

**Natural Resources Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2011**

Members Present:

Claudia Emken Terri Treacy Tim Collins
Brian Anderson

DNR Staff:

Marc Miller Tim Schweizer Mark Spangler
Mike Stevens Mike Ziri Tami Evans

Guests:

Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society

Director Miller opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Roll call was given; quorum was not met.

Director Miller advised the board that Deputy Director Debbie Stone has moved on in her career, accepting a position with Cook County as the Director of Environmental Control. In the interim, Director Miller will be the liaison with the Board.

The Governor's proposed budget for IDNR represents a \$3.6 million increase in general revenue funds, but 7.2 % decrease overall; mostly from federal funds. The budget process is very different this year due to the Governor's proposal to "budget for outcomes". This approach looks at a program, recognizes its value to our citizens and the outcomes that are delivered. This allows IDNR to present its programs, and tell its story.

Because of DNR's approach to this process, the Agency has been recognized as being one of the best among the state agencies. If this approach continues, DNR will be best able to sell and justify its programs so that they will continue to be funded. DNR has also been recognized with its efforts of Executive Order 10/10 which asked agencies to review and reduce costs associated with telecom, travel and vehicle use. DNR was able to reduce its costs by \$1.4 million.

\$500 million has already been borrowed from state agencies; approximately \$38 million in OSLAD and another \$5-6 million in NAAF from DNR. Pressure will continue and it will be an issue for our boating, park & conservation, state park and fish & wildlife funds. Because of the radical cuts DNR has faced, these funds have been operationalized and by the end FY12 and into FY13 these funds are expected to

be in the red. DNR will be facing choices in the next year that will be difficult which includes the potential of 400 plus retirements.

\$41 million has been obligated for OSLAD grants that have been awarded and still waiting for funding. Until there is some certainty, there will not be any granted this year.

The PARC (Park & Recreational Facility Construction Act) program is funded from capital dollars, and from a different funding source. DNR received 237 applications for \$236 million; \$25 million is available. Recommendations are being reviewed and depending on what is available will depend on what is being let out.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has put into the federal register a proposed rulemaking to allow states additional flexibility for waterfowl zones and splits; public comment period is through May 15. DNR has been pushing for a fourth waterfowl zone that last two years and has a proposal which will help alleviate a lot of the contentious problems we have been seeing over the last 10 years. DNR will be reaching out to waterfowl groups for their involvement in this process.

Chronic Wasting Disease is an issue that DNR will be watching closely over the next several months. CWD has spread to Kane, Grundy and Stephenson County. In recent years, DNR has partnered with Wisconsin to share science and techniques and to encourage a more scientific approach as CWD in Wisconsin is growing. Recent meetings however, and their management approach has been disappointing. IDNR is reassessing its strategy based on what might be seen in Wisconsin and will engage and activate the hunting community and make sure we continue efforts to contain the disease.

The Director thanked the three new members for attending and taking on the challenges of the board, and added that he would like the board to be more involved in an advisory, policy and leadership role. Conservation Congress was a model, led by NRAB and involving constituents. The creation of a recreational access committee will be formed and a solid direction will be given in the near future. If anyone is interested in helping, please let the director know.

Terri asked where the department was with the suggested fee increases. The director added that park - parking fees are being worked on internally; we are waiting to see where we are with the General Assembly and then we will move forward. Water allocation fees for Water Resources and consultation fees for Realty & Environmental Planning are proposed.

Mike Stevens and Mike Ziri provided the board with a brief update on Agency legislation. DNR is watching the following:

SB1703 – Creates a CPO Operations Assistance Fund – allows the Conservation Police to keep monies from written tickets in a fund to be used for equipment needs.

HB1437/SB2190 - Feral Swine/Hogs – makes it illegal to import or possess feral swine

SB1337 – Creates a River Otter trapping season

HB2861 – Allows terminally ill children to hunt regardless of season or time of year

HB1192 – Allows director to authorize a local community group or civic organization to sell alcohol at events while at DNR facilities.

SB262 – Adds the director or his designee to the Commission to End Hunger

Tom Clay, Illinois Audubon Society was asked to attend the NRAB meeting and provide the board with an overview on Vital Lands Illinois. Vital Lands Illinois is a vision about connections – connecting people and land and the future of land protection in the State of Illinois. Vital Lands Illinois was formed through an invitation from the Grand Victoria Foundation to mostly non-governmental organizations to look at funding opportunities from their land acquisition program. This grant program is based a lot on Illinois' fish & wildlife action plan and how acquisitions fit within this plan. Grant monies are for stewardship & acquisition but not for restoration. These organizations combine partnerships and show how these different organizations can work together in land movement activities.

Mark Spangler, ICF Executive Director provided the board with information on the newly gifted property, Torstenson Family Farm in Winnebago County. This property was gifted by the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation and is a 750 acre parcel of woodlands, marshes and farming opportunities and will be utilized as the Torstenson Family Youth Conservation Education Center. This property is an opportunity for local communities and the Chicago areas to educate children in conservation. Local school districts have been challenged on how best they could use the property which could be open to farming practices, water quality testing, species identification and open classroom discussions. The Dan and Ada Rice Foundation have given the ICF a \$100,000 matching grant that is earmarked to build the education center.

The Illinois Conservation Foundation Hall of Fame Banquet is February 9 at the Drury Lane in Oakbrook Terrace.

The Chairmanship/Vice Chairmanship was postponed due to lack of quorum.

Board Comments:

Claudia has been asked why the youth turkey season can't be held the same time as the regular turkey season. Similar questions regarding other youth season have been brought up in the past. Director Miller added that he would look for a solution.

Brian Anderson had a recent conversation with Dave Eustis of Southwestern RC&D regarding having Tom Heavisides assist them with a green cities component in the metro east area.

Tim Collins submitted an essay on the Emiquon. This essay will be shared with the board.

The June meeting will likely be rescheduled. Tami will be in touch with new dates.

Public Comments:

None