

MINUTES

from the 21th Meeting of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team

May 22nd 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, Elliot Brinkman, Randy Heidorn, Trent Thomas, Cindy Skrukud (on the phone), Jim Renn, Mike Redmer (on the phone), Anne Mankowski, Jamie Diebal (NRCS), Jack Darin, Eric Schenck

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

Interested Parties: Don McFall, Debbie Bruce, Jesse Riechman, Tamika Gibson

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 21st meeting of the IL Fish and Wildlife Action Team.

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

ORC Dir Jim Herkert led a discussion about the minutes from the last meeting. Since the minutes had not been emailed out to the members prior to the meeting, paper copies were distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was tabled for approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Jesse Riechman – Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association – gave a presentation on the efforts by his association of private land owners to practice the conservation management practice of prescribed burning on the acreage that they own. Mr. Riechman noted that they were the only land owner prescribed burn association located East of the United States' original association in the Texas/Oklahoma area.

Randy Heidorn – IL Nature Preserves Commission- said that they would be a model for funding that was sustainable. Were they looking for sustainable funding?

Mr. Riechman replied that they have been partnering with the National Wild Turkey Foundation and hope to tap into their super-fund for sustainable funding.

A cost per acre was discussed, but Mr. Riechman said the value of each person's acreage was different, so a single rate was problematic.

Paul Brewer – IDNR Forest/Woodland Campaign Lead - suggested contacting the US Forest Service for grant money.

Mr. Riechman said that they had contacted them and that their plan cycles were so much different that it was hard to develop a meaningful match.

Mike Wefer - IDNR Farmland/ Prairie Campaign Lead suggested using CRP. Mid management seemed to be also problematic.

Ann Holtrop-IDNR - presented the results of a survey that was sent to Action Team members to identify the purpose of and expectations for the IWAP revision. Overall, respondents wanted the revision to improve connections between species outcomes and the habitat actions that accomplish them. Most respondents wanted to get involved at the Campaign level. The list of SGNC was considered "just right", but there was a desire to identify focal species. If species were added to the list, respondents felt that they should be representative species from taxonomic groups not currently represented. Species that are stable or have an upwards trend were not priority species.

Eric Schenck – Ducks Unlimited – felt that the revision effort needed to prioritize the Plan's actions. He was not clear on how DNR was doing this.

Paul Brewer – IDNR Forest/Woodland Campaign Lead – said that his DNR projects are all implemented by trying to meet the WAP's goals.

Mike Wefer - IDNR Farmland/ Prairie Campaign Lead – reiterated what Paul Brewer said in that his DNR projects also were trying to meet the WAP's goals.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert also confirmed that the WAP has been the guiding document for work being done on state owned land. Also noting that the actions that are being done better show some progress for the next ten years toward implementing the goals and actions of the Plan.

Elliot Brinkman – Prairie Rivers – mentioned that not all conservation work is being done in designated focus areas within the Plan and that they needed to be accounted for also.

Nancy Williamson - IDNR Green Cities Campaign Lead – felt that the WAP had not sufficiently addressed the urban issues very well. She also felt that education was needed among the conservation community in urban areas.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert asked for Nancy to poll the urban conservation community to see what issues they felt were important and needed to be addressed and bring those results to the next meeting.

Eric Schenck – Ducks Unlimited – asked what ever happened to the Land & Water Stewardship Campaign.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert said that that campaign had been folded into all of the campaigns since each campaign includes stewardship activities. He also mentioned that a land and water stewardship team could be formed if the Action Team felt it was necessary.

Paul Brewer – IDNR Forest/Woodland Campaign Lead – felt that each campaign doesn't have hard edges and that the campaign boundaries bleed into other campaigns at different time and locations.

Randy Heidorn – IL Nature Preserves Commission – felt that the Action Team needed to reengage the Teaming With Wildlife organization as it is an important entity to put pressure on funding issues in Congress.

Nancy Williamson - IDNR Green Cities Campaign Lead – felt that better state agency coordination was needed.

Ann Holtrop - IDNR Streams Campaign Lead – said that IEPA had asked for guidance from the Action Team on WAP priorities.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert asked if any state agencies had contacted the Campaign Leads directly?

Randy Heidorn – IL Nature Preserves Commission – said that Vial Lands wanted to help with the Revision process.

Nancy Williamson - IDNR Green Cities Campaign Lead – felt that IEPA could help fund some of the WAP's action items.

ORC Dir Jim Herkert asked for ideas on how to better engage the state agencies in implementation of actions. IDOT and IEPA were regular participants in Action Team meetings, but have not been participating as much recently. State agencies could use funding from their existing programs to support implementation of conservation actions. Additionally, there may be needs that the agencies have that could be addressed in the Plan revision. Jim is interested in meeting with representatives from the state agencies to discuss how existing programs can be used for implementation, and what could be added to the Plan to better support existing programs

Campaign Lead Reports -

Paul Brewer – IDNR Forest/Woodland Campaign Lead – said that all projects being done are trying to meet the goals of the Wildlife Action Plan.

Randy Smith – IDNR Wetlands Campaign Lead – The first IL Wetland Campaign meeting was held on April 11th at SIU is producing a document of the findings to be release soon and will be posted for all the Team to see. The next meeting will be held May 29th. The discussion keyed in on Focus Areas and the need to define what a Quality Wetland is first.

Chris Evans - IDNR Invasives Campaign Lead – The draft language of Wild Swine Ad Rule is currently going through review. Illinois Invasive Plant Species Council (IIPSC) meeting will be held on May 29th. Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month is underway Awareness with meetings and the second annual ISAM awards. Morton Arboretum & invasives forum to be held.

Ann Holtrop – IDNR Streams Campaign Lead – A project to update distribution maps for mussel species in greatest need of conservation is awaiting approval by Fish and Wildlife Service. Through these efforts, those mussel species that have declined during the past decade will be identified. Conservation actions for declining fish and mussel species will be the focus of the streams campaign in the revision.

Mike Wefer – IDNR Farmland & Prairie Campaign – mentioned that the General and Continuous CRP signups had just opened. This included the expanded SAFE areas that were finally approved by FSA last fall.

Nancy Williamson – IDNR Green Cities Campaign Lead – There are still HUD, DOT & USEPA grants available. Great progress has been made with the CMAP. Oak recovery almost done. Chicago area has a lot of SGNC.

Action Team Member and COA updates

Elliot Brinkman - Prairie Rivers – Upper Mississippi River has developed a PR brochure. There is a Bio Blitz at Milan Bottoms on 5-31-13 at 3 pm. Middle Illinois River and Ducks Unlimited are working on projects.

Erick Schenck - Ducks Unlimited – Working on Oakwood bottoms – 1 Mil grant.

The next IFAWAT meeting will be the 22nd meeting on **Aug 21st, 2013 1 pm IDNR Hdqrts 3rd Floor Director's board room**

ORC Dir Jim Herkert adjourned the 21st meeting of the **Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Team**