

MINUTES

from the 20th Meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team

March 12th 2013 - 1 pm

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

In attendance were:

Members: Jim Herkert, Brian Anderson, Jeff Walk, Elliot Brinkman, Randy Heidorn, Tom Clay, Trent Thomas, Gregg Good, Tom Clay, Aaron Kuehl, Terri Treacy, Cindy Skrukud, Jody Shimp, Jim Renn and Mike Redmer – on the phone

Campaign Leads: Ann Holtrop, John Buhnerkempe, Paul Brewer, Mike Wefer, Randy Smith, Chris Evans, Nancy Williamson –on the phone

Interested Parties: Don McFall, Debbie Bruce, Tracy Fidler, Mark Alessi, Mike Ward-INHS

All documents/Power Points presentations that were presented at the meeting are posted under meetings on the left-hand panel on the team's SharePoint website. <https://dnr.partner.illinois.gov/ifawat/default.aspx>

ORC Dir Jim Herkert called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees to the 20th meeting of the IL Fish and Wildlife Action Team.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert asked for all present to introduce themselves with their name an organization.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting and they were unanimously approved.

Dr. Mike Ward- INHS – gave a presentation on the Farmland and Prairie Campaign focus area monitoring that has been taking place in Illinois. Field analyses on data collected in the 2012 field season involved comparing the density and diversity of birds in SAFE habitat sites. Preliminary data suggest that winter raptors and pheasants are using some of the SAFE areas. In the future more towers need to be erected, more tagging is needed and more tests are needed.

Ann Holtrop-IDNR - presented the new request for a Species in Greatest Need of Conservation workshop and an update to the Overarching Goals for the IL Wildlife Action Plan.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert suggested there was a need to just have one large list of all of the SGNC and a smaller list of focus species within the larger list. All of the members present agreed and that will be the prevailing thought as the Plan moves forward toward Revision.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert wanted the conservation NGO's to be more involved in the Revision process.

Brian Anderson, Director of IL Natural History Survey – suggested that COAs near each other be reviewed and possibly combined.

He also encouraged campaigns to identify which SGNC and COAs are addressed by their respective conservation actions. .

Campaign Lead and Sub- Committee reports -

Paul Brewer –Forest/Woodlands Campaign - passed out the Final Report by Jeff Hoover W-162-R-2 (The Forests and Woodlands Campaign monitoring for the IWAP) highlighting the alteration or loss of natural disturbance processes, changing composition of forested habitats and the changing composition of forested habitats. See report at URL above.

John Burke from Missouri is taking over for Kent Adams (who left to work for Pheasants Forever in PA) on a regional basis until a replacement can be found.

Paul mentioned that the Oakland woodlands have been seen disappearing at a alarming rate in Illinois.

The Trail of Tears Plan is underway and progressing.

Randy Smith – Wetlands Campaign April 11th will be a Wetland meeting with partners. Randy is working on a wetland planning document. He started his new job in January of this year. There are two focus areas for the Campaign – Sanganois and Black Crown Marsh.

Chris Evans - Invasives Campaign gave his report on **Invasive Species** – see report at URL above

Ann Holtrop - Streams Campaign gave her report – see report at URL above

Mike Wefer - Farmland & Prairie Campaign passed out his report highlighting his recent discussions about Biomass, the SAFE program, the loss of 33,899 CRP acres and the additional 186,549 of CRP acres set to expire in Sept 2013. Mike also mentioned that the Pyramid's grassland management plan had been completed and the Sibley-Saybrook plan was still in progress.

Nancy Williamson gave her report for the Green Cities Campaign – A new Mississippi River Coordinator has been hired by a conservation partner. The Kishwaukee partners are working in a large industrial area.

Andrew Hulin - IDNR and **Ann Holtrop** presented the scope of the COA Task Force and summarized the boundary changes that had been submitted and approved by the COA task force. To date, requests have been received to modify boundaries for Mason County Sands Area, Upper Mississippi River, Kishwaukee, and Lake-McHenry Wetlands COAs. The Upper Mississippi River COA group requested that a new multi-state COA be created. Mason County Sands was revised pre-COA task force, and the revised boundary is part of the existing COA data layer. During this meeting, the Task Force proposed that revised boundaries to Upper Mississippi and Kishwaukee be accepted.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert talked briefly about the Task Force's review of the Upper Mississippi and Kishwaukee COA boundary changes, and made a motion to accept the changes. The motion was seconded and passed.

Brian Anderson, Director of IL Natural History Survey felt that whenever two COA's are close together, such as McHenry and Kishwaukee that they should just combine them.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert felt that since the Kishwaukee COA had a stream focus and the McHenry COA had a wetland focus that they should stay separate.

Additional discussion followed on the status of the Lake-McHenry Wetlands COA request. This request was made about the time the Task Force was formed, however the Task Force did not receive the data and justification that accompanied the original request.

Brian Anderson, Director of IL Natural History Survey offered to have his GIS people prepare a revised boundary for the Lake McHenry COA, and to prepare additional documentation for the request.

Team member updates – Prairie Rivers – Elliot Brinkman announced that there was going to be a bio blitz at Rock Island on June 3rd, contact Elliot for more information. They are also involved in building a bi-state partnership with Iowa to protect lands and buy land, looking toward a inter-state reserve for a bird wild land. Elliot also mentioned that the Teaming With Wildlife Fly In was successful and they presented Senator Durbin with a conservation award.

Peasants Forever – **Aaron Kuehl** reported that they were going to hire three more biologists to work with IDNR in the field. Also that April 9-11th was their Ag Committee Meeting.

Tom Clay mentioned that they had purchased a tract of land around Carbondale and turned it over to the SIU University. They also had purchased property along the Green River and there was a dedication of the Green River INAI site, which contains the largest population of Blanding Turtles to date.

IL EPA – **Gregg Good** said that there was an alarming increase in the occurrence of harmful algal blooms (HAB) in Illinois lakes during 2012. The drought and high nutrient loadings

likely contributed to the problem. In response to pet deaths and potential human health risks, IEPA will be leading a state task force to create a HAB detection and response plan. -Any group interested in assisting IEPA in this effort should contact Gregg.

The next IFAWAT meeting will be the 20th meeting on **May 22nd 2013** 1 pm IDNR Hdqrts
3rd Floor Director's board room

ORC Dir Jim Herkert adjourned the 20th meeting of the **Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team**

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