

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD
MINUTES OF 186th MEETING, AUGUST 28, 2020
via ZOOM

Approved at the 187th meeting, October 9, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Angelo Capparella, Dr. Janice Coons, Dr. Tracy Evans, Dr. Jeremie Fant, Dr. Joyce Hofmann, Mr. Randy Schietzelt, Dr. Philip Willink, and Mr. Chris Young

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Bruce Ross-Shannon

OTHERS PRESENT: Raelynn Parmely (Illinois Farm Bureau), Alexandra Miranda (student), Jeannie Barnes (Illinois Natural History Survey), Kelly Neal (Illinois Nature Preserves Commission), Alexandra Mira (private individual), Susanne Masi (Illinois Native Plant Society), Joe Kath (IDNR), Mike Wefer (IDNR), Ann Holtrop (IDNR), Heather Osborn (IDNR), Brad Semel (IDNR), Nathan Grider (IDNR), Mark Allesi (IDNR), Todd Strole (IDNR), and George Sisk (IDNR).

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

Chair Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:06 A.M. and read the roll call. Seven voting Board members were in attendance, constituting a quorum. Dr. Hofmann welcomed the visitors. Mr. Young called them by name and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Schietzelt moved that the agenda be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Coons. New legislation for public meetings conducted via the internet requires a roll call vote, which was called by Chair Hofmann. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes from the 185th Meeting

Draft minutes of the 185th meeting had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. Dr. Coons moved that the minutes of the 185th meeting be approved with two typographical corrections and otherwise as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schietzelt. Chair Hofmann called the roll and the motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

4. Approval of Minutes from the Joint Meeting with the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) on January 21, 2020

Draft minutes of the Joint Meeting with the INPC on January 21, 2020^t had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. Dr. Capparella moved that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schietzelt. Dr. Willink asked if the presentations from that meeting had been posted as this was covered in the minutes. Chair Hofmann called the roll. The motion passed unanimously, with Dr. Coons abstaining.

5. Report from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Board members received a report from Ms. Ann Holtrop. She stated that the report was generally routine. She reported on creative ways Natural Heritage was employing to keep people safe during the Covid-19 restrictions and continue with the mission of recovery of endangered and threatened species such as the Alligator Snapping Turtle. She mentioned working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about conflicting recommendations for working with endangered bats. Guidelines have been created for IDNR staff working with bats and their habitat. Dr. Capparella asked about releasing those guidelines to land trusts. Ms. Holtrop replied that the guideline were designed specifically for IDNR staff, but something more general may be released in the future. Dr. Capparella stated that it would be helpful for land trusts to have access to this type of information. Ms. Holtrop also mentioned personnel changes within the department and introduced Jenny Skufca's replacement, Heather Osborn, who will handle Incidental Take Authorizations.

6. Report from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC)

A brief INPC report was distributed to the Board via e-mail and Ms. Kelly Neal addressed the Board. The last INPC meeting had been cancelled and the next will be held September 15, 2020. Staff have been busy preparing items for that meeting so a full report will be provided prior to the next Board meeting.

7. Report from the Chair of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

Chair Hofmann previously provided a written report on her activities since the last meeting, which she briefly summarized. She prepared an outline for the process of revising the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species (List) and a timeline for the 2020 revision. Dr. Hofmann pointed out that the 2020 changes to the List became effective on May 28. A new checklist of endangered and threatened species has been added to the Board's website thanks to the efforts of Jeannie Barnes and Tara Kieninger. The 2015 List is also archived on the website along with the list of changes approved by the Board in 2020. Dr. Hofmann will begin preparation of the Board's biennial report for 2018-2020. She requested that Board members tally their volunteer hours from July 2018 through June 2020 to add to the report. Her written report is attached to these minutes.

8. Board Appointments

All Board members are currently working under expired appointments. Mr. Young suggested that everyone self-nominate again so that IDNR can work towards getting these appointments made. He will make sure appointments fall on the appropriate years.

9. Outline of the Process for Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species – Chair Hofmann

Chair Hofmann said that the outline would be useful for current and future Board members and might be suitable for posting on the Board's website. Dr. Coons asked if the description of how the Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committees (ESTACS) are formed should go onto the website. Chair Hofmann stated that some information about the ESTACs is available on the website. Ms. Holtrop stated the IDNR had reviewed the outline and Dr. Hofmann said she could merge the two versions.

10. Timeline for the 2020 Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species - Chair Hofmann

Chair Hofmann distributed a timeline of the List revision process as it occurred from February 2016 to the adoption of the new list in May of 2020. Dr. Hofmann said that the timeline might reveal ways to shorten the length of the process somewhat. For example, members of all ESTACs could be approved early in the timeline at a single meeting.

11. Comments on Petition Forms for Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Chair Hofmann has collected several comments about possible improvements to the petition forms used for the List revision. Some comments that were more conceptual, dealing with the process itself, were also received. Ms. Holtrop stated that she had also collected comments from IDNR staff. Dr. Hofmann asked for suggestions about dealing with the comments. Mr. Young offered to look at both sets of comments and synthesize them into those that would require only a modification to the petition form and those that are conceptual changes to the process. Conceptual issues will require more discussion at a future Board meeting.

12. Invitation from the Illinois Native Plant Society (INPS) for a Board Member to Serve on the Review Panel for Its 2020-2021 Survey Grant Program

Ms. Masi read the written invitation from the INPS for a Board member to serve on its review panel for grants to support surveys of plant species of special interest (including listed species). Dr. Coons asked about the time commitment for the grant review process. Ms. Masi stated that the process takes about 1.5 months for grant selection and time to review written reports upon completion of the grant. There was some discussion about review panel composition and anonymity and the possibility of legal conflict. Mr. Young will meet with IDNR legal counsel to discuss these issues. A motion was made by Dr. Capparella that a member of the ESPB participate in the INPS Survey Grant Program contingent on legal advice and seconded by Mr. Schietzelt. A roll call vote passed the motion unanimously. Dr. Coons thanked Ms. Masi and commended the INPC for providing funds to support surveys of plant species.

13. Selection of Date for 187th Board Meeting

Because the 186th Board meeting had been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Board needed to select a date for the 187th meeting, which will probably be virtual as well. Dr. Capparella made a motion that the next meeting be held October 9, 2020. The motion was seconded by Dr. Fant and passed on a unanimous roll call vote.

14. Public Comment Period by call-in (3 minutes per person)

There were no public comments.

15. Other Business (topics may be discussed, but no actions may be taken)

Chair Hofmann reviewed the tasks that need to be completed before the next meeting. She said that she would also review the section of the Board's website dealing with List revision since it is out of date. She will have suggestions at the next meeting. Dr. Willink repeated his question about posting of the presentations from the joint meeting with the INPC in January. Mr. Young said he would investigate. The policy manual also needs to be updated.

16. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Schietzelt moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded by Dr. Fant. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Chair Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 11:42 A.M.



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Report from the Chair, 28 August 2020

Joyce Hofmann

Activities for the period between the 185th and 186th Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 185th meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 185th meeting and the approved minutes of the 184rd 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)
- prepared and distributed an outline of the process for the revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species
- prepared and distributed a timeline for the 2020 revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species
- provided editorial suggestions for the response to public comments received following First Notice of the Administrative Rules containing the revised lists of endangered and threatened Illinois fauna and flora
- distributed six Conservation Plans, one Biological Assessment, and eight draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) to Board members for potential review
- wrote comments for improvements to the petition forms used for the revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species
- collected comments for improvements to the petition forms from Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) members

- reviewed the new checklist of Illinois endangered and threatened species prior to posting on the Board's website
- prepared for the 186th Board meeting – edited draft minutes for the 185th Board meeting and the Joint Meeting with INPC; developed an agenda for the 186th meeting; had the draft agenda posted on the Board's website; distributed materials for the meeting to Board members.