates. They had hoped to have a draft of the revisions for the Board to review at the current meeting, but were still working on the document. Mr. Rogner indicated that the DNR would complete their proposed revisions in time for the Board to consider the document at its August 2010 meeting.

146-11 ESPB Research Program – (FY08 and FY09 projects, FY10 cycle – status review)

Chairman Gooch advised the Board that Ms. Mankowski had provided a report of status for the Board's ongoing research contracts and recently submitted reports (Attachment D). He then reminded the Board that the IDNR's FY10 Wildlife Preservation Fund allocation to the Board had been withheld by the IDNR due to concerns that it may need to utilize WPF funding to cover fund-appropriate budget shortfalls within DNR. He asked Mr. Rogner if there had been any change in the status of the FY10 WPF allocation and Mr. Rogner indicated there had not and that there was currently no indication about any FY11 WPF allocation.

Chairman Gooch reviewed a recommendation brought forth by Ms. Mankowski that if the Board received an FY11 WPF allocation from the IDNR consideration might be given to funding a pending project to update historic animal element occurrence records and an ongoing project to update historic plant element occurrence records for the Illinois Natural Heritage Database. Dr. Taft stated that the Board had already recommended for funding projects from the FY10 cycle and those should be given first consideration if the Board received FY11 research funding.

Several Board members agreed with Dr. Taft and he added that he would like to see a progress report of the ongoing plant project before funding it any further. Chairman Gooch indicated that the Board could discuss all of this at the next meeting and asked if there was any other discussion on the research program. Dr. Taft added that he questioned the scientific design of the proposal to update the animal element occurrence records. Chairman Gooch stated that the Board has been challenged during listing revisions by inadequate data and noted the significant number of historic element occurrence records in the state. Mr. Heidorn interjected that updated element occurrence information is critical to many functions of endangered and threatened species defense and protection for the INPC, IDNR, and ESPB. Chairman Gooch agreed and suggested that the Board discuss the topic further when Ms. Mankowski is present and that he would advise Ms. Mankowski to contact applicants whose projects were recommended for FY10 funding to see if their proposals were still viable should the Board receive FY11 WPF funding.

146-12 Species Updates

Items 1-12 were included in Ms. Mankowski's written report submitted to the Board prior to the meeting. Items 13 – 23 were reported by Joe Kath (IDNR Endangered Species Manager). Items are presented as received. Item 24 was reported by Vice Chair Campbell, item 25 was reported by Dr. Herkert (IDNR Office of Resource Conservation Director), and Item 26 was reported by Ms. Masi.

1. ***Penstemon brevisepalus* (short-sepaled beard tongue)** – This species received preliminary approval for de-listing from Board (at the 140th meeting Nov 2008), but it was excluded from final action pending verification of voucher specimens. The ESTAC has was not able to verify information about voucher specimens in time for the May meeting, now representing nearly 1.5 years of effort to verify. Board staff recommends that status review of this species be deferred for any interim changes and instead be included in the next 5-year review – to end in 2014. This species is only recorded from a single location in Pope County. The Natural Heritage Database indicates last observed in 1981 and last surveyed in 2005. Ms. Mankowski may make a site survey during May 2010.

2. ***Mentzelia oligosperma* (stickleaf)** – The Board received survey information for this species too late to include it in the recent list revision. At the Board's 141st meeting (Feb 2009), the Board approved a preliminary recommendation to list it as endangered. The Board is awaiting information about other species before moving to the required public hearing and then to other steps of the listing process.

3. ***Utricularia subulata* (hair bladderwort)** – At its 141st meeting (Feb 2009), the Board approved preliminary recommendation to list this species as endangered. The Board is awaiting information about other species before moving to the required public hearing and then to other steps of the listing process.

4. ***Isotria medeoloides* (Small Whorled Pogonia)** – The Board approved de-listing for this species and it was removed from the Illinois list in 2009. Based on a review of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act and Ad Rule for the list of Illinois endangered and threatened flora, it appears the Board does not actually have the authority to remove a federal species from the Illinois list. Board staff recommends the species is re-listed as Illinois endangered when the Board proceeds with other plant list changes. The Illinois Natural Heritage Database indicates last observed in 1991 and last surveyed in 2005 and 2009. Ms. Mankowski may make a site

survey during May 2010.

5. Ms. Mankowski requested Plant ESTAC recommendation about the potential delisting of two species due to possible extirpation based on information from a recent publication by Ebinger et al (Erigenia 2010); **B*erberis canadensis* (Allegheny Barberry)** and ***Euphorbia spathulata* (Spurge)**, both Illinois endangered. The Illinois Natural Heritage Database indicates last observed in 1987 and last surveyed in 1988 for B. canadensis and last observed in 1987 and last surveyed in 2008 for E. spathulata. Most members of the ESTAC did not express recommendation, but a few felt that the Board should allow a longer period of no verification (25-30 years vs. 20 years) and have record of more recent survey efforts before delisting. Ms. Mankowski may conduct surveys during May 2010.

6. In coordination with the USFWS Rock Island Field Office and the *Boltonia decurrens* recovery team, Ms. Mankowski continues to work on a USFWS **Decurrent False Aster (*Boltonia decurrens*)** Conservation Agreement for Managed Lands in the Illinois River and Mississippi River Floodplains. The agreement will cover multiple partners across two states (Illinois and Missouri). The *B. decurrens* recovery team hopes to have a draft document for land management agency review and input sometime in May or June.

7. Ms. Mankowski and Kim Roman (INPC Preservation Specialist) coordinated with several researchers and prepared an INPC special project proposal for returning to Momence Wetlands Nature Preserve plants of ***Styrax americana* (Storax or American Snowbell)** that had been propagated from seed collected at the site several years ago. Ms. Roman will be the lead on field activities to plant and monitor the plants. Field activities will begin in Spring 2010.

8. As outlined in several 2009 Board meetings, the Board and IDNR are working together to develop and coordinate materials necessary to re-evaluate the listing status of the **peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)**. At the request of the Board, the IDNR is preparing a *Post de-listing management and monitoring plan for the peregrine falcon*, with a first draft tentatively planned for July 2010. The Board agreed that it would await finalization and Board approval of that plan prior to reconsidering the listing status of the peregrine falcon. The Bird ESTAC has received copies of 2009 breeding season and population viability assessment data and the Board will ask that the Bird ESTAC also participate in the Board's review of the IDNR plan.

9. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to treat the **shovelnose sturgeon** as a threatened species under the "Similarity of Appearance" (SOA) provision of the Endangered Species Act (Act) due to its similarity of appearance to the endangered **pallid sturgeon**. The shovelnose sturgeon and the endangered pallid sturgeon are difficult to differentiate and inhabit overlapping portions of the Missouri and Mississippi River basins. The original proposal was somewhat confusing in that it used both "list" and "treat" language relative to threatened status. Under the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act (IESPA), species that are listed, or proposed for listing, as federally endangered or threatened are automatically added to the Illinois List, so it was unclear from the original proposal if/how this would affect state listing in Illinois. Ms. Mankowski received clarification from the USFWS that if it goes to final rule, the language will be corrected to replace "list" with "treat", so in this respect, the species will not be <u>listed</u> as threatened, but <u>treated</u> as threatened. Therefore, under the IESPA, the species would not/should not automatically be added to the Illinois list. The proposed special rule would apply only to activities that relate to the harvest of shovelnose sturgeon and shovelnose-pallid sturgeon hybrids

for commercial fishing purposes and is not expected to impact commercial fishing targeting non-sturgeon species, recreational or other non-commercial fishing activities. The special rule would not prohibit the legal commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon outside the range where the shovelnose and pallid overlap.

10. Ms. Mankowski continues project management of an IDNR SWG grant for the recovery of the **barn owl *(Tyto alba)*** in Illinois. The recovery planning team (Anne Mankowski, Dr. Jeff Walk, Terry Esker, Maggie Cole, and Mark Alessi), with Dr. Walk as the primary author, completed and circulated for review a first draft of the *Illinois Barn Owl Recovery Plan.* The Board's Bird ESTAC members are among those reviewing the document. Distribution of a second draft is planned for May/June and anticipation of presentation to the Board with request for approval of the final document at the Board's August 13, 2010 meeting.

11. As part of species recovery efforts, IDNR Fisheries staff are working on projects involving translocation of **Redspotted Sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*)** and several glacial lake fish species (**Pugnose shiner - *Notropis anogenus,* Blackchin shiner - *Notropis heterodon,* Blacknose shiner - *Notropis heterolepis,* Iowa darter - *Etheostoma exile,* Iowa darter - *Etheostoma exile,* and Banded killifish - *Fundulus diaphanous***). Ms. Mankowski reviewed, relative to the ESPB E&T animal translocation policy, and provided comments about the project proposals and permit requests.

12. Board staff reviewed and provided comment on four incidental take authorization conservation plans during the last quarter:

- ITA CP for Adams Electric wind turbines, Adams and Brown counties (**Short-eared owl** – *Asio flammeus*; **Upland sandpiper -** *Bartramia longicauda*; **Northern Harrier** – *Circus cyaneus*; **Loggerhead Shrike** – *Lanius ludovicianus*; **Indiana Bat** – *Myotis sodalis*; and, **Gray Bat** – *Myotis grisescens*);
- ITA CP for Big Sky Wind Farm, Lee and Bureau counties (*Ornate box turtle – Terrapene ornata*);
- ITA CP for Loon Lake Management Assoc, Lake County (**Banded Killifish** – *Fundulus diaphanous*; **Starhead Topminnow** – *Fundulus dispar*; **Blackchin Shiner** – *Notropis heterodon*; **Blacknose Shiner** – *Notropis heterolepis*; **Pugnose Shiner** – *Notropis anogenus*; **Iowa Darter** – *Etheostoma exile*); and,
- ITA CP for Sangamon Valley Trail, Sangamon County (**Franklin's Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus franklinii*)**.

Mr. Kath, IDNR Natural Heritage, reported on items #13 – 23 (text presented as submitted)

13. **Alligator Snapping Turtle:** As previously reported, helicopter telemetry performed in early February along Clear Creek in Union and Alexander Counties. Of the 30 animals released, we know of at 6-7 that have been predated upon by river otters. This flight confirmed 14 "on-air" signals and the animals remained primarily along the Clear Creek corridor bordering Union County Conservation Area. The ultimate goal as established by the AST Recovery Team is to return in April of May and retrieve at least six (6) live animals. A helicopter flight will be performed immediately before on the ground work ensues to help accurately pin-point locations of animals. Retrieval of six (6) live animals will allow the recovery project to move forward and begin the limited release of animals at strategic sites in southern Illinois. <u>This retrieval effort is tentatively scheduled for the week of May 24-28 and will even involve the use of SCUBA divers</u>

on/in Clear Creek.

14. **Bats and White-Nose Syndrome (WNS):** Press release circulated on Monday, April 26, 2010:

IDNR Closing State Owned and Managed Caves

Move intended to help slow spread of white-nose syndrome killing bats in northeastern states and recently confirmed in the Midwest

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is closing state-owned and managed caves that support bat populations as part of a national effort to slow the spread of the mysterious white-nose syndrome affecting bats in the northeastern United States.

The closure will be in effect until further notice. Among the caves that will no longer be open to visitors is the Illinois Caverns site in Monroe County in southwestern Illinois. Caves located at five other IDNR sites are also involved in the closure order. The caves are being closed to all visitor access in an effort to prevent humans from spreading white-nose syndrome among hibernating bat populations. These actions follow recommendations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), who along with other state and federal agencies have closed several caves throughout the United States as a result of this disease.

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is a new wildlife disease of unknown origin that has killed hundreds of thousands of bats across the northeastern U.S. during the past three years and continues to spread. It has recently been detected in Missouri and threatens to stretch rapidly to other portions of the Midwest (including Illinois), home to several species of bats that are on the federal list of threatened and endangered species, as well as some of the largest populations of hibernating bats in the country.

"The evidence collected to date indicates that human activity in caves and abandoned mines may be assisting the spread of white-nose syndrome," said IDNR Director Marc Miller. "The State of Illinois through the IDNR, working in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service, is taking steps to reduce the risks of further spread of WNS. This will involve the complete closure of all IDNR-owned and managed caves for the foreseeable future."

The primary agent of concern with white-nose syndrome is a fungus that is new to science and may possibly have been unintentionally introduced into the United States. This fungus grows best in the cold and wet conditions common to caves and abandoned mines and likely can be transported inadvertently from site-to-site on the boots and gear of cave visitors.

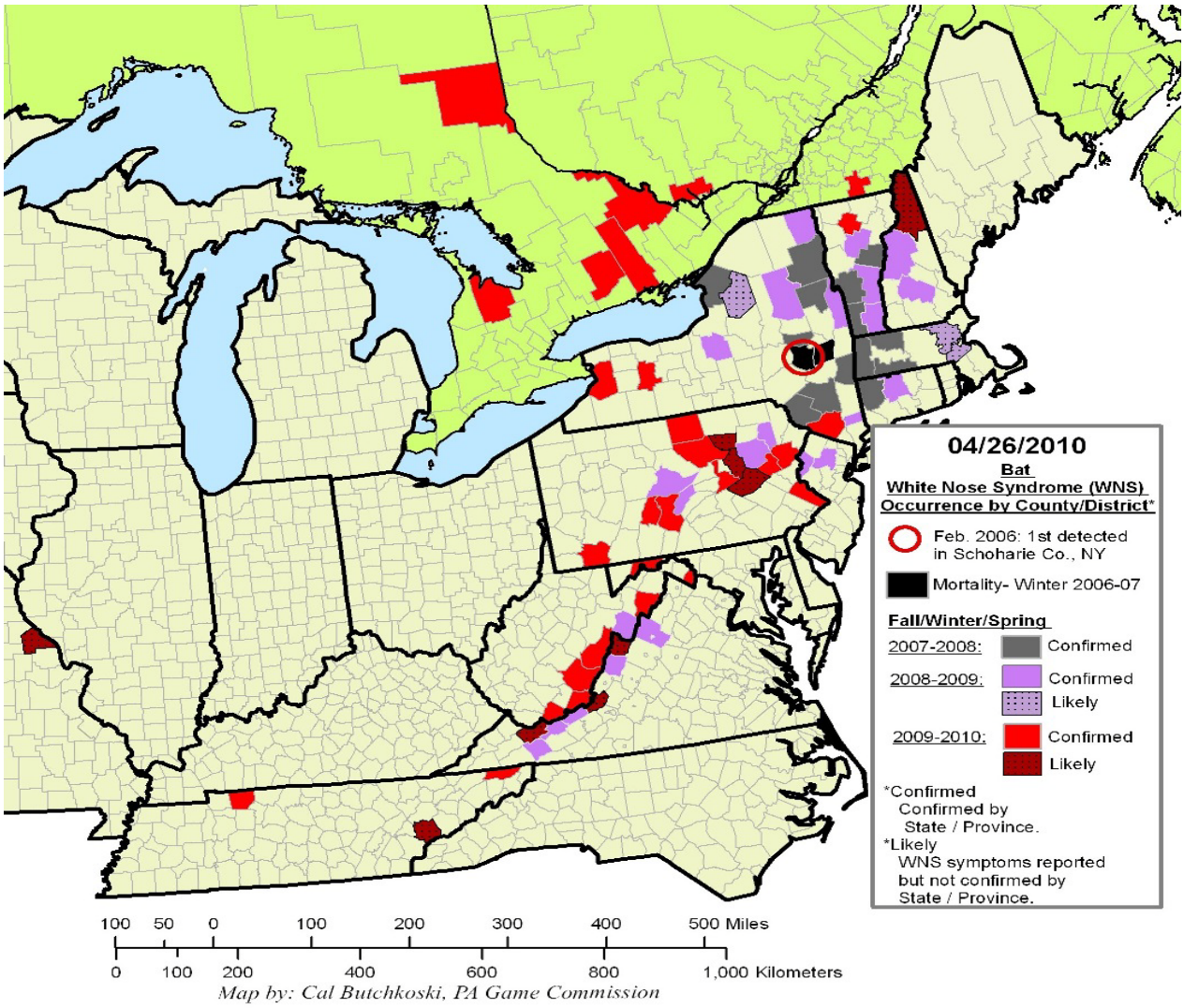
"We hope that slowing the spread of WNS will buy time that is critical to confirming the cause of this disease and potentially implementing management actions to minimize the impacts to native bat populations," said IDNR Endangered Species Manager Joseph Kath. "Scientists are working to determine the cause of WNS. Whatever is causing WNS may remain in caves where bats hibernate even when bats are not present, and we are concerned that people may inadvertently carry WNS out of the cave with them."

The IDNR is implementing the cave closure immediately and will review the order on a quarterly basis.

“We recognize that this complete cave closure effort will require sacrifice from the caving community and other citizens, and we regret this inconvenience. However, the observed devastation to bat populations, exceeding 90 percent mortality at many affected sites, and the evidence for human-assisted spread justifies that we exercise an abundance of caution in managing activities that impact caves and bats,” Kath added. “These measures will not be a cure for WNS, but they are necessary to help slow the spread of this affliction and to reduce the risks to bat populations in North America.”

The IDNR does not have the authority to close caves on lands other than those which are owned or managed by the Department. The IDNR is encouraging local units of government, public organizations, and private landowners throughout Illinois to follow the Department's example and immediately close caves on their property and prohibit any human access in order to help prevent or slow down the spread of WNS. IDNR biologists can provide advice to private landowners regarding proper cave closure.

Questions regarding WNS and the cave closure effort should be directed to Joseph Kath, IDNR Endangered Species Manager, at 217/782-6384 or by e-mail to Joe.Kath@illinois.gov.



White Nose Map as of 4/26/10: Likely = Positive PCR results, but lacking histological information.

<u>MBWG (Midwest Bat Working Group) meeting:</u>
We have scheduled the second meeting of the MBWG for May 6th & 7th 2010, at the Indiana State University Bat Center at Terre Haute. The purpose of the meeting will be to:

A) elect our officers
B) determine operating procedures
C) receive reports from the various states on the developments of the last year with regard to WNS, wind farms, and other bat issues
D) Discuss actions for WNS and wind farms.

The MBWG is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 6 Elected Officers and 9 Representatives, one from each of the member states. The officers include a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, Listservmaster (position descriptions below) and one Representative from each of the 9 member states based-on those within the USFWS Region 3 (*i.e.*, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin) and surrounding state members (Arkansas). States surrounding USFWS Region 3 may become members as they wish.

State Representatives are elected from among members within each state/province – by all members. The intent is to have a diverse mix of federal, state, provincial, and private entity (e.g., consultant and non-profit) representation on the Board with at least one of Directors being associated with a state wildlife agency that represents MBWG at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and other associated FACA-restricted groups/meetings.

Thus, the **Board of Directors** (15 total members) is made up of Officers and Representatives that have been elected by the full group of MBWG. The term of office for each member of the Board of Directors is two years and until they are re-elected, or their successor is elected and qualifies.

15. **Eastern massasauga rattlesnake:**

A. Copy of correspondence sent: 04/19/2010

Subject: Carlyle Lake Biological Station (POCs = Joe Kath, IDNR and Dr. Mike Dreslik, INHS)

Dear Assistant Director Rogner and Director Anderson:

The Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) have a long standing relationship in their joint responsibilities to protect and enhance the state of Illinois' natural resources. One specific relationship, the conservation efforts of the state endangered Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake (EMR), began over a decade ago with Eldon Hazlet State Park (EHSP) staff. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) Carlyle Lake office also joined the effort by maintaining focused efforts on EMR conservation. This coordinated three agency effort begins with data collected by INHS biologists that is then interpreted and disseminated to EHSP and COE staff.

The combined agencies collaborated on an extensive management plan to insure the protection of the species and enhance essential grassland habitats. The collaborative relationship has resulted in assistance managing the recent SWG grant to improve critical grassland/ savanna habitats at EHSP. Combined efforts have resulted in increased habitat acreage via restoration and management of invasive species. Site managers at EHSP have voluntarily reduced agricultural fields adjacent to essential hibernacula, and returned them to grasslands and savanna. Also COE staff has begun major habitat rehabilitation and restoration initiatives on their properties. Both EHSP and COE staff assist INHS biologists each with annual spring EMR monitoring. In addition, EHSP and COE staff are trained to handle live snakes if they are encountered by the public. INHS staff have assisted with habitat management and public outreach and education for the IDNR and COE. The data collected from the EMR population represents one of the most complete and comprehensive long-term data sets on the species nation-wide. Through the development and implementation of the management plan, IDNR and COE properties are able to continue meeting the recreational needs of the public, as well as enhance the sites natural ecosystems. The collaborative relationship will continue as the IDNR moves toward recovery of the EMR.

Because this relationship has proven successful, we are interested in planning for the future using this collaboration as a model. This decade long collaboration has given us a solid base of scientific knowledge, resulting in specific conservation and management actions that benefit the EMR and other grassland species. Thus our goal is to capitalize on this successful model by continuing the work efforts on the EMR and expanding to other natural resources (e.g.- wetland functionality, continuation of restoration to native habitats, the health and quality of upland game species, surveys and monitoring of other native species).

To meet future goals, it has become necessary to establish a more permanent biological research facility, not unlike the current biological field stations of the INHS. We believe the new research facility should be located at South Shore State Park (SSSP), which has the largest population of EMR in Illinois, is centrally located among all IDNR and COE properties, and has sufficient space and infrastructure.

Research staff currently works from a loaned security residence in SSSP; however, the residence is no longer habitable. The first step toward establishing a recognized field station is to obtain a habitable structure with space to conduct research. We also need funds to remove the old building and hook up utilities to the new structure. Our hope is that this biological station would be a joint venture, used by all partners- INHS, IDNR, COE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and other research institutions interested in studying the natural resources of Carlyle Lake.

Two major steps have been advanced, 1) we have some funding ($25,000) and 2) we have the potential to acquire two Federal FEMA trailers from Texas. Now we ask the group how do we proceed and what is needed for the following:

1) Obtain permission to remove the old South Shore Trailer from State Inventory
2) Remove the old Trailer
3) Obtain two FEMA trailers (currently in Texas) and transport them to SSSP (specifically items 703112-0103-006 and 703112-0103-028 from http://gsaxcess.gov)
4) Hook up the two trailers, one as a residence and the second as a lab
5) Recognize this initial effort as a biological field station with room for growth

B. Massasauga Recovery Team News:

Greetings Illinois EMRT
Just wanted to pass on some news...the Fish & Wildlife Service has announced its Endangered Species "Recovery Champions" Awards for 2009.
Our fellow EMRT member Dr. Rich King, and his student Kristin Stanford were jointly recognized for their work with the Lake Erie Watersnake.

The full press release and profiles of all the 2009 winners are at:

http://www.fws.gov/news/NewsReleases/showNews.cfm?newsId=9ADA68FE-B106-4E93-9CF4452BFE172146
http://www.fws.gov/endangered/recovery/champions/index.html

16. **Blanding's Turtle:**

Blanding' Turtles (*Emydoidea blandingii*) at Material Services Property – Update, April 2010

Five individual Blanding's Turtles (three adult females, one juvenile, and one hatchling) have been encountered on or near Material Services property (MSP) since 2008 during a Blanding's turtle radio-telemetry project at Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve in Will County.

In addition, 16 hatchlings from females who nested or attempted to nest at MSP were released on site, bringing the current known total as of Fall 2009 to 20 individuals.

On 14 June 2008, a gravid (carrying eggs) female Blanding's Turtle was found dead on the east shoulder of Route 53, adjacent to Material Services' Property. This female had presumably crossed beneath the property fence and was attempting to cross the road to find a nesting site when she was killed by a vehicle.

On 15 June 2009, a radio-equipped female, RF-01L-12L, moved south from Romeoville Prairie via the Des Plaines River to Isle la Cache Forest Preserve, directly north of MSP. On 22 June, this female crossed beneath the north property fence onto MSP to a small marsh complex below the North/South powerlines. She remained in this area and nested on 27 June. She crossed the

north property fence on 29 June back to forest preserve property. With permission, her nest was protected with a predator exclusion cage and monitored for emerging hatchlings in August and September. We recovered seven hatchlings from the nest that were measured and released into the small marsh complex in October.

While radio-tracking RF-01L-12L female on 22 June, researchers encountered two unmarked Blanding's turtles (a gravid female RF-09L-11L and juvenile RF-09L-10L) in the small marsh complex. Both new turtles were measured and marked. With permission, the juvenile was radiotagged and released. The female had been severely injured by a predator; two legs had been recently amputated by the predator, likely during a nesting foray. She was taken to Willowbrook Wildlife Center in Dupage County for surgery, rehabilitation, and captive egg-laying. She was subsequently released on 12 August with a radio-transmitter at her initial capture location. These turtles were monitored with radio-telemetry regularly throughout the rest of the activity season. The eggs obtained from RF-09L-11L were incubated at Willowbrook Wildlife Center and 9 hatchlings were measured and released in the small marsh complex in October. While releasing hatchlings from the protected and captive incubated nests on 13 October, a new hatchling was incidentally encountered in the small marsh complex. This individual was measured and released.

Summary

All radio-tracked individuals maintained activity in the northern portion of MSP during the study period. The juvenile (RF-09L-10L) was most often located in marsh habitat under the powerlines. The resident female (RF-09L-11L), although was captured in the small marsh complex under the powerlines, was located most often near or in a small channel of the Des Plaines river (Photo 2). The juvenile moved less than the female, averaging 25 m/day compared to 146 m/day. The juvenile moved a total distance of 1,243 m and the female 5,840 m during the study. However, the female only had a slightly expanded home range, 5.5 ha, compared to the juvenile, 4.5 ha.

The presence of young individuals and reproductive status of the adult females encountered at MSP indicates more individuals are likely present on site, at least during some portion of the activity season. The incidental hatchling capture in the small marsh complex confirms that at least one other undocumented female nested in the vicinity. Additionally, the fact that one gravid female showed strong fidelity to MSP suggests that at least one male may be present at some time.

Our data shows that turtles may either reside year-round at MSP or only for a portion of the activity season (e.g. nesting). A gravid female temporarily moved south from Romeoville Prairie to MSP via the Des Plaines River to nest. Blanding's turtles are capable of moving several kilometers and could possibly travel North from Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve to MSP as well. Additional monitoring (e.g. trapping, visual searches, radio-telemetry) would be necessary to accurately determine the number of individuals found on the site.

17. **HED Critical Habitat**:

The Final Revised Critical Habitat for Hines Emerald Dragonfly (Docket No. FWS-R3-ES-2009-0017) was published in the Federal Register on April 23, 2010.

This document will be placed on public inspection on 04-22-2010 08:45 EST.

Federal Register Final Rule is on the web at < http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/insects/hed/index.html>.

Attached below is a Q&A sheet. There were no changes made to the designated Critical Habitat in Illinois from the original designation.

Hine's Emerald Dragonfly

Revised Critical Habitat Designation

Questions and Answers

What action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service taking?

We are revising the Hine's emerald dragonfly critical habitat designation by adding an additional 13,311 acres to the 13,221 acres of critical habitat originally designated in 2007, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act. The revision will bring the total acreage of designated critical habitat to 26, 532 acres with 2,995 acres in Illinois, 14,348 acres in Michigan, 348 acres in Missouri, and 8,841 acres in Wisconsin. These are lands of wet meadows, groundwater seeps, and associated wetlands that lie over dolomite bedrock and provide breeding and foraging habitat for the dragonfly.

We excluded 959 acres of state and privately owned lands in Missouri from the final critical habitat designation because land managers are already working to conserve the species on those lands.

The revised critical habitat designation for the Hine's emerald dragonfly is published as a Final Rule in the Federal Register.

What changes did the Service make to the 2007 final critical habitat designation?

In the original 2007 critical habitat designation, we excluded two units in Michigan and 12 units in Missouri that are owned or managed by the Forest Service. We are now adding those 14 units back into the area designated as critical habitat. We are also including a unit on the Mark Twain National Forest that was not known to be occupied by the Hine's emerald dragonfly at the time of the 2007 final rule, but has since been discovered. The inclusion of the two units in Michigan and 13 units in Missouri increases the area designated as critical habitat from at total of 13,221 acres to a total of 26,532 acres.

The areas designated as critical habitat in Illinois and Wisconsin, are unchanged and remain the same as the 2007 designation.

Why did the Service revise the Hine's emerald dragonfly critical habitat designation?

On March 10, 2008, six parties filed a complaint challenging the exclusion of Forest Service lands in Michigan and Missouri from the 2007 final designation of critical habitat for the dragonfly. The Service reached a settlement agreement with the plaintiffs in which we agreed to reconsider the federal land exclusions.

Why did the Service originally exclude National Forest lands from the critical habitat designation?

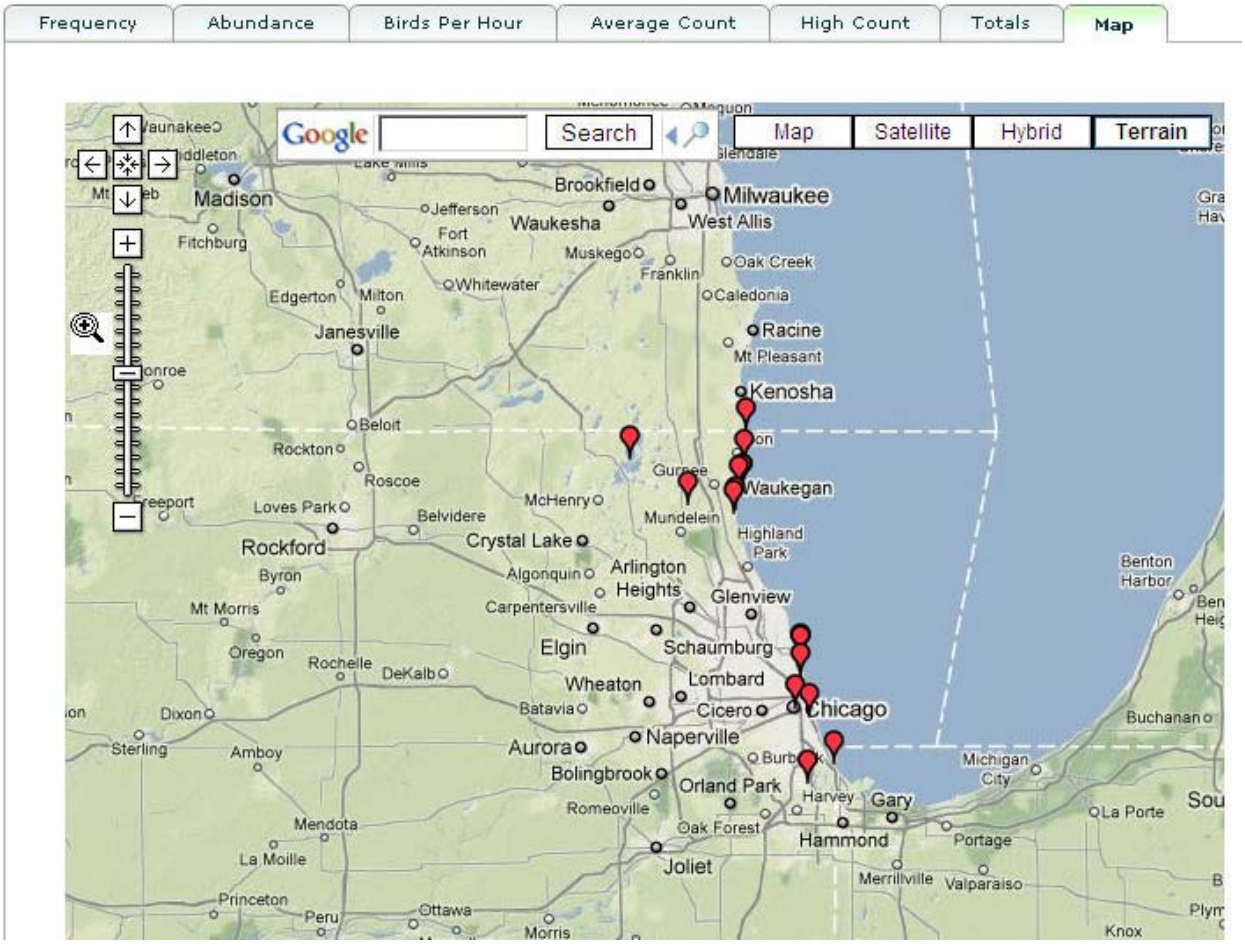
We believed that the benefits of excluding those specific areas from the designation outweighed the benefits of including them. It was our belief that the conservation actions planned and carried out for the Hine's emerald dragonfly on Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan and Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri provided greater conservation benefit than designating those areas as critical habitat. Detailed information on our reasons for originally excluding those areas is available in the Sept 5, 2007 *Federal Register* Notice: Designation of Critical Habitat for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly – pages 51125 and 51126. A link to that document can be found

online at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/hed/index.html>.

Where can I learn more about the Hine's emerald dragonfly and its critical habitat?

Information is online at http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/insects/hed/ or you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chicago Field Office

18. **Piping Plover**: Map developed by Brad Semel, DHB/McHenry County



Locations within Lake, Cook and Lake Counties where piping plovers were observed during the period 1900 through 2009

19. **Interior Least Tern**:

Survey and Management of Interior Least Terns in IN./IL. - 2009

Prior to the Least Tern nesting season in 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made their usual preparations to attract Least Terns to the Cane Ridge Tern Pond in Gibson County. Last year's selenium issue was resolved by pumping Wabash River water to both the federal and the state sites although there were some problems with adequate flow. Least Terns nested on both federal islands. In mid-May, Least Tern decoys were deployed on both islands at the adjacent Tern Bar Slough (TBS), managed by the Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts were made to minimize the washout problem that allowed access to predators last year. Electrified fencing was used at both of these islands to minimize predation. No Least Tern nesting occurred at TBS, although terns were occasionally seen feeding and roosting there. On Duke Energy property attraction methods were used only at the end of the Splitter Dike at Gibson Lake. However, human access was

restricted to all of the former nest sites and the areas were checked at least twice a week for Least Tern use. Efforts were made to discourage Least Tern nesting at the largest ash pond site to the north of the plant. This site was being capped and sealed with ash and soil. There was a lot of human and machine presence. **The Splitter Dike was used by Least Terns with three distinct nesting colonies present. In spite of the heavy human activity, nesting still occurred on the Ash Pond. In addition, the nesting site on private land about 5 km southwest of the Tern Pond first used last year again saw Least Tern nesting. Before it could be protected the site was destroyed by farming practices. The terns relocated about 1 km to the west across the Wabash River in Illinois and successfully fledged young. The Wabash River was searched from Coffee Island south to the confluence of the Ohio. One colony of 16 adults with one confirmed nest was discovered about 1 km upstream from the confluence.**

20. **Wolves:**

Current Status in Illinois – appears on IDNR's "Living with Wildlife" Website:

Gray wolves were extirpated from Illinois before 1860. There are no resident populations of wolves in Illinois. Wolves are currently listed as a threatened species Federally and in Illinois.

To date, there have been four (4) confirmed gray wolves in Illinois since 2000. Genetic information available from two of the wolves indicates that the animals came from the Eastern Distinct Population Segment, most likely from Wisconsin.

- A male shot during a coyote hunt in Marshall County in 2002.
- A male killed by a vehicle immediately north of Chain O'Lakes State Park in Lake County in 2005.
- A male shot in Pike County in 2005.
- A male killed by a coyote hunter in JoDaviess County in 2008.

As one would expect, these animals were primarily young, rogue males, likely kicked out of their native packs and willing to travel long distances in order to try and establish a pack of their own (typical wolf behavior).

In addition, it is likely that a small number of rogue individuals (perhaps 2 to 4) have passed through Illinois over the last decade on their way to surrounding states. Photos and/or tracks of these animals may exist, but without genetic information, it is impossible to confirm whether these animals were truly wild (i.e. from Wisconsin) or perhaps wolf-dog hybrids kept as pets that either escaped or were released intentionally by their owners.

April, 2010: Statement on wolves in Illinois from FWS Law Enforcement-

I agree that coordination and communication on the wolf issue could improve between the FWS and the ILDNR. However, when there is a potential unlawful take of a federally listed endangered and/or threatened species, whether it be a wolf, eagle, pallid sturgeon, etc., these matters should then be treated as possible criminal investigations and the necessity to provide detailed information regarding the unlawful take will be limited until the investigation is completed. I would respectfully ask that my office continue to be the lead point of contact whenever there is a possible take of a federally listed species so that my agents can coordinate investigative efforts with the ILDNR conservation police so a determination can be made as to whether or not an investigation should be initiated.

As a general rule, Service policy discourages our employees from making statements or providing details on pending investigations to the public and/or media. The Service considers it

improper to discuss publicly the specific details of any pending investigation and the disclosure of such details, whether intentional or not, could adversely affect our investigative efforts. Recent comments made to the media by someone outside of law enforcement regarding one of our current wolf investigations illustrates my point and the need to keep investigative details within law enforcement until the investigation is completed. Those comments have the potential to affect our federal investigation.

As you may recall from our previous discussions, I strongly encourage and support public outreach and education on the wolf issue. I specifically ask that information again be included in various media sources, to include the upcoming Illinois hunting digest and Outdoor Illinois. I anticipate that wolf sightings, killings and incidents will continue to increase in the years ahead and believe that if we do what we can to properly educate the public about wolves, we will lessen the potential conflicts that may arise. Regardless how people feel about the return of the wolves to Illinois, they are protected by both State and Federal law.

I look forward to working with the ILDNR on this issue and plan to speak with Director Rafael Gutierrez to ensure that our officers continue to work together on these wolf issues. Thanks again for your interest with this issue.

Timothy J. Santel
Resident Agent in Charge (Illinois - Missouri)
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Law Enforcement
1499 Bradfordton Road
Springfield, IL 62707
(217) 793-9554
tim_santel@fws.gov

21. **Whooping Crane**:
Whooping Crane Update, 4-17 April 2010
R. P. Urbanek, E. K. Szyszkoski, S. E. Zimorski, and M. W. Strausser
General:
Maximum size of the eastern migratory population at the end of the report period was 103 birds (58 males, 45 females). The 2 remaining juveniles in Florida began migration on 14 April. As of 21 April, 88 whooping cranes had been confirmed back in Wisconsin, and no pairs were on nests.

Illinois Stops: No. 7-09* continued migration from Grady County, Georgia, on 6 April and roosted SW of Gadsden, Etowah County, Alabama, on that night; E of Guthrie, Todd County, Kentucky, on the nights of 7 and 8 April; E of Elberfeld, Warrick County, Indiana, on 9 April; **N of Sherburnville, Kankakee County, Illinois; on 10 April; and E of Crete, Will County, Illinois, on 11 April.**
She stayed at the latter stop during the remainder of the report period.

Nos. 6-09 and 12-09 began migration from the St. Marks NWR release site on
14 April and roosted that night E of Thorsby, Chilton County, Alabama.
Their signals were lost in Hickman County, Tennessee, on the next night when they landed for roost, and they could not be found on the ground.
[They were reported in flight over Heron Park, Danville, Vermilion County, Illinois, on the morning of 18 April. They completed migration to the Necedah NWR area on 20 or 21 April.

22. **Alligator Gar**:
Message From: Trent Thomas – INHS (04/02/2010)
I am excited to share the attached copy of the State Wildlife Grant Pre-proposal for the Reintroduction of Alligator Gar in Illinois. The Pre-proposal was submitted by Tim Spier (WIU) and Dave Wahl (INHS) today to Jim Renn for consideration for 2010 SWG funds. This project has been five years in development and represents a cooperative effort among many people in many agencies from the beginning. With the attached pre-proposal we bring two research groups onboard, allowing us to learn a great deal of information about a relatively unknown species in a short amount of time. Such an effort should significantly enhance our chances of success with the reintroduction of alligator gar to Illinois waters.

As the latest update to this endeavor, our first shipment of alligator gar are expected to arrive in May. The Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery in Mississippi plans to spawn their adult fish already collected for this year in the first week of May. The fry will arrive to Illinois as 5 to 6 day-olds. Steve Krueger at Jake Wolf Memorial Fish Hatchery has agreed to receive these fish and nurture them through this vulnerable stage of life. We expect to move the fish to grow-out ponds as 3 to 4-inch fingerlings, greatly improving their chances of survival. If all goes well and follows the experience of other states with this species, the alligator gars could be up to 24 inches in length when they are stocked into waters this coming fall.

I hope everyone is as excited as I am for the opportunity to return an extirpated species to Illinois after more than 40 years! Thank you to everyone that has helped this project along the way and in the time to come. Rob Hilsabeck and I should be able to answer any questions you may have about the alligator gar plans.

23. **Incidental Take Update**: As of this meeting (May 2010), there are eight (8) active ITA's with at least 2-4 (primarily IDOT and Wind Power related) expected this quarter of 2010. Please contact Joe Kath with any questions you may have regarding specific projects. Thank you.

24. Ms. Campbell reported documentation of the first sandhill crane nesting attempt in Vermilion County this year. This species was delisted in 2009 because it was deemed recovered in Illinois.

25. Dr. Herkert reported that in 2009 piping plovers nested in Illinois for the first time in many years and there are reports of birds present this year, but no nesting has been confirmed.

26. Ms. Masi reported that the Plants of Concern Program trained about 50 new volunteer monitors.

146-13 Next Meeting Information
The 147th meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board will be at 10:00 A.M. on August 13, 2010 at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie visitor's center.

146-14 Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)
There were no comments.

146-15 Other Business
Dr. Retzer indicated that he, Mr. Kruse, and Don McFall (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Chief) have been working on an annual workplan for Ms. Mankowski.

146-16 Adjournment
Chairman Gooch asked if there was any other business, and noting none, adjourned the meeting.

Attachment A

Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board staff report
for the 146th Meeting, May 14, 2010
Submitted by Anne Mankowski, Director

The Board currently only has one staff, its Director, contractually employed by IDNR. All activities were conducted by Ms. Mankowski, unless otherwise noted. Because the Board has reduced staff and had been without any fulltime staff from 2002-2007 and then without any staff from 2007-2008, Ms. Mankowski has not been able to complete all required work in the course of a 40-hour work week. Since the last staff report, Ms Mankowski has contributed the following overtime hours, mostly uncompensated, toward ESPB duties: February = 42.50; March = 53.25; April = 63.25.

1. Competitive Funding and Grant Proposals
Ms. Mankowski, with assistance from Tara Kieninger (Illinois Natural Heritage Database Manager), prepared a State Wildlife Grant FY10 pre-proposal to contract a data specialist to support Board activities for the next list revision (2014) and to update the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Species in Greatest Need of Conservation. IDNR approval of pre-proposals and request for full proposal from successful applicants is scheduled to take place in July 2010.

Ms. Mankowski, also in collaboration with Tara Kieninger, prepared an FY11 Wildlife Preservation Fund proposal to update by resurveying historic (>10 years old) animal E&T occurrences in IDNR administrative Region 5. If deemed successful, the project will be proposed each year for other IDNR administrative regions, to update statewide data. This project received approval at the initial IDNR review and will now be considered by the Wildlife Preservation Fund Citizen Review Committee. Announcement of approved projects is expected prior to the end of the state fiscal year.

2. Board Member Appointments
Ms. Mankowski continued with follow-up at IDNR about ESPB appointments and reappointments.

3. ESPB Budget
Ms. Mankowski continued working with IDNR about the FY11 ESPB Budget request.

4. ESPB Research Program
Ms. Mankowski engaged in a fair amount of correspondence related to follow-up and review of reports on FY08 and FY09 contracts, and general inquiries about the Board's research program.

5. ESTAC Species Review
Ms. Mankowski coordinated Plant ESTAC review of two species (*Berberis canadensis* - Allegheny Barberry and *Euphorbia spathulata* – Prairie Spurge), providing background documentation and process explanation (see Species Updates).

6. ESPB Policy Manual and Strategic Plan
Ms. Mankowski prepared final draft revisions of the ESPB Policy Manual and Strategic Plan documents.

7. ESPB Status and Distribution and Thirty Years of the Illinois List Publications
Ms. Mankowski distributed for review to ESTAC members a draft of *Illinois Endangered and Threatened Species: Status and Distribution 2009 Changes* and continued work on a draft document anticipated for completion by the end of 2010 that will be entitled *Thirty Years of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species*.

8. Meetings, Presentations, and other Publications

-Ms. Mankowski represented the Board at the 55th Natural Areas Evaluation Committee meeting, April 27th, 2010 at IDNR Headquarters, Springfield.

-Ms. Mankowski represented the Board and presented a staff report at the 205th Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting, May 4th, 2010, at the Cache River Wetlands Visitor Center.

- Ms. Mankowski represented the Board at a Sustainable Natural Areas Plan meeting hosted by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Update project, Champaign, Illinois, March 9, 2010.

-Ms. Mankowski prepared and submitted to *Erigenia* a draft paper reviewing the 2009 changes to the Illinois list of endangered and threatened plants. Dr. John Ebinger is listed as co-author since he was the lead in compiling plant data for the 2009 list revision.

-Planned - Ms. Mankowski presented, as an invited speaker, a talk about the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act and the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species at the Illinois State Bar Association, 2010 Environmental Law Conference, Chicago, IL, May 13, 2010.

9. Coordination with IDNR and INPC:

Ms. Mankowski coordinated with the Endangered Species Program ORC, Division of Wildlife ORC, Impact Assessment Section OREP, Office of Land Management, Office of Law Enforcement, Office of Legal Counsel, Office of Public Services, Media Relations, and Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, on multiple matters, including:

-Assisted Mitch Cohen, IDNR Chief Legal Counsel, with preparation of information for an Illinois endangered and threatened species enforcement presentation he made to the Chicago Bar Assn.

-Assisted IDNR and JCAR with IDNR proposed amendments to the Incidental Take Administrative Rule.

-Prepared proposed amendments to the IL E&T Animal List Administrative Rule (Part 1010) to correct listing and typographic errors; mudpuppy and black-billed cuckoo from endangered to threatened, and a few typographic corrections. It is on first notice with the comment period ending June 22, 2010.

-Assisted IDNR Legal with evaluation of possible take incident involving Franklin's Ground Squirrels near Springfield, Illinois.

-Continued working with IDNR to provide advice to USFWS about planned research for the ornate box turtle.

-Participating in IDNR ORC review of State Wildlife Grant pre-proposals and proposals.

-Participating in IDNR review of proposed Illinois Tiered Aquatic Life Uses framework for future rulemaking.

-Prepared ESPB annual budget explanation forms for IDNR submittal to the Illinois Legislature. Assisted IDNR and INHS staff with development of FY11 contract and budget request materials.

-Circulated for review a draft of the *Illinois Barn Owl Recovery Plan* prepared by the barn owl recovery plan team, with Dr. Jeff Walk as primary author. Continued project management of the SWG project supporting this work; submitted annual report to USFWS and quarterly report to IDNR and coordinated and tracked project activities.

-Reviewed and endorsed, relative to the ESPB E&T animal translocation policy, an IDNR translocation proposal for the Redspotted Sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*).

-Provided guidance and advice, relative to the ESPB E&T animal translocation policy, to IDNR Fisheries staff in assisting the DuPage Forest Preserve District with preparation of a translocation proposal for several glacial lake fish.

-Worked with Jody Shimp (Natural Heritage Regional Administrator) to develop presentation materials for the Illinois Wildlife Action Team to consider supporting inclusion of plants in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Ms. Mankowski represents the Board as a member of the Illinois Wildlife Action Team and will present the information, with Jody Shimp, at the May 26, 2010 meeting.

-Reviewed and provided comment on four incidental take authorization conservation plans during the last quarter (see Species Updates).

-In coordination with John Marshall, IDNR website and IT Support staff, updated information to the ESPB webpage and recommended changes for an upcoming update to the entire IDNR website.

-Provided support to IDNR by job shadowing two students from Pleasant Plains High School on March 30, 2010.
-Provided support to Kathy Andrews, IDNR Outdoor Illinois Magazine editor, by reviewing two draft articles; piping plover and ornate box turtle.
-Directly responded to 52 requests for ESPB and E&T information from the public and other state and federal agencies.

10. Coordination with other Agencies

-Ms. Mankowski continues working with the USFWS Rock Island Field Office, IDNR, and several other partners and prepared a second draft of a Decurrent False Aster (*Boltonia decurrens* – federally and IL threatened) Conservation Agreement for Managed Lands in the Illinois River and Mississippi River Floodplains.
-Ms. Mankowski coordinated between several researchers and INPC staff (Kim Roman, Preservation Specialist) and prepared an INPC special project proposal for returning to Momence Wetlands Nature Preserve plant of *Styrax americana* (Storax or American Snowbell) that had been propagated from seed collected at the site several years ago (see Species Updates). Ms. Mankowski and Ms. Roman also continue working on a recovery outline for *Platanthera ciliaris* (Orange Fringed Orchid).
-Ms. Mankowski consulted with USFWS and MDC to prepare for IDNR a summary of listing and legal effects of USFWS treating as threatened the shovelnose sturgeon in waters co-occupied with the pallid sturgeon.
-Ms. Mankowski completed USFWS training for Federal Aid Project Management; annual HAZMAT refresher training; and, annual Wildland Firefighter Type 2 red card refresher and pack test.
- Ms. Mankowski assisted staff at the Joint Committee on Administrative Review with IDNR proposed amendments to the Incidental Take Administrative Rule.
-Planned – Ms. Mankowski will, on May 5, 2010, join the IDNR in meeting with USFS staff at the Shawnee National Forest to review cooperative opportunities between the agencies.

11. Field Work

- Assisted Mark Phipps (Natural Heritage Biologist), 20-acre prescribed burn near Farmersville, Montgomery Co.
- Assisted Scott Simpson and Terry Esker (Natural Heritage, Site Superintendent and Natural Heritage Biologist, respectively), 7 prescribed burns totaling 150 acres at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Marion Co.
- Assisted Bob Lindsay (Natural Heritage Biologist), 110-acre prescribed burn at Cypress Pond and 230-acre prescribed burn at Cedar Bluff Nature Preserve in Johnson Co.
- Planned – conduct survey with Michelle Simone (Natural Heritage Biologist) for Kitten Tails (*Besseya bullii*) at Big River State Forest, Henderson Co.
- Planned – conduct survey with Kim Roman (Preservation Specialist) for Ornate Box Turtles (*Terrepene ornata*) in Kankakee Co.
- Planned – conduct survey for *Berberis canadensis* (Allegheny Barberry) in Jackson Co.
- Planned – conduct survey for *Penstemon brevisepalus* (Short-sepaled Beard Tongue) in Pope Co.

12. Other General Administration and Clerical Work

- Prepared and routed Board member and staff travel vouchers.
- Regularly distributed information to Board and ESTAC members via internet and hardcopy mailings.
- Prepared and distributed to Board members draft minutes from the February 18, 2010 strategic planning meeting.
- Prepared and distributed to Board members draft minutes from the February 19, 2010 145th meeting.
- Made updates to the ESPB webpage on the IDNR website.
- Responded to 52 requests for information and/or ESPB reference materials.
- All aspects of preparation for the May 14, 2010 146th meeting.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources report for the 146th meeting of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board
May 14, 2010

Prescribed Burning - Natural Heritage completed a successful spring prescribed burn season. Heritage staff led 77 prescribed burns on nature preserves, land and water reserves and other natural areas. The burns covered more than 5000 acres.

USFWS State Wildlife Grant awards were announced in March. 13 projects were funded, including stewardship of hill prairie preserves on the Mississippi River bluff in southwestern Illinois, stewardship of DNR natural areas, acquisition of an addition to Apple River Canyon State Park in Jo Daviess Co., status revision for Illinois' fish species in greatest need of conservation and Illinois chorus frog habitat conservation.

USFWS Section 6 grants – USFWS announced the FY 2010 budget for Section 6 grants. The allocation for Illinois is $75,063.

Cave Closure - DNR closed 6 state owned and managed caves that support bat populations as part of a national effort to slow the spread of white nose syndrome – a wildlife disease affecting bats in the northeast and Midwest. The caves that are closed are Illinois Caverns in Monroe Co., Blackball Mines NP in LaSalle Co., Burton Cave NP in Adams Co., Brainerd Cave LWR in Jersey Co., Fogelpole Cave NP in Monroe Co., and Guthrie Cave LWR in Union Co. The closure is in effect until further notice.

Invasive Species Awareness Month – The Illinois Invasive Plant Species Council named May as Invasive Species Awareness Month. The Council is working in partnership with many conservation organizations and agencies in Illinois to promote awareness of the impact of invasive species on Illinois' landscape. Invasive species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose great costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and other enterprises as well as human health.

To: Endangered Species Protection Board

From: Randy Heidorn

Date: 13 May 2010

Subject: Illinois Nature Preserves Commission Report for ESPB Meeting

I. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) Operations:

A. Deborah Stone, Randy Heidorn, Jenny Skufca, Kelly Neal, John Nelson, Steven Byers, Kim Roman, and Bryan Eubanks attended the INPC photographic exhibit event celebrating the 500th protected site at the Environmental Law and Policy Center in Chicago.

II. Inventory and Monitoring:

A. Several INPC staff compiled landowner contact information and biological information for potential natural areas to assist the INAI update staff and effort.

B. Randy Heidorn, Kelly Neal, and Jenny Skufca Participated in discussion criteria for inclusion of a Woodlands Category in the INAI.

C. Tom Lerczak:

1. Completed baseline plant inventories at the Rollo Prairie in Mason County, and at a 40-acre tract of Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) property in Mason County for use in LWR proposals.
2. Completed a second overwintering survey of red-headed woodpeckers at Sand Prairie-Scrub Oak NP.

D. Mary Kay Solecki:

1. Assisted IDNR staff with a rare snake survey in Piatt County by determining landowners of potential habitat for rare snakes, condition of potential habitat, and landowner education.
2. Initiated a salamander and frog survey at Edgewood Farm LWR.

E. Judy Faulkner Dempsey monitored a population of synandra (*Synandra hispidula)* at the Little Grand Canyon-Cedar Creek INAI site.

III. Protection Program:

A. The following sites were approved for legal protection at the 205th meeting of the INPC held at the Henry N. Barkhausen Cache River Wetlands Center on May 4, 2010:

1. Natural areas approved for registration as a LWR include:
   a. Flag Pond, Clay Co., 180 acres (IDNR), Very high quality pond of the Bottomlands Section of the Wabash Border Natural Division.
   b. Stonewood Farm, Jackson Co., 135 acres (privately owned), birthing rookery for a State – threatened reptile.
   c. Chauncey Marsh, Lawrence Co. 345 acres (IDNR), marsh, buffer to existing NP, State-endangered Royal Catchfly(*Silene regia*) and State-threatened cerulean warbler (*Dendroica cerulean*) and reptile.
   d. Rollo Prairie Addition to Sparks Pond LWR, Mason Co., 155.87 acres (IDNR), State-threatened amphibian and reptile.
2. Natural areas given preliminary approval for dedication as NP include:
   a. Addition to Gensburg-Markham Prairie NP, Cook Co., 9.187 acres (The Nature Conservancy [TNC]), very high quality dry and mesic sand prairie and sedge meadow Chicago Lake Plain Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division, and several listed plants.
   b. Buffer addition to Beadles Barrens NP, Edwards Co., 15 acres (privately owned), restored buffer.
   c. Samuel Barnum Mead Savanna, Hancock Co., 37 acres (IDNR), high quality dry savanna of the Galesburg Section of the Western Forest-Prairie Natural Division and four listed plants.
   d. Forested Fen, Kane Co., 23 acres (Fox River Country Day School), forested fen of the Morainal Section of the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division, State threatened bog arrow grass (*Triglochin maritima*).
   e. Addition to Carl N. Becker NP, Kankakee Co., 10 acre (TNC), very high quality dry and dry-mesic sand savanna, two listed plants.
   f. Westwood Park Addition and Buffer to Yonder Prairie NP, McHenry Co., 63.6 acres (City of Woodstock), high quality wet-mesic prairie, and a state threatened reptile.
3. Natural Areas given final approval for dedication as NP include:
   a. McMahon Woods and Fen, Cook Co. 670 acres (Forest Preserve District of Cook County),

Federally endangered Hines emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora hineana*), also restorations with State-endangered Queen of the Prairie (*Filipendula rubra*) and State-threatened savanna blazing star.

b. Freundschaft Weise Buffer addition to Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP, McHenry Co. 36.4 acres (privately owned), buffer to high quality fen.

c. Yonder Prairie, McHenry Co. 40.3 acres (Land Conservancy of McHenry Co.), high quality wet prairie,

B. The new NHLs are:

1. Heather's Hollow in Monroe County; part of Columbia Hill Prairies INAI site; 9.7 acre (Newman)
2. Carroll T. Cox Forest in Crawford County; part of Chauncey Marsh INAI site; 106-acre (Edgin).

C. Mary Kay Solecki chaired the LWR procedures update committee, gave a presentation on LWR updates to the INPC staff and Commissioners, obtained reviews of the draft white paper, and finalized the white paper on updating procedures for acquiring and registering LWRs.

D. Steven Byers: Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge (NWR):

1. Gave a presentation to Marc Miller, John Rogner, Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and USFWS Region 3 Director Tom Mileus regarding the proposed NWR regarding USFWS initiatives, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, Strategic Habitat Planning, and a 5-year action plan for climate change. Also toured the area of the proposed NWR.
2. Met with Greg Siekaniec, Chief of the USFWS Refuge System, Evan Hirsch of the Fish and Wildlife Refuge Association, Elizabeth Kessler of MCCD regarding the proposed NWR and took a short tour of the site.
3. Gave presentations and received support for the NWR from the Natural Lands Institute (NLI), local Audubon Chapter, MCCD, and the CW Executive Council.

E. Angella Moorehouse met with staff from Interstate Resource Conservation and Development, Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District and NLI to discuss the formation of a new land trust for the Quad Cities area.

F. Mary Kay Solecki participated in a Salt Fork Rivers Partner meeting and encouraged landowners along Salt Fork of Vermilion River INAI site to formally protect natural area in their ownerships. Prepared map of conservation lands protected on Salt Fork of Vermilion River INAI site and distributed it to river conservation partners.

G. Judy Faulkner Dempsey:

1. Landowner contacts to propose preservation of the Britton Springs dusky salamander site.
2. Talked with the landowner of Toothless Cave, an Indiana bat hibernaculum.

IV. Land Acquisition:

A. Mary Kay Solecki assisted a private landowner in an effort to acquire land upstream of an INAI river section for conservation purposes.

B. Angella Moorehouse provided information and recommendations on a 1,000+ acre tract of land containing populations of the state-threatened blazing star (*Liatris scariosa* var. *nieuwlandii*) that was offered for sale to the IDNR.

C. Debbie Newman worked extensively on acquisition projects for three INAI sites in Monroe and St. Clair counties, totaling 530 acres.

V. Defense Program:

A. Class III Special Resource Groundwater Petitions for nine INPC sites were submitted in May, 2009. The submission was reviewed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) and published to the Environmental Register in December, 2009 for public comment. Per IEPA staff on April 19, 2010, no public comments were received; therefore, the IEPA will recommend final listing through their legal staff in the near future. The nine sites are: Armin Krueger Speleological NP, Bluff Spring Fen NP, Braidwood Dunes and Savanna NP, Elizabeth Lake NP, Illinois Beach NP, Lake in the Hills Fen NP, Lockport Prairie NP, Romeoville Prairie NP, and Volo Bog NP.

B. Jenny Skufca:

1. Responded to four reviews for IDNR's Comprehensive Environmental Review Program (CERP) and nine reviews for IDNR's consultation program.
2. Prepared Class III Groundwater Petition packets for George B. Fell NP, Goose Lake Prairie NP, and Spring Grove Fen NP for submittal to the IEPA. Petitions for Trout Park NP, Cotton Creek Marsh NP, and Gladstone Fen NP are now in final draft stage and will also be submitted.
3. Attended a meeting with Element Markets wind development company, IDNR staff, and USFWS staff

to discuss factors considered in review of wind projects in Illinois.

4. Submitted letters from the INPC to Ogle County and Lake County Planning Departments regarding INPC protocols for reviewing wind projects near INPC sites.

C. Jenny Skufca and John Nelson met with representatives of Unimin Mining Corporation and the IDNR to discuss mining activities adjacent to George B. Fell NP and expenditure of the annual contribution donated to the Wildlife Preservation Fund for protection and stewardship at the NP.

D. Angella Moorehouse contacted the McDonough County Natural Resource Conservation Service to report a possible sodbuster violation involving the installation of drainage tiles within the wetland of Bushnell Swamp INAI Site.

E. Mary Kay Solecki**:**

1. Provided Ecology and Environment, Inc. staff with INPC procedures for handling potential pipeline impacts on or near NPs.
2. Provided TNC staff with possible wind farm impacts/mitigation measures as they relate to Nachusa Grasslands and vicinity.

F. Threats to Sites within INPC programs:

1. **Lake in the Hills Fen NP, McHenry County – John Nelson**
   a. Issue: On March 25, 2009, a wildfire occurred at Lake in the Hills (LITH) Fen.
   b. Threat: The LITH-Algonquin Fire Protection District responded by entering the NP with brush trucks that got stuck in hydric soils. A Bobcat skidsteer was called on-site to extract vehicles, and it also got stuck.
   c. Status: Resolved. A Wildland Fire Training course was hosted and conducted at the LITH-AL Fire Protection District headquarters with attendance at full capacity on April 9-11, 2010. INPC staff is attempting to purchase a properly equipped ATV for use by the Fire Protection District in the event of future wildfires.
2. **Bluff Spring Fen NP, Cook County – John Nelson, Steven Byers**
   a. Issue: Routing of water from Gifford Lake and "finger lakes" located adjacent to Bluff Spring Fen is currently under consideration by the FPDCC. Options include surface conveyance of water from Gifford Lake or conveyance of the water via a pipe.
   b. Threat: INPC groundwater consultants Randy Locke and Jim Miner, Illinois State Geological Survey, have both recommended the "piping" alternative.
   c. Status: Ongoing. A meeting was held on March 29, 2010, with representatives of Bluff City Materials, Vulcan, and the FPDCC with INPC staff. The FPDCC staff approved the plan and may be able to sign the plan as permit applicant; otherwise, the FPDCC will need to approve a resolution to approve the plan at a formal board meeting.
3. **Gladstone Fen NP, McHenry County – John Nelson**
   a. Issue: Proposed residential subdivision on land adjacent to the NP.
   b. Threat: Close proximity to the NP could have impacts to the groundwater resource that sustains the high quality fen wetland and sedge meadow at Gladstone Fen NP. The development property is 58 acres and is currently zoned for seven home parcels. The subdivision plan calls for 13 home sites with a conservation area adjoining the NP.
   c. Status: Ongoing. On January 18, 2010, INPC staff testified at a combined meeting of the Bull Valley Village Board and Zoning Board.
4. **Stone Bridge Reserve LWR, Winnebago County – John Nelson, Jenny Skufca**
   a. Issue: The landowner of the LWR, Roscoe Township, installed an underground electric line through the LWR.
   b. Threat: This is an unauthorized use that caused damage to the natural area, including potential damage to a state-listed species.
   c. Status: Ongoing. No restoration plan or procedural agreement was received by INPC as requested. Roscoe Township's attorney contacted the INPC on March 26, 2010, requesting assistance with the restoration plan. An on-site meeting will be scheduled with the INPC, NLI, and Roscoe Township representatives to discuss alternatives.
5. **Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid NP, Lake County – Steven Byers**
   a. Issue: The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) intends to widen Route 22. The proposal for dedication of this site provided for this construction, which includes construction of a berm in order to reduce the width of the road project.
   b. Threat: Indirect threat posed by sedimentation and subsequent increase in reed canary grass, which threatens long-term viability of the federally-threatened orchid.
   c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff was asked to submit a letter to IDOT District 1 Engineer, Peter

Harmet, requesting that IDOT purchase NP fee-title or establish a memorandum of understanding with the landowner that allows IDOT access to the site for monitoring and management.

6. **Gensburg-Markham Prairie NP, Cook County – Steven Byers**
   a. Issue: The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC) has developed a drainage plan for the Little Calumet River watershed.
   b. Threat: The plan could unintentionally inundate portions of the NP.
   c. Status: New. INPC staff, Dr. Ron Panzer, and Mr. Karl Gnaedinger met with Deborah Shore, MWRDGC Commissioner, and Mr. Richard Lanyon, General Superintendent of MWRDGC and staff to review the threat. The Commission was asked to submit a letter to MWRDGC "flagging" the proposed project; outlining the threat posed to NP, and the natural resources put at risk.
7. **Braidwood Dunes and Savanna NP, Will County – Kim Roman**
   a. Issue and Threat: Exelon Tritium release and remediation.
   b. Status: Resolved. In 2005, the INPC and the Forest Preserve District of Will County (FPDWC) were made aware of a Tritium release from Exelon's Braidwood station immediately adjacent to the NP. Tritium levels in the NP were elevated (relative to background levels), but did not exceed state drinking water standards, and would naturally attenuate over time. Other areas outside the NP had Tritium levels that exceeded state standards, and a remediation strategy (supervised by the IEPA) was required. The most feasible remediation strategy that was adopted was the pumping of nearby wells for approximately ten years to capture the Tritium plume in the groundwater. Groundwater modeling showed the draw of well water would pull water away from the NP (create a cone of depression) and potentially impact the high quality sedge meadow and wet prairie communities of the NP. Because of the risk of violating the Illinois Natural Areas Preservation Act, Exelon continued discussions with the FPDWC and INPC staff while closely monitoring groundwater levels in the NP and nearby wells. Exelon's pumping is at a rate that pulls the Tritium onto their property, while being conscientious of maintaining water levels in the NP. Exelon had agreed to also fund management tasks in the NP to minimize or avoid impacts to the natural communities that might result from a temporary groundwater reduction. In March of 2010, a Consent Order between the IEPA, Illinois Attorney General's Office, and Exelon was finalized. Part of the final settlement included a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) for the NP. Exelon provided payment of $392,000 to the FPDWC to monitor the site and implement management/restoration. Tasks funded by the SEP include hydrological restoration by modifying small ditches, woody removal, invasive species control, native seeding, prescription fire, and ecological monitoring. The implementation of this aggressive management plan should abate potential impacts from a temporary groundwater reduction. Exelon anticipates pumping up to another five years before Tritium remediation is complete. To date, the actual data obtained from wells within the NP show no significant change in water levels at the NP. Staff of the FPDWC and INPC will continue to monitor the results of groundwater sampling for the duration of remediation.
8. **Meredosia Hill Prairie NP, Morgan County – Tom Lerczak, Jenny Skufca**
   a. Issue: The Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative (IREC) is installing new electrical lines and wants to place poles and lines within the NP.
   b. Threat: The proposed three electric poles would cause direct damage to the prairie and interfere with site management.
   c. Status: There are no current valid easements for utilities within this portion of the NP. IREC was provided information and maps to related boundaries of the NP. Since there are alternatives, such as moving to the other side of the street, staff denied the initial request.
9. **Prairie of the Rock Overlook LWR, Randolph County – Debbie Newman**
   a. Issue: Unknown persons have ridden ATVs all over the site below the hill prairie.
   b. Threat: ATV damage throughout the site. In addition, a couple of INPC boundary signs were pulled out and tossed into the LWR.
   c. Status: Ongoing. INPC is working with the landowner's tenant farmer and Prairie du Rocher Police to eliminate the activity. The INPC will be purchasing a gate to prevent ATV entrance into the LWR.
10. **Salt Lick Point LWR, Monroe County – Debbie Newman**
    a. Issue: An individual bulldozed approximately one-fourth of an acre area across the LWR line.
    b. Threat: Encroachment in the LWR.
    c. Status: Ongoing. INPC staff and a Conservation Police Officer are working with the neighbor to remedy the situation and prevent future incursions.
11. **DesPain Wetlands LWR, St. Clair County – Debbie Newman**

a. Issue: A neighbor to the LWR had survey done and posted boundaries on the LWR, claiming an additional 30-50' as his property.
b. Threat: Encroachment in the LWR.
c. Status: Ongoing. INPC is working to bring the surveyors together.

12. **Stemler Cave NP, St. Clair County – Debbie Newman**
    a. Issue: Maintenance of a power line that goes across the top of the NP sinkhole.
    b. Threat: Maintenance is causing some vegetation issues, including destructive cutting and spread of non-native invasive.
    c. Status: Ongoing. Staff is working with the power company to possibly relocate the line. Monroe County Electric Coop is determining viability of alternatives and the INPC is waiting to hear from them.

VI. Stewardship Program:

A. Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager Certification: The IDNR's Wildland Fire Task Force, a group Randy Heidorn co-chairs within IDNR, has been actively reviewing applications for certification. To date, over 150 applications have been processed and approved. Mr. Heidorn has also been working with IDNR's Systems and Licensing and Central Management Services staff to develop the database, card, and certificate graphics so that credentials can be issued.

B. Stewardship Planning:
1. Kelly Neal:
    a. Reviewed six management schedules, two unscheduled management activities, and two management related CERPs at INPC sites.
    b. Worked with IDNR's Systems and Licensing and Central Management Services staff to begin implementation of new INPC Special-Use Permit database.
    c. Coordinated with IDNR's Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) staff to develop a plan for an integrated approach to streamline permit management between ORC and the INPC.
2. John Nelson:
    a. Met with landowner to discuss proper management and use of the Dolly-Kuetemeyer buffer addition to Boone Creek Fen NP. The owners agreed to restore an area of the NP which they had seeded with turf grass as an extension of the yard around their home.
    b. Met with the Gramercy Park Foundation and Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation to discuss restoration plans for the NHL, which includes 2000 year old Indian mounds.
    c. Provided management advice to landowners of Lowell Forest NP, Gladstone Fen NP, Boloria Fen and Sedge Meadow NP, Keough Effigy Mounds LWR, Pine Rock NP, Flora Prairie NP.
3. Steven Byers:
    a. Coordinated with CW partners to identify, evaluate, and respond to GLRI funding opportunities.
    b. Met Tom Gargrave, IDNR Regional Forester, on a site to review stewardship at the Forested Fen owned by Fox River Country Day School.
4. Kim Roman:
    a. Participated in a meeting with the FPDCC, US Army Corps of Engineers, and USFWS to discuss hydrological and ecological restoration of Burnham Prairie NP.
    b. Kim Roman and Bryan Eubanks participated in a meeting (led by Steven Byers) with the FPDCC and IDNR to discuss and plan the management needs of Wolf Road Prairie NP.
5. Angella Moorehouse:
    a. Met with the Henry County Natural Areas Guardians to discuss management issues at Munson Township Cemetery Prairie NP and Greenlee Cemetery Prairie NP.
    b. Prepared management schedule updates for nine INPC sites.
    c. Met with faculty from Black Hawk College, Western Illinois University and Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation Service to discuss plans to implement a goat grazing project on Black Hawk College property to control bush honeysuckle. The project will also include a Grazing Conference to be held at Black Hawk College this summer. The goal is to obtain more knowledge on how to utilize goat grazing to control invasive plants and to rehabilitate native plant communities.
6. Tom Lerczak:
    a. Began planning for additional sites (Hopewell Hill Prairies NP, Oak Bluff Savanna NP, and Crevecoeur NP) on the Hill Prairie State Wildlife Grant.
    b. Completed GPS mapping of exotic species control area at Culp Conservancy Woods LWR.
    c. Provided written management recommendations to the Pekin Park District for tree planting at

Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR.

7. Mary Kay Solecki:
    a. Assessed management needs at Edgewood Farm LWR and Riverbend LWR.
    b. Coordinated management schedule update for one LWR.
    c. Prepared text for customized entrance sign at Carl Fliermans' River NP.
8. Debbie Newman:
    a. Updated/wrote management plans for five sites.
    b. Continued working with volunteers and committee at Salt Lick Point LWR.

C. Stewardship project implementation: Staff continued to coordinate and administer stewardship projects, including the Hill Prairie Project, funded by Landowners Incentive Program (LIP), State Wildlife Grant (SWG), the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, an EPA 319 Grant, the NAAF, and INPC operations fund. These projects involve meeting with landowners, securing landowner agreements, preparation of grant applications, preparing bid packages, supervising contractors, and assisting in conducting restoration activities. Contractor work included prairie reconstruction and seed purchase, exotics and woody species control, dump cleanup, erosion control, boundary survey, fence construction and sign posting, and prescribed burn site preparation and burn crews. Sites where this kind of work occurred include:

1. Area 1 (Nelson): Freeport Prairie NP, Kinnikinnick Creek NP, Pine Rock NP, and eight NP sites in the Boone Creek Watershed.
2. Area 2 (Byers): Prepared and submitted three new projects.
3. Area 3 (Kim Roman): Sweet Fern Savanna LWR, Goose Lake Prairie NP, Aroma Forest Preserve LWR, Long Run Seep NP.
4. Area 4 (Moorehouse): Grubb Hollow Prairie NP, Geissler Savanna LWR, Brownlee Cemetery Prairie NP, Spring Grove Cemetery Prairie NP, Cecil White Prairie LWR, Stony Hills NP, Siloam Springs State Park (SP) and Jamar Haven LWR.
5. Area 5 (Lerczak): Ridgetop Hill Prairie NP, Wiegand Prairie NHL, Dirksen-McNaughton Woods LWR, Walden West LWR and Illinois River Sand Areas LWR.
6. Area 6 (Solecki): Loda Cemetery Prairie NP, prepared and submitted three new projects for Horseshoe Bottom NP, Doris Westfall Prairie Restoration NP, and Baber Woods NP.
7. Area 7 (Newman): Continued administering 14 projects at INPC.
8. Area 9 (Faulkner Dempsey): Ren-Dil Shale Glade NP, Degognia Canyon LWR, and Faulkner-Franke Pioneer Railroad Prairie NP.

D. Land management conducted by staff:

1. John Nelson, Tom Lerczak, and Mary Kay Solecki provided INPC signs and/or posts to landowners of INPC sites.
2. INPC Staff conducted prescribed burns at several sites including:
    a. Area 1: Fifteen sites.
    b. Area 2: Bluff Spring Fen NP, Boone Creek Fen NP, Gladstone Fen NP, Sterne's Fen NP, Wheeler Fen LWR, Queen Anne Prairie – Eckert Cemetery NHL, Hybernia NP, and Highmoor Park NP.
    c. Area 3 (Roman & Eubanks): Short Pioneer Cemetery Prairie NP, Long Run Seep NP, Grant Creek Prairie NP, Des Plaines Dolomite Prairies LWR, Wilmington Shrub Prairie NP, Hildy Prairie NHL, Iroquois County State Fish &Wildlife Area (SFWA) LWR, Morris Wetlands, Silver Springs SP, and a private Will County Wildlife program property.
    d. Area 4: Grubb Hollow Prairie NP.
    e. Area 5 (Lerczak and Lovgren): Hopewell Hill Prairies NP, Crevecoeur NP, and Walden West LWR.
    f. Area 6: Allerton Park INAI site, Iroquois County SWFA, and Unity East Elementary School Prairie Restoration.
    g. Area 7: Ten sites.
    h. Area 8: Led or assisted with 50 prescribed burns totaling 2,639 acres. Beadles Barrens NP, Cretaceous Hills NP, Jasper County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP, Marion County Prairie Chicken Sanctuary NP, Lost Creek Marsh NP, Robert Ridgway Grasslands NP, Cedar/Draper's Bluff LWR, Horn Prairie Grove LWR, Karl Bartel Wildlife Sanctuary LWR, Padgett Pin Oak Woods LWR, P & E Refuge LWR, Prairie Ridge State Natural Area LWRs in Jasper and Marion counties, Ping Prairie at Huskey Hollow NHL, Beall Woods SP, Chauncey Marsh State Natural Area, Iroquois County SFWA, Pyramid SP, Stephen A. Forbes SP. Also assisted District Wildlife Biologist with a burn.
3. Additional invasive species control, restoration, and other management activities were conducted at several sites including:

a. Area 1: Harlem Hills NP (3 workdays), Gladstone Fen NP (4 workdays).
b. Area 2: Wolf Road Prairie NP, Trout Park NP, Hybernia NP and Bluff Spring Fen NP.
c. Area 3 (Roman & Eubanks): Goose Lake Prairie NP, Superior Street Prairie LWR, Sweet Fern Savanna LWR, Messenger Woods NP, Long Run Seep NP, Wolf Road Prairie NP, Grant Creek Prairie NP.
d. Area 6: Monticello's Sangamon River LWR, Jordan Creek of the Salt Fork NHL, Jasmine Hollow LWR, Loda Cemetery Prairie NP.
e. Area 7: Potato Hill NHL, Martha and Michelle Prairies LWR, and Salt Lick Point LWR.
f. Area 8: Beadles Barrens NP

Report on the ESPB research program to address the status, conservation, and/or recovery of Illinois endangered or threatened species

Submitted by Anne Mankowski, Director
for the 146th Meeting, May 14, 2010

The Board administers a research program to answer questions regarding the listing, recovery, and conservation as it relates to those aspects, of Illinois' endangered and threatened species. Since the Board has been without a budget since 2002, it has during that time relied solely on a $25,000 annual allocation from the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund to administer the program. Due to concerns about budget shortfalls, the IDNR was not able to release the FY10 allocation to the Board, so the Board will not be contracting any FY10 projects. Ms. Mankowski engaged in fair amount of correspondence related to follow-up from the FY10 RFP, follow-up on FY08 and FY09 contracts, and general inquiries about the Board's research program.

1) FY08 and FY09 Projects

FY08 Projects

Contract #	Title	Researcher/ Institution	Award Amount	Status
RC08E02W	Establishing population trends of *Hyla avivoca* in southern Illinois by duplicating the 1995 Redmer, Brown and Brandon survey	John Palis	$ 3,402.00	Done
RC08E01W	Survey of breeding colonial wading birds of conservation concern in the lower Wabash River drainage in Illinois, with special emphasis on the Little Blue Heron	Three Rivers Environmental Assessments	$ 18,423.00	Done
RC08E03W	Status survey update for listed herptiles for Kidd Lake Marsh, Fults Hill Prairie N.P., and other newly dedicated lands in Monroe County	Robert Weck	$ 4,852.20	Done
RC08E04W	Genetic variation in *Astragalus crassicarpus* var. *trichocalyx* in Illinois	SIU at Edwardsville, Dept. of Biological Sciences	$ 2,999.70	Done
RC08E05W	Spatial Ecology and Over-Winter Survival of Neonate Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*) at Carlyle Lake	INRS INHS UIUC	$ 13,191.00	Due 06/30/10
RC08E06W	Conservation genetics of the state endangered spotted turtle, *Clemmys guttata*	INRS INHS UIUC	$ 5,000.00	Done
RC08E07W	Status, Distribution and Resource Requirements of the Longnose Dace in Illinois	INRS INHS UIUC	$ 6,450.00	Done
RC08E08W	Status Survey of *Mentzelia oligosperma* (Stickleaf)	Michael Jones	$ 4,986.00	Done
RC08E09W	Population Size and Genetics of the Blanding's Turtle at Goose Lake State Natural Area, Grundy County, Illinois	INRS INHS UIUC	$ 8,318.00	Done
RC08E10W	Status Report for Native Populations of Shortleaf Pine (*Pinus echinata*)	Michael Jones	$ 9,632.00	Due 06/30/10
RC07E02W	Reproductive Success of Sandhill Cranes in Northeastern Illinois	Dr. David Thomas, PI; Dr. Michael Ward , INRS INHS UIUC, INHS	$ 5,730.00	Done

FY09 Projects

Contract #	Title	Researcher/ Institution	Award Amount	Status
RC09E01W	Habitat Use, Nest Success, and Natal Philopatry of Loggerhead Shrike in Northwest Illinois.	Wenny and Elbert (INRS INHS UIUC)	$ 6,053	Due 05/01/10
RC09E02W	Conservation Genetics of Jefferson Salamanders in Illinois: Implications for Conservation and Recovery	Kuhns (INRS INHS UIUC)	$5,995	~~Due 03/30/10~~ No cost extension to 09/30/10
RC09E03W	Status assessment survey for springtails (Collembola) in Illinois caves.	Soto-Adames and Taylor (INRS INHS UIUC)	$4,663	Done
RC09E04W	Rarely Seen Illinois Native Plant Species; Their Status and Distribution.	Phillippe and Ebinger (INRS INHS UIUC)	$6,419	~~Due 12/31/09~~ No cost extension until 06/30/10
RC09E05W	Status of three freshwater snail species in the lower Ohio River basin in Illinois.	Tiemann and Cummings (INRS INHS UIUC)	$3,993	Due 06/30/10

2) Brief Summaries for Recently Received Project Reports

Conservation genetics of the state endangered spotted turtle, *Clemmys guttata*, by Whitney Banning, INHS UIUC, (RC08E06W).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION FROM REPORT:

Genetic data are critical when planning conservation strategies for turtles and can be used to elucidate genetic diversity, genetic drift, inbreeding, and gene flow (Alacs et al. 2007). Only one other genetic study exists in the literature for *C. guttata*; a method called DNA fingerprinting was used to assess genetic variability in five populations located in Indiana (Parker and Whiteman 1993). This molecular method is considered obsolete by most population geneticists because of shortcomings such as the inability to distinguish heterozygotes from homozygotes, which thus prevents sophisticated population-level analyses (Avise 2004). Today, microsatellite analysis is widely used in population genetic studies, because microsatellite DNA exhibits greater polymorphism compared to other markers due to their relatively high rates of mutation and thus provides better resolution among closely related individuals (Oliveira et al. 2006, Selkoe and Toonen 2006). Although, *C. guttata* is a species of special concern throughout its geographic distribution, this is the first known study that has reported on the genetic diversity of *C. guttata* populations using microsatellite markers.

The numbers of alleles we found in each locus were similar for those reported for *C.guttata* in King and Julian (2004). However, the level of average heterozygosity in this study (0.35) is relatively low compared to those reported in other Emydid turtle studies (see Mockford et al. 2005; 2007, Hauswaldt and Glenn 2005, Tessier et al. 2005, Howeth et al. 2008, Marsack and Swanson 2009, Refsnider 2009, Selman et al. 2009). Only one study on ornate box turtles in Iowa found lower levels of heterozygosity (Richtsmeier et al. 2008). The amount of differentiation between the LPNP and RPNP populations (FST=0.09) can be considered small to moderate yet, it is difficult to evaluate these comparisons of genetic diversity based on only a few microsatellite loci.

The fact that significant linkage disequilibrium (non-random association of alleles) was detected between *Gmu*D55 and *Gmu*D90 in the LPNP population could be caused by two related reasons. First, many young individuals (i.e. hatchlings, juveniles, and immature) were included in the sample set. Including offspring has the potential to bias samples towards parental genotypes. Additionally, samples were collected across multiple years, and because of the life history traits of this species, multiple generations. Both of these reasons can lead to a non-random distribution of alleles in the sampled population.

Although several attempts were made to optimize (adjust amounts of reagents, annealing temperature, etc.) the PCR reaction for the second multiplex panel, amplification success was inconsistent and variable among the remaining four microsatellite loci. Additional loci will be needed to better understand the genetic structure of each *C. guttata* population and their relationship between each other (i.e. gene flow, genetic drift) in the lower Des Plaines River Valley as well as other populations throughout the species range. Thus, the originally proposed objective of creating a population viability analysis was not pursued for this report. I will continue to optimize the reaction conditions for the second multiplex panel as well as additional primers sets that successfully amplified during the initial screening stage, for a total of 15-20 microsatellite loci.

Population estimates for LPNP range from 82-103 (Mauger 2008) and for RPNP range from 96-172 (Banning and Dreslik 2009). The number of tissue samples collected and successfully extracted (LPNP=134, RPNP=94) exceeds or nearly meets the within-year population estimates and indicates that these populations have been adequately sampled to accurately characterize the genetic attributes of these populations. Once genetic structure of the LPNP and RPNP populations is better understood, future work should focus on the creation of a comprehensive population viability analysis (PVA) that includes known

demographic, life history, spatial, and genetic parameters to gauge the long-term persistence of *C. guttata* in Illinois. A sensitivity analysis can also then be used to determine most effective management strategies.

Population Size and Genetics of the Blanding's Turtle at Goose Lake State Natural Area, Grundy County, Illinois, by Dr. Mike Dreslik, INHS UIUC, (RC08E09W).

SUMMARY FROM REPORT

• We have trapped 180 locations around Goose Lake Prairie State Natural Area, Grundy County for 64,000 trap hours during the 2006-2009 field seasons.
• We have identified 76 individuals from the population.
• Although adult sex ratios are equal, the adult to juvenile ratio is skewed toward adults.
• We were able to obtain a preliminary population estimate of 93 individuals (95% C.I. 79,112).
• Movements and home range results were some of the largest reported in the region even given that the tracking duration was much shorter.
• Turtles used multiple wetlands during tracking and long-distance moves over a short period to reach them.
• We successfully amplified and genotyped four microsatellite loci for 45 individuals.
• Two to five alleles were identified for each locus and no deviations from Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium were detected.
• Effective number of alleles ranged from 1.2-2.5 and observed heterozygosity ranged from 0.20-0.64.

There were recommendations for continuing the work begun here and expanding to address additional population ecology parameters (Reproduction, nesting, individual growth, spatial ecology, mortality and survival, population size and structure, population genetics).

Survey of breeding colonial wading birds of conservation concern in the lower Wabash River drainage in Illinois, with special emphasis on the Little Blue Heron, by Three Rivers Environmental Assessments, (RC08E01W).

DISCUSSION FROM REPORT

Historically, Little Blue Herons (*Egretta caerulea)*, Yellow-Crowned Night Herons (*Nyctanassa violacea)*, Black-Crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax)*, Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula)*, and other threatened and endangered wetland birds occurred in areas of Southeastern Illinois (Table 3). Other species that occurred in this area are Pied-Billed Grebes (,*Podilymbus podiceps)*,Common Moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus)*, Least Bitterns (*Ixobrychus exilis)*, American Bitterns (*Botaurus lentiginosus)*, and King Rails (*Rallus elegans*). Undoubtedly, Little Blue Herons and Snowy Egrets are at the Northern limits of their breeding ranges in Southern Illinois, but a in a few years of note, such as in 1996, these birds occurred and nested in small numbers in this region (Table 3). Conditions may have been favorable enough during this year to encourage nesting behavior in Southeastern Illinois, or conditions may have been unfavorable enough in other areas to push the birds to this area.

Generally speaking, birds in the Southeastern Illinois area from May 20 to June 20 of each year might be considered breeding birds. Those individuals arriving after July are most likely post-breeding wanderers. For Herons and Egrets in Illinois, there are two summer populations, the Illinois breeding population which arrives in early spring, and a summer migration population consisting of birds relocating from the South where nesting begins and ends much earlier than in Illinois. A number of species of Herons exhibit a 6 special migration pattern, in which, after the nesting season is completed, they first move northerly as much as 200 miles, where they then spend the entirety of the summer and fall months. These birds then migrate back south for the winter.

At the current time, Little Blue Herons and Snowy Egrets rarely venture into Southeastern Illinois because nesting habitat is so severely diminished, and what habitat there is, is not present for long enough periods to allow for successful nesting activity.

A reasonable assumption is that the birds have relocated to the west side of the state where numbers have been consistent over the past 3 years. Little Blue Herons are showing up in large numbers in Southwestern Illinois. A post on IBET from July 13, 2008 by Craig Taylor listed 1250 birds in Union and Alexander Counties in Illinois which may indicate post breeding wandering from the south. A post from Keith McMullen on July 7, 2008 noted many species of Herons and Egrets throughout the flood plains of Jackson, Union, and Alexander counties, and nearly 1,000 Little Blue Herons were observed in the flooded areas along Illinois Rte. 3 in July 2008 by Jeff Stewart (pers. comm.).
The reason for the loss or relocation of these populations is most likely the loss of habitat, and lack of sustained habitat for these birds in southeastern Illinois (Table 4). Logging and agricultural practices have removed historic nesting habitat in this area. Without the creation or presence of permanent to semi-permanent wetlands in southeastern Illinois, breeding populations of Little Blue Herons, as well as other wading birds, will likely never become established.

3) ESPB Research Program Budget
The current balance is $7.68.