

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES OF 180<sup>th</sup> MEETING, NOVEMBER 16, 2018

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

Approved at the 181<sup>th</sup> meeting, February 8, 2019

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Tracy Evans, Mr. Bruce Ross-Shannon

OTHERS PRESENT: Jeannie Barnes (INHS), Kelly Neal (INPC), Trent Thomas (IDNR), and Lyndsey Ramsey (Illinois Farm Bureau)

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

Chair Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:03 A.M. and read the roll call. Since six voting Board members were in attendance, there was a quorum. Chair Hofmann welcomed the visitors.

2 Adoption of Agenda

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

3 Approval of Minutes from the 179<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Draft minutes of the 179<sup>th</sup> meeting had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. Dr. Willink pointed out a typo in the scientific name of the Bigeye Chub. Chair Hofmann said that she would fix the spelling of the species name. As no further changes were proposed the minutes of the 179<sup>th</sup> meeting, with Dr. Willink's correction, were approved.

4 Report from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Board members received a report from Mr. Young detailing activities of the IDNR's Office of Resource Conservation and Office of Realty and Environmental Planning. Ms. Lisa Bulinski recently began work as Mr. Young's Executive Secretary. She will also assist the Board and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission. Ms. Jeannie Barnes added a comment commending the Plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) for its work.

5 Report from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC)

Ms. Kelly Neal presented a report on the recent activities of the Commission and its staff. The Commission held its 230<sup>th</sup> meeting in September and added additional areas to the system, including two new Land and Water Reserves and one new Nature Preserve. The system now includes 192 reserves and 392 preserves, totaling 110,000 acres. All field vacancies have been filled and a map showing INPC districts was included with the report. Dr. Capparella mentioned that many threats to INPC sites were listed in the report and asked if that was typical. Ms. Neal responded that the number of threats was unlikely to decrease as more areas are added to the system and development continues in proximity to INPC sites. Mr. Schietzelt pointed out that

new owners of a property may not be as motivated to protect it as were the owners who originally dedicated the land as a Nature Preserve or Land and Water Reserve.

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

Chair Hofmann reported on her activities since the 179<sup>th</sup> meeting. A major activity was performing administrative reviews of five petitions for changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species. She also attended the 230<sup>th</sup> meeting of the INPC in September and presented a report on behalf of the Board. Her written report to the Board is attached.

7 Completion of Mandatory Ethics and Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Board Members

All Board members present indicated that they had completed both online training modules.

8 Update on the Process for the Review of Listed Plant Species – Drs. Coons and Fant

There has been good attendance at the three meetings of the Plant ESTAC with many people providing regional input. The ESTAC will hold one more meeting in Champaign, probably in February 2019, to finalize its recommendations. Dr. Coons indicated that there could be petitions for as many as 21 changes to the Illinois List. Mr. Schietzelt asked if recovery of Downy Solomon's Seal is dependent on management and how common this is for listed plant species. Dr. Coons replied that management was important for the Downy Solomon's Seal and other species. Mr. Young pointed out that IDNR has \$2.5 million in stewardship funds that could be used for management of endangered species or their habitat.

9 Schedule for Completion of Current Review and Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Chair Hofmann reminded members that the Board completed the last revision in 2014, but the date on the current Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species (List) is 19 May, 2015. She discussed the schedule for the current revision with Mr. Young since the last meeting and they agreed that it would be good to have the new List in place by June 30, 2020. Chair Hofmann reviewed the steps in the revision process. After the Board approves a preliminary List it must hold a public hearing (with time for written comments to be submitted). The Board responds to the public comments and approves its final List. The List is then sent to IDNR for approval and to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR). Chair Hofmann suggested that the Board approve the final List at the February 2020 meeting. If the preliminary List were approved at the August 2019 meeting the public hearing could be held next autumn. Board members discussed the proposed schedule and there was a consensus to follow it. Members of the Fish and Plant ESTACs will be informed that petitions for changes to the List should be submitted for preliminary approval at the February or May 2019 Board meeting.

10 Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Change the Status of the Redspotted Sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*) from Endangered to Threatened – Presentation by Jeremy Tiemann (Illinois Natural History Survey) and Trent Thomas (IDNR)

Mr. Trent Thomas gave a PowerPoint presentation on the status of the Redspotted Sunfish. Through the efforts of a recovery team sunfish were collected from a population in the Sangamon River drainage and transferred to research ponds at the Illinois Natural History Survey to spawn. Young-of-the-year from the research ponds were translocated to two protected sites and individuals from these sites were subsequently introduced into waterways with suitable habitat. Mr. Thomas stated that the species is unlikely to be extirpated from Illinois because of

the large number of individuals in the protected source populations. Dr. Capparella moved that the Board give preliminary approval to changing the status of the Redspotted Sunfish from endangered to threatened. Mr. Schietzelt seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

11 Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Mottled Sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*) to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

The Board discussed a petition to add the Mottled Sculpin to the List as a threatened species. Two subspecies of Mottled Sculpin occur in the state. Dr. Willink pointed out that this is a somewhat unusual situation because one subspecies is stable, while the other (in northeastern Illinois) has declined. Dr. Capparella asked whether the Board could list a subspecies. Chair Hofmann said that the Board has discussed that question previously and Mr. Young stated that the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act only mentions that the Board can list “species.” Dr. Capparella then pointed out that there are different ways of defining a species and there was general discussion about the issue. The petition gave three criteria as a basis for listing the species. Chair Hofmann asked whether the Mottled Sculpin has a very restricted geographic range and is a significant disjunct in the state. Dr. Willink thought that those criteria did not apply. Dr. Capparella moved that the Board give preliminary approval to adding the Mottled Sculpin to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened, based on the criterion that it exhibits restricted habitats or low populations in Illinois. Dr. Fant seconded the motion. Dr. Willink recused himself from voting on the motion, which was approved by all other members present.

12 Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Ozark Minnow (*Notropis nubilus*) to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

The Board discussed a petition to add the Ozark Minnow to the List as a threatened species. The petition presented evidence that the number of Ozark Minnows in Illinois is low and has declined for unknown reasons. The species also has a restricted range in the state and the number of locations at which it has been found has decreased over time. Dr. Willink stated that the species is common in the Ozarks. The Ozark Minnow does not have a very restricted geographic range, but the fish in Illinois are disjunct from the main population. Mr. Schietzelt moved that the Board give preliminary approval to adding the Ozark Minnow to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened, based on the criteria that it is a species which exhibits restricted habitats or low populations in Illinois and is disjunct from the main population. Dr. Fant seconded the motion. Dr. Willink recused himself from voting on the motion, which was approved by all other members present.

13 Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Change the Status of Downy Solomon’s Seal (*Polygonatum pubescens*) from Threatened to Endangered

The Board discussed a petition to change the status of Downy Solomon’s Seal. The status of this species has been changed three times since its initial listing, most recently for the 2015 List. Chair Hofmann stated that Dr. Evans had asked if there was a time lapse for making another change to a species. Chair Hofmann said that there was no policy and Mr. Young pointed out that it would be better to have flexibility rather than establishing a fixed number of years between making changes to a species. Chair Hofmann said that the current Board was not responsible for the number of changes made to this species’ status in the past and Mr. Young concurred that the Board should just consider the present situation. Dr. Willink moved that the Board give preliminary approval to changing the status of Downy Solomon’s Seal from threatened to endangered. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

14 Discussion of Potential Funding for Research Grants

Dr. Coons raised the issue of obtaining money for funding surveys on species of interest. Mr. Young pointed out that IDNR has money from the Wildlife Preservation Fund and that Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) sometimes include payments to the Department. Dr. Capparella asked if the latter funds were used specifically for the species covered by the ITA. Mr. Young said that was the case. The money may be used for activities such as habitat restoration or outreach in addition to surveys. Mr. Young proposed that the Division of Natural Heritage, INPC, Board and ESTACs work as a team to prioritize species for surveys and management over a five-year period. There was a consensus among Board members that this would be a useful approach. Drs. Coons and Fant will send Mr. Young a list of recommendations from the Plant ESTAC and Chair Hofmann will resend recommendations from the zoological ESTACs.

15 Approval of Schedule for 2019 Quarterly Board Meetings

Board members looked at dates for 2019 quarterly meetings. Mr. Schietzelt moved that the Board meet on February 8, May 17, August 16, and November 15. The motion was seconded by Dr. Coons and was carried unanimously.

16 Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Mr. Trent Thomas commented that IDNR uses the taxonomic list generated by the American Fisheries Society, which does not recognize subspecies. He also mentioned that sometimes a species similar in appearance to one listed as endangered or threatened by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is also listed to protect the vulnerable species.

17 Other Business

Dr. Coons asked about the status of Board appointments and Mr. Young said that he would check into the matter.

16 Next Meeting Information

The next meeting will be at 10 A.M. on February 8, 2019 at Midewin.

17 Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 12:29 P.M.



# ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

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## Report from the Chair, 16 November 2018

Joyce Hofmann

### Activities for the period between the 179<sup>th</sup> and 180<sup>th</sup> Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 179<sup>th</sup> meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 179<sup>th</sup> meeting and the approved minutes of the 178<sup>th</sup> 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)
- assisted Drs. Coons and Fant with posting of agendas and minutes for the Plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee
- prepared a report on Board activities for the 230<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC)
- attended the 230<sup>th</sup> meeting of the INPC in Cypress on 11 September
- distributed five draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) to Board members for review
- performed administrative review of petitions to change the status of the Redspotted Sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*) from endangered to threatened and add the Ozark Minnow (*Notropis nubilus*) and Mottled Sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*) to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened
- performed administrative review of petitions to change the status of Downy Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum pubescens*) and Prairie Buttercup (*Ranunculus rhomboideus*) from threatened to endangered
- completed mandatory online Sexual Harassment Prevention training
- phoned new Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) Executive Secretary Lisa Bulinski to discuss Board operations
- phoned ORC Director Chris Young to discuss timeline for completion of list revision
- prepared for the 180<sup>th</sup> 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

