

MINUTES from the 11th Meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team

May 26th 2010 1 pm

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL
DNR Board Room – 3rd Floor

Members Present: Marc Miller, John Rogner, Leslie Sgro, Deb Stone, Jim Herkert - Kent Adams, Jim Anderson, Tim Caughran, Tom Clay, Nancy Erickson, Gregg Good, Laura Kammin, Don King, Aaron Kuehl, Matthew Lechner, John Lohse (Dept of Ag), Richard Nichols, Charles Perino, Mike Redmer, Trent Thomas, Mike Wefer - Joel Cross, Jim Renn

Interested Parties: IDNR: John Buhnerkempe, Don McFall, Debbie Bruce, Kathy Andrews, Ann Holtrop

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Asst Dir John Rogner welcomed all attendees to the 11th 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.

Introductions were made by all present.

Asst Dir John Rogner started the meeting with old business.

Kathy Andrews, Editor of Outdoor Illinois magazine, passed out a status report of the magazine articles which have been “branded” with the Wildlife Action Plan information since March 2010. Kathy said that all of the campaigns have been addressed with the exception of the Green Cities, which in some regard was covered in the June issue, which focused on the Leave No Child Inside initiative.

Kathy updated members on the project devised in the last meeting of the IFAWAT to create a special magazine outreach insert to show the magazine’s readership and general public what the Wildlife Action Plan’s Campaigns were and examples of the progress in achieving the goals of the Action Plan. Kathy presented a slide presentation showing examples of what the insert pages might look like.

Kathy requested stories from the Action Team members for the Outdoor Illinois magazine.

ORC Office Dir Jim Herkert gave the Plant presentation as Anne Mankowski and Jody Shimp could not attend. Jim used Anne’s slide presentation to present on the topic.

Aaron Kuehl, Pheasants Forever, commented that he wondered if adding the Plant supplement to the IL Wildlife Action Plan would take away or reassign some existing resources when all are struggling now to just implement the Action Plan as is.

Charles Perino, IL DOT, said that with IDOT, any T & E plants that they encounter will trigger various admin actions that they have to follow, so adding Plants to the IWAP might be redundant for IDOT.

Jim Anderson, Chicago Wilderness, said that he feels that adding the Plant supplement will strengthen the Plan.

Mike Wefer, The Wildlife Society, said that in addition to his concerns that adding plants might dilute the plan, he also thought it would be great if they complimented the plan. Mike also asked if anyone had looked at the list that in Jody's and Anne's presentation to see if the plants fit in with the WAP.

Mike Redmer, U.S.FWS, said that he felt that add the Plant supplement would help by creating another resource to use to obtain funds to implement the Plan. Mike said that he was in favor of adding the Plant supplement to the Plan.

Marc Miller, Director of IDNR , briefly stopped in at the meeting, took questions and reassured the team members that the IDNR budget will hold it's own this year and next.

Asst Dir John Rogner posed the question of how adding the Plant supplement into other state's Action Plans has helped them in funding / implementation?

Action Item: Jim Renn will work with Anne Mankowski to respond to John's question.

Randy Heidorn, IL Nature Preserve Commission, said that their work on plants involves the plants as a part of the natural community and how that community of a particular ecosystem including it's animal species. He felt that adding the Plant supplement was a good idea. That the separation of plants and animals in the current program is an artificial separation that was born out of a combination of FWS trust species which are essentially limited to animals, and political expediency to get some funding for some wildlife even though only animal wildlife. Although a plant supplement will not address funding related issues, it will go a long way to considering the complete picture of all wildlife.

Nancy Erickson, IL Farm Bureau, agreed that contacting other states to see how adding the Plant supplement to their Plans has affected their efforts.

Asst Dir John Rogner said that he got the impression that all were in favor of adding the Plant supplement to the Plan and that he looked forward to also hearing what other states have to say about their progress.

Joel Cross, IDNR Watershed Protection Section, gave a progress report on the State Wildlife Grant T-55 project. Joel said that the goals of the project had not changed.

Joel talked about a new document that was proposed that would be a list of Frequently Asked Questions...some ideas were.....1) clarifying COA's 2) defining what is a COA Partnership statement 3) defining what is a COA and related partnerships 4) What are the advantages of being a COA partnership 5) discussing what is a COA boundary

6) providing guidance to COA partnerships. This document would be distributed to the Team for comment before the next meeting.

Action Item: Assist Dir John Rogner suggested that a spoke person from one of the successful COA partnerships come to talk to the Action Team at the next meeting.

Eric Schenck, Ducks Unlimited, asked “what is the final product to be of the T55 project?”. Eric expressed concern that he did not understand just what is being accomplished. He said that he had not been involved in the project for more than a year so wondered how it’s success was progressing.

Jim Herkert said that he felt that the FAQ document would help facilitate the formation of COA partnerships.

Aaron Kuehl said that state-wide organizations were not involved enough in the T-55 project and wanted to know why.

Jim Herkert said that IDNR was working on a “top-down” effort in the T-55 project which would involve state-wide NGO’s.

Eric Schenck said that the Clifftop NGO in Southern IL is dealing with their own COA issues of goals being different for people who live on top of the Mississippi River bluffs and the people who live in the valley. Eric didn’t feel that Clifftop was involved with the T-55 project either.

Jim Anderson said that Chicago Wilderness is working on creating a “regional” group that would communicate between all of the entities doing conservation within Northern IL.

John Rogner posed the question of “what is IDNR’s role in supporting the COA partnerships and other NGOs in the same area. He felt that some of that coordination was being started by IDNR’s Nancy Williamson in Northern IL.

John Rogner gave a brief update on the State Wildlife Grant FY 2010. A SWG timetable was passed out so that all members could see dates and what needed to happen by those dates.

Jim Herkert initiated the conversation about implementation of the IL Wildlife Action Plan by creating a system in which a subset of 10-12 very important IDNR sites would be chosen. These sites would be chosen by a special subcommittee made up of IDNR, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Chicago Wilderness, National Wild Turkey Foundation, USFWS and Prairie Rivers organization. Each IDNR Region should have at least one site.

Sites to be chosen within the next few months.

The subcommittee’s first task will be to choose the sites.

Jim Herkert felt that IDNR would be open to partner sites being close or connected to the sites chosen.

John Rogner said that this effort will be “deliberate” and not “opportunistic”.

Eric Schenck said that the lands protection people in Northern IL are looking to partner with ideas like this.

Jim Herkert also said that he wants to also assign an IDNR “lead” person to be responsible for following implementation work on each campaign within the Action Plan. This person’s job responsibilities will be rearranged to insure that they have the capacity to perform these new duties.

Action Item: An email about who the leads will be and what the tasks will be is forthcoming.

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Team Roundtable:

Laura Kammin, Prairie Rivers Org. gave a brief bio about herself. She replaced Kim Erndt. Laura will be the new Team rep for Prairie Rivers.

Matthew Lechner, US Forest Service – Shawnee – gave a brief bio about himself. Matthew replaced Steve Whitowski, who retired. Matthew will be the new Team rep for USFS.

Nancy Erickson, IL Farm Bureau, talked about her efforts to provide outreach to the IL farmers about conservation through articles, speakers and a conference held in Springfield a month ago. Jim Renn manned a IDNR booth for the Wildlife Action Plan at that conference.

Erick Schneck, Ducks Unlimited,

Jim Anderson, Chicago Wilderness, Lake County Forest Preserve, Wisconsin DNR, Great Lakes Restoration project have all been working together on the \$988,000 project on Illinois Beach.

NEXT MEETING DATE: ~~September 9th, 2010 Thursday~~

changed to Nov 17th, 2010 same time and place