

SUBJECT: INFORMATION ITEM: Update on Butler's Gartersnake Conservation Strategy

FOR: MARCH 2007 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Signe Holtz, BUREAU DIRECTOR; and Terrell Hyde, NHI ASSISTANT ZOOLOGIST

SUMMARY:

The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of IUCN-The World Conservation Union's Species Survival Commission was asked to design and conduct a workshop process to produce a population viability analysis and a set of draft revised conservation strategies for Butler's gartersnake in Wisconsin. The analysis consists of a computer simulation that incorporates current knowledge of the biology and ecology of the species and projects the relative performance of gartersnake populations under alternative scenarios of management or lack thereof. Using these alternative projections of population performance, a Butler's Gartersnake Stakeholder Workshop was held from February 5th-8th to determine the most effective practices to minimize the risk of extinction. Sixty people, representing more than 40 organizations were in attendance. Participants included private landowners, industry, academic researchers, wildlife managers, state and local regulators, and NGO representatives. Workshop goals included: 1) Evaluate species management and research activities; 2) formulate priorities for a practical management program for long-term survival of the species in an urbanized environment; and 3) promote effective collaborations between stakeholder groups that foster maintenance of Butler's gartersnake habitat while accommodating thoughtful economic expansion in the region. Concrete management actions and responsibilities were identified at the workshop and a Workshop Report was drafted. Near the conclusion of the workshop, the participants agreed that further work was needed to translate the Workshop Report into a revised Conservation Strategy. In keeping with the process that CBSG and the Stakeholder Workshop has laid out, the Conservation Strategy revision has been transparent and has been done in a cooperative manner. Post-workshop meetings have been held to develop regulatory framework with flexibility in design and certainty in process, and to revise the target for the number of sites required for successful management.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is informational. No action is needed.

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

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|----|-------------------------------------|---|-----|--------------------------|----------|
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fiscal Estimate Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |
| No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Background Memo | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | Attached |

APPROVED:

/s/
Bureau Director, Signe Holtz

3/6/07
Date

/s/
Administrator, Laurie Osterndorf

3/7/07
Date

/s/
Secretary, Scott Hassett

3/7/07
Date

cc: Laurie J. Ross - AD/5
Frank Trcka - SER
Terrell J. Hyde - ER/6