

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BUTLER'S GARTERSNAKE STAKEHOLDER NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2007

CONSERVATION TARGET REVISED

Near the conclusion of the Stakeholder Workshop (PHVA), the full body of participants agreed that the site characterization and prioritization scheme would be used to further clarify the value of individual sites/patches for Butler's gartersnake conservation. With such clarity at hand, and with the results of the Population Viability Analysis (PVA) as further guidance, a revised target for the number of patches required for long-term survival of the species in Wisconsin was possible.

Previously the minimum number of significant conservation patches was determined to be 65. This number was based on the WDNR's and the scientific community's current knowledge of population characteristics, patch security/habitat threats, genetic factors, and patch size. Since 2005, we now have new science including results of a genetics study, upland/wetland use by the snake, population characteristics, and patch size and potential and confirmed locations. In light of this new information, we had scientific justification to revise and reduce the number from 65.

After the Stakeholder Workshop, the WDNR applied the biological characterization and prioritization scheme to the list of 161 known Tier 3 patches. Upon completion, a subset of the PHVA and PVA workshop participants

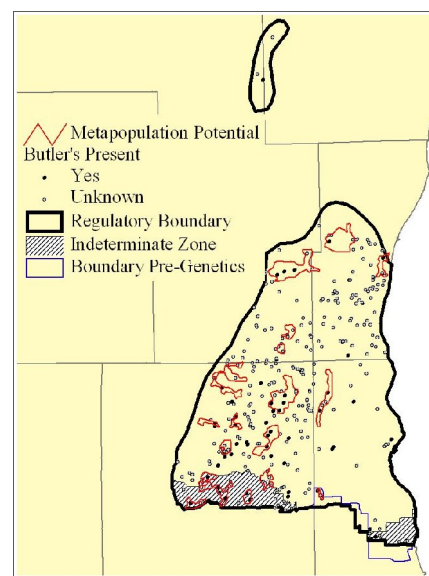
reconvened to revise the number of patches required (i.e., Conservation Target). Philip Miller of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group returned to facilitate the meeting and to provide population ecology expertise. The subset of participants was mostly comprised of scientists having expertise in population dynamics, Butler's life history and ecology, and Butler's genetics. Representatives from the Metropolitan Builders Association were invited to ensure transparency of the process. The meeting took place at the University Wisconsin Pyle Center on March 13th 2007. The meeting was broadcast over the internet and can still be viewed at : <http://www.uwex.edu/ics/stream/dnr/ber/>

Elements of the Process

- Population Viability Analysis results
- Biological characterization and prioritization results
- Spatial distribution of patches
- Distribution of unique genetic features

The meeting participants reached full consensus on the revised Conservation Target of 40 Tier 3 patches. Of these 40 patches, 28 should have moderate to high metapopulation potential. We

defined patches with high to moderate metapopulation potential, as those with linking potential with at least 2 other patches. The balance of the 40 Tier 3 patches will consist of patches with genetic uniqueness or isolated patches representing spatially important patches within the snakes range.



In order to identify which 40 patches will be selected for long-term conservation additional survey work is needed to determine snake presence, as well as further work to finalize and apply the socioeconomic characterization and prioritization scheme.

For More Information Contact:

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