

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes, April 23, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bryan Poynter, Chair
Jane Ann Stautz, Vice Chair
Dan Bortner, Secretary
Brian Rockensuess
Laura Hilden
David Holt
Marc Milne
Bart Herriman
Tom Kelley
John Wright

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT

Elizabeth Gamboa
Aaron Bonar

Scott Allen

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STAFF PRESENT

Chris Smith	Executive Office	Linnea Petercheff	Fish and Wildlife
Ryan Mueller	Executive Office	Elizabeth Mabee	Fish and Wildlife
David Bausman	Executive Office	Joe Caudell	Fish and Wildlife
Steve Hunter	Executive Office	Trevor Laureys	Fish and Wildlife
Terry Coleman	State Parks	Angie Haywood	Fish and Wildlife
Terry Hyndman	Law Enforcement	Holly Lawson	Communications
Brent Bohbrink	Law Enforcement	Whitney Wampler	Legal
Amanda Wuestefeld	Fish and Wildlife	Vince Burkle	Entomology
Brad Feaster	Fish and Wildlife		

GUESTS PRESENT

Jennifer Thum

Samantha Chapman

Bryan Poynter, Chair, called to order the regular meeting of the Natural Resources Commission at 10:00 a.m., ET, on April 23, 2024, at Fort Harrison State Park, The Garrison, 6002 North Post Road, Blue Heron Ballroom, Indianapolis. With the presence of ten members, the Chair observed a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the Commission's January 23, 2024, meeting minutes.

Tom Kelley moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Jane Ann Stautz seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

REPORTS OF THE DNR DIRECTOR, DEPUTY DIRECTORS, AND THE CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dan Bortner, Director of the Department of Natural Resources (Department) provided the following report:

On April 8, 2024, there was the total solar eclipse, an event that took years of planning. The Department had 54 properties that experienced totality. There was a large turnout with guests from at least 46 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Canada, Philippines, England, Germany, Norway, and Portugal. The Department had one fish and wildlife property, one nature preserve property, and six state park properties that were at capacity. Additionally, there were ten state park properties and two fish and wildlife areas that reached between 70 percent to 90 percent parking capacity, ten campgrounds were fully booked, and the state park inns were 90 percent booked for the weekend prior to the eclipse. The Department's Interpretive Naturalists presented 224 eclipse related programs with more than 16,355 visitor engagements. There were 800 volunteers with over 4,600 hours of eclipse related services. Director Bortner thanked the Department staff for their hard work and making the eclipse event a success.

The Department's agency bill, HB1401, passed in the state legislature. HB1401 allows for license updates and clarifications, pauses the sale on mineral rights for Department properties until July 1, 2025, and provides for property owner notification on properties in a floodway. The Department has started work on the agenda for the 2025 legislative session.

The Department has a new accessibility webpage linked on the Department's homepage at on.in.gov/dnr-accessibility. The website creates a single point-of-access to find amenities and accommodations available for people with different interests and abilities. Accessible activities include trails, beaches, fishing piers, and information on special trail track chairs and hunting permits. All people are welcome at Department properties and this project recognized the "one DNR mission".

The Division of Law Enforcement is hosting another K-9 Officer School. The Indiana K-9 Resource Protection Program started in 1998 with two teams and now there are twelve Indiana Conservation Officer (ICO) K-9 teams. Every year the Division of Law Enforcement trains ICO teams. The K-9 school also trains teams from other states and

countries. The current K-9 Officer School class has three Indiana K-9 teams along with one K-9 team from Arkansas. Graduation is planned for May 23, 2024, on the Statehouse lawn.

On Arbor Day, April 26, 2024, the Department and the Governor will celebrate the initiative to plant one million trees across Indiana in five years by planting the 'millionth tree,' a cucumber magnolia, on the Statehouse lawn. Director Bortner thanked the Division of Forestry for its hard work in getting the trees planted and thanked the Governor for the challenge to plant the trees.

Ryan Mueller, Deputy Director of the Regulatory Bureau, provided his report as follows:

The Division of Reclamation continues to oversee the plugging of orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells statewide. This is the first phase of funding from a federal grant of \$25 million awarded to Indiana. As of April 1, 2024, 280 wells have been plugged at a cost of \$17.7 million. The total number of wells contracted to be plugged is approximately 366 wells.

The Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology staff removed nearly 19,000 spotted lantern fly egg masses in several counties statewide. Each egg mass contains approximately 40 eggs meaning over 750,000 spotted lantern fly eggs have been destroyed. The spotted lantern fly is detrimental to vineyards, orchards, and hardwood forests.

The Division of Water completed a series of focus groups with consulting engineering firms to better understand the regulated community's needs. As a result of the focus groups, the Division made recommendations regarding timing and efficiency on completing application reviews and the issuance of permits. The focus group's information complimented results from a recent survey of 1,200 respondents. The purpose of the survey and working groups was to help with customer service and communications.

The month of May is Historic Preservation Month, and the theme is Indiana's Historic Scholastic Gymnasiums. In 1903, the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) was formed to regulate and administer athletic competitions. Between 1911 and 1937, the IHSAA boys' basketball tournament grew from 12 teams to more than 800, showing the rise of popularity of the sport, or "Hoosier Hysteria." As a result, large gyms were needed for crowds and tournament games. Indiana is home to some of the largest high school basketball gyms in the country, demonstrating the state's enthusiasm for and dedication to the sport.

In 2023, the Division of Reclamation received nearly \$25 million in federal funding to reclaim more former coal mines to their pre-mining statuses. The funding is part of a \$377 million grant that Indiana will receive over a fifteen-year period to reclaim former mine land. The Division has over 50 projects in various stages of development.

On March 16, 2024, the Division of Water will host the tenth biennial Operation Stay Afloat conference at the State Government Center in Indianapolis. The conference highlights flood preparedness and hazard mitigation. Target audience members are local floodplain administrators, local building officials, local emergency management officials, representatives from regional planning groups or river basin commissions, engineers and other consultants who work with local jurisdictions and volunteer groups involved with floodplain issues and disaster recovery.

Chris Smith provided the report for the Bureau of Administration, as follows:

The Department's partnership with the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) remains strong and progress continues with work on the renovation of Spring Mill Inn at Spring Mill State Park. The Department has completed several projects around the state, including playgrounds at Patoka Lake and Whitewater State Park; trail structures at McCormick's Creek State Park; and replacement of underground fuel tanks at Patoka Lake, Turkey Run State Park, and McCormick's Creek State Park; structural repairs to the pool deck at Potawatomi Inn at Pokagon State Park; new comfort stations at Monroe Lake; and a roof and siding replacement on the beach house at Raccoon Lake.

As of April 15, 2024, the Department had 1,263 regular positions filled of the 1,398 fulltime positions available. The Department is in the process of filling 75 regular positions of the 135 vacancies. The result is an adjusted vacancy rate of 4.79 percent. The Department is also preparing for recreation season by filling approximately 1,350 intermittent positions to ensure appropriate staffing levels at properties statewide.

On April 19, 2024, the Department presented to the Budget Committee to obtain approval to move forward with purchasing land for the Busseron Creek Conservation Project. This project will be funded with \$1.5 million from the general fund and a 25 percent state match from the Wildlife and Sport Fishing Restoration federal grant. The Division of Fish and Wildlife will operate and conserve the 4,650-acre property.

The Department is starting to build the 2026 to 2027 fiscal year budget. Internal preparations have begun, and the Department is waiting for the official budget instructions to be released.

Chris Smith, Deputy Director of the Land Management Bureau, provided his report as follows:

There was a new yellow perch record by Blas Lara, who caught the 3-pound 1 ounce fish during the annual Hammond Marina Fishing Derby.

Youth turkey season began April 20, 2024, while the spring wild turkey hunting season begins April 24, 2024 and runs until May 12, 2024.

Fisheries staff is in full gear with walleye and muskie egg production taking place in early April. The hatchery staff is working to stock 63,000 rainbow and brown trout across the state in preparation for inland trout fishing season opening on April 27, 2024. Fish

stocking will take place at 35 bodies of water in 21 counties. Information on all the Department's stocking activities can be tracked on the fish stocking database on the Department website. The information can be pulled up by the species, the year, or the body of water.

It has been one year since the tornado at McCormick's Creek State Park (McCormick's Creek). In the past year a timber salvage operation took place at the McCormick's Creek campground and over 11,000 logs were removed. The Department is also working through the contracting process for the additional debris removal at the campground. Repairs have been completed on the family cabins and work is underway to repair and upgrade the Friendly Shelter to make it ADA accessible. Saw crews from multiple Department properties and Team Rubicon have amazingly cleared miles of trail on the McCormick's Creek property and all major trails will be reopened by the end of May. The Department has engaged Schmidt and Associates to redesign the campground at McCormick's Creek, which was Indiana's first state park and campground. This is an opportunity to renovate the campground to accommodate larger campers and provide modern amenities with current standards.

Groundwork has begun for the lodge at Potato Creek State Park. The site is being prepared by work crews, including moving the Whispering Winds Shelter.

The Fort Harrison State Park Inn has begun a roofing project. The Garrison will be closed in July for some needed updates including renovations to the restrooms.

The Division of Forestry staff has been in the field resuming work on the Governor's Million Tree Initiative. The Division is partnering with the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation and Cliff Barr volunteers for a planting event at Greene-Sullivan State Forest.

Smith introduced Joe Caudell, Deer Biologist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, to give an update on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) found in an Indiana deer. Caudell presented as follows:

CWD is a neurologic disease of deer caused by misfolded prions. CWD is infectious between deer. Deer can be infected at birth or soon after and death typically occurs two years after infection. The prions contaminate the soil. There is no cure or treatment for prion diseases and CWD is always fatal to deer.

CWD is in all the states around Indiana with a high concentration further north and is a threat to all white-tailed deer population. States have tried to manage the disease but attempts to slow or stop the spread of the disease have not been successful. The Department will focus efforts on learning to live with CWD where established but will attempt to control CWD where it is most likely to be effective.

CWD was found in northern Indiana near a deer population where CWD was found in Michigan. If CWD is found in a place where it is not expected to be found, the Department will get good population estimates of the deer in the area, temporarily ban

feeding deer, have additional hunting seasons, get testing samples, and, in a limited area, utilize sharpshooting if appropriate if the prevalence is not more than one percent. The goal is to eradicate the disease if the apparent prevalence is less than one percent.

CWD was found in LaGrange County, which is an expected area because the disease had been found in deer populations in Illinois and Michigan. Because CWD was found in an area where it was expected to be, the Department created a permanent ban on rehabilitated fawn movement from the CWD area to the rest of Indiana. Also, in areas where CWD is expected, if prevalence is above five percent, the Department would allow cervid farmers to apply for a depredation permit to protect their livestock.

CWD is more prevalent in areas with high deer density populations because there is more deer-to-deer contact. Because CWD was found in a small corner of LaGrange County, the CWD-positive area the Department has established includes surrounding Noble, Steuben, and DeKalb Counties. The Department cannot detect CWD at low prevalences under one percent so the Department will use computer modeling to figure out the extent of the CWD.

Steps property owners can take to reduce the spread of CWD include prohibiting surface disposal of deer carcasses, not using natural-based lures, eliminating deer feeding, sampling and testing harvested deer, reducing deer density, and reducing the age structure of the deer herd.

The Department partners with taxidermists in the state to sample high value adult bucks. The taxidermist will cut the lymph nodes out of the deer. The Department pays for the sample to be sent to the lab. The deer that tested positive for CWD was detected through a sample that came from a taxidermist.

Holt asked how long it would take for CWD to spread through the state. Caudell said CWD is a slow growing disease, and it depends a lot on the density of the deer population in an area.

The Chair asked how long a sample takes to get returned. Caudell answered that once the Department submits the sample to the lab it could take three to four weeks. The results are then posted online for the hunters to decide how they want to hunt. Caudell noted sometimes, during hunting season, the taxidermists are busy and might hold on to their samples to send them all at once. He also noted a hunter might not take a deer right away to the taxidermist, which would also cause a delay.

Bortner added the CWD positive deer from LaGrange County was harvested in November of 2023 and the results were recently received.

Hilden asked if an individual hunter could submit a deer for testing and what the cost might be for the hunter. Caudell said if the hunter were to take a harvested deer to a Department property that has a cooler the Department would test the deer for free. Caudell said a hunter could send their deer sample directly to Purdue University for testing and the cost is \$37 dollars.

Milne asked what was causing overpopulation in deer and if the deer herd population had links to the loss of natural predators. Caudell said the area where there is a high deer density is an area of high-quality deer habitat with the prevalence of woody wetlands combined with dispersed farmland. Caudell also said predators would not have that much of an impact because of the habitat and reproductive potential of deer.

Kelley asked if there was harm to humans that eat harvested deer with CWD. Caudell said the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends humans not eat deer that test positive for CWD even though there is no direct evidence that links eating CWD-contaminated deer meat with contracting CWD.

The Chair deferred the report from the Chair of the Advisory Council to the next meeting.

Gamboa provided an update on the paralegal position with the Division of Hearings. She noted approximately 35 applications for the position were received. The first round of interviews are concluding and some individuals have been invited back for second interviews.

CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Information: Consideration of 2024 meeting dates:

The remaining 2024 Commission meeting dates are May 21, July 16, September 17, and November 19. All meetings, except the July 16 meeting, are scheduled to be held at Fort Harrison State Park, The Garrison. The July 16 meeting is scheduled to be held at Clifty Falls State Park in Madison, Indiana.

Updates on Commission and AOPA Committee

Jane Ann Stautz, Vice Chair of the Commission and Chair of the AOPA Committee, reported:

The AOPA Committee was scheduled to meet on April 23, 2024, prior to the Commission meeting but the objections were withdrawn in the matter. The Vice Chair noted there are oral arguments scheduled for April 29, 2024, and May 17, 2024.

DNR, EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Consideration and identification of any topic appropriate for referral to the Advisory Council

None

Request for preliminary adoption to add 312 IAC 1.5-1 through 312 IAC 1.5-3 with regard to 1) the applicability of fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations, or another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule to the department of natural resources (department); 2) the fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations, or another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule charged by multiple divisions of the department; and 3) the fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations, or another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as rule charged by the division of entomology and plant pathology.
Administrative Cause No. 23-AD-025

David Bausman, Department's Executive Office, thanked Whitney Wampler, the Department's Office of Legal Counsel, the Division of Hearings, and Department staff who contributed to preparation of the rules packet. Bausman presented this item as follows:

The Indiana General Assembly passed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1623, making significant changes to the rulemaking process. Without the adoption of the proposed rules packet, the Department could not appropriately operate in the future. This includes defining a rule on fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations, or another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule. The legislation required all fees, fines, and civil penalties not in compliance to be reviewed by the State Budget Committee (SBC) by December 31, 2023, with rules to be adopted by December 31, 2024.

Due to the lengthy history and changes in rule-making authority for fees, the Department is at various stages of compliance with HEA 1623. In November 2023 the Department presented eight civil penalties and 612 fees and financial benefits presented to SBC for compliance. HEA 1401 passed which allowed the Department to exclude facility fees from the rule packet.

The intention of HEA 1623 was to provide transparency to the public of an agency's fees, fines, and civil penalties. The Department is proposing a new article under 312 IAC for all fees, fines, and civil penalties and include some already in compliance under HEA 1623. None of the fees being submitted for preliminary adoption are new or increased fees, they meet the new requirements, and do not create a fiscal impact.

312 IAC 1.5-1 through 312 IAC 1.5-3 address Department fees utilized by the landholding divisions, such as Division of State Parks, Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of Nature Preserves, and Division of Forestry. The fees focus on property admission or common activities that require a fee. Included are fees and civil penalties for the Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology.

Holt clarified the Department is out of compliance because of a statute change requiring the Department to adjust the rules to comply. Bausman confirmed and added that the reason for transparency and a misunderstanding of the administrative process regarding "emergency rules." Bausman noted four agencies including the Department had an accelerated timeline to get their

rules in compliance and the Department has moved quickly to manage two legislative sessions that impacted adjustments in the process.

Rockensuess added that Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has also been going through the same process with a lot of time and effort to get the rules in compliance. He said the four agencies are on an accelerated timeframe to get the process completed because if not completed by December 31, 2024, those agencies would not be able to function.

Stautz asked if during the rule review opportunities for adjustments in the fees were identified. Bausman responded that in 2021, some fees in the rules were increased and other fee-increase proposals have been delayed because of getting the fees rules in compliance, but it will be something that will be revisited.

Brian Rockensuess moved to approve preliminary adoption to amend 312 IAC 1.5-1 through 312 IAC 1.5-3. Tom Kelley seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Request for preliminary adoption to add 312 IAC 1.5-4 regarding the fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations, and another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule charged by the divisions of fish and wildlife and nature preserves. Administrative Cause No. 23-AD-044

Bausman presented this item as follows:

Proposed 312 IAC 1.5-4 focuses on fees, fines, and civil penalties for the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Nature Preserves. The fees are set amounts with the exception of a couple ranges and formulas. The proposed rule includes hunting and fishing licenses.

Milne asked about possible grammatical errors located within the proposed rule language. Gamboa noted publisher guidelines as the reason for how the rule is drafted. Bausman added the Department works within the format guidelines of the Legislative Service Agency for the Indiana Register.

John Wright moved to approve preliminary adoption to amend 312 IAC 1.5-4. Jane Ann Stautz seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Request for preliminary adoption to add 312 IAC 1.5-5 through 312 IAC 1.5-10 regarding the fees, fines, civil penalties, financial benefit limitations and another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule charged by the divisions of 1) forestry; 2) historic preservation and archeology; 3) land acquisition; 4) reclamation; 5) state parks and 6: water for the department natural resources; and to repeal 312 IAC 17-1-11; 312 IAC 25-5-8; 312 IAC 25-7-15; 312 IAC 29-12-2; and 312 IAC 29-12-4. Administrative Cause No. 23-AD-045

Bausman presented this item as follows:

Proposals 312 IAC 1.5-5 through 312 IAC 1.5-10 focus on fees, fines, and civil penalties for the Division of Forestry, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Division of Land Acquisition, Division of Reclamation, Division of State Parks, and the Division of Water.

The Division of Forestry would include fees for activities requiring a permit such as cutting firewood and fees for the Community Urban Forestry Program. The Division of Preservation and Archaeology includes set-amount fees for archaeology access to the state historic architectural and archeological research database (SHAARD).

The Division of Land Acquisition includes the fees listed for in-lieu fees that allow permitting applicants to purchase stream and wetland mitigation credits to fulfill compensatory mitigation requirements for permitted impacts authorized under Indiana's State Isolated Wetlands law, the Flood Control Act, Lakes Preservation Act, or Navigable Waterways Act.

The Division of Reclamation fees include civil penalties on oil and gas production violations combined into one rule with five ranges and one formula. Also included is a bond requirement for a permit not covered by the surface coal mine reclamation bond formula that is classified as another payment amount set by an agency that otherwise qualifies as a rule. Other fees and civil penalties were already compliant by statute or rule, and they are being moved into one section for ease and transparency.

The Division of State Parks fees included are for property activities or property access. Concessions and licensed marine operators are exempt because of HEA 1401 and the process included in Information Bulletin #20 will be reviewed and put into a rule later.

The Division of Water fee submitted for review to SBC was a royalty fee for extracting mineral resources, such as sand, gravel, stone, or hard minerals. The Division of Water did not submit any civil penalties for SBC review and will not be enforcing violations with civil penalties until a rule is adopted.

John Wright moved to approve preliminary adoption to amend 312 IAC 1.5-5 through 312 IAC 1.5-10 and preliminarily repeal 312 IAC 17-1-11; 312 IAC 25-5-8; 312 IAC 25-7-15; 312 IAC 29-12-2; and 312 IAC 29-12-4. Brian Rockensuess seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

The Chair asked how the new rules might impact fee increase requests in the future. Bausman replied that new or increased fees will need to have SBC review, get Indiana State Budget Agency (SBA) and Indiana Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval, and then a proposed rule would be presented to the Commission for preliminary adoption. Bausman said he anticipates any fee establishment or increase process to take at least a year.

DNR, DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Report to the Natural Resources Commission on Citizens Petition for a year-round coyote season; Administrative Cause No. 23-FW-022

Linnea Petercheff, Division of Fish and Wildlife, presented this item as follows:

Indiana allows year-round coyote hunting and trapping on private land with landowner permission without a license or permit. Wildlife control operators with a permit can also be hired to help landowners and tenants take coyotes on their property. For public lands, the coyote hunting and trapping season runs from October 15 to March 15. Expanding hunting and trapping has greater opportunities for conflicts with other outdoor recreation activities. Coyotes also typically have their young in April and a year-round season could create more orphaned young.

Coyotes are a wild animal with value for their role in the ecosystem, helping control small mammal populations. Since coyotes can already be taken year-round by landowners and those with written permission, the Department does not believe the season should be extended year-round.

Marc Milne moved to approve the Report on Citizen Petition Citizens Petition for a year-round coyote season. Bart Herriman seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Report to the Natural Resources Commission on Citizens Petition for a season on bobcats; Administrative Cause No. 23-FW-023

Petercheff presented this item as follows:

The Indiana General Assembly passed Senate Enrolled Act 241 requiring the Department to establish a bobcat hunting season no later than July 1, 2025. The Department will be proposing a rule for preliminary adoption to the Commission later in the year. There is a requirement that when an agency receives substantive comments during the first public comment period or at the public hearing, a second public hearing is required. The Department anticipates two public hearings with one being in the southwest part of the state and another one in the southeast part of the state since that is where the highest population of bobcats are.

The Petitioner was notified of the legislation and that the Department would be working on a bobcat hunting season rule.

Brian Rockensuess moved to approve the Report on Citizen Petition requesting a bobcat hunting season. Tom Kelley seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the motion carried.

Information Item: Presentation on Indiana's State Wildlife Action Plan

Elizabeth Mabee, Conservation Partnership Coordinator with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, presented as follows:

The conservation challenges are big, requiring a conservation strategy to address the biggest threats to Indiana's natural resources. The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) uses a regional approach to focus the Department's conservation work. SWAP is required to receive federal funding. The plan is revised every ten years and must include partner collaboration.

The new SWAP addresses conservation challenges and connects the conservation efforts to the wellbeing of the community. SWAP's intention was to be a strategic plan supporting collaborative conservation across Indiana's conservation community focused on habitat and not just a Department plan. The term "Wildlife" in SWAP should be inclusive of all components of the ecosystem and the plan is to improve habitats on private and public land to do the greatest good for the greatest number of species.

The Department's SWAP revision approach is to convene a regional plan to engage partners, organizations, agencies, or non-governmental organizations (partners) who live and work in those parts of the state. Regional partners are likely to be better poised to carry out the strategies of a regional plan that matters most to their constituents. The Department sought to broaden the level of new partner engagement in SWAP and approximately halfway through the revision there were 79 partners who attended at least one workshop and 14 partners who attended two or more workshops.

The SWAP revision approach begins with identifying those systems in most need of conservation to enhance the habitat value of agricultural and urban landscapes while conserving wetlands, forests, grasslands, rivers, streams, and lakes. After identifying the needs in each region, the Department has a process to highlight the most pressing systems within a region and then work with regional partners to develop an actionable strategy.

SWAP is funded by the State and Travel Wildlife Grant and when the plan is drafted and approved by the Department it will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:20 a.m., ET.