

**Natural Resources Advisory Board Minutes
October 26, 2010**

Members Present:

Claudia Emken
Timothy Collins

Terri Treacy

Brian Anderson

IDNR Staff:

Deborah Stone
Debbie Bruce

Tim Schweizer
Shawn Wilcockson

Kristin DiCenso
Tami Evans

Chairman Emken opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m., roll call was given. Quorum was not met.

The Board has three new members: Terri Treacy, Brian Anderson and Timothy Collins. Terri is a field representative from the Sierra Club, Brian is the director of the Illinois Natural History Survey and Timothy is the assistant director for the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs.

Chairman Emken noted that Richard Mark has resigned from the board. A resolution noting his achievements was signed by Chairman Emken and will be mailed to him.

Deborah Stone provided the new members with a brief glimpse into many of the new programs underway at IDNR. These programs are responsive to the recent Conservation Congress held in October of 2009. Conservation Congress was to engage our constituents, bring them together in one place and share respective goals and priorities. The two day gathering touched on three areas: funding, youth recruitment and retention and access for outdoor recreation. A few recommendations relative to funding have been accomplished. Partners for Parks in Wildlife have taken a lead on looking at long term funding options for conservation.

Target Hunger Now! Kristin DiCenso - Kristin provided the board with an overview of this new initiative geared toward providing protein enriched meals to soup kitchens throughout Illinois. Target Hunger Now! is an offshoot of the Sportsmen Against Hunger program and will build on that program, which has provided over 600,000 pounds of venison, providing over 2 million meals.

Target Hunger Now! kicked off its inaugural event in Aurora & Maywood Illinois in September feeding over 400 families. IDNR has partnered with the Illinois Conservation Foundation, the Beta Club of Illinois, FeedingIllinois.org and Comcast in these efforts. Comcast has provided media coverage and produced a video that can be found on the DNR homepage. Hunters who donate venison to the Sportsmen Against Hunger program can receive a \$50.00 tax deduction voucher through the Illinois Conservation. A list of processors taking part in this program can be found on the department's homepage.

IL Recreational Access Program – Debbie Bruce – The Department recently received a grant from the US Department of Agriculture for a program called Voluntary Public Access and Habitat incentive program. This allowed states to competitively seek funds to improve recreational access or to create a program and implement it. In April the Governor passed an executive order charging IDNR and participants of Conservation Congress to seek funding and to seek ways to create outdoor recreation programs.

The grant requested \$1.5 million over a three year period. In the first year, DNR will receive \$525,000 to develop and launch a program for recreational access focusing on three campaigns: fishing/boating access, youth turkey hunting and to seek landowners who own several hundred acres for more diverse recreational activities.

Part of the competition included providing recreational opportunities, ensuring proper habitat and tying this program with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Illinois has such a successful CREP program that we were able to secure funding. The CREP program involves 68 counties in the Illinois & Kaskaskia River basin.

Private landowner enrolled in CREP will be eligible for funding and offered a 3 year lease agreement for habitat improvements. The Iroquois & Kankakee River areas will be a focus for the fishing/boating access as access is limited. The youth turkey hunting campaign will focus on spring youth hunting. Landowner's who have 80 acres of forested habitat that is suitable will be offered the same 3 year lease agreement.

Liability is an issue; shooting sports are included in the recreational liability access act. However, amending legislation that allows DNR to lease properties for a nominal rate, and waiving liability for the landowner will be looked at. Participants will be required to sign up through the local soil & Water Conservation District.

A programmatic Environmental Assessment must be conducted and approved through a several step process before IDNR can receive funds.

CREP will re-open December 1 and information will be provided to individuals upon enrollment.

Environmental Literacy Plan - Val Keener – The history of the Environmental Literacy Plan dates back to 1995, and was formed with the Illinois State Board of Education along with the Lt. Governor's office. The plan is a broad look at environmental education goals, what we see as being important to students, teachers, communities, and the public to aim toward an environmental literate populous. The ELP plan has been updated approximately every five years. In 2009, the Environmental Literacy Plan was discussed in the youth recruitment & retention committee at Conservation Congress and was the

number one recommendation of the committee. IDNR began the process of engaging the Board of Education and EPA, along with numerous organizations to develop a plan. Public focus groups have been held and these groups were charged with providing strategies and setting goals. Comments were incorporated and provided to the public for review and comment. Comments will be presented to DNR, EPA and the State Board of Education. Implementation has always been an issue; there is a plan but no funding. Val provided the Board with a copy of the Environmental Literacy for Illinois Strategic Plan.

PARC Program - Tom Dilello/Mick Rosendahl – The Park & Recreational Facility Construction Act was created in 2009. PARC grants are eligible to local governments for parks and recreation construction projects, including renovation of recreational centers, pavilions. \$25 million is available for FY11, with 20% of the appropriation awarded to the Chicago Park District and 80% awarded to local units of government outside the City of Chicago. Applications were open October 15 and close on November 29. DNR will provide up to 75% of approved project costs, with disadvantaged communities being eligible for up to 90%.

PARC projects are bondable, cannot be used to match other state or federal funds and differ from OSLAD. A handout describing the program was provided to the board.

A copy of the DNR budget powerpoint will be sent to the board.

2011 Advisory Board Dates – Deborah Stone - suggested dates for 2011 are: January 25, April 12, June 21 and October 18. Board members will be polled and confirmation of dates will be forthcoming.

Board Comments:

It was suggested inviting one of our joint partners, like Pheasants Forever come to a future board meeting and share an example of joint projects/significant land acquisitions.

A request for a list of DNR joint partnership projects relative to land acquisition be provided to the board. It was suggested that *OutdoorIllinois* highlight the partnerships that DNR has.

It was also suggested that documents provided at the board meetings be provided electronically.

The board adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

