

HABITAT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

August 20, 2011

Ramada Inn of Stevens Point

Meeting called to order by Chairman Roger Sabota at 7:05pm

Roll called, all present with the following exceptions: Excused were Ron Lang, David Zielke, Arold Ninneman, and Dan Donahue. Unexcused was Heather Palmquist. DNR Liaison's Ron Cork and Ricky Lien were also present.

The Mission Statement was read with no discussion. Motion to approve as read by Rich Halverson, Second by Arlen Heistad and approved.

Ron Cork said the Department is looking to hire 10-16 new wardens and that currently we are about 40 wardens short and there are several wardens that are within retirement age so that number could grow. Ron mentioned that there is money in the 2013 budget to replace some of the wardens. There has been some transition from the Water Guard to Field Wardens. It was also mentioned that there has been a decontamination unit purchased to have at boat landings that will pressure wash boats/trailer so that invasive's are not transported from landing to landing. It uses hot water and a chemical to kill the invasives.

Ricky Lien says there are vacancies in the wetland habitat field due to some reorganization and they are filling those positions also. He mentioned that Stewardship funds have been cut and this will affect wetland purchases. He said there is about \$5 million dollars available for wetland infrastructure which means boundry signs and parking lots and improvement but not land purchase. The money has a very strict guideline what it can be used for.

He also mentioned that they are doing some work with wild rice in the north and it's a very important food source for waterfowl.

That there are some Pittman-Robertson Funds and stamp money available for projects.

We discussed dam abandonment rules and practices at length. We would like to see the slides that Ed Harvey showed us last year as a refresher and as a baseline for the new members. We'd also like to invite Linda Hyatt from the Department to attend so we can have a meaningful discussion about this topic. Roger will contact everyone with an invitation for January 20th 2012. We'll try to meet at DNR locations around the state so we don't have the expense of travel and will have a "live meeting". Ron Cork mentioned that we should invite others to attend this meeting. Sportsman's clubs and lake associations are very good at providing educational information to their members. That the Wisconsin Association of Research, Conservation and Development Councils is also a great resource. They can often times find money to help with projects and suggested that the leaders be invited. There was a Motion by Rich Halverson, Second by Arlen

Heistad to have this meeting and to have a discussion after the meeting to share what we've learned and to see what, if anything, the committee wants to do. This motion was approved.

We also discussed the possibility of delayed mowing on state owned lands. Our discussion was primarily about roadsides and ditches. We'd like a "timely" mowing of these areas so not to disturb ground nesting birds but to mow before the weeds go to seed. We don't want the seeds to be spread by the mowers. It might make sense to mow one side of the road one year and the opposite side the following to avoid total destruction of nests.

We've been asked by the Governor and the Congress to simplify rules and regulations. We'll look at the rules that come from our committee to make sure we're not causing more undue regulation and to make sure an existing rule makes scientific sense and not to remove rules for the sake of removal.

Member Matters:

Steve Budnik mentioned that the USFWS has funds for aquatic habitat restoration
Bob Haase said that Walleyes for Tomorrow is doing work for walleye spawning habitat and habitat improvement in general that will also help muskies. Bob also asked our committee to be more proactive in making resolutions as well as handling them from the public.

Jason Wood talked about deer habitat and what invasives do to the understory in the woods. Would like to see some of the hunt shows on tv talk more about invasives and what they are doing to our deer habitat. Would also like to see them help educate their viewers regarding invasives.

Rich Halverson said that our committee has had some great conversations and we're stepping in the right direction but we need to see some action. Maybe this is our year.

Don Camplin said that we should work with the sportsman's clubs and associations to help educate people on invasives and solicit help in reporting and controlling them.

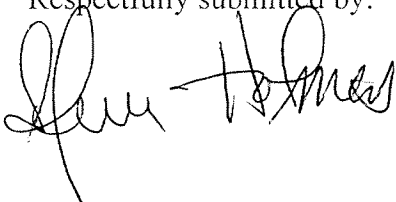
Arlen Heistad agrees that education is a key step in controlling invasives.

Ron Earnest thinks that we need to get some action happening. He hopes now is the time.

Roger Sabota and Steve Holmes agree with the majority, that we need to educate the masses and that our committee needs to take a leadership position in getting some much needed action to the efforts we've been talking about for years. With the help of sportsman's clubs, lake associations and the groups that Ron Cork mentioned, maybe this will be the year to see some positive results.

Motion to adjourn by Don Camplin, Second by Rich Halverson and approved at 9:28pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.