

JANUARY 28, 2009

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Natural Resources Board was held on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 in Room G09, State Natural Resources Building (GEF 2), Madison, Wisconsin. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. for action on items 1-7. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Organizational Matters

1.A. Calling the roll

David Clausen – present	Preston Cole – present
Jonathan Ela – present	Gary Rohde – present
John Welter – present	Christine Thomas – present
Jane Wiley – present	

1.B. Approval of agenda for January 28, 2009

Mr. Rohde MOVED, seconded by Mr. Ela approval of the agenda for January 28, 2009. The motion carried unanimously.

Matt Frank, DNR Secretary, welcomed Representative Ann Hraychuck, Assembly Committee on Fish and Wildlife Chair. Representative Hraychuck is from Balsam Lake and was first elected in 2006. She was previously Sheriff of Polk County and was seen statewide as a leader among sheriffs. He observed that it was unusual, and welcome, for the chair of key State Assembly committee attend an NRB meeting, and thanked her for her visit.

Representative Hraychuck said she was honored and excited to be here as chair of the Assembly Fish & Wildlife Committee. She said she is an avid hunter and was a successful bear hunter four years ago. She looked forward to her service as Fish and Wildlife Committee Chair and hoped to foster an air of cooperation between the general public, Department, and Natural Resources Board.

Dr. Thomas said she was invited to Representative Hraychuck's office for a visit after the December meeting. Since she has been on the Board, a legislator has never invited her to their office, and she appreciated the invitation and the conversation.

1.C. Approval of minutes from December 9-10, 2008

Mr. Ela MOVED, seconded by Dr. Clausen approval of the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Ratification of Acts of the Department Secretary

2.A. Real Estate Transactions

Discussion followed on the Lake Pepin Wildlife Area and why the Department of Transportation is selling the land to the DNR and not transferring it.

Dr. Clausen MOVED, seconded by Mr. Ela approval of the real estate transactions. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Action Items

3.A. Air, Waste, and Water/Enforcement

3.A.1 Approval of the 2009 – 2011 Legislative Proposal Package

Paul Heinen, Legislative Liaison, gave an overview of the highlights to the Department's legislative proposals from the Divisions of Enforcement, Lands, Customer Assistance and

External Services, and Air and Waste. He requested the Board approve the 2009 – 2011 Legislative Proposal Package.

Discussion followed on what other legislative proposals are coming up that the Board should take a position on outside of the green sheet package, how these proposals are dealt with at the Department, and concern that the Board does not establish a position on major proposed bills.

Discussion continued on the difficulty of the Board taking a position on each introduced bill, the Board taking a general policy direction in legislative proposals, concern of not being able to obtain public involvement, the difficulty of the Board taking a position on a particular bill when there are various versions and specifics, monitoring the day-to-day approach of bills and amendments, and concern of the Board losing objectivity.

Discussion continued on how the current process is working, concerns of adding to the bureaucracy, and the possibility of staff emailing the Board with a list of major bills rolling through the legislature that the Board might be concerned with.

Dr. Thomas stated that if the Department is taking a position on a bill on a major issue with the Legislature, then it is the Board's job to set that position. If the Department is providing information about a bill to the Legislature, that is the role of the Department.

Discussion continued on bringing to the Board particular topics of legislative issues rather than specific legislative proposals.

Secretary Frank stated he will look at, at the very least, how to improve the information flow to the Board along the lines of what the Chair was recommending since the Department does track bills and those not yet introduced. They could come back in April with something but there may be bills that get voted on in February and March and get passed. This is the nature of the legislative process. To get you the best shot of what we think is out there - what has been introduced, what is up for hearing - in the end that is about the best we could do until you get into an individual piece of legislation.

Dr. Clausen MOVED, seconded by Ms. Wiley approval of the 2009 – 2011 Legislative Proposal Package.

Discussion continued on prohibiting baiting and allowing feeding such as in the states of Minnesota and Iowa.

Secretary Frank stated the reason the Board has taken the action it has in the past and why the Department continues to advance this action, is that we believe there is a science-based reason for a ban on both. The rationale is that when you are feeding deer for hunting purposes or for general enjoyment of seeing the deer come in, you are congregating deer. From everything we know about the passing of disease, whether it is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) or Tuberculosis (TB), when you congregate wildlife in a particular area whether it is for hunting or for other purposes you are increasing the risk of transmission of disease. That is why Wisconsin has been fairly consistent as a Department with Board backing that we support both a baiting and feeding ban of deer.

Discussion continued on MN and IA's position.

Discussion continued on the requirement of blaze orange on all hunting blinds, adding turkey licenses for students, and if there are any statutory changes in the license plate program.

Paul Heinen stated he believed the license plate item is proposed for the budget and not in separate legislation.

Mr. Welter requested the Board be informed of the potential cooperative agreement with Minnesota related to the license plate program.

Secretary Frank stated Governor Doyle started this process with Minnesota where we are looking at operations and activities between state governments in both places and we have already begun some discussions with our counterparts on both the Natural Resources side and Environmental protection side because in Minnesota those two agencies are split. We are very intrigued about their license plate program and his counterparts told him they are looking at how they might modify their program in the future. He will be meeting with them in the next few weeks and will get some suggestions back by the end of the month. He will keep the Board posted on those discussions.

The motion carried unanimously.

3.B. Air, Waste, and Water/Enforcement
None

3.C. Land Management, Recreation, and Fisheries/Wildlife

3.C.1 Request Adoption of Board Order ER-08-08, revisions to NR 27, relating to the list of Endangered and Threatened Species

Sumner Matteson, Bureau of Endangered Resources Avian Ecologist stated that the Department's recovery programs for Trumpeter Swan and Osprey has been very successful. The statewide populations of these two species have increased to the point where they no longer qualify as Endangered or Threatened Species. The lack of public response to the proposed rule suggests that the public generally supports delisting these two species. Of the limited responses received, 50% were in favor and 25% were against, with the remainder not taking a position on the proposed rule for or against delisting. He requested the Board approve Board Order ER-08-08.

Discussion followed on the crucial support of the Kohler family, the likelihood of available habitat for trumpeters to be restored in a broader portion of Wisconsin, and lead poisoning.

Public Appearance:

1. **Barb Barzen**, Spring Green, representing the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (NRF) spoke in support of delisting the trumpeter swan. Declaring this program a success is very gratifying for NRF and for other organizations that supported this program for 22 years.

Mr. Ela MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde approval of the Request for Adoption of Board Order ER-08-08, revisions to NR 27, relating to the list of Endangered and Threatened Species.

Discussion continued on what future work is planned for the trumpeter swan program.

The Board and attendees gave a standing ovation to one of the Department's great success Stories, and to the staff and public supporters who made it possible – the trumpeter swan program.

Dr. Thomas requested staff forward to her a list of names of contributors that should be thanked for their work on this program.

The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.2 Request Approval of bear harvest quotas for the 2009 season

Keith Warnke, Big Game Biologist, Wildlife Management Bureau stated that regulating hunting is the primary management tool for Wisconsin's black bear population. Harvest is managed by the number of bear harvest permits issued in each of Wisconsin's four bear management zones. The Department recommends a bear harvest quota of 4,585 and an overall permit level of 7,310

for the 2009 season. In individual management units the recommended 2008 permit level is A) 2,580; B) 1,300; C) 2,200; and D) 1,230. He requested the Board approve the 2009 Bear harvest season quotas.

Discussion followed on if the Department tracks the number of people who apply for preference points but do not use them, how the preference point system works, population estimates and goals, and comparative hunting pressure between dog hunting and baiting groups.

Public Appearance:

1. **Rich Kirchmeyer**, Prentice, representing the WI Conservation Congress (WCC) as Bear Committee Chair stated the WCC supports the Department's Zones A and D recommendations and supports the Department's revised proposals for Zones B and C as listed on his handout. He thanked the Department for delaying this item from December and for revising Department recommendations. **(Handout)**

Discussion followed as to what extent Tetracycline, for the new population study, was placed in areas more likely to have higher bear populations and if there is a difference in success rates between hunters using dogs or bait.

2. **Bob Welch**, Redgranite, representing the WI Bear Hunters Association stated they were elated that the Department took sound science seriously and adjusted population numbers accordingly. They support this item and look forward to being a participant when this comes forward again.
3. **George Meyer**, Poynette, representing the WI Wildlife Federation as Executive Director stated they support adoption of this proposal for the 2009 hunting season. He asked that the 2009 bear harvest be carefully monitored and evaluated to see if the harvest levels determine that the new population estimate methodology is accurately reflecting the true bear populations levels in the state. WCC is especially concerned about the Zone C proposal. The Department's bait station survey indicated that the Zone C bear population has declined recently and that there is less public land available for bear hunting in Zone C. There is a legitimate concern that higher permit levels will result in hunter crowding. He requested the Board use caution as the new system is implemented. **(Handout)**

Discussion continued on hunting in Zone C.

Dr. Clausen MOVED, seconded by Ms. Wiley approval of the request for approval of bear harvest quotas for the 2009 season.

Dr. Thomas stated that there has been some discussion in public that the Department did not know how many bears we had. The Department obtained funding and received scientific data. She commended staff for doing what was needed to be done and for putting a data point on the map. Now we need another data point on that map. We knew we needed more information and went after it with some assistance.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 3.C.3 **Request Authorization for Public Hearings on FH-01-09, proposed fishing and clamming regulations changes for 2009 Spring Fish and Wildlife Rules Hearings**
Joseph Hennessy, Staff Specialist, Fisheries Management Bureau gave an overview of the eight changes of broad, statewide significance and approximately 25 questions of local or regional interest, which affect fishing regulations on individual waters. If approved, these proposals will be presented to the public for comment at the April 2009 Spring Fish and Wildlife Rules Hearings. He requested the Board approve the request for public hearings on Board Order FH-01-09.

Mr. Hennessy also requested the Board make a motion to amend the rule as presented to include language restricting one sauger within the five fish harvest in Lake Winnebago.

Discussion followed on the likelihood of extending bass regulations to other lakes in Burnett County.

Mr. Welter requested staff forward a summary of the studies to Wisconsin Conservation Congress and the NRB to provide further information on the difference in mortality between barbless hooks and barbed hooks prior to the upcoming April spring meetings.

Discussion continued on the significance between large streams and tributaries and how administrative issues go through the hearings process.

Public Appearances:

1. **Ed Harvey**, Waldo, WI Conservation Congress (WCC) Chair supports the rule package as presented.

NOTE: In accordance with s. 15.348, Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Conservation Congress shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Natural Resources Board on all matters under the jurisdiction of the Board, and therefore is uniquely granted the permission to address the Board on any agenda items. No other public comment was accepted.

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde adoption of the Request for Authorization for Public Hearings on FH-01-09, proposed fishing and clamming regulations changes for 2009 Spring Fish and Wildlife Rules Hearings.

Mr. Welter MOVED to amend the rule as presented to include one sauger within the 5 fish harvest in Lake Winnebago. Mr. Rohde accepted as a friendly amendment.

The original motion as amended carried unanimously.

3.C.4 Request Authorization for Public Hearings on WM-01-09, proposed Wildlife Management 2009 Spring Hearing Rule changes

Scott Loomans, Wildlife Regulation Policy Specialist, Wildlife Management Bureau gave an overview of the rule package that relates to hunting, trapping, closed areas and game refuges. These rule changes are proposed for inclusion in the 2009 Spring Hearing Questionnaire. He requested the Board approve the request for public hearings on Board Order WM-01-09.

Discussion followed on the use of recorded or electronic calls by handicapped hunters.

Public Appearances:

1. **Ed Harvey**, Waldo, WI Conservation Congress (WCC) Chair supports the rule package as presented.

NOTE: In accordance with s. 15.348, Wis. Stats., the Wisconsin Conservation Congress shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Natural Resources Board on all matters under the jurisdiction of the Board, and therefore is uniquely granted the permission to address the Board on any agenda items. No other public comment was accepted.

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Ms. Wiley approval of the Request for Authorization for Public Hearings on WM-01-09, proposed Wildlife Management 2009 Spring Hearing Rule changes. The motion carried unanimously.

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- 3.C.5 Congress Matters: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2009 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions
Ed Harvey, Wisconsin Conservation Congress Chair, gave an overview of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress' 2009 Advisory Questions which were approved by the Congress Executive Council for inclusion on the Statewide Spring Hearing Questionnaire for the joint DNR spring Hearings and Conservation Congress County Meetings in April 2009. He then distributed to each Board member the 75 year WCC commemorative medallion and invited members to LaCrosse for the annual convention. **(Handout)**

Discussion followed on why some questions actually have two components to them and whether WCC should rethink whether question #22, prohibiting legislation without public hearings or Department input, is meaningful, since one legislature cannot bind the actions of later legislatures.

Ms. Wiley requested the Board receive WCC newsletters.

Discussion followed on public comment received regarding muzzleloader scopes and the rationale for combining pheasant and turkey stamps.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM – NO ACTION WAS TAKEN

- 3.C.6 Request Authorization for Public Hearings on Board Order FH-21-08, revisions to Chapter NR 25, commercial fishing – outlying waters
Michael Staggs, Director, Fisheries and Habitat Bureau stated that this proposed rule addresses the definition of the Great Lakes commercial fishing license year, licensing requirements for Great lakes commercial fishers, and the number of available Great Lakes commercial fishing licenses. He requested the Board approve the request for public hearings on Board Order FH-21-08.

Dr. Clausen MOVED, seconded by Mr. Cole approval of the Request for Authorization for Public Hearings on Board Order FH-21-08, revisions to Chapter NR 25, commercial fishing – outlying waters.

Discussion followed on correspondence received from members of the Lake Superior Fishing Board.

The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Thomas recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:10 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. with agenda item 4.A.1.

4. Citizen Participation – 1:00 p.m.

4.A. Citizen Recognition

1. 2007 and 2008 Rebecca Wallace Award

Dr. Thomas stated that this award is presented annually by the Board Chair and Department Secretary. Department employees nominate a co-worker to receive this award in honor of Becky Wallace. Becky, Chief of Runoff Management was an 18 year veteran employee who was killed in an automobile accident, along with her husband Lyle, in February of 1997. Her staff proposed this award in memory of Becky. In February 1997, the Natural Resources Board passed a memorial resolution honoring Becky Wallace.

Secretary Frank stated it is an honor to present these awards and further honored to have present today two of Becky's children Mitch and Spencer. He thanked them for being here. He then announced the 2007 and 2008 recipients and awarded them with a framed pen and ink watercolor that was created by Mr. James McEvoy, a retired DNR artist from Brooklyn, WI.

2007 Recipient: David A. Zebro, Regional Enforcement Leader, Law Enforcement, Spooner
- Northern Region

Randy Stark, Director, Law Enforcement Bureau and **John Gozdziwski**, Northern Region Director jointly accepted the award on Mr. Zebro's behalf since he could not attend the meeting due to an illness. He epitomized what Becky Wallace stood for and carries on her legacy. Mr. Zebro sent his regrets for not being there and his appreciation for receiving this award.

2008 Recipient: Cheryl Bougie, Storm Water Management Specialist, Green Bay - Northeast Region

Ms. Bougie stated it was an honor to receive this award. She noted she had met Becky Wallace in an elevator of a hotel during a statewide meeting where Becky welcomed her to the program. She was very outgoing and was a real role model for her. She then thanked her husband and other mentors that have been helpful to her in her career.

4.B. Citizen Participation

Public Appearances

1. **Lois Swain**, Deerfield, representing herself. *Topic:* Concerns on rifle hunting on DNR property near their residence. She spoke on the dangers of rifles and safety concerns for her family and neighbors. She requested the Board ban the use of rifles on the state owned land bordering their property. **(Handout)**

Discussion followed on if there were any actual incidences at her farm this year, signage concerns, and ballistics research on rifles vs. shotguns.

2. **Howard Olson**, Cambridge, representing himself. *Topic:* Rifle hunting of deer in Southern WI. He asked the Board to reconsider their decision to allow rifle hunting in southern Wisconsin for the deer hunt. He spoke on safety issues, harvest numbers, and the unintended impacts of less land being available to hunters because of the shotgun to rifle regulation

Discussion followed on township restrictions and land being closed to hunters.

3. **Mike Henneberry**, Watertown, representing himself. *Topic:* Use of rifles in South Central CWD Mgmt. Zone. He stated the new 2008 rule allowing the use of a rifle for the legal harvesting of whitetail deer in the CWD Management Zones in SE and SC WI that were previously "shotgun" only needs to be reconsidered for 2009 and beyond. The decision to make the change was not based upon sound science. **(Handout)**

4. **Roby Rogers**, Deerfield, representing herself. *Topic:* Concerns on rifle hunting on DNR property near her residence. She spoke against rifle use on the state land bordering her property. She stated she is very concerned about safety and wants to see rifle use eliminated all together. She added that signs only work if people follow rules. She requested the Board reevaluate the use of shotguns and rifles and limit hunting to projectiles that are safe for all people and animals surrounding that area.

Discussion continued on the number of hunters and how they use this parcel, safety, and trespassing concerns.

Dr. Thomas stated there is at least a law enforcement issue here if laws are being broken. She asked for further discussion as the year unfolds and requested a staff analysis to include incidents, safety measures the Department is taking to address neighboring property owner concerns, hunter access issues, impact on hunting, the magnitude of people involved, property damage, and township information.

5. **George Meyer**, Poynette, representing the WI Wildlife Federation as Executive Director. *Topic:* Hall Deer Farm. He stated that the contract with Buckhorn Flats deer farm is not binding with the property. He requested that action be taken by the Board to declare such properties as public nuisances under the law and that there be a binding requirement that runs with the land to require the long term maintenance of a deer proof fence. This would prevent the wild deer herd from coming in contact with CWD contaminated properties. He also asked that the Board schedule a full briefing by DATCP and DNR staff on this issue at an upcoming meeting of the Board. **(Handout)**

Dr. Thomas noted there are individual Board members who share these concerns. She requested staff add this item to the June agenda for the tentative joint meeting with DATCP Board.

6. **Gary Goyke**, Madison, representing the WI Commercial Deer & Elk Farms Association and Whitetails of WI *Topic:* Staff commendation of Sarah Shapiro Hurley. He stated they really appreciate the hard work done by Dr. Sarah Shapiro Hurley on the Captive Wildlife Bill which passed the same week CWD was discovered in WI. Dr. Hurley will receive the Outstanding Public Service Award at their upcoming meeting. He stated their appreciation of the value of good professional staff and thanked Dr. Hurley for her work.

The Board also thanked Dr. Hurley for her service to the citizens of the state of Wisconsin. She will be retiring from state service in February.

Secretary Frank stated Dr. Hurley has been a true leader to the state for decades. She is extremely knowledgeable and has a fantastic personality. In addition to all of her contributions to science based natural resources management, she is also a mentor and role model. She is respected by all her peers. He congratulated her for this award and for all she has accomplished during her career.

Dr. Thomas continued with Agenda Item 3.C.7.

3.C.7 Land Acquisition – Ice Age Trail – Waushara County

Discussion followed on where the trail goes to the south.

Mr. Ela MOVED, seconded by Dr. Clausen approval of the Land Acquisition – Ice Age Trail – Waushara County. The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.8 Land Acquisition – Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest – Oneida County

Discussion followed on how the Department is obtaining the easement to the north and from whom and on the high cost of the parcel.

Mr. Cole MOVED, seconded by Ms. Wiley approval of the Land Acquisition – Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest – Oneida County. The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.9 Land Acquisition – Peter Helland Wildlife Area – Columbia County

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde approval of the Land Acquisition – Peter Helland Wildlife Area – Columbia County. The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.10 Land Acquisition - C.D. (Buzz) Besadny Fish and Wildlife Area – Kewaunee County

Mr. Ela asked if the project boundary should be expanded to include the southern portion of the acquisition.

Ms. Wiley MOVED, seconded by Mr. Ela approval of the Land Acquisition - C.D. (Buzz) Besadny Fish and Wildlife Area – Kewaunee County and to include all of this property in the project boundary. The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.11 Land Donation – Statewide Natural Area and Grand Traverse Island State Park – Door County

Mr. Cole MOVED, seconded by Mr. Ela approval of the Land Donation – Statewide Natural Area and Grand Traverse Island State Park – Door County. The motion carried unanimously.

3.C.12 Land Donation – Statewide Natural Areas – Crawford County

Public Appearances:

1. **Steve Richter**, spoke on behalf of Rebecca Smith, Madison, representing The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as Director of Conservation for Southern WI. He stated TNC values their partnership with the Department and was pleased to donate the 960 acre Hogback Preserve to the Department and the people of Wisconsin. He acknowledged the contributions of both the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and TNC's many supporters. He also noted TNC was particularly excited by the Department's proposed feasibility study for the Lower Kickapoo River Valley.
2. **Jennifer Nelson**, Steuben, representing the Kickapoo Initiative stated that the Hogback is in her back yard and welcomed the Department to the neighborhood. One of the most stressing needs for this area is for protecting and enhancing the biodiversity of the Lower Kickapoo Valley. It is the goal of the Initiative to promote methods of private land management that are both profitable and environmentally sustainable. She requested the Board approve this donation and proposed feasibility study.
3. **Maggie Jones**, Blue River, representing Valley Stewardship Network stated there were intact ecosystems at this location and that there has been a big citizen-based effort to keep it intact. This is one of the best win-win situations she has ever seen. She invited the Board to see it for themselves.
4. **Robert Horwich**, Gays Mills, representing Community Conservation stated they motivate communities in twelve countries to protect the land they live on and Protected Areas adjacent to where they live. The concepts and activities that their organization has developed have been extremely successful and in most cases have left empowered community groups managing their own projects. They are currently initiating a project called the Kickapoo Community Sanctuary to motivate Kickapoo residents to see themselves as residents of a watershed that need their protection. **(Handout)**

Discussion followed on where their organization was based.

5. **David Wilson**, Mineral Point, representing the Driftless Area Initiative stated their support for the approval of this land donation and further supported the approval of a feasibility study to be conducted on 17,000 acres of the Lower Kickapoo River Valley. He asked the Board to consider the benefits that protection of this land through the state Natural Areas Program will provide to forest dependent birds reproducing in and around the Kickapoo Valley, Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, and the Greater Driftless Area of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. **(Handout)**

Discussion followed on a concern that these land donations and purchases are impacting staff, the management of these lands, if they are meeting the expectations of the donors and contributors, and budget reductions.

Secretary Frank stated that as we look at Stewardship now that it has been reauthorized to 2020, we now have the opportunity to greatly expand our purchases in the future. We are very mindful of monitoring our overall capacity within the Department to manage effectively the lands that we have acquired. From a Department-wide standpoint, this is an issue we feel we need to pay attention to. Partnering organizations like the groups that came in today are absolutely vital to our success. We need to continue those efforts but also need to look at our overall staffing levels as we go into the future.

Discussion continued on staffing levels, hunting and outdoor recreation user group pressure on state lands, safeguarding land for the future, possible outcomes and recommendations of the feasibility study, and Minnesota proposing sale of state-owned lands to help offset that state's budget deficit.

Secretary Frank stated that the budget is very difficult right now. He and the Governor both feel very strongly in terms of priorities for the Department that the Stewardship Program is something that we need to keep at the top of the list, even during very tough times. Other sacrifices will have to be made. Cutting into the Stewardship Program is not the way to solve our state's budget problems. We need to maintain a strong program. These opportunities come along sometimes only once in a lifetime. If you miss your chance, you will miss the chance forever to add them to the public domain for generations to come.

Secondly, there is another model emerging with public lands. Over the years, traditionally it was how much staff do they have to do things for the people of WI. We are here to serve the people but what has been developing over time of really connecting people locally and regionally to the land that they live in and really engaging them much more. By engaging citizens and local organizations and communities, you can tell from the excitement here today that our staff has been working as a partner with The Nature Conservancy and other organizations. This is a new model of relating to the land. Leopold would be happy to see this. We are engaging local citizenry in the work that we are doing. If we continue to do this, even during tough times, in the long run we will have some really great properties for people to enjoy.

Discussion continued on Minnesota's actions.

Mr. Ela disclosed that his wife works for The Nature Conservancy and worked on this transaction. He abstained from the vote.

Mr. Cole MOVED, seconded by Mr. Welter approval of the Land Donation [and Feasibility Study] – Statewide Natural Areas – Crawford County. The motion carried on a voice vote. Mr. Ela abstained from the vote.

The Board commended and thanked the wide variety of groups including The Nature Conservancy that made this legacy possible for the future of the citizens of the state of Wisconsin possible.

Mr. Cole confirmed that his motion included both the acquisition and the authorization for the feasibility study.

5. **Board Members' Matters**

Mr. Clausen requested that an action item be added to the February 25, 2009 agenda for the Department to formulate a plan to keep the fences in place at Buckhorn Flats Deer Farm and other CWD contaminated farms.

Mr. Ela requested staff come back with a complete list, plan and timeline for dedicating all natural areas on state properties that are currently in the "designated" category.

Mr. Welter requested an update on the *Wild and Scenic River* status of the Totagatic and Brunsweler Rivers.

Mr. Rohde requested a legislative update at every other monthly meeting to include what is moving and what is not.

5.A. Election of Officers (taken up at the end of the meeting)

5.B. Review of Natural Resources Board Question(s) for the 2009 Spring Fish and Wildlife Hearings

Mr. Cole requested the following board advisory question be added to the 2009 Spring Fish and Wildlife Hearings: “Would you support the concept of establishing a Youth Conservation Congress?”

Dr. Thomas requested staff assist Mr. Cole in drafting the question and to define procedural concerns, if any.

6. Special Committees’ Reports
None.

7. Department Secretary’s Matters

7.A. Retirement Resolutions

7.A.1 Randall J. Link

7.A.2 David A. Hildreth

7.A.3 Zida Reed

7.A.4 Daniel S. Koich

7.A.5 John Glindinning

7.A.6 Charles L. Weister

7.A.7 Steven W. Hewett

7.A.8 Tom Niebauer

7.A.9 David E. Birren

Dr. Thomas stated that she knew Tom Niebauer and his sons attended and worked at UW-SP. He has been very good for the citizens of Wisconsin in dealing with the federal government and other states on issues important to all. Mr. Niebauer and George Meyer were responsible for obtaining funding for the Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program. He has dedicated his life to our natural resources.

Mr. Welter applauded the work of Dan Koich who in west central Wisconsin has been the go-to guy for water regulations and protection. He has been tremendous not only working with individual land owners but in working with other agencies to try to protect our state’s waters.

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Dr. Clausen approval of the retirement resolutions. The motion carried unanimously.

7.B. Donations

7.B.1 The Natural Resources Foundation will donate \$9,400 to be used toward management of the Wisconsin State Natural Areas in the La Crosse Area

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde approval of The Natural Resources Foundation donation of \$9,400 to be used toward management of the Wisconsin State Natural Areas in the La Crosse Area. The motion carried unanimously.

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- 7.B.2 The Wisconsin Chapter of Safari Club International will donate \$8,176 to support a disability project on the Richard Bong State Recreation Area

Mr. Ela MOVED, seconded by Mr. Welter approval of The Wisconsin Chapter of Safari Club International donation of \$8,176 to support a disability project on the Richard Bong State Recreation Area. The motion carried unanimously.

- 7.B.3 Sauk County will donate \$5,958 to support invasive species removal in State Natural Areas

Ms. Wiley MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde approval of the Sauk County donation of \$5,958 to support invasive species removal in State Natural Areas. The motion carried unanimously.

Secretary Frank gave an update on the Federal Stimulus Package and Wisconsin's newly created Office of Recovery and Reinvestment, the Minnesota-Wisconsin Efficiency Collaboration, the Wolf Delisting Status (**Handout**), and federal climate change legislation.

Discussion followed on the bidding process and Department infrastructure improvements.

8. Information Items

- 8.A. Air, Waste, and Water/Enforcement
None

8.B. Land Management, Recreation, and Fisheries/Wildlife

- 8.B.1 Presentation of a Concept Plan for a Motorized Recreation Area (MRA)

Dan Schuller, Director, Bureau of Parks and Recreation and **Peter Biermeier**, Section Chief, Bureau of Parks and Recreation gave a joint presentation on options for funding, location, management, and partnerships for a concept plan for one or more motorized recreation areas. Findings from a Department study on this concept from over the past two years were also presented as well as a variety of development and operational scenarios.

Mr. Ela thanked Mr. Schuller, Mr. Biermeier, and their team for their thoughtful, keep options open approach. He is glad to see, at least conceptually, that this is moving forward.

Discussion continued on the site selection process and options, feasibility study, if there are other MRA's in Wisconsin, alternatives to state ownership, and recreation immunity.

Secretary Frank stated that in the last year the Board has dealt with the issue of ATV's on other properties and Board members are well aware of the controversy surrounding those decisions. As that process proceeded, some were asking whether the Department could come forward with some projects that actually would be win-wins.

He gave credit to the state ATV Association, even after those decisions were made, for being more than willing to come in and talk about the future. This is an area of recreation that has been expanding and looks like it will remain very popular. Our choice here is either to be reactive as we have been or be proactive. We are trying to work with partners. The ATV Association has responded very well and helped provide some information to help the Department get to this point.

If we can get some options to bring forward to the Board a plan without user conflicts, with local citizen and local government support, and without a significantly costly environmental impact or a cost to ameliorate the environmental impact, we are responding to a need and desire that is out there. This could be a real positive.

Discussion continued on the concern of competing with current recreation opportunities, if other states with MRAs have a ratio to motorized vehicles to the amount of property available, and if numbers of ATVs registered are skewed by people using their ATVs in other locations such as those located at second homes.

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Mr. Cole requested staff create a business plan to address revenue options in addition to a facilities and recreation plan.

Mr. Biermeier stated complimented the motorized community for its cooperation with the Department.

Discussion continued on locating a suitable site.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM – NO ACTION WAS TAKEN

Dr. Thomas continued the meeting with agenda item 5.A.

5.A. Election of Officers

Dr. Clausen MOVED, seconded by Mr. Rohde to nominate and elect the existing officers to serve a third term. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Welter MOVED, seconded by Dr. Clausen to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

NOTE: Each Natural Resources Board meeting is recorded. Tapes of each meeting are available for purchase by contacting the Natural Resources Board at 608-267-7420. The following resources are also available: Agenda Item Packets (green sheets), supporting documents, and public comment.