

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES TO THE 138th MEETING

GIANT CITY STATE PARK

16 MAY 2008

(Approved at the 140th meeting, November 14, 2008)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Dan Gooch, Marilyn Campbell, Susanne Masi, Dr. Mike Retzer, Dr. Herkert, Dr. John Ebinger.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: John Clementsen, Dr. Chris Phillips, Dr. Tom Nelson

OTHERS PRESENT: Tracy Evans, IDNR-OREP; Glen Kruse, IDNR-ORC; Anne Mankowski; Jody Shimp IDNR Heritage, Randy Heidorn INPC.

138-1 Call to Order, Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Chairman Gooch called the 138th meeting of the IESPB to order at 10:05 A.M. Acting Secretary Retzer called the roll call of Board Members. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

138-2 Adoption of the Agenda

Chairman Gooch asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Acceptance of the minutes was postponed until comments and corrections of Board members can be made by Dr. Retzer or Dr. Phillips.

138-3 Board Resolution

Chairman Gooch advanced a resolution commending the many years of service to the IESPB by Dr. Ebinger. The resolution was read and M. Campbell motioned to accept the resolution, S. Masi seconded and the Board approved the resolution. It is included below in its entirety.

138-4 IDNR Staff Report

Glen Kruse, Chief of the Division of Natural Heritage gave his report. It is included below in its entirety. He highlighted the Wildlife Preservation Fund receipts being about what they were last year; interviews of Natural Heritage Residents; no news on FY2009 State budget (no specific IESPB funding in the budget); and the eagle nest cam at Ameren.com.

138-5 INPC Report

Randy Heidorn of the INPC gave the Commission's report. It is included below in its entirety. He emphasized the loss of clerical staff for INPC; hiring a staff member (Jennifer Skufca) to oversee the defense of natural areas; a switch of focus from acquiring

natural areas to their maintenance and protection. Discussion followed concerning the monitoring of Braidwood Dunes and tritium removal from the groundwater by Exelon. J. Ebinger discussed his work there and the monitoring of the plant community during the tritium removal. J. Herkert also asked if INPC tracked the number of areas being burned, etc. each year. R. Heindorn responded that specific numbers are not kept but he thought that of maintenance activities about 40% of what are needed to be done are being carried out. J. Herkert inquired as the status of the royal catchfly recovery plan and Heidorn was uncertain of its current status.

138-6 ESPB/ Staff Report

Chairman Gooch raised the topic of hiring an IESPB director. G. Kruse said that L. Sgro (IDNR) is committed to hiring a director but Central Management Services said no to a permanent hire. A director can be hired on a one-year contract that will need to be renewed annually. J. Herkert reviewed the forms prepared by C. Phillips.

138-7 Species Updates

Joe Kath was unable to attend and no report by him was presented. G. Kruse updated the board on the Alligator Snapping Turtle reintroduction project in Illinois. Individuals in the southern U.S. are being captured for stocking and breeding in Illinois. Genetics from turtles across its range show six distinct populations. Individuals being brought to Illinois are deemed suitable for stocking/breeding in Illinois. G. Kruse also presented efforts to locate Illinois Chorus Frog populations in the Havana area.

S. Masi presented an overview of the “Plants of Concern” project in NE Illinois. The projects monitors 203 species of which 111 are listed plants and involves 81 landowners and 386 volunteers. She submitted a paper summary and is attached to these minutes. G. Kruse commented on the values of the project to providing information to the Natural Heritage Database, and he suggested that state funds may be available to support the program.

J. Herkert stated that the bird ESTAC has met and it is working on their T&E list recommendations. J. Ebinger said that the plant ESTAC will hold three regional meetings to discuss their list. G. Kruse said that IDNR would be able to pay for ESTAC members to travel to these meetings.

138-8 Board Appointments and Appointment of Nominating Committee

A motion was made by J. Herkert that the IESPB recommends that John Taft [Illinois Natural History Survey] be appointed to the IESPB. The motion was seconded by M. Campbell. A short discussion followed that Taft would serve on the board and that he would replace J. Ebinger.

The motion passed unanimously.

S. Masi, M. Campbell, and M. Retzer were appointed to the Nominating Committee for Next Term Officers.

138-9 Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee Listing Recommendations

Dr. Retzer submitted a memorandum to the IESPB detailing the activities of the Fish ESTAC and the recommendation of elevating the status of *Lepomis miniatus*, Redspotted Sunfish from threatened to endangered. He further discussed other items in the memo. That memo is attached. J. Ebinger recommended that the other ESTACs follow the Fish ESTAC example. The Fish ESTAC memo discussed the need to study further non-listed species before listing. Chairman Gooch recommended that cases be written for species for funding. G. Kruse suggested that board members could apply for State Wildlife Grants for such studies or the board to cooperate with interested parties to apply for these funds.

138-10 Next Meeting Information

The 139th ESPB meeting will take place Aug 15, 2008, at the Audubon Headquarters in Springfield.

138-11 Other Business

J. Herkert told the Board of his efforts to work with John Marshall (IDNR Realty) to get information from the IESPB animal brown book on the Web.

J Herkert asked the IESPB to pass a resolution in support of Susan Donovan's (TNC) effort to get INA NAAF funds released and used for its intended purpose. The issue, based on The Nature Conservancy document handed out by Herkert, was discussed. The Board resolution was motioned by J. Ebinger and seconded by M. Campbell. The resolution reads as the following: The IESPB supports the use of the NAAF for its intended purpose: the acquisition, protection and management of natural lands; full appropriation of the recommended \$15M of NAAF for FY09 for land acquisition and stewardship; dedication of a significant appropriation for land acquisition (\$6.3 M) and the remaining amount of funding necessary to complete the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory update (\$4.3M); restoration of funding to support 28 crucial staff within the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, the Division of Natural Heritage and Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (\$4.4M); assertive legislative oversight to the IDNR to expend funds appropriated by the General Assembly for important conservation programs.

138-12 Public Comment Period

No comments

138-13 Meeting Adjournment Chairman Gooch asked for a motion to adjourn the 138th meeting. Dr. Herkert so moved and Chairman Gooch seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion at 12:00 PM.

Resolution

Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

May 16, 2008

Whereas **Dr. John Ebinger** was appointed to the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board in 1988 and continued to serve on the Board until 2008—some 20 years; and,

Whereas John was a dedicated, loyal and highly valued Board member who served as the Board's Vice-chair from 2001-2008; and,

Whereas he authored, co-authored or edited a number of publications on behalf of the Board including: *Endangered and Threatened Species of Illinois: Status and Distribution. Volume 1 - Plants* and *Endangered and Threatened Species of Illinois: Status and Distribution. Volume 2 - Animals* and,

Whereas he served as Chair of the Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee for Plants and lent thereto his considerable expertise as a Botanist and Field Naturalist (and has, in addition, agreed to continue on with said committee); and,

Whereas the good Doctor deported himself always as an all around positive helpful and even jolly fellow;

Now therefore, The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board resolves to commend Dr. John Ebinger and thank him for exemplary service. The Board further directs that a copy of this resolution and a certificate of recognition and appreciation be transmitted to Dr. John Ebinger upon its passage.

Passed and approved by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board this Sixteenth day of May, Two Thousand and Eight.



Chairman

Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

ESTAC Fish Committee

MEMORANDUM

To: Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

From: Michael E. Retzer, Chair

Date: March 7, 2008

Re: 5 year review of the State list of endangered and threatened fish species

The fish ESTAC has reviewed the status of several listed species including the eastern sand darter (*Ammocrypta pellucida*), least brook lamprey (*Lampetra aepyptera*), redspotted sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*), and bluebreast darter (*Etheostoma camurum*). All of these species have been the subject of recent status surveys. With the exception of the redspotted sunfish, the committee felt no need to change the status on the list of any of the species. Trent Thomas, Jeremy Tiemann and John Epifanio have recently finished a report on the status of the redspotted sunfish, and they suggest the species be elevated from threatened to endangered. The Fish ESTAC concurs with this recommendation and recommends that the Illinois Endangered Species Protection move the redspotted sunfish from the threatened to the endangered species list. This recommendation is based on the finding of Thomas, Tiemann and Epifanio that only two viable but isolated populations now exist in Illinois, one in the Illinois River drainage and one in the Wabash.

The entire list was reviewed with short discussions of many of the species. Brooks Burr commented on the status of the least brook lamprey (*Lampetra aepyptera*) and said that new field techniques are now able to better detect lampreys and may be applied to other species in the state. The cisco (*Coregonus artedi*) and other whitefish species were discussed and it was noted that these species seemed poorly sampled in Illinois although INHS has recent records for these species.

Other non-listed species discussed for possible listing included the ghost shiner (*Notropis buchani*), brassy minnow (*Hybognathus hankinsoni*), other *Hybognathus* sps., *Macrhybopsis* sps., Ozark minnow (*Notropis nubilus*), burbot (*Lota lota*), bluntnose darter (*Etheostoma chlorosoma*), and pugnose minnow (*Opsopoeodus emiliae*). It was decided that status and distributional studies are required before the listing any of these species. The committee outlined three projects that would be forwarded to the Endangered Species Protection Board for the next round of funding by the Board.

Masi report on Plants of Concern

Plants of Concern (POC) is a volunteer-based, long-term rare plant monitoring program in NE IL, funded in part by the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund. From 2001 to 2007, POC had monitored 203 species (111 listed species) in 603 Element Occurrences at 223 sites. Eighty-one landowners worked with the program (federal, state, local and private) and 386 volunteers have been involved. In 2007, 202 volunteers monitored 149 species in 401 Element Occurrences at 179 sites.

Significant findings made by POC volunteers and staff include discovery of a new Kane County population of *Ranunculus rhomboideus* (Prairie Buttercup), discovery of several new populations of *Viola conspersa* (Dog Violet) and *Carex woodii* (Pretty Sedge), and inclusion in the program of *Botrychium campestre* (Prairie Moonwort) at its only known location in Illinois. With seven years of accumulated data, the program is beginning to analyze trends in populations of rare plant species in Northeastern Illinois. All monitoring data is submitted to landowners and to the Natural Heritage Database.