

**Natural Resources Advisory Board
July 22, 2019 IDNR Headquarters
Meeting Minutes**

Board Members Present:

Jerry Hiller, Scott Bryant, Marshall Douglas, Matt Langendorf, Marcia Polhamus, John Fleischi, Darel Martin, Mick Wanless, Joseph Mark

IDNR Staff Present:

Director Callahan, Tami Evans, Tim Schweizer, Chris Young, Luke Garver, Steve Baggerly, Judy Bauer, Jennifer Weisenberger

Guests:

Ken Polhamus, Tricia Bryant, Scott Crauley, Michael Rasmussen

Adoption of the April 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes – Marshall motioned to accept the April 15, 2019 meeting minutes; Jerry provided the second.

Adoption of the July 22, 2019 Agenda – Scott motioned to adopt the July 22, 2019 agenda; Matt provided the second.

Chairmanship – John Fleischli - Director Callahan asked that the board provide nominations for Chair & Vice Chair. Matt nominated John to be reappointed as Chairman. Marshall provided the second; no opposition was heard. Marcia nominated Scott to be Vice Chair. Darel provided the second; no opposition was heard.

FY20 Bike Path Grants – Steve Baggerly/Judy Bauer – Board members were sent review material for the FY20 Bike Path Grant Program prior to the July 22, 2019 Natural Resources Advisory Board meeting. IDNR Grants staff received 17 project applications requesting \$2,735,200 in grant funding. One applicant has withdrawn due to a pending property rights issue. Each project has been

reviewed, scored and evaluated by staff. \$6.5 million is available for award. John asked about disparities on some of the requests; does distance of the paths generate the amount, or do some communities do things better. Some communities can do things cost effectively. IDOT would like for IDNR to start paying for the design phase or anything that creates the bike path, but IDNR needs to make sure that the paths are built. Scott stated that match funding can be tough on struggling communities. Does the scoring system allow points for distressed communities, if not can points be added for distressed communities like OSLAD? Scott made a motion to accept Grants staff recommendation to fund all 16 applicants; Matt Langendorf provided the second. No opposition was heard.

OLSAD Update – Bob Appleman – Scott Bryant had asked for a discussion on OSLAD money since grants were not given out in FY 16, 17 & 18. Bob provided the board with a spreadsheet noting revenues and expenditure for FY16 through FY20. As of July 17, 2019, the current balance is \$43 million, taking into account that \$28 million of new projects are in process of which 50% will spend out with obligations that are already in place, and projects from prior years that are still not complete. The legislature authorized a borrow of \$55 million dollars in October of 2017, and \$3 million in November 2018. A provision under Public Act 101-0010 states that the borrow must be repaid within 48 months of when the borrow occurred. IDNR expects the return of the \$55 million in 2021, and the \$3 million in 2022. \$29 million in spending authority was available for 2019, and an additional \$29 million in spending authority for 2020. \$50 million was appropriated in FY18 for outstanding obligations for prior years. IDNR is actively using the amount of spending authority we have access to. Scott thanked Bob for his explanation and stated that he has been trying to get answers for three years. We need to make sure the \$58 million is put back into IDNR.

Procurement Issues – Brad Colantino, Office of Fiscal Management – IDNR is under the general services of the Chief Procurement Office and must follow all the rules that they set. It is designed around trying to ensure small businesses receive state government business. With those regulations/restrictions, they do add a considerable amount of time, and even cost. It's a complicated system, and it's hard to understand how to bid for jobs which has reduced our vendor pool.

Because of the budget impasse of previous years, a lot of qualified vendors have left, and a lot of the vendor base no longer bids on Illinois jobs. There is stress and concerns on what can be pushed through the process and there is a significant delay in our state fish & wildlife grants. IDNR has a small team trying to push work through, and the department is trying to streamline the process. Scott stated that you can go to any IDNR field site in the state, and staff can't get what they need due to the procurement process, even in emergencies. A site superintendent is limited to spend \$2,000 and can't even buy tractor tires without going through the bid buy system. This process is not being done effectively. The intent of the Procurement Bill, Senate Bill 51 was to help small businesses which is not happening. Brad recognized the significant issues in the process; there are a lot of restrictions that we must navigate to procure anything. Site staff are given a \$2,000 threshold where they don't have to enter into the Bid Buy system, per purchase without stringing. Brad stated that there are options for staff and that it needs to be communicated with them. Director Callahan added that we need to work together to put IDNR in a different space as it relates to procurement. IDNR will need the board's help in crafting a legislative solution that would be similar to what 23 other states currently do because of the magnitude and the complexity of projects that Natural Resource agencies face. Once we have identified our needs, the director will ask the board to meet with elected officials in their respected areas to assist with proposed legislation. Scott stated that this is what we need and is a step in the right direction; something we haven't seen for some time. Jerry asked if there was any reason why legislators haven't been invited to NRAB meetings. The director said it was a good suggestion and she would consider inviting them. Mick asked about a track truck that was purchased with duck stamp money for Sanganois. It has never been received and no one seems to know what's going on with it. Brad will look in to the issue and provide an update to the board through Tami.

CMS Update – Brad Colantino – Brad provided some FY18 numbers, for the DOIT portion, prior to implementing SAP. The State Garage Revolving Fund or vehicle fleet is \$3 million; Technology Management Revolving Fund \$7.1 million; Communications Revolving Fund, \$62,000; Facilities Management Fund, \$2 million. We are not without problems and we are trying to change our strategic approach on what we can fix. Scott added that IDNR received a \$38 million-dollar

budget this year, and out of that, how much of that \$38 million is given right back to CMS for truck rental, building rental, etc.? The director stated that's why we need to explain, not complain. When you can explain with documentation of consequence you are presenting facts. When we prepare to work together we will be explaining how we got to where we are, and how and why we are presenting recommendations of consideration for improving the process which will not only benefit this agency but also the State of Illinois. Additionally, agency offices have been asked to do a SWOT analysis to evaluate what works, what doesn't, what are our needs, etc. Offices will then be able to develop a strategic plan which will allow the department to develop a strategic plan based on what the offices have identified. There is a lot of work that needs to be done. Communicating, collaborating and connecting will put ourselves in a better place. Scott added that it takes 8/9 months to fill a position. This year's Urban Fishing Program did not get all its seasonal workers, but a call from the governor's office got them hired within 4 days. Director Callahan suggested that Human Resources be invited to a future NRAB meeting to address hiring processes.

Turkey Survey Update – Luke Garver – As of last week, 5,000 surveys have gone out; 3,000 regular turkey hunters and 2,000 landowner turkey hunters. The primary goal of the survey is to test the public on what their priorities are in terms of turkey hunting, the management of the natural resource itself, the season structure and how it is set. The bulk of the survey is to get opinions on how they would like to see the resource managed and how we can change their hunting season for the bird they choose. Darel asked if there is a question that addressed a 20/28 day straight season. Yes, but it is more complex than just having a wide-open season like Missouri or Indiana, which have a later start. If you have a wide-open season are you also ok with it being pushed back much later? Public lands could become unsafe and harvest pressure could become an issue. John asked if it was Luke's opinion that the decline in turkey is a natural biological fluctuation. We've seen it plateau for several years, specifically along the Illinois/Missouri river corridors. Research is being centralized in Pike County, and there are some theories on buffalo gnats/fly as a potential cause. We are fairly certain that turkeys are going down the same path as quail & pheasant and that brood rearing and nesting habitat is declining. Young turkeys need quality grasslands. Darel asked if the survey asked about youth being able to use their unfilled tag during

the entire season. It's not specifically addressed due to current quota's that are given for each county. In many counties the number of youth hunters exceed the quota. It might produce an unsafe situation or create an overharvest condition in certain instances. Marcia stated that she doesn't see where an overharvest is an issue. If they filled the tag, then they don't get to go again. We are banking on them having a known success; if you let them go you will see a major uptick. What if it's limited, just anything? Iowa has a segmented season similar to Illinois, with their last season available to anyone to hunt. Marcia asked if there would be another turkey meeting once the survey results are complete. Luke is open to the idea of getting together, along with additional biologist. Darel stated that this was part of the discussions at the R3 Conclave, and that we want to give kids more opportunities to hunt; the deer permit change has helped. John asked what the thought is for neighboring states to have a later start. It's based on average nesting date; when most hens are sitting on a nest, when most toms have had an opportunity to breed, we have a less likelihood of overharvest. Luke stated that any change would reduce access. The Natural History Survey is conducting the statistical analysis and November is the targeted date of when the results should be available. Darel asked if a copy of the survey could be provided. The report will be a public document. The worry of putting it out is a potential bias.

Board Comments

Jerry asked about the Big Muddy and the releasing of water into the river, and about Rend Lake Resort. The director stated she does not have an answer on Big Muddy but will provide an update. The vendor meeting at Rend Lake had more interest than it has had previously.

Scott asked about the ad rule change on permit to sell; is it still at JCAR? The department was seeking comments/input on charging to use our facilities/state parks/historic sites. In the process of doing so, IDNR Legal Counsel identified a sentence that should not have been included. It's been pulled and being re-written. Scott stated that it is still listed on the website.

Joe would like to further the discussion on zone lines for waterfowl hunting as discussed at the last meeting. What would it look like, can it be changed, and if

we can, what steps are necessary to do so. Joe would also like to know the department's stance and how deep we've looked in to the various technology that is out there, specifically items on your phone. There are some interesting things as it relates to hunting & fishing; social media that is designed specifically for outdoorsmen. What is our outlook, is this something that could be explored? How can we make it easier to have access and collect data? How do we get information out to the average hunter, do we do a good job? There is a demographic who does not receive information.

Director Callahan stated that the Illinois Conservation Foundation has identified a mobile app as a project that they are interested in pursuing. They are actively looking and making progress and hope to have something by February.

Darel asked if there was any new information on R3 Conclave and the information that was gathered? Is it progressing? A lot of good ideas were shared.

John encouraged the board to provide agenda items.

Scott added that we needed an in-depth conversation on the Habitat Stamp Fund and how the grants are being administered and what they are being administered for. A lot of people are highly incensed on what has been going on. Every organization is going to put in for grants for administrators out of the Habitat Stamp Fund.

Director Callahan stated that when we have future meetings, each of you can bring your elected official with you. It should not be for me just to invite; we each have legislators that represent each of us. Chris Young suggested that topics of discussion be identified so that when we ask them for their time we have specific areas of conversation. If we wait to interact with our elected officials until they are here in Springfield, it's too late. IDNR will, at some time, be placing a legislative liaison in Chicago. Those are the individuals that vote on legislation that is very important to you. It's a responsibility to work together and articulate needs.

The director started a monthly “State of the State” with all IDNR staff that is an update on what we are working on, what meetings she has attended and the challenges that she has recognized and how we are addressing them. Since we last met, we have a Deputy Director/Assistant Chief of Staff, Rachel Torbert. Rachel is helping with our website and social media. Jerry Costello has joined as director of Law Enforcement. Von Bandy has joined as director of Land Management. In September, Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko will join as the Illinois State Museum Director. John Rogner has joined as Assistant Director and Kristin DiCenso has joined as Chief of Staff. Governor Pritzker has toured the Illinois State Museum; he is the first Governor that has toured the museum since Governor Thompson. The director has toured the historic Pullman Site in Chicago and visited the Propagation Center in Lincoln. Visited levee’s in Pike & Scott County and hosted meetings with communities and the Farm Bureau on policy. Visited Brandon Road Lock & Dam numerous times talking about Asian carp. Illinois is a non-federal partner for the Army Corps of Engineers project to create barriers in preventing Asian carp from getting into Lake Michigan. Visited the Mason State Tree Nursery in Topeka and attended the Midwest Association Fish & Wildlife Agencies annual meeting in Ohio. IDNR now has monthly meetings with CMS regarding maintenance and needs of IDNR facilities. We are making progress. On August 1st, there will be a new CEO at the Illinois Conservation Foundation. The Director’s Hunt is November 25 & 26th, and the NRAB meeting will be on Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. There is currently 1,192 staff positions filled. IDNR has a budget in 2020 to hire 1,250.

Scott mentioned that some of the members have terms that are up. This must go through the Governor’s office and they are aware of those that are expired. Members serve until reappointed or replaced.

Public Comments

Michael Rasmussen Capitol Outdoors stated that in his opinion, the board is in direct violation of the Open Meetings Act. The agenda for this meeting was not posted on the web. It is his job to advise this board that it is in violation and the board needs to look in to this. Not a complaint, just facts. Director Callahan said your point is well taken, and that it falls on Tami. Tami said this morning that it

did not get posted on the website. It was, however, posted on the bulletin board in the entry way of the building.

Scott Crauley commented that he has been turkey hunting since 1980 and his suggestion is if it's working don't fix it. Missouri has a three-week season and their population has declined as well. Illinois seems to be working.

Tricia Bryant appreciated the Director's 3 C's and truly hopes that it is sincere. There is some communication lacking because staff are confused about the procurement process. Why is there a lack a vendor's, and how do we make that process easier for them? In regard to the borrowed money, she tasks this board to look deeper, how was this done, why, what is the process for repaying.