



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Natural Areas Preservation Council

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



Natural Areas Preservation Council Meeting
Department of Natural Resources
Science Services Operations Center
2801 Progress Road
Madison, WI
October 8, 2014
1:00 p.m.

MINUTES

(Subject to Council approval)

Present: James Bennett, Sharon Dunwoody, Patrick Robinson, Owen Boyle, Erin Crain, Susan Borkin, Eric Anderson, James Perry, Thomas Eddy, Victoria Rydberg, Kenneth Bradbury
Staff: Dawn Hinebaugh
Guests: Jack Sullivan (DNR Science Services Director), Dave Sample (DNR research scientist)

James Bennett (chair) called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

A. Minutes of previous NAPC meetings

1. Minutes of July 15, 2014 meeting

Borkin moved (seconded) to approve minutes of the July 15 meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

B. Adoption of agenda

Informational item F. 1. will be moved prior to action items (E) in consideration to Sullivan. Borkin moved to adopt agenda (seconded). Motion carried.

C. Announcements

- Crain informed the council that Jim Woodford, NHC Field Operations Section Chief, will take over the staff liaison duties from Thomas Meyer.
- Owen Boyle to resign from the council. Dave Sample is a guest today to learn about the council and possibly accept appointment to the council.

D. Report on previous action items

1. Legal opinion of NAPC enabling legislation

Crain: No further updates.

E. Action items

1. SNA Program/NAPC initiatives

Crain looking for a way to involve NAPC with NHC initiatives by having active participation between staff involved in the initiatives and a NAPC representative, aka "champion". This will allow for better continuity between meetings and input from NAPC.

a. SNA Volunteer Stewards (Jared Urban, NHC staff/James Perry, NAPC champion)

The SNA stewards program is envisioned as having one trained volunteer steward for each of the eight SNA work areas. Stewards will work on stand-alone SNAs (those that are not embedded in other properties such as state parks, wildlife areas, or county forests) and be supervised by the District/Area Ecologist. The goal would be to provide

a fully-equipped trailer in each work area that contained the necessary work gear and equipment.

- b. Site Assessments** (Meyer until Hoffman replacement, NHC/Borkin, NAPC champion)
SNA site assessments will help establish goals and priorities for each stand-alone SNA.

Phase 1 (completed): gather all pertinent information on stand-alone SNAs such as acquisition and management history and get the data input into the DNR's Land Management System (LMS), a database used to track the management for Land Division properties (NHC, Parks, Wildlife, Facilities and Land).

Phase 2: property inspections occurring now.

Phase 3: management needs assessment for ~140 SNAs and statewide plan of priorities.

- c. Use of SNAs as scientific areas** (Crain, NHC/Robinson & Bradbury, NAPC champions)
Crain believes administration does not have full appreciation of what/ how SNAs are important and how they can play an important role in department and statewide initiatives. There is a need to incorporate the idea of using SNA research areas as part of initiatives such as climate change, for example.
- d. Roles Definitions** (Crain, NHC/Bennett, NAPC champion)
There is a strong part for NAPC to play in helping to craft roles and responsibilities regarding SNA policy implementation in order to facilitate communication throughout the department and prevent mixed messages from occurring.
- e. Marketing and Outreach** (Tyler Brandt, NHC/Eddy & Dunwoody, NAPC champions)
- SNA spotlight
 - NRF major donor field trips
 - Armchair hikes
 - Adopt-a-SNA
 - State Lands Day
 - Friends groups

****Follow up:** Next NAPC agenda to include brief updates on NHC initiatives by staff and/or NAPC champion.

Eddy proposed to have another strategic planning meeting. Requested documents from 2011 strategic planning session and council retreat.

****Follow up:** Meyer will forward all pertinent strategic planning documents to the council.

- 2. Review of NAPC guideline development** (handout)
Council discussed whether or not new guidelines were needed and whether some of the newly proposed topics could be written as formal statements (similar to NR 52) instead of guidelines (e.g. invasives, LTER, climate change).

****Follow up:** Next meeting agenda to include discussion on guidelines with input from staff.

- 3. Review of council operating procedures** (handout)
Some edits (bureau name change) are needed. Council will review and discuss at future meeting.

- 4. Future council meeting schedule**

Next meeting is February 11 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Location TBA.

F. Information items

1. Bureau of Science Services discussion

Jack Sullivan, Director of DNR's Bureau of Science Services (SS), described the responsibilities of SS that include the spearheading DNR's science initiatives, research, and climate change impacts.

a. Ecological Monitoring and Research on SNAs

Sullivan would like to see more integration between SS and NHC, in particular, in using State Natural Areas for research and ecological monitoring. Sullivan believes the council can assist in the process. The department has not done a good job of recording and capturing data on our lands and there is a need to establish a long-term ecological monitoring plan across Ecological Landscapes.

Bennett: Mentioned that the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) model at Trout Lake could be a prototype for the state. <https://lter.limnology.wisc.edu/> There are other terrestrial examples, as well.

Sullivan believes the council could help provide a directive to the department on this initiative and described how the Invasives Species Council challenged agencies, including DNR, to step up to the plate with regard to invasives and to move forward in completing and implementing various initiatives, including a strike-team and budget items. Science Services is willing to work with NHC and the council on an ecological monitoring and research-based effort on SNAs.

Borkin: Inquired about potential roadblocks to actually implementing this initiative. Sullivan answered that SS does not have responsibility for SNAs and a budget for monitoring is lacking. There are potential resources available, for example Pittman-Robertson funds (PR), but the current DNR administrative policy, in part driven by the political environment, is for the majority of those funds to be earmarked to game species, rather than non-game or other types of projects.

Crain clarified that two percent of NHC's budget comes from PR and that NHC received no funds from the most recent "bumps" – increases in the original PR budget due to license and ammunition sales. Those bumps were \$4m, \$4m, and \$9 million.

Eddy believes that ecological monitoring is a great idea and would encourage SS to research and address the ecological services of State Natural Areas and then come up with some sort of tax initiative based on those services that would help fund non-game conservation work. Robinson is very supportive of these big ideas and initiatives.

Crain briefed council on a recent NHC initiative to help provide stable funding to the program. Currently, the department does not have solid data on species population trends yet NHC is responsible for providing this information to the regulated community. NHC inventory and data collection has no stable funding source and is limited by having soft money (e.g. grants, gifts) as its primary funding source. NHC management is currently working with administration to establish on a new initiative and plan that will provide for more stable funds for the program. Response has been positive thus far.

2. NR 40 – DNR’s Invasive Species Rule

NR 40 (Wis. Adm. Code ch. NR 40) makes it illegal to possess, transport, transfer, or introduce certain invasive species in Wisconsin without a permit.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/classification.html>

After a two year process, an updated rule will be presented to the Natural Resources Board (NRB) on December 10, 2014 for approval. Sullivan mentioned that on the whole, NRB has been supportive with the new rule, which will have impacts on some business communities in the state but that doing nothing would be cost prohibitive in the long-term. Sullivan suggested that although the public comment period for the rule rewrite has ended, the council can still weigh in their support for the new rule by writing a letter to NRB. Crain believes that it would be valuable for the council to testify before the board at the meeting, in part to support NR 40 but also for maintaining contact between NRB and the council.

Hinebaugh will send NR 40 resource links to the council. Goal is to have a working draft support letter by Thanksgiving.

3. NHC marketing initiative

Item previously discussed as part of E. 1(e). Annual report for NHC will be available soon. Council discussed creating an annual report of NACP highlights that would follow the state’s fiscal year. Rydberg suggested breaking out into committees or small discussion groups at next meeting to discuss both the NACP guidelines and the annual report. Further discussion to occur at next meeting. Crain responded that a report could provide an opportunity for the council to be more connected to the department.

4. Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation report

- As part of the 10-year updates to the Wildlife Action Plan and the Fish and Wildlife Plan, NHC will be hosting an on-line survey to gather citizen feedback on conservation priorities for the state. Survey link to be provided when ready.
- Crain shared a DRAFT NRF/SNA publication “Top Conservation Opportunities by Region” that outlines specific SNAs, their management needs, and associated costs of those needs.

Bennett adjourned meeting at 3:20 p.m.