



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Natural Areas Preservation Council

P.O. BOX 7921 · MADISON · WISCONSIN · 53707



Natural Areas Preservation Council Meeting
Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
211 South Blue Mounds St.
Mount Horeb, WI
April 24, 2014
9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

(Subject to Council approval)

Present: Michael Strigel (Chair), Thomas Eddy, James Bennett, Kenneth Bradbury, Sharon Dunwoody, James Perry, Patrick Robinson, Owen Boyle, Erin Crain
Absent: Susan Borkin
Staff: Thomas Meyer, Randy Hoffman, Matt Zine

A. Minutes of previous NAPC meetings

1. Minutes of January 23, 2014

Perry moved (Dunwoody seconded) that the minutes of the January 23, 2014 meeting be approved as distributed. The motion carried.

B. Adoption of agenda

The following agenda items were proposed for addition:

- F.2. SNA acquisition update (Hoffman)
- F.3. Policy on failure to extinguish prescribed fires (Zine)

Bradbury moved (Bennett seconded) that the agenda be adopted as amended. The motion carried.

C. Announcements

- Crain: Owen Boyle was selected as the section chief for the Species Management Section of the Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation.
- Bradbury: WGNHS developed a hiker's guide to the geology of Devil's Lake State Park application for mobile devices. Available currently only for Apple products. Sue Swanson at Beloit College will commence a 4-year statewide inventory of springs using DNR funding in part. Springs will be visited and geo-referenced.
- Eddy: A Botanical Club of Wisconsin botany blitz is scheduled for May 31st at Plover River Woods SNA in Portage County.
- Meyer: Cliff Germain, the first ecologist and long-time SNA Program chief will be inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in Stevens Point on May 3rd.
- Strigel: Announced his resignation from NAPC after his current term expires on July 1st, 2014. He will focus his energy on the 20th anniversary of Gathering Waters Conservancy.

D. Report on previous action items

1. Report on Wisconsin Wildlife Federation meeting

Crain attended a meeting of WWF looking for an official resolution supporting the work of NHC and rare species protection on private lands. The group ran out of meeting time to formally address this item, but voiced its support.

2. Report on meeting with DNR attorney

Strigel: Crain, Bennett, Meyer, and Strigel met with DNR attorney Chandra Harvey to clarify

how and when NAPC can provide input on issues. Because statute 15.347(4) reads "There is created *within* the Department of Natural Resources, a Natural Areas Preservation Council..." the council can't take a position contrary to DNR policy nor can it criticize the Department's stance. Crain: Harvey is now looking at the sideboards placed on all councils and boards that advise the DNR and an analysis is forthcoming. Harvey is also analyzing liability and litigation issues as they pertain to the council. Bennett: Questions -- Can NAPC act on its own or under the authority of the appointing agencies? Do NAPC members officially represent their appointing entities?

E. Action items

1. Council appointments

Bennett: The Department of Public Instruction had signaled that it would defer to NAPC on a recommendation for a DPI appointee to replace Dennis Yockers. NAPC recommended Robert Welch. A DPI letter then surfaced that clearly stated DPI Environmental Education consultant Victoria Rydberg would replace Yockers, and that therefore she would be the appointee. Rydberg is currently on maternity leave, but has been officially appointed to NAPC. Bennett is working with WASAL director Jane Elder to appoint a NAPC member to fill the opening left by Strigel's departure. He will also ask Elder for the reappointments of Eddy and Perry to new three-year terms.

2. Recognition of departing NAPC members

Crain presented Strigel with a old-growth hardwood plaque from NAPC and thanked him on behalf of the DNR for his 6 years of service to the council, 5 as council chair.

3. NAPC guidelines for the placement of memorials on SNAs

Bennett: Borkin, Bennett and Meyer reviewed existing DNR Manual Code and the old council policy on this issue. He will distribute the proposed guideline revisions by email for later council approval.

4. Hemp Fishery Area SNA designation

Bennett: Was contacted by Robert Freckmann (retired, UWSP) who recommended NAPC support designation of a portion of the Hemp as an SNA. Meyer: the designation process typically flows from staff up to the council to allow for adequate analysis of the request. Hoffman: Reiterated the formal designation process (see handout document), especially as it relates to DNR properties subject to master plans. Meyer was encouraged that the public identifies NAPC as a conduit for SNA designation and supports input on SNA designation via any route, council or staff. It was suggested that the SNA web page include information on how to nominate an SNA. Bennett: Will draft a letter to Freckmann stating this issue was discussed at the meeting and that the Department will take his recommendation into consideration.

5. Expense reimbursement for NAPC members

Meyer: Council members (non-DNR) who wish to be reimbursed for travel expenses related to NAPC meetings, including meals, mileage, and lodging, must have a W9 form on file with the agency and complete a travel reimbursement log. Meyer will send instructions via email.

6. Follow-up on Pittman-Robertson Fund availability for NHC

Crain: PR funding comes from federal taxes on firearms and ammunition and is traditionally directed toward habitat improvement for huntable species of birds and mammals. NHC and SNA Program receive about 2% of DNR's \$19 million annual allotment. With a recent bump in PR funding as a result of increased firearm sales, an additional \$6 million is available to the department. Crain submitted proposals to DNR administration seeking a larger share of the funds for NHC. A decision is forthcoming.

7. State Natural Area Day

Eddy: No progress has been made on this item. He will call a subcommittee together. Bennett stated that the Natural Resources Foundation would support promotion of the project, but wasn't able to fund it directly.

8. Future council meetings

Meyer will find a date in July or early August for a summer meeting, perhaps with a field component. Locations suggested by members included Bayfield, Fond du Lac, and Stevens Point areas. The council was open to the idea of a two-day field meeting in 2015.

F. Information items

1. Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation report (Crain)

- White-Nosed Syndrome, the fungus affecting bats, was recently discovered in a population in Wisconsin.
- The USFWS is seeking to list the northern long-ear bat as endangered or threatened. Its listing would have repercussions for a wide variety of land management activities, including those on SNAs.
- NHC staffing: Three new District Ecologists will be hired this summer. The process to hire a chief for the Program Integration Section housing the SNA Program is proceeding.
- The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan will be updated this fall.
- WICCI: Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts is starting up new working groups, including one for plants and natural communities. A focus will be on vulnerability assessments and impact of climate change on SNAs.
- SNA Program was provided \$75K from Facilities and Lands for SNA maintenance, fencing, gates, etc.
- The Natural Area Spotlight has more than 1000 subscribers.
- DNR Science Services should be invited to discuss how SNAs can be used for research.
 - Dunwoody: Why does interest in using SNAs for research ebb and flow? What draws researchers to use the SNA land base?
 - Robinson agreed to revisit the SNA Workshop results to help answer these questions.

2. SNA acquisition update

Hoffman distributed a spreadsheet (attached) showing recent land acquisition activity in the program.

3. DNR prescribed fire "Failure to Extinguish" policy

Zine: New department policy requires that all fire be extinguished before leaving a prescribed burn. In the past, smoldering material well within fire lines could be left to burn out. The new policy requires an extensive investment in resources to monitor SNAs after burns.

On a motion by Eddy (Perry seconded) the meeting was adjourned at 12:21 p.m. The motion carried. Following the meeting, Bradbury provided a tour of the WGNHS rock, mineral and core collections at the Mount Horeb facility.