

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD
MINUTES OF 184th MEETING, NOVEMBER 15, 2019
MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE, MAIN MEETING ROOM, VISITOR
CENTER 30239 SOUTH STATE ROUTE 53, WILMINGTON, IL 60481

For approval at the 185th meeting, February 21, 2019

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Jeremie Fant

OTHERS PRESENT: Austin Omer (Illinois Farm Bureau), Joe Kath (IDNR), Jeannie Barnes (INHS), Todd Strole (IDNR)

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. Seven voting Board members were in attendance, constituting a quorum. Dr. Hofmann welcomed the visitors 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. Willink and carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Approval of Minutes from the 183rd Meeting

Draft minutes of the 183rd meeting had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. There were no corrections or additions so the minutes were approved as presented.

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

Board members received an oral report from Mr. Young. There is a proposal to have a joint meeting of IESPB and the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC) on January 21, 2020. This would be a public meeting at the IDNR building in Springfield from 2:00-4:00 PM. The focus of the meeting would be to encourage collaboration among the two boards and IDNR. There is a planned presentation of a landscape-level collaboration in the Shawnee National Forest. A block of rooms has been reserved for ESPB members who wish to stay overnight. The consensus among Board members was favorable to the proposed meeting. Mr. Young is working with new Assistant IDNR Director John Rogner to develop a support position for the Board. Mr. Todd Strole distributed the Office of Resource Conservation (ORC) written report. He summarized IDNR activities involving endangered and threatened species. The first of four permanent acoustic monitoring stations for bats was placed at Jubilee State Park. Mitigation money is being used to assess the status of the Gravel Chub. A survey will be performed of species response to hydrological fluctuations found in Buttonland Swamp. A management plan for Massasauga Rattlesnakes at Carlyle Lake was reviewed. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed delisting the interior least tern. Mr. Strole summarized personnel changes and new hires. Several SWG grants were updated. Three projects began October 2019 and three others are scheduled to begin in January 2020. Two of the projects involve insects and pollinators. There was a short discussion of the administration of SWG grants. They are generally external and given to qualified institutions or organizations. In response to a

query by Dr. Coons, Mr. Strole said that SWG grants are for animals only. Dr. Capparella asked about a proposed wind farm with a footprint in Illinois Chorus Frog habitat. Mr. Young, Strole, and Kath explained how the Incidental Take Authorization applies to this project.

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

A paper copy of the INPC report was distributed to Board members.

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

Chair Hofmann will submit a written report on her activities later. She reported that IDNR staff have consolidated IESPB records in file cabinets at the IDNR building. The public hearing for the proposed changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species was held at the IDNR building on October 11 with no comments made by members of the public. Four letters with comments were subsequently received during the comment period. The Chair report has been attached to the minutes.

7. Compliance with Mandatory Ethics and Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Board Members

Board members reported on their compliance with the mandatory training. Chair Hofmann still has to complete the Sexual Harassment Prevention training.

8. Review of Public Comments on Proposed Changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Four written comments were received during the public comment period. One of the letters was a general statement. Another was from the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, supporting the proposed changes. Ms. Angella Moorehouse (IDNR) commented on a problem with the scientific names used for some of the listed plants and offered assistance in providing names consistent with U.S. Department of Agriculture nomenclature prior to the next revision. Ms. Lauren Lurkens of the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) provided several constructive comments about the Board, but no specific comments on proposed changes. Board members agreed with points made by the Farm Bureau in the letter. The Board authorized Chair Hofmann to respond to three letters and she will work with Mr. Young to address the comments from the Farm Bureau. The Board discussed why the Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) minutes were not posted and possible remedies. There was also discussion of posting an executive summary of the proposed changes with the scientific reasoning on which they were based.

9. Approval of Final Listing Decisions for the Review and Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Evans motioned to give final approval to the list of proposed changes as presented. Dr. Willink seconded the motion. Dr. Capparella asked about the fluctuating status of the wolf. Chair Hofmann pointed out that this was the last item on the proposed list and would make the species' Illinois status match its federal status. The motion passed unanimously. The list of proposed changes will now be sent to IDNR. Ms. Bridget Henning (IDNR) will help shepherd the list through the remainder of the revision process.

10. Review of the Process for Revision of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species, Including Potential Modifications of Petition Forms

Mr. Bruce Ross-Shannon offered to work with Chair Hofmann to create a summary of the entire review process, including a timeline. There are several tasks that could be completed during this period before

the next revision begins. This includes review of the Board's policy manual and the petitions for changes in status. Dr. Willink said that the petitions made the review process easier and that the ESTACs were an important part of the process. Ms. Jeannie Barnes (INHS) was asked to review the petition as it relates to the Database information she provides to the ESTACs. It was suggested that the petition should include an executive summary giving the reason for the proposed change (provided by the ESTACs). These summaries or review statements about listing decisions by the IESPB could be posted with the minutes to provide the public with the rationale for proposed changes in status. The Board reviewed the methods of finding potential ESTAC members. The goal is to expand opportunities for interested people to become part of the process. Dr. Evans suggested a press release asking for volunteers. There was brief discussion about starting the next review cycle with plants or reviewing plants and animals on a staggered five-year cycle. Dr. Evans proposed that Board members think about improvements to the petitions for the next meeting.

11. Public Comment Period (3 minutes per person)

Mr. Omer (IFB) thanked the Board for its serious consideration of the letter from the IFB. Ms. Barnes said that newly listed species will be added to the Illinois Natural Heritage Database so she will need location information from the petitions. She also mentioned that she would have liked to attend all of the ESTAC meetings.

12. Approval of Schedule for 2020 Quarterly Board Meetings

Meetings for 2020 have been scheduled for 10:00 A.M. on February 21, May 15, August 28, and November 13 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Visitor Center, Wilmington, IL. Room availability was confirmed by personnel at Midewin.

13. Other Business (issues can be discussed, but no actions may be taken)

Dr. Capparella suggested that the next ESTAC meetings should note whether the species are found in protected areas.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 11:49 A.M.

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702 - 1271; dnr.espb@illinois.gov;

Report from the Chair, 15 November 2019

Joyce Hofmann

Activities for the period between the 183rd and 184th Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 183rd meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 183rd meeting and the approved minutes of the 182nd 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 a report for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission's 233rd meeting in September
- prepared materials for the public hearing on proposed revisions of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species – prepared the agenda, arranged for posting of the agenda, sent summary of listing decisions to people who requested a copy, prepared a registration slip for members of the public who wished to make a comment
- attended the public hearing
- did an interview with a reporter from Springfield during the public hearing
- did a telephone interview with a reporter from the Peoria NPR station WCBU
- distributed four Conservation Plans and two draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) to Board members
- prepared for the 184th 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