

MINUTES

from the 26th Meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team

Nov 19th 2014 – 1:30 pm

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL
3rd Floor Director's Board Room

In attendance were:

Members: Gregg Good, Trent Thomas, Elliot Brinkman, Kelly Neal, Gene Barickman, Tom Clay, Aaron Kuehl

On the conference phone: Tracy Boutelle-Fidler, Cindy Skrukrud

Campaign Leads: Ann Holtrop, Stan McTaggart, Chris Evans, Nancy Williamson, Mike Wefer, John Buhnerkempe

Interested Parties: Laura Brown, Jen Browning, Kelly McGinnis (Bluestem Communications)
Leon Hintz

ORC Ann Holtrop called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees to the 26th meeting of the IL Fish and Wildlife Action Team.

ORC Ann Holtrop - asked for all present to introduce themselves with their name and organization.

ORC Ann Holtrop requested that the minutes from the 25rd meeting be approved. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Laura Brown and Jennifer Browning, Bluestem Communications, presented their Plan for executing their State Wildlife Grant (T-95 R-1) Assessing partner involvement in Action Plan Implementation.

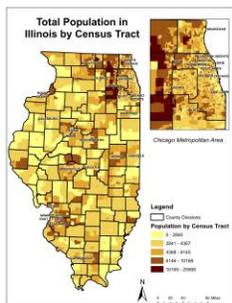
- Introduction and overview
- Opening question: How is Illinois' Action Plan currently being used?
- Group activity & discussion: Role of the Action Team
- Voting activity: Action Plan update features
- Final questions: commitment sheet

All attendees participated in the activities of answering questions and posting answers under written questions taped to a white board. The inter-active presentation lasted for over an hour.

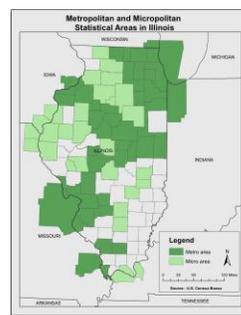
A lively discussion ensued when these various questions were asked by Jennifer Browning.

Bluestem will compile the results and contact members for further information and communicate those results back to the Team at a future date.

Nancy Williamson – Green Cities Campaign Lead – gave a PowerPoint presentation/update of the conservation activities taking place in Illinois’ large metropolitan areas. Nancy showed slides of various maps that have been created showing the definition of a “large” metropolitan area.



Total population area by Census Tract



Metropolitan & Micropolitan Statistical Areas in IL.

ORC Ann Holtrop gave a progress update of the State Wildlife Grant call for pre-proposals for 2014. Ann said that 60 pre-proposals were received. The ranking process of those pre-proposals is almost done. Applicants will be notified in January of their project’s status.

Campaign Leads – due to the length of the Bluestem and Green Cities presentations, the Campaign Leads gave their reports in written format and they will be posted to the IWAP website. Look there for an update of all the good conservation activities going on in the Campaigns.

Team Members – comments and updates:

Tom Clay mentioned that he liked the new IWAP website.

Elliot Brinkman offered to help with the IWAP Revision.

Gene Barickman – said that NRCS is offering a new The Regional Conservation Partnership Program is a new program authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill. Final proposal evaluations are being completed and an announcement of project selections is expected in early January. The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.

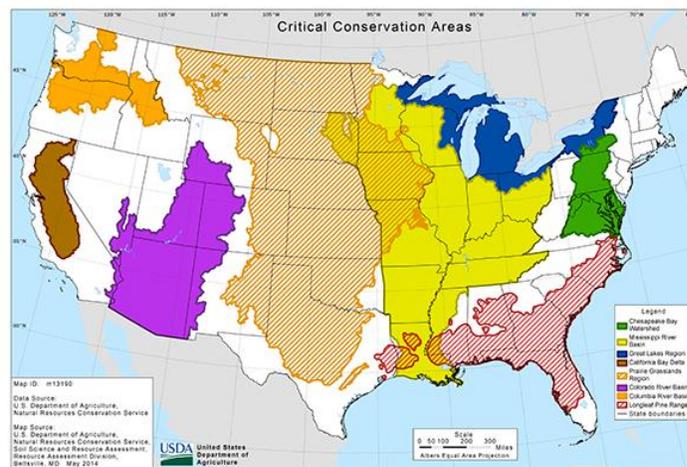
RCPP combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program. Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of EQIP, CSP, ACEP and HFRP; and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.

Benefits - RCPP encourages partners to join in efforts with producers to increase the restoration and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife and related natural resources on regional or watershed scales.

Through RCPP, NRCS and its partners help producers install and maintain conservation activities in selected project areas. Partners leverage RCPP funding in project areas and report on the benefits achieved

NRCS Programs Used in RCPP - Conservation program contracts and easement agreements are implemented through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) or the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). NRCS may also utilize the authorities under the Watershed and Flood Prevention Program, other than the Watershed Rehabilitation Program, in the designated critical conservation areas.

Critical Conservation Areas - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) are designated by the Secretary of Agriculture and represent an opportunity for many stakeholders to come together at a regional level to address common natural resource goals while maintaining or improving agricultural productivity. Partners, working closely with producers and communities, define and propose projects that will achieve regional natural resource goals while also meeting complementary local conservation priorities.



Each CCA has an overarching goal that includes addressing priority resource concerns that are common throughout the area. Descriptions of the CCAs, including maps, goals and resource concerns, can be found through the following links:

- [Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)
- [Great Lakes Region](#)
- [Mississippi River Basin](#)
- [Colorado River Basin](#)
- [Longleaf Pine Range](#)
- [Columbia River Basin](#)
- [Prairie Grasslands Region](#)
- [California Bay Delta](#)

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/initiatives/?cid=stelprdb1242732>

Gene also said that NRCS is looking to increase the payments for conservation assistance, and is working on wetland restoration.

Aaron Kuehl – said that CP-38 work in increasing acres for Pheasants Forever - Cantrell Management will be hosting workshops.

Stan McTaggart – said that Western Illinois University was starting new small conservation projects.

Gregg Good – said that IL EPA was starting new programs focused on the home owner.

ORC Ann Holtrop asked to adjourn the 26th meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team.

Future Meetings:

The next IFAWAT meeting will be scheduled after Bluestem Communications completes their surveying of Team Members as to how they view the present structure of the Team, how often they feel it should meet and how information should be disseminated.

Future Meetings are scheduled for May 13, 2015 and Aug 12th, 2015