

MINUTES from the 12th Meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team

Nov 17th 2010 1 pm

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL
Lakeview Room A

Members Present: John Rogner, Leslie Sgro, Deb Stone, Jim Herkert - Kent Adams, Brian Anderson, Jim Anderson, Tom Clay, Nancy Erickson, Gregg Good, Randy Heidorn, Laura Kammin, Aaron Kuehl, Matthew Lechner, Anne Mankowski, Mike Redmer, Eric Schenck, Trent Thomas, Jeff Walk, Mike Wefer,--- Joel Cross, Jim Renn

Interested Parties: IDNR: John Buhnerkempe, Don McFall, Kathy Andrews, Paul Brewer

On the phone: Kris Lah-USFWS, Nancy Williamson-IDNR

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Asst Dir John Rogner welcomed all attendees to the 12th meeting of the IL Fish and Wildlife Action Team and called the meeting to order

Asst Dir John Rogner asked that the minutes for the last meeting be approved and they were unanimously approved. Motioned seconded by Jim Anderson.

Introductions were made by all present.

ORC Office Dir Jim Herkert gave an update of the progress of the **IMPORTANT SITES** initiative.

8 sites were chosen:

- 2 - Forest Campaign
- 2 - Farmland & Prairie Campaign
- 2 - Wetlands Campaign
- 2 - Streams Campaign

The goals of the Important Sites are:

- Accountability
- Performance Measures
- Comprehensive overview of sites
- Work with: existing Plans of Work
 - T-55 – COA's planning efforts
- Need to develop guidelines for Plans of Work progress

Jeff Walk said that the sites were picked for their habitat strengths and not for species.

Aaron Kruehl asked about this Plan of Work?

Brian Anderson said that other states that he had looked at used Focus Areas and then added the objectives.

Asst Dir John Rogner said that the Important Sites committee will define what is needed and thanks the NGO's on the Important Sites committee for their work.

ORC Office Dir Jim Herkert updated the team on the progress of the CAMPAIGN LEADS

Farmland & Prairie Campaign	Mike Wefer
Forrest Campaign	Paul Brewer
Green Cities Campaign	Nancy Williamson
Wetlands Campaign	TBD
Streams Campaign	TBD
Land & Water Stewardship Campaign	TBD
Invasive Species Campaign	TBD

Jim Anderson asked if the Campaign leads will be at future IFAWAT meetings?

Asst Dir John Rogner noted that team members should get involved with the Campaign leads. He also stated that an NGO could be a Campaign Lead.

John Buhnerkempe gave an update about what the IDNR' Div of Wildlife was doing to implement the Farmland & Prairie campaign. John passed around handouts covering the Farmland/Prairie Campaign Overview; Campaign quantitative Goals; Oct 19th 2010 Partner Meeting Agenda; SAFE enrollment totals (as of 10-7-2010) and Campaign Partner meeting Decision Points.

Mike Wefer then followed up with an on-the-ground update.

Nancy Erickson asked what about land owners who wanted to participate in SAFE but were not near an identified SAFE site?

Asst Dir John Rogner asked if they were looking at the Joint Venture data.

Jeff Walk said that their goals came, in part, from the Joint Venture findings.

Jim Anderson asked was there an update on the progress state-wide and for all NGO's.

Jeff Walk said that they were using grassland bird areas for SAFE sites.

Joel Cross gave an update on the SWG T-55 project, its FAQ's document and a brief discussion about how COA boundary change requests from NGOs have been handled.

Brian Anderson said that he felt confused about what all of the goals were. Goals for the Important Sites, goals for the T-55 project, goals for the Campaign Leads and goals for the Campaigns.

Randy Heidorn felt that the goals were good as planning tools for IDNR and NGOs.

John Buhnerkempe said that many of the focus areas are in COAs.

A broad discussion developed among several team members about COAs, COA boundaries, Focus Areas, INAI sites.

Jim Anderson said that Chicago Wilderness was working on their own implementation Focus Areas.

Brian Anderson suggested that landowners petition to IDNR to have their site(s) be included in a COA.

Brian Anderson suggested that a small group be created to devise how to change COA boundaries.

Jim Herkert asked Dave Myers if he had met with all COAs NGOs within the state and Dave Myers said yes.

Asst Dir John Rogner said that the T-55 campaign focused on the COAs and not the Campaign areas.

Joel Cross talked about the upcoming revisions that are needed for the IL Wildlife Action Plan, a requirement per the State Wildlife Grant statute.

Jeff Walk added that a lot of “policy” changes were needed in the text of the Plan.

ACTION ITEM: **Asst Dir John Rogner** to **Jim Herkert**, “ lets get a team together to handle the revisions of the Plan. “ A public participation component is necessary as well.

Tom Clay asked how other states were handling the revisions of their Plans with their voters.

Ann Mankowski gave an update on the push to add plant species into the Plan by adding a list of Species in Greatest Need of Conservation.

Dave Myers suggested that Plants should be added into the Plan as an integrated part of the Natural Divisions assessment.

Jeff Walk requested that he have a time slot at the next meeting to present TNC’s final results from their contract with IDNR to provide a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

Team Roundtable:

Paul Brewer gave an update of the Forest Campaign’s progress.

Jeff Walk spoke for **Vital Lands of Illinois** saying that they and the Grand Victoria Foundation are committed to using the IL WAP as guidance for their plan of work.

Jim Herkert said that it was great to see Vital Lands embrace the IL WAP for their work.

Eric Schenck - Ducks Unlimited said that they were working in the middle Illinois River on a 5yr vision. They hired a Forester for their work on the Lower Mississippi River, which DU defines as an iconic area for the public.

Aaron Kuehl – Pheasants Forever said that they had been working in Knox County and had 1,000 acres restored.

Nancy Erickson said that the Farm Bureau continues to keep land owners abreast of the latest news on conservation programs by State and Federal.

Tom Clay – IL Audubon said that this was the 50th yr anniversary for the Prairie Ridge SNA.

Jeff Walk – TNC their efforts in restoration had resulted in 2,100 acres of continuous grassland.

Asst Dir John Rogner –for the USFWS – said that enough support (including WI IDNR) had been garnered to make it possible for the Service to initiate a professional study that could result in the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. The study area encompasses 350,000 acres and could result in the creation of a 10,000-30,000 acre refuge acre site along the IL-WI boarder becoming a US Wildlife Refuge.

Nancy Williamson said that she has been working with cities on their green infrastructure plans.

Jim Anderson – Chicago Wilderness said that their big effort has been the Great Lakes Restoration multi-million dollar project which is on-going.

- Creating their own list of Species in Greatest Need of Concern
- Creating a list of “keystone” species
- Creating a list of “flagstone” species to be used in a marketing campaign
- Map all of the wetlands GIS
- Rank their Focus Areas

Kent Adams – National Wild Turkey Foundation – been working on their SWG project, forest restoration and working with IDNR on CREP.

NEXT MEETING DATE: February 16th, 2011 IDNR Hdqrts, Director’s Board Room 3rd Floor. 1 pm – 3 pm