

The Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly

HCP

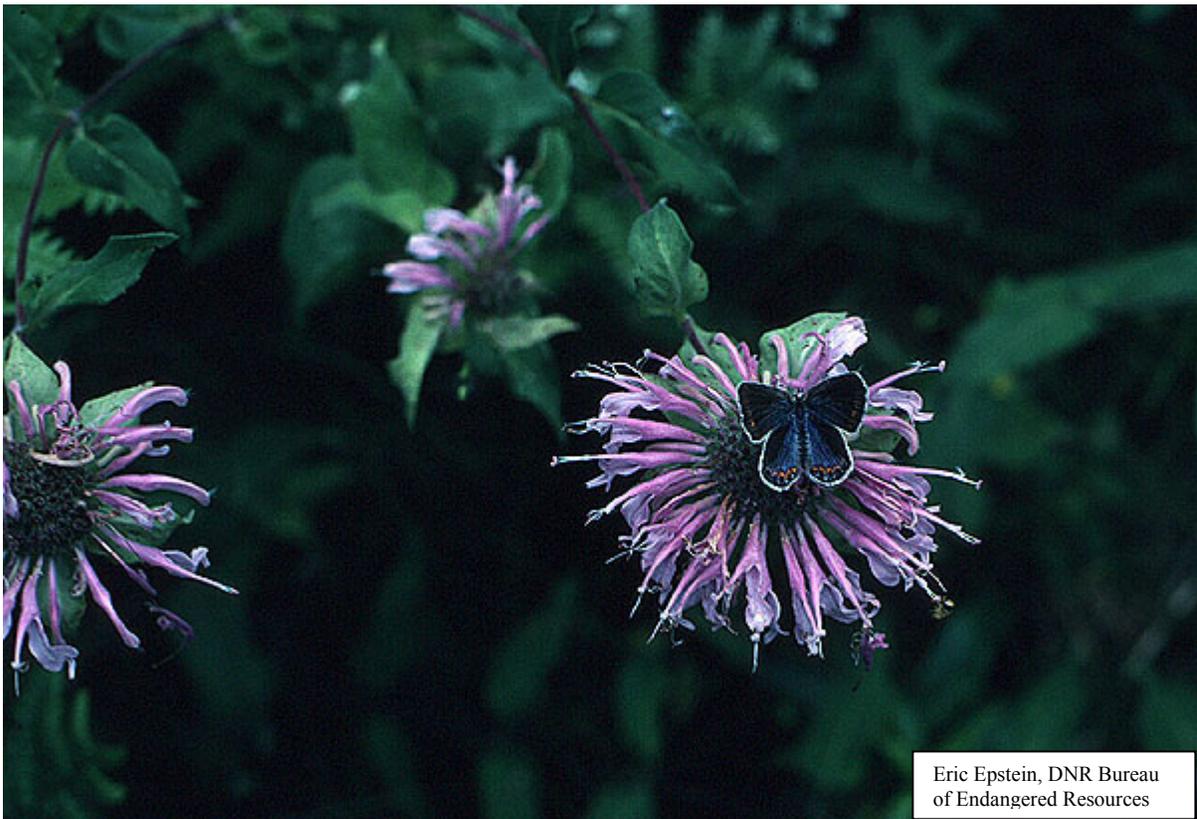
Annual Report

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Introduction

The Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the Karner blue butterfly (Kbb) in Wisconsin establishes a statewide program for Karner conservation. Wisconsin DNR is authorized to oversee implementation of this plan and activities described in the implementing agreement conducted according to the terms of Permit # TE0100064 for incidental take of Karners. This report is a summary of information from twenty-five partners and seven DNR staff about activities conducted on lands included in the HCP.

Results of Activities Conducted on Partner Lands

Thirteen partners reported surveys for lupine and Karners. Nine-hundred seventy-eight sites were reported surveyed for lupine, with 84 of them showing presence. Thirty-three sites were reported surveyed for Karners, with four indicating presence. These numbers are not an accurate representation of the surveys conducted during the period of the permit in 1999. See "Problems with self monitoring" summary below.

The names of surveyors were cross-checked with the list of Effectiveness Monitoring training attendees, to ensure that all were properly trained on survey technique. Appendix C contains the names, addresses and phone numbers of those certified to conduct effectiveness monitoring surveys. There are some with missing information, because this information was not formally collected at previous training sessions. A common problem here is that the surveyor name was left blank. The importance of completing the **entire** form will need to be emphasized at training in 2000. There were two instances where the surveyor did not attend training, but in both cases was accompanied by another surveyor that did attend. Also, survey dates were compared among partners, and in two cases, notes were made by the surveyors that the final survey was probably conducted a bit beyond the peak of the second flight. Again, a re-emphasis during training will hopefully improve the probability of all surveys being conducted during peak flight period during the 2000 monitoring season. However, it is to be expected that in a few cases each year variables of personnel, weather, or butterflies will cause the surveys to fall outside the peak period. Since the permit was issued well after flight periods ended in 1999, we are not including exact dates of the flights. Subsequent reports will contain this information as required by paragraph X.5 of Permit # TE0100064.

DNR, DOT, TTC-GP, JCF, and MCF reported activity on occupied habitat, encompassing approximately 1000 acres of habitat and five miles of trails. Activities conducted ranged from prescribed burns and timber sales to trail maintenance. Pre-management surveys were conducted on all but one of these areas. No permanent take was reported.

Five partners reported transfers of land during the report period. Appendix A contains the details of location, transferee, and relationship to SPA/ACE boundaries. A total of 259,607 acres are currently included for coverage under the HCP.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) conducted surveys for associated species. They found *Talinum rugospermum* on three of five sites, and *Callirhoe triangulata* and the red-tailed leaf-hopper on both sites surveyed for these species. Loggerhead shrike and Kirtland's warbler were not detected through surveys on three sites.

DNR in conjunction with the IOC recommends that future reports contain a separate page for reporting proactive conservation measures, i.e. those activities conducted to enhance or feature Karners and their habitat. This page will accentuate the positive management being conducted with respect to Karner blues within the landscape of this HCP. Several partners reported such activities in their 1999 reports to DNR.

Along with wayside construction, DOT seeded nine acres to prairie and lupine. The Nature Conservancy reported clearing firebreaks and thinning trees to improve habitat at Quincy Bluff, as well as collecting lupine seed and other prairie restoration activities. DNR planted 50 acres in warm season grasses and forbs, including 25 pounds of lupine seed, at Emmons Creek Fishery Area. The Glacial Lake Grantsburg Unit conducted prescribed burns and firebreak construction and maintenance activities on sites that include long-term Karner habitat, encompassing approximately 2500 acres.

The highlight of the 1999 report comes in the form of a multitude of outreach and education (O&E) activities conducted by 15 different partners. Two partners also noted plans for O&E activities in 2000. Appendix B details the activities conducted by partner staff, ranging from outreach within the company to construction of a Karner habitat display on I-94. The Thilmany International Paper video highlighting Karner conservation was aired on public television in 1998, but included in this report to emphasize the positive impacts partners are having on public access to information on the Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly HCP.

Problems with Activity Report

The most significant problem among partners in reporting came from this section of the annual report form, because it was not clear to anyone until late March that this section was intended to track activities conducted on **occupied** lands only. A wide variety of responses was elicited, ranging from reports on sites with no lupine to sites outside of the high potential range. Some partners reported on activities from the entire year 1999, while some reported on activities only since the signing of the permit. Other obstacles included failure to report dates of surveys or dates of disturbances, and reliance on pre-management surveys done prior to 2 years before the management activity occurred. It also appears that some partners were conducting management activities on lands without conducting adequate surveys for Karners. Most of these problems can be resolved by making simple modifications to the report form, as well as improving directions given to partners when the forms are distributed. Clarification is needed about reporting management activities that occur across reporting periods, such as extended timber sales.

Another question mark in this section was the distinction between conservation measures taken to conserve Kbb and habitat during normal business practices and proactive conservation measures, and how each should be reported. The first needs to be reported in a general way as part of the disturbance section of the annual report. The second also needs to be contained within the annual report in a separate section, to emphasize the positive impacts of the HCP.

Problems with Self Monitoring Summary

The period covered by the annual report occurred after the dates when adequate surveys could be done for lupine or Karners. There is also some uncertainty as to what is expected in terms of self monitoring. These two factors resulted in reports of effectiveness monitoring data, surveying for lupine but not Karners, and data presented for **all** sites ever surveyed by partners. Clarification will be made on these points to the partners for the next reporting period.

Problems with Transfers page:

Only a few partners reported land transfers, and those had incomplete information. It is also evident that it was unclear to partners that only transfers of lands in the high potential range needed to be reported in this section, as well as the definitions of SPA/ACE boundaries and whether those should be reported. We recognize that DNR needs to improve communication between its Bureau of Facilities and Lands and the land managers in the regions to better fulfill our obligation in this area.