

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES OF 179th MEETING, AUGUST 17, 2018

MIDWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE, MAIN MEETING ROOM, VISITOR CENTER, 30239 SOUTH STATE ROUTE 53, WILMINGTON, IL 60481

Approved at the 180th meeting, November 16, 2018

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Angelo Capparella, Dr. Tracy Evans, Dr. Joyce Hofmann, Mr. Bruce Ross-Shannon, Mr. Randy Schietzelt, Dr. Philip Willink, and Mr. Chris Young

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Janice Coons and Dr. Jeremie Fant

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeannie Barnes (INHS), Bridget Henning (INHS), Leon Hinz (IDNR), Joe Kath (IDNR), Lyndsey Ramsey (Illinois Farm Bureau), Josh Sherwood (INHS), and Jeremy Tiemann (INHS)

1 Call to Order, Roll Call of Board Members, and Introduction of Guests

Chair Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:08 A.M. and read the roll call. Since seven Board members were in attendance, there was a quorum. Chair Hofmann welcomed the visitors.

2 Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Schietzelt moved that the agenda be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Evans and carried by unanimous vote.

3 Approval of Minutes from the 178th Meeting

Draft minutes of the 178th meeting were distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. No corrections were proposed so the minutes of the 178th meeting were approved as presented.

4 Report from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Board members heard a report from Mr. Young about activities of the Illinois Department of Natural Resource's Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) and Office of Realty and Environmental Planning. The Department has a full budget, including capital funds. Hiring for several positions, including an Executive Secretary who would assist the Board, is proceeding in the ORC.

There was a general discussion, initiated by Dr. Capparella, about the benefits and risks of making biodiversity data about sensitive species public. Mr. Young pointed out that in some cases the Department provides polygons showing environmentally sensitive areas without specific locations of listed species.

Chair Hofmann mentioned that she had corresponded with Jenny Skufca about access to reports submitted pursuant to Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs). Ms. Skufca will periodically provide the Board with a list of executed ITAs and Board members can request reports about any project in which they are interested.

5 Report from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission

Ms. Kelly Neal submitted a memorandum from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission prior to the meeting. Mr. Tom Lerczak recently retired from the Commission staff and the Natural Areas Preservation Specialist position for Area 6 has been filled. Dr. Capparella mentioned two potential grant sources (the Grand Victoria Foundation and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation) that could be useful to the Commission.

6 Report from the Chair of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

Chair Hofmann reported on her activities since the 178th meeting. She estimated the minimum number of hours donated by Board members during the 2016-2018 biennium (1250) and submitted the biennial report to the relevant entities through the Department. She also gave two interviews about the Board's mission and operation. Her written report to the Board is attached.

7 Semi-Annual Review of Whether to Keep Closed the Minutes from Previous Closed Meetings

The Board next considered whether to keep closed the minutes from previous closed sessions. Mr. Ross-Shannon made a motion to keep previous closed meeting minutes closed and the motion was seconded by Mr. Schietzelt. Mr. Ross-Shannon pointed out that the Board has very little record, if any, of the earliest closed minutes so it is difficult, and pointless, to release those minutes. Chair Hofmann stated that, in her experience on the Board, all closed minutes involved personnel matters. The question was called and all present voted to keep minutes of previous closed session closed.

8 Update on the Plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC)

Since Drs. Coons and Fant were absent, Chair Hofmann provided a report from notes she had received from Dr. Coons. The first meeting of the Plant ESTAC occurred on May 25, 2018 at the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign. There were about 27 attendees (ESTAC members and interested parties) who reviewed plant species of central and western Illinois. The next meeting of the Plant ESTAC is scheduled for August 24, 2018 at Midewin to consider plant species of northern Illinois.

9 Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Change the Status of the Bigeye Chub (*Hybopsis amblops*) from Endangered to Threatened

The Board discussed granting preliminary approval to change the status of the Bigeye Chub from endangered to threatened. Josh Sherwood of the Illinois Natural History Survey gave a presentation to support the petition for changing the status of the Bigeye Chub. Dr. Capparella made a motion for approval, which was seconded by Dr. Willink and carried unanimously.

10 Presentation. Systematic Species Status Assessment: Applying Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) Assessment and NatureServe Conservation Status Assessment Methodology to Illinois Listed Species.

Dr. Leon Hinz, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, described the criteria used in Illinois to list wildlife species as Species in Greatest Conservation Need. He discussed efforts to quantify the designation of species as rare or declining in abundance or distribution. Dr. Bridget Henning, Illinois Natural History Survey, discussed the development of a quantitative process for updating the S ranks used by NatureServe for Illinois species. Board members felt that the information presented could be useful in refining the criteria used to list species as threatened or endangered.

11 Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Mr. Jeremy Tiemann asked about the deadline for submitting petitions to change the status of fish species. Chair Hofmann thought that January 2019 would be appropriate and would give her time to conduct administrative reviews of the petitions in time for them to be considered at the February 2019 Board meeting. Board members then discussed a targeted completion date for the current list revision. The consensus was that July 1, 2020 would be a reasonable completion target date for the current cycle.

12 Other Business

Chair Hofmann reminded Board members to complete their online ethics training and submit completion certificates by 24 August.

13 Next Meeting Information

The next meeting will be at 10 A.M. on November 16, 2018 at Midewin.

14 Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 12:15 P.M.



ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

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Report from the Chair, 17 August 2018

Joyce Hofmann

Activities for the period between the 178th and 179th Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 178th meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 178th meeting and the approved minutes of the 177th meeting to be posted on the Board’s website
- monitored the Board’s email account – responded to some messages, forwarded others to appropriate personnel at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- obtained citations on nomenclature changes for listed species from taxonomic experts and forwarded them to Illinois Natural Heritage Database staff
- estimated the number of hours donated by Board members for inclusion in the Board’s 2016 -2018 Biennial Report and submitted the report
- assisted with the Plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) meeting on May 25
- distributed five draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) to Board members for review
- performed administrative review of a petition to change the status of the Bigeye Chub (*Hybopsis ambiops*) from endangered to threatened
- sent final minutes for Board meetings since July 1, 2017 to IDNR as requested by the Department’s auditors
- worked with Jenny Skufca on a method to provide Board members access to ITA report files
- gave interviews to a reporter from northeastern Illinois and a journalism student at Northwestern Illinois about the work of the Board
- prepared for the 179th Board meeting – developed an agenda; had the draft agenda posted at the IDNR building, at the Midewin Visitor Center, and on the Board’s website; distributed materials for the meeting to Board members