ADVISORY COUNCIL
December 9, 2009 Meeting Minutes

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Patrick Early, Chair
John Bassemeir
Donald Van Meter
Bill Freeman
Jim Trachtman
Rick Cockrum
David Lupke
Ross Williams
James Snyder

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

Sandra Jensen
Jennifer Kane

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF PRESENT

John Davis	Executive Office
Chris Smith	Executive Office
Mark Reiter	Fish and Wildlife
Linnea Petercheff	Fish and Wildlife
Mitch Marcus	Fish and Wildlife

GUESTS PRESENT

John Goss
Bryan Poynter
Pete Hannebutt
Dean Shadley

Call to Order by Chairman, Patrick J. Early

The Chair called to order the meeting of December 9, 2009 at 10:39 a.m., EST, at the Fort Harrison State Park Inn, Indianapolis, Indiana. With the presence of nine members, the Chair observed a quorum.

The Chair announced that today's meeting is the last meeting for Advisory Council member John Bassemier. "We have all our meetings basically in Indianapolis. John

travels from Evansville…and I think John probably missed one or two meetings since he came on [the Advisory Council]. We really appreciate John's service and the fact that John came again today so that we could have quorum."

John Bassemeir said, "I've enjoyed working with the group. I didn't realize how responsive the DNR is and how dedicated this group is. I've been in a lot of groups, and I'm really happy to say that I feel good about the DNR, [its] responsiveness, and how [it] works with the people and wildlife".

Approval of minutes of meetings held on September 14, 2009 and October 14, 2009

John Bassemier moved to approve the minutes of meetings held on September 14, 2009 and October 14, 2009 without amendment. Bill Freeman seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

For consideration and discussion by the membership is a tentative schedule for year 2010 meetings of the Advisory Council

The Chair asked the Advisory Council members to mark their 2010 calendars "early, and certainly we understand that [the dates] are not going to work for everybody but we do need to try to have a quorum as often as possible. [The Advisory Council] has taken on quite a few things over the past couple years that are very important to DNR. It's better that we can move things on to the Commission really with more than just a consensus."

The Chair noted that the meeting dates now fall on Tuesdays rather than Wednesdays, and asked if the members had a preference as to which day would work with their schedules. Hearing no preference, the Chair then announced the dates of 2010 meetings as follows:

- February 9, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EST), Harrison State Park Inn, Theodore Room
- April 13, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EDT) at the Harrison State Park Inn, Roosevelt Room
- June 8, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EDT) at the Harrison State Park Inn, Roosevelt Room
- August 10, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EDT) at the Harrison State Park Inn, Theodore Room
- October 12, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EDT) at the Harrison State Park Inn, Roosevelt Room
- December 14, 2010 (10:30 a.m., EST) at the Harrison State Park Inn, Roosevelt Room

Consideration of recommendation for approval of preliminary adoption of amendments to 312 IAC 9-3 and 312 IAC 9-10-4 that govern the taking and possession of exotic mammals, including wild (feral) hogs and cervids; Administrative Cause No. 09-166D

Linnea Petercheff, Staff Specialist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, presented this item. She explained that 312 IAC 9-3-18.5 is proposed to be amended to remove some

families of exotic animals from the list that are "not likely" to be used in high-fenced hunting operations. She said also proposed is removal of the families Suidae and Tayassuidae, which relate to swine, to be moved to a new rule, 312 IAC 9-3-18.6, governing these two species separately. The amendments would allow anyone, not just the resident landowner or tenant to take an exotic mammal that has escaped from captivity into the wild. An amendment would clarify the possession and sale of these species and clarify that they cannot be released into the wild.

Petercheff said the new rule 312 IAC 9-3-18.6 governing wild hogs is needed to clarify requirements associated with the possession and taking of wild or feral hogs in Indiana. Professional staff from the Division of Law Enforcement, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) "all met and agreed upon the [proposed] language especially the definition of 'wild hog.'" She explained that wild hogs are a "major" disease threat to domestic hog operations, because wild hogs carry pseudo rabies, which can be transferred to domestic swine. Wild hogs also carry brucellosis, a human threat, in addition to other diseases such as tuberculosis. Petercheff said wild hogs destroy habitat for native species and destroy private property. She said the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the American Health Association have both passed resolutions calling for feral swine control. "In some states it has taken a lot of staff and money to control the populations".

Petercheff said that the Division of Law Enforcement and she have received inquiries from persons requesting to import hogs into Indiana to put them on high-fence hunting preserves. "Right now, [BOAH] does not allow their importation except by permit, and [BOAH] doesn't really want to issue permits for wild hogs to come into Indiana". She said the proposed rule would "close the door" on requests received by BOAH or the Department to import wild hogs. She summarized that the rule would prevent the importation of any more wild hogs, clearly prevents the possession or sale of these animals, and prohibits the high-fence hunting operations for these animals, but allows the taking of a wild or feral hog at any time.

Petercheff said that 312 IAC 9-10-4 would be amended to add exotic cervids to the game breeder license to comply with statutory authority governing cervidae livestock operations. The statute requires owners of cervidae to hold a game breeder license. She said rule language was drafted with input from several game breeders and the Division of Law Enforcement. She noted that the slaughtering of any animals would be conducted in compliance with the Humane Slaughter Act and other governing statutes. She said the proposed rule amendments would set forth enclosure requirements, record keeping, and other requirements to possess white-tailed deer and other animals kept under a game breeder license.

John Goss with the Indiana Wildlife Federation ("IWF") said that the proposed rule provides "several improvements" and the IWF "strongly supports" the proposal. He said that the exotic mammals proposed to be added "should have been included [in the rules] all these years. This is overdue." Goss said that the IWF is "just beginning" to hear about requests to place feral hogs in high-fenced hunting areas. "Certainly, that would be

a tragedy to allow that to start, so we want to put a stop to it at the front end". He noted that the proposal to bring the requirements of possession of exotics under a game breeder license in line with the recently adopted BOAH requirements, such as requiring 8-foot fences, ear tags, records, and inspections "is a good thing".

Goss noted that he attended a meeting held by the Department with the Deer and Elk Farmers Association. Goss said the Association is "fine" with the rule proposal. "We had a good conversation with them. They agreed it was time to bring everything in line." He said that the proposed rules, if made permanent, would facilitate matters during future disease outbreaks. "There were lots of cracks in the system when we had a TB problem earlier this year".

Rick Cockrum said the rule proposal was a "great idea, but it seems we are always going to be playing catch-up. There's always going to be the next exotic species." He asked whether there were discussions to propose a "generic prohibition" and shift the burden of proof on those who wish to import an exotic species. "We could be here in another year with a whole other animal that somebody is bringing in to hunt."

Petercheff said that the Department has not discussed a general prohibition. She explained that the original reason for the rule governing exotic mammals was to prohibit the use of exotics in high-fence hunting situations. "We tried to list all the species that may be included in a high-fence operation. There wasn't really a discussion that dealt with possession of these animals in Indiana or importation…; however, "that [discussion] needs to take place". Petercheff noted that she has received requests recently about importation of monkeys, parakeets, and a variety of exotics.

Cockrum encouraged the Department to conduct further discussion regarding a general prohibition of importation of exotics in Indiana.

The Chair asked whether feral hogs were becoming a "pretty big" issue in Indiana.

Petercheff said that a Department biologist in southern Indiana receives reports "all the time" regarding feral hogs in Lawrence, Jackson, and Wayne Counties. "We think [feral hogs] are in multiple counties, and we know people are taking them." The Department does not have an exact number of feral hogs in Indiana, but "we know there are a good number of them".

The Chair then asked, "How long do you think it is going to be before somebody shoots Farmer Johnson's hog?"

Petercheff said the Department "hopes" the definition of "feral hog" is comprehensive "enough" for the public to distinguish between a feral hog and commercial swine. She explained that BOAH does not require ear tags for commercial swine so included in the definition are specific physical attributes of a feral hog. "Hopefully, a person will be able to recognize the difference, unless there is a hybrid out there". Petercheff provided to

the Advisory Council members pictures of feral hogs. She said the proposed rule also includes language to better clarify the possession and sale of wild hogs.

Donald Van Meter asked, "Did these [feral hogs] come from some place, or are these Indiana hogs that somehow had gotten loose".

Petercheff said the Department believes the feral hogs were imported illegally into Indiana and released into the wild. "Now they are breeding and living on their own in the wild".

Rick Cockrum moved to recommend that the Natural Resources Commission approve for preliminary adoption amendments to 312 IAC 9-3 and 312 IAC 9-10-4 that govern the taking and possession of exotic mammals, including wild (feral) hogs, and cervids. James Snyder seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Consideration of public comments received through the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Rules Enhancement Project regarding suggestions deferred to Division of Hearing staff pertaining to wild animal possession permits; Administrative Cause No. 09-125D

Sandra Jensen, Hearing Officer, presented this item. She explained that the Advisory Council reviewed this item at its October meeting. However, the two individuals, Aaron Cleveland and John Cusson, both from Silly Safari Show, Inc., were notified that the item was to be placed on the December agenda. Jensen said the item was again placed on the Advisory Council's agenda; however, she noted that neither individual was present at today's meeting.

Consideration and deliberation of the Advisory Council for purposes of preparing recommendations for submission to the Natural Resources Commission regarding substantive suggestions and public input received as part of the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Rules Enhancement Project; Administrative Cause No. 08-061D

The Chair explained that this item involves the discussion of potential items generated from the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Rules Enhancement Project ("Project") to move forward for Natural Resources Commission consideration. "We've been working on this all of 2009". The Chair then summarized the Advisory Council's Project efforts. He said that items forwarded to the Commission are items that "at the very least need more conversation, discussion, and study". The Chair noted hat he had sent to all the members a list of suggestions that he believed "had legitimate reasons to continue the discussions" and since that time he explained that certain members had offered some additional suggestions that they believed were also worthy of additional discussion. The Chair explained that the Advisory Council discussion would be broken into five separate categories to parallel the five Advisory Council meetings held during June through October 2009 and associated subject matter discussion.

Hunting, Trapping, Taking Mammals Other Than Deer
(June 10, 2009 Meeting)

The Chair said the majority of individuals who attended the June 10, 2009 meeting provided suggestions on rules governing running dogs with main concerns of not shortening rabbit season and expanding opportunities to use their dogs to chase raccoons year round. He said that the Advisory Council had discussion with the interest groups about extending the running season by eliminating the late winter blackout period. He said the fall blackout period should remain due to opposition from deer hunters. He said that Department feedback indicates there are no biological reasons supporting a winter blackout.

The Chair said another suggestion was made during the June meeting to allow hunting of coyotes year round on all public and private properties except for public lands that are closed down for other seasons. "Again, there does not seem to be any biological reasons not to expand coyote hunting seasons". He noted that current regulations allow a landowner or the landowner's designee to take a coyote year round on privately owned property.

David Lupke asked whether the Advisory Council would recommend any changes to the regulations regarding the trapping and possessing of live coyotes.

The Chair explained, "That is all being handled through other processes that are going through DNR right now." He then asked Sandra Jensen, Administrative Law Judge with the Commission's Division of Hearings, to provide a brief update.

Sandra Jensen said the Commission received three citizen petitions for request for rule change to prohibit possession of live coyotes, and a Department committee was formed to review the petitions. She said the committee's report was presented to the Commission during the Commission's November 17 meeting. Jensen said the Commission asked the Department to "broaden" the scope of review to include issues not contained in the citizen petitions for rule change. The Commission asked the Department to present a report and recommendations no later than the Commission's March 2010 meeting.

The Chair said that suggestions received were either recommending season extensions or reducing seasons for mammals, increasing bag limits or reducing bag limits. "We were very fortunate in all of these meetings to have [DNR] biologists who worked closely with the [subject matter] we were discussing that day. They were very helpful in addressing a lot of the questions from the public, but also explaining some of the biology of all of this." The Chair said that the Advisory Council will defer the decisions whether to extend or reduce seasons and increase or reduce bag limits to the Department biologists and administrative staff "who are much more qualified".

Rick Cockrum said, "Historically, the argument from the biologists to me was, 'Well, is the public ready for that or how is the public going to perceive that?' What I found very encouraging is that the public is ready for that.'…I don't want to lose that public

momentum; it's there. My message to the biologists is to stay focused on it; you don't want to lose that opportunity."

Summary of Recommendations:

- Consider allowing the hunting of coyotes year round on all public and private properties except public properties specifically closed to the taking of coyotes for
- Extend coon dog running season by eliminating late winter blackout period
- Consider extending raccoon and possum taking season

Hunting, Trapping, Taking of Deer
(July 14, 2009 Meeting)

The Chair explained that some of the suggestions for rule amendment were initiated through the Project, and other amendments were initiated through the Department's Division of Law Enforcement and "trends that are going on around the Country." He noted that hunting accidents in general have decreased; however, accidents involving people in ground blinds have increased. The Chair said a proposal to require some type of hunter orange on ground blinds is recommended during deer season.

The Chair said another suggestion that merits additional discussion is creating a comprehensive hunting license for all weapons and bag limits. "There seemed to be an awful lot of confusion amongst people as to what licenses they need, where, and do you need a separate license for each county or for each doe you take, and so on." He said that public comment received indicates that license costs become "pretty prohibitive". He said that the public were in favor of a "more expensive" comprehensive license, which covers bag limits and weapons, to be available for purchase at the beginning of the year.

The Chair said another suggestion received was expanding the crossbow opportunities. Crossbows can be used to take deer during the late winter archery season. He noted that "a lot" of states have allowed an expansion of crossbow hunting for deer herd management, and to expand hunting opportunities for those not capable of drawing a long bow. The Chair said that it is "very important" for the Advisory Council to understand there is "very strong opposition" to expanding crossbow hunting for the entire archery season. Suggestions received recommended the early archery season as long bow only except for those with disabilities who are currently allowed to use a crossbow during this early season, and recommended the expansion to allow senior citizens who want to hunt but who cannot draw a bow. "I don't think there is any opposition from the bow hunters to expanding crossbow season during the general firearm season". Also suggested was creating a separate crossbow license, which would require a legislative change.

Rick Cockrum asked, "What's the thinking behind having a separate license?"

The Chair explained that public "thinking" is that the crossbow is "in fact, a third category of weapon; it's not a bow; it's not a firearm; it's something in-between." He said that bow hunters are "adamant" that the crossbow "is not archery equipment".

The Chair explained that because of increased pressure from insurance companies and farmers the House, during the 2008 Legislative Session, introduced a bill that would have taken the management of Indiana's deer herd "effectively our of the hands" and out of the Department's hands and place the responsibility with the Legislature. He noted that the bill did not progress, but the "issue is not dead". The Chair said the Advisory Council needs to discuss and address the next steps to further control the deer herd.

The Chair said the Advisory Council received many suggestions regarding allowance of hunters to check in their deer by phone, or "telecheck." He said no opposition was heard from the public regarding this allowance. "I realize there are cost issues involved" such that it would not, with the current economic situation, be implemented in the immediate future. The Chair said a study committee was formed to review telecheck, which made positive recommendations. Other states have "successfully" implemented a telecheck system that accommodates harvest data.

The Chair noted that there were suggestions recommending limiting depredation permits to take only antlerless deer and suggestions to implement Earn-A-Buck program, which is the concept that a hunter would be required to take a doe first before taking a buck. The Chair said that both suggestions merited further discussion, and may be additional tools to manage Indiana's deer herd.

Mark Reiter, Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, stated that the "Earn-A-Buck" program "can go just a little way of moving a [deer] population to more mature, but not very far". He said that Wisconsin ceased its "Earn-A-Buck" program due to public outcry. "Hunters, in general, don't like it."

Summary of Recommendations:

- Propose requirement of hunter orange on ground blinds
- Consider establishing a comprehensive license for all weapons and bag limits
- Expand crossbow opportunities into firearms season for all hunters and all seasons for hunters 65 and older
- Consider legislation that would enable the creation of a separate crossbow license
- Consider extending seasons and bag limits to address Indiana's deer herd management
- Telecheck
- Depredation permits limited to antlerless deer
- Consider Earn-A-Buck

Hunting Birds
(August 12, 2009 Meeting)

The Chair said suggestions received indicated that waterfowl hunting seasons were "too early" in Indiana's southern zones. He noted that the federal government mandates the number of days allowed to hunt waterfowl; however, the Department has "some leeway in deciding where those days fall."

The Chair said that suggestions were received to expand fall wild turkey hunting opportunities. He noted that the Department has already drafted a rule proposal that would expand the fall wild turkey season and increase the number of counties in which to hunt wild turkeys.

The Chair stated that suggestions received revealed that there is "a lot of concern" regarding Indiana's grouse population. He noted that the Department's grouse biologist, Steve Backs, has stated that the loss of early successional habit is the main reason for declines in grouse population, and limiting hunting of grouse would have a minor impact on the population.

The Chair said suggestions were received supporting ability to check in the harvest of a wild turkey by telephone.

Pete Hanebutt, from Indianapolis, stated that he was a grouse hunter. "I think the idea of changing the grouse season, shortening that, is wrong—maybe not wrong in practice, but wrong headed". He provided Advisory Council members copies of several studies associated with grouse populations, and a Michigan study shows that hunting "appears to have no direct or probably limited indirect effect on hunting." He said the Department's biologist "admits that hunting is not the issue in this case, but habitat is". Hanebutt said that an Appalachian study found that grouse harvest "appeared to be compensatory, meaning it has no impact". He said he was "aggravated" that the Department's biologist seems to "only have one tune that he can sing, and that is to limit hunting". Hanebutt said those that pay for the habitat stamps "for a number of years now shouldn't be the ones that get blamed for the problem with our grouse. Everybody in the world acknowledges that it is a habitat issue not a hunting issue". He said that limiting the grouse season is "short-sighted", and the Department should help enhance habitat. Hanebutt asked the Advisory Council to table the proposal to limit grouse hunting season in order to allow for further study.

The Chair explained that the Advisory Council will recommend the Commission consider limiting grouse seasons and bag limits in order to allow for further discussion. "If we do not move it forward, then it won't be discussed".

Hanebutt said, "I will be happy to work within the system."

<u>Summary of Recommendations</u>:

- Explore moving waterfowl dates later for Indiana's southern zones
- Expand fall turkey opportunities
- Limit grouse seasons and/or bag limits
- Telecheck for turkeys

Fishing: Trout and Salmon on the Brookville Tail waters
(September 14, 2009 and October 8, 2009 Meetings)

The Chair recommended that no changes be made to the existing rules governing fishing at the Brookville tail waters. He said the Advisory Council would be "very much in favor" of enhancing the trout habitat "if, in fact, we could get everybody to work together". DNR would be receptive to ideas that would improve trout habitat but only if all constituents worked together in cooperative fashion.

Fishing-Except Trout and Salmon on the Brookville Tail waters
(October 14, 2009 Meeting)

The Chair explained that many suggestions and testimony was received supporting the increase the size limit of small mouth bass. He said that comments were also received indicating that some of Indiana's streams are "really becoming pretty good" small mouth bass fisheries. He said the increase in size limit would protect the resource, but still provide fishing opportunities.

The Chair said a majority of testimony at the October 14th meeting was from those that fish for striped bass who support the use of shad as bait in lakes where shad is already established. He noted that the Department is currently reviewing the use of shad as bait in those lakes where shad already exist provided the shad used are netted the same day and not transported. "The idea behind all of this is that we don't want those gizzard shad to spread…Once they get established, they can really use up a lot of an ecosystem".

Rick Cockrum stated that he was "very concerned" about the use of gizzard shad as bait due to its invasiveness. "I strongly caution the staff do everything they can to minimize the spread."

Bill Freeman said, "I understand what everybody was arguing about, but this is one area where—I know we are passing along recommendations for further discussion—I would put my vote in that you just don't use shad".

The Chair said that suggestions supporting the increase in size of the casting net merits further discussion by the Commission. "There is probably some merit to a 5-foot net not being effective from a bait collection standpoint."

The Chair said that suggestions received and the testimony expressed at the October 14th meeting "seems to indicate…that the big catfish are disappearing from Indiana's streams and rivers, because they have a lot of value to pay lakes". He said that testimony was given that commercial anglers are netting the "big catfish" to sell to pay lakes "so the pay lakes can advertise that they've got 60, 70, 80 pound fish". He noted that the commercial anglers are "not doing anything illegal, at least as I understand it right now. The question is whether or not we should be protecting our catfish resource".

<u>Summary of Recommendations</u>

- Consider increase small mouth bass size limit to 14 inches
- Consider allowing use of live shad as bait for striped bass in waters where shad are already established

- Consider allowing the use of bait cast nets up to ten fee in diameter for taking shad.
- Consider protecting the catfish resource from the netting large catfish to sell to pay lakes

The Chair noted that other suggestions were received regarding allowing youth hunters to take a buck during youth season. He said the Commission gave final adoption to a rule allowing youth hunters to take a deer of either sex, which becomes effective December 12, 2009 (LSA #09-60(F)). He noted that statutes and rules have been amended to standardize the age definition of youth hunter to those less than 18 years of age. The Chair said the "one buck rule" was extended in 2008 to expire in 2012 in order to gather data to see whether the rule is impacting the age class of the deer herd.

The Chair invited Bryan Poynter to provide a summary of the Commission's involvement in the Project.

Bryan Poynter, Chair of the Natural Resources Commission, indicated that the Commission would consider the Advisory Council's recommendations at its January 2010 meeting, and subsequently would recommend rule amendments and legislative amendments.

Sandra Jensen explained that after Commission consideration at its January meeting, the Department would have an opportunity to review the Commission's recommendations and begin bringing forward supplemental information and rule proposals beginning in March, 2010.

The Chair thanked those persons involved in the Project.

Bryan Poynter thanked the Advisory Council for its efforts. "The work that has come out of this in a very efficient way is being looked at across…many, many other states…I can't thank you enough, because you all have come from far places around the state to participate in these extra meetings…I thank you for the work that you have done".

Rick Cockrum moved to approve for submission to the Natural Resources Commission the recommendations as listed in the bulleted summaries. Donald Van Meter seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Identification of any topic appropriate for referral to the Department of Natural Resources

James Snyder asked whether the Department could consider the possibility of partnering with a city or town to establish a reduced group fee for entrance to a state park when the city or town hosts an event on one of the Department's properties. He explained that the Town of Porter held a fireworks display at the Dunes State Park and the approximate 10,000 attendees were required to pay the park's entrance fee.

John Davis said the Department has a few state parks around the state where there are fireworks displays or symphony concerts, and other events. He said the Department would review the establishment of a group entrance fee where a city or town hosts an event at a state park.

Snyder said that Porter solely funded the fireworks event. "I was just thinking that [a group fee] might encourage more communities to do things to attract people to the parks". He said he did not want to take funds away from the Department, but a group fee may encourage cities and towns to use the parks for events. Bill Freeman agreed that paying the park entrance fee to attend an event in the park is sometimes an issue. He also encouraged further discussions of a group entrance fee.

Davis said the Department is "definitely" looking for ways to attract more visitors to its properties. Davis said that he would arrange for discussions between the property managers as well as organizing properties managers to be present at the Advisory Council's February 2010 meeting.

Information Item: Update on white-nose syndrome and cave closures

John Davis, Deputy Director, Bureau of Lands and Cultural Resources, updated the Advisory Council regarding the closure of caves on Department property to preempt introduction of white-nose syndrome in bats. He said the syndrome was first seen in New York and has spread through five to six states on the Eastern Seaboard. The syndrome seems to be traveling down the Appalachian Mountains toward Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, and infects many species of cave-dwelling bats. Davis noted that scientists have not determined the cause of the syndrome that kills 90% of a cave's bat population. Davis said that last week the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a protocol to discourage caving in Indiana and other states within 500 miles of the latest evidence of white-nose syndrome, which is located in West Virginia.

Davis said the syndrome causes the diminishing of a bat's fat storage, resulting in the bats leaving the caves early—January, February, and March—to forage for insects. Not finding any insects, the bats roost on barns, houses, and other structures and eventually the bats die. "Thousands, thousands, and thousands of bats are found over the landscape during the winter". He noted that bats also carry rabies and there are reports that rabies can be transferred from bat to humans.

Davis said, "We have a looming public health problem." He said the Department has been meeting with the Department of Health and the Board of Animal Health to try to understand what "we should do when, and if, white-nose syndrome gets to Indiana. We're afraid that it's possible that we might have white-nose now in some significant caves, and that's why we are pressed for time." He noted that with the Advisory Council's schedule and the timing issue, a proposed rule would be presented directly to the Commission rather than through the Advisory Council. Davis explained that a proposed rule would also address wildlife rehabilitators and other persons dealing with

bats in order to initiate and enforce protocols for the handling of bats. He said the Department is also considering whether an emergency rule is necessary. He also noted that the situation may also require a prohibition on bat rehabilitation.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:15 p.m., EST.