

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS
HABITAT COMMITTEE MEETING
August 15, 2008
Minutes

The Habitat Committee Meeting was called to order by Chairman Roger Sabota at 7pm.

Roll was called by Secretary Steve Holmes. Members in attendance were Dean Bowe, Ronald Earnest, Richard Halverson, Arlen Heistad, Allen Hrudka, Alan Kidd, Larry Meyer and LeRoy Wiesner. Excused were Mike La Rose and Arold Ninneman. Unexcused was Rich Varsho.

A Mission Statement was developed, read and voted upon. Motion by Richard Halverson and Second by Ronald Earnest to approve the Statement; Carried. Roger will forward a copy to Kurt.

Bill Horns of the DNR Fisheries presented a proposed rule regarding invasive species. The presentation was very informative and a lot of material to digest. The key to the rule seems to be educating the public on what is invasive and what you can and can't do with that species. Roger asked each member to read the proposed rule and get back to him with their thoughts. After all members contact Roger, we'll put together a letter of support of the proposed rule and forward it to Kurt.

Next, Warden Barry Meister introduced Ben Mott, Water Guard whom made a presentation about the Water Guard Program. There are 9 Water Guards in the state that are visiting boat landings, county fairs, the state fair, fishing tournaments, lake associations, youth groups, 4H clubs and any other group that would like to listen to them. They are educating the public about invasive species. They are getting the word out that plant material, live well and bilge water must be removed from the trailer/boat so as not to spread invasive species. Most people are very agreeable and are willing to obey the Water Guard requests. Tickets are written if the people don't care to listen. This is a very good program and again, education is key. We appreciate what they do and hope their message spreads.

Darrell Zastrow of the DNR Forestry presented about climate change and its impacts on our forests. A year ago the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) was formed by the DNR and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at U-W Madison. The group is drawing together the best available science to assess potential impacts of climate change in Wisconsin and to recommend adaptation strategies for policy makers, business and community leaders, agricultural interests, resource managers and the public. We look forward to future updates from Darrell.

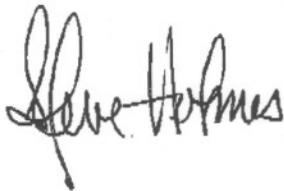
Darrell also gave up an update on the Emerald Ash Borer discovered in Ozaukee and Washington Counties in early August 2008. This Borer may have a huge impact on the ash forests of Wisconsin. Already, ash lumber/wood is quarantined in 4 counties in hopes of stopping the spread of the infestation. The Department does have a Management Plan and is currently trying to establish the size of the infestation and visiting with other states that have experience with the EAB as how to proceed. Again, education is a top priority.

Next we had a conversation with Kevin Marquette of the Menominee County Highway Department. His county is actively identifying invasive plant species and when they mow them, they clean the mowing equipment so not to spread seed and plant material to a new site. This is a great means to reduce the spread of any invasive. We will be developing a letter to be sent to the Highway Commissioners Association of Wisconsin asking for their help in identifying, reducing the spread and controlling current sites of invasive species. Kurt will follow up with Kelly Kearns to see if she is developing a letter as well. A second letter will be sent when Best Management Practices become available. Education is once again key.

Joe Nohner presented on the breeding sites of Muskies. Joe's presentation was very informative and interesting. The breeding population of muskies is declining in part due to shoreline development, sedimentation, and predation by northerns. Joe said that they had over 3,000 volunteer man hours in this study; donors were muskie clubs, students and other interested groups. We're interested to hear the final results of Joe's study.

Rich Halverson made a Motion to adjourn, Second by Alren Heistad, Carried. We adjourned at 10:30pm.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Steve Holmes on August 16, 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".